

*John Capgrave*

*The Life of Saint Katherine*

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# *The Life of Saint Katherine*

## *Introduction*

John Capgrave's life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria belongs to the most popular genre of medieval narrative: hagiography, or writings about the saints.<sup>1</sup> From the earliest centuries of Christianity, accounts of the lives, deaths, and miracles of exceptionally holy men and women proliferated. These stories, which were written in Greek, Latin, and all the medieval vernaculars, were extraordinarily varied. Some sketched the saint's life in just a few sentences, while others expended thousands of lines of verse or prose on their subject. Some were full of meditations, prayers, and moral and theological exposition, while others were fast-paced and funny, sometimes racy. Hagiography could serve many different purposes, from affirming Christian dogma to promoting political and social agendas. Though most saints' lives were written by the clergy, they were directed to men and women from all walks of life and, indeed, were constantly being reshaped to fit the needs and values of new audiences.

Though saints' lives claim to be "true," they defy the modern reader's sense of historical accuracy.<sup>2</sup> To begin with, the earliest biographies of so many saints, including Katherine of Alexandria, were produced centuries after their protagonists were supposed to have lived. Moreover, there is a certain sameness about the genre, which signals the legends' fictiveness. The lives of countless saints draw on a few standard plots, stock characters, and conventional incidents. Miraculous escapes, violent and sexually charged conflicts, and ingenious methods of inflicting death figure prominently. Medieval readers of saints' lives — much like contemporary fans of James Bond movies, slasher flicks, bodice-busters, or whodunits — relished the repetition of familiar plots and motifs. Yet such repetition also conveyed a religious "truth," namely, that all saints *are* the same, in that all live a common life of holiness

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<sup>1</sup> For an excellent general introduction to the genre, see Thomas Head, "Hagiography," in *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia*, ed. William Kibler and Grover Zinn (New York: Garland Pub., 1995), pp. 433–37.

<sup>2</sup> On medieval views of truth and historicity, see Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

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(*vita sanctorum*) modeled on the life of Christ.<sup>3</sup> As long as the contours of that universal, spiritual life were sharply drawn, the hagiographer could use his (or, less often, her) imagination to fill in the details, or could borrow those details from previous legends.

The Katherine of Alexandria legend exemplifies one of the most popular hagiographical formulas, the virgin martyr legend, an account of the trial and execution of a beautiful Christian who defies all authority to uphold her faith. Like most virgin martyrs, Katherine probably never existed: although her martyrdom is set in the early fourth century, the earliest mention of her dates from the ninth century, and a full account of her passion was not composed until the eleventh century. According to that account, known as the Vulgate version, Katherine was a learned young queen of Alexandria who confronted Emperor Maxentius as he presided over pagan ceremonies in her capital. Consternated by her learned denunciation of paganism, Maxentius summoned fifty philosophers to trounce her in a public debate, but Katherine instead converted them all to Christianity. Outraged, Maxentius resorted to violence, only to be thwarted at every turn by heavenly intervention. When he starved Katherine, angels fed her; when he scourged her, they healed her; when he built a machine with which to mangle her, they shattered it, showering the pagan spectators with the lethal fragments. To make matters worse, Katherine converted the emperor's wife and his best friend. Unable to sway his prisoner through torture, intimidation, reason, or flattery, Maxentius had her beheaded. As proof of her purity, milk gushed from her severed neck, and angels transported her body to Mount Sinai, where her relics continued to perform miracles.<sup>4</sup>

Though saints' legends tended to be highly formulaic, each saint was distinguished by some attribute or incident, often one that inspired the adoption of that saint either as a personal patron or as the patron of a certain cause or vocation. For example, scholars adopted St. Nicholas because he resurrected three students who had been robbed, killed, diced, and pickled by an innkeeper.<sup>5</sup> Because the virgin martyr Apollonia was tortured by having her teeth yanked out, she became the patron saint of toothache sufferers and was portrayed gripping a tooth with pincers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I am using the term coined by the sixth-century author and theorist of hagiography Gregory of Tours. See his *Life of the Fathers*, trans. Edward James (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1985), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> A version that circulated in England of this standard *vita* has been edited by S. R. T. O. d'Ardenne and E. J. Dobson in *Seinte Katerine*, EETS s.s. 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 132–203. Nancy Wilson Van Baak has translated a somewhat different version of this *vita* in *La festa et storia di Sancta Caterina: A Medieval Italian Religious Drama*, ed. and trans. Anne Wilson Tordi (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 249–91.

<sup>5</sup> Charles W. Jones, *Saint Nicholas of Myra, Bari, and Manhattan: Biography of a Legend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> See Leslie Abend Callahan, "The Torture of Saint Apollonia: Deconstructing Fouquet's Martyrdom Stage," *Studies in Iconography* 16 (1994), 119–38.

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Likewise, Katherine is shown with a wheel, recalling the torture on a machine of spiked wheels that Maxentius planned for her. Katherine's learning and sovereignty established her by the end of the Middle Ages as one of Europe's most popular saints. The clergy, who were largely responsible for producing and disseminating saints' legends, identified with her as a fellow scholar; as Capgrave puts it, "Because thou were so lerned and swech a clerk, / Clerkes must love thee — resoun forsoth it is" (*Katherine*, 3.38–39). Laypeople, who were becoming increasingly important as readers and patrons of saints' lives, could appreciate the public Katherine, a lady of affairs with property to manage and worldly obligations to discharge. The drama of a queen besting an emperor obviously appealed to medieval artists, since they frequently depicted Katherine in full regalia trampling the prostrate Maxentius, her sword piercing his neck or gouging out an eye.

A striking indicator of the interest Katherine aroused was the metamorphosis of her legend during the thirteenth century, when hagiographers began prefacing the traditional account of her confrontation with Maxentius and martyrdom (the "passion") with elaborate descriptions of earlier events. These expanded narratives often recount the deeds of Katherine's forbears and tell of her birth, family life, education, and eventual ascension to the throne. Moreover, they all contain some version of the saint's conversion and her transportation to heaven, where she marries Jesus in a mystical wedding ceremony that literalized the ancient *sponsa Christi* motif.<sup>7</sup> This episode of Katherine's legend may have captured the imagination of Margery Kempe and other late medieval holy women, for many of them reported mystical marriages of their own. The earliest extant English legend to cover Katherine's life before her martyrdom was written in the Anglo-Norman dialect of French near the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>8</sup> This was followed, c. 1420, by a Middle English life in prose, later incorporated into a popular collection of saints' lives, the 1438 *Golden Legend*.<sup>9</sup> Some twenty-five years later, John Capgrave produced the legend presented in this edition, which is, to my knowledge, the longest and most intricate Katherine legend written during the Middle Ages, either in Latin or in any vernacular.

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<sup>7</sup> Virgin martyrs had for centuries been referred to as Christ's spiritual brides. For a discussion of Katherine's literal representation as Christ's bride, see Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: The Arts, Religion, and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), pp. 107–13.

<sup>8</sup> London, British Library, MS Addit. 40143.

<sup>9</sup> *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, ed. Henry Hucks Gibbs (London: Nichols, 1884). A shorter and later version of this prose life has been edited by Saara Nevanlinna and Irma Taavitsainen, *St. Katherine of Alexandria: The Late Middle English Prose Legend in Southwell Minster MS 7* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993). The introduction by Nevanlinna and Taavitsainen provides a valuable survey of this popular Katherine legend.

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### **Capgrave and his Milieu**

Capgrave spent much of his seventy-one years in the thriving port of Lynn on the estuary of the Ouse River in northwestern Norfolk.<sup>10</sup> At his birth in 1393, Lynn was the ninth largest city in England, with a population of around 5000, and boasted some seventy-five craft guilds and a merchant class that thrived upon the trade in wool, cloth, grain, and wine. At the center of town stood a prestigious convent belonging to the Augustinians, an order of friars committed to preaching and service in urban areas.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps emulating an earlier John Capgrave, who may have been his uncle, Capgrave joined the order in his mid-teens and was ordained c. 1416. He pursued a standard course of studies, mastering the basics of grammar, logic, and philosophy at local Augustinian institutions before tackling theology at their London convent. He concluded his training at Cambridge University by attaining (in record time, at the age of thirty-four) the highest and most prestigious teaching degree available, that of *magisterium*, or doctor of divinity.<sup>12</sup> In the process, he mastered debating skills that surely contributed to the unusual length and intricacy of the disputes in his Katherine legend, first between Katherine and her barons and later between her and the fifty philosophers.

That Capgrave belonged to a religious order by no means implies that he was an otherworldly recluse. Though we can only speculate about his student days, one set of rules for Augustinians studying in London anticipates plenty of mischief among the aspiring theologians: laughing and whistling in church, shouting and banging dishes at meals, sneaking food or unauthorized visitors into the rooms or selling their furniture for spare cash, patronizing taverns, and staying out all night.<sup>13</sup> In Lynn, Capgrave would have been in the thick of affairs, for the Augustinians were frequently called upon to mediate conflicts between civic factions such as the merchants and the craft guilds. He would also have met the major political figures who lodged with the Augustinians while visiting Lynn; indeed, in 1446 Capgrave, as prior, was responsible for entertaining King Henry VI. His experience of the world was further broadened by travel. He visited Rome in 1449 on Augustinian business and did enough sightseeing to write a guide to that city, *The Solace of Pilgrimes*. Capgrave grew prominent within his order. He was prior of the Lynn friary, the largest Augustinian house in England, from c. 1441 to 1453, and was subsequently elected Prior Provincial of England by

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<sup>10</sup> For more on Capgrave's life and milieu, see the studies by De Meijer, Fredeman, Gibson, Lucas, and Seymour. For a study of Lynn itself, see Vanessa Parker, *The Making of King's Lynn: Secular Buildings from the 11th to the 17th Century* (London: Phillimore, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed study of the Augustinian order in England, see Roth; and Aubrey Gwynn, *The English Austin Friars in the Time of Wyclif* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940).

<sup>12</sup> Roth, 1.174.

<sup>13</sup> Fredeman, "Life," p. 214.

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unanimous vote. From 1453 to 1457, he oversaw thirty-four houses with more than 500 friars and served as liaison with the Prior General in Rome.

Despite his administrative obligations, Capgrave was a prolific author. His oeuvre includes the lives of Saints Katherine, Norbert, Augustine, and Gilbert; a chronicle of England; a collection of historical biographies about people named Henry; a guide to Rome; several theological treatises; and numerous commentaries on the Bible. He may, indeed, have viewed his writing as an extension of his responsibilities first as head of the Lynn friary and then as head of all English Augustinians, for he dedicated his works to patrons who could aid his house and his order: Kings Henry VI and Edward IV, bishops and heads of religious houses, Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, and the Norfolk magnate and bully Sir Thomas Tuddenham.<sup>14</sup> Generating goodwill among such magnates was especially vital as political chaos mounted, breaking out in open civil war in 1455 (the Wars of the Roses). All of Capgrave's works except his *Katherine* survive in manuscripts — including lavish presentation copies — that he himself produced or supervised the production of, perhaps at a scriptorium within the Lynn convent.<sup>15</sup>

Political unrest did not thwart the development of a rich culture in southeastern England. Capgrave's East Anglia abounded with authors whose endeavors were encouraged by local bibliophiles and patrons of the arts.<sup>16</sup> In the decades following Chaucer's death in 1400, John Lydgate, John Metham, and Osbern Bokenham were, through tributes to their predecessor and adaptations of his work, shaping a "Chaucer Tradition" in England.<sup>17</sup> Religious drama flourished, and during the 1430s, Margery Kempe, also of Lynn, a businesswoman, traveler, and mother of fourteen, completed her extraordinary *Book*, an amalgam of autobiography, hagiography, mysticism, and social criticism. That a laywoman could produce such a work at a time when the Church in England, fearing the spread of heresy, was overtly hostile toward amateur theologizing, attests to a certain tolerance in East Anglia, a survival of the openness to spiritual creativity that had enabled the anchoress Julian of Norwich to record her unusual visions a generation earlier.<sup>18</sup> Capgrave's *The Life of St. Katherine* was very much a product

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<sup>14</sup> H. S. Bennett discusses Tuddenham's doings in *The Pastons and Their England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1922).

<sup>15</sup> Lucas, "Scribe and Publisher."

<sup>16</sup> See especially Gibson and Moore.

<sup>17</sup> For discussions of the roles of Lydgate and Bokenham in the formation of a Chaucer tradition, see, respectively, Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Delany.

<sup>18</sup> For discussions of the religious climate in late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century East Anglia, see Gibson; Staley; and David Aers and Lynn Staley, *The Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

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of East Anglian culture. Though Capgrave acknowledges only one English source for his narrative (a possibly fictional legend relayed by a London priest), his *The Life of St. Katherine* reads as if it were written by someone who had read Chaucer, was conversant with the works of Lydgate and Bokenham and with biblical drama, and knew of Margery Kempe's *Book*.<sup>19</sup>

### **Capgrave's *The Life of St. Katherine***

In his prologue, Capgrave tells us that his *The Life of St. Katherine* derives from a long-lost biography composed by Katherine's disciple Athanasius, which was translated from Greek into Latin by a fifth-century scholar named Arrek and from Latin into English nearly a millennium later by a parson of St. Pancras in London. Unfortunately, Capgrave explains, the anonymous priest died before he could complete his project; moreover, his dialect was so obscure that his translation was known to only a handful of scholars — and even they could not understand it. Having come upon the incomplete manuscript, Capgrave undertakes to translate his predecessor's "derk langage" into proper English and to supply the missing account of Katherine's martyrdom from an authoritative Latin source. Yet if Capgrave was, as he avers, faithfully translating preexisting sources, those sources have not survived.<sup>20</sup> Certainly Capgrave did not originate the events that he narrates; all are found in earlier Katherine legends. However, medieval authors were not loath to invent authorities (Lollus in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is a famous example), and we should not accept Capgrave's assertions without question.

Capgrave's *The Life of St. Katherine* stands apart both from other known narrations of Katherine's life and from English hagiography generally. To begin with, at five books totaling about 8,000 lines of rhyme-royal verse, his legend is rather long for a saint's life. Its length is not unprecedented; during the 1430s, Lydgate had written "epic" lives of Saints Edmund and Alban, along with *The Life of Our Lady*, all of which comprise several thousand rhyme-royal lines and are divided into multiple books.<sup>21</sup> Lydgate may have been emulating Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, which was widely admired by fifteenth-century readers. Although Capgrave borrows literary devices favored by Chaucer and Lydgate, he makes no pretensions to high art. His stanzas jingle with the fillers, tags, and formulas that abound in popular

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<sup>19</sup> On Capgrave's familiarity with Chaucer, see Pearsall, Stouck, and Winstead ("Chaucer Tradition").

<sup>20</sup> See Kurvinen's discussion and partial transcription of the Latin *vita* that most closely resembles Capgrave's.

<sup>21</sup> Karen A. Winstead, "Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Alban: Martyrdom and *Prudent Pollicie*," *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994), 361–76.

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romances.<sup>22</sup> These features, along with broad humor, colloquialism, and irregular meter, distinguish Capgrave's *Katherine* from his only other verse narrative, the far more decorous *The Life of St. Norbert*, composed c. 1420 and dedicated to John Wygenhale, abbot of the Premonstratensian priory of nearby West Dereham.

Capgrave's casual style does accord with his stated goal of making Katherine's long-lost *vita* known "more openly . . . / . . . of woman and of man" (Prol., lines 45–46). Yet he does not tell a simple story, as so many popular writers did; rather, he transforms Katherine's life into an encyclopedic narrative holding something for everybody: for the antiquarian, digressions on Greek and Roman history, with the occasional reference to "Brytayn, the londe in whech we dwelle" (4.111); for the political theorist, divagations into theories of just and unjust rule and justifiable versus unjustifiable rebellion; for the entrepreneur, numerous references to money, merchandise, and commerce; for the doting parent, descriptions of King Costus and Queen Meliades coddling the baby Katherine and of attendants bustling about her nursery; for the aspiring *gentil*, accounts of pageants, jousts, and feasts.

Attuned to the interests of women, who were avid readers and patrons in 1440s East Anglia, Capgrave develops those aspects of the virgin martyr's relationship with her heavenly spouse that provincial wives could understand: her longing for her absent husband, for example, and her anxiety over the safety of her household and property during dangerous times.<sup>23</sup> Through his portrayal of other women — the Virgin Mary, Maxentius' wife, and Katherine's mother — he further engages a female audience. Widows who had themselves struggled to secure their children's inheritance could appreciate the maneuvers of Meliades. Shortly after her husband's funeral, she summons a parliament in Alexandria, the ancient seat of kings, without telling anyone why (1.512–18); then, having propitiated the magnates of her husband's realm with lavish entertainments, she has Katherine crowned, effecting her daughter's prompt and smooth succession at a time when many people were grumbling at the prospect of being governed by a girl.

For Capgrave, addressing a broad audience does not mean avoiding complex social and philosophical issues but rather engaging ordinary readers in those issues. The long debate in

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<sup>22</sup> See Pearsall.

<sup>23</sup> For discussions of East Anglian women as patrons and readers, see Delany; Gibson; and Ralph Hanna III, "Some Norfolk Women and Their Books, ca. 1390–1440," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), pp. 288–305. For more on the responsibilities of provincial wives, see Coss; Ann S. Haskell, "The Paston Women on Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England," *Viator* 4 (1973), 459–71; and Sarah McNamer, "Female Authors, Provincial Setting: The Re-Versing of Courtly Love in the Findern Manuscript," *Viator* 22 (1991), 279–310. See also *Wife and Widow in Medieval England*, ed. Sue Sheridan Walker (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

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Book 2 over a woman's fitness to rule sets forth contradictory yet equally compelling arguments about government, tradition, and gender, and it concludes with no clear-cut winner. Books 3 through 5 treat weighty doctrinal matters at length, despite the Church's opposition to theologizing in English.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Capgrave does not shrink from adumbrating parallels between Maxentius' persecution of Christians and the Church's persecution of the Lollards (followers of John Wyclif who advocated, among other things, that ordinary people should read and discuss the Bible in their own language).<sup>25</sup> For example, Christians are denounced by “[a] byschop . . . with mytere and with crose” (4.309) and persecuted for engaging in unlicensed preaching (4.1431–35), while Capgrave puts into the mouth of an idolatrous pagan the very arguments by which the Church defended the veneration of devotional images (4.1499–1512). With equal temerity, Capgrave implicitly criticizes the current English monarch, Henry VI.<sup>26</sup> Like Katherine, Henry was widely accused of being overly pious, inattentive to matters of state, and insufficiently manly. If these traits led a great saint's kingdom to ruin, where were they likely to lead Henry's? As a shield for these dangerously topical allusions, Capgrave adopts a quintessentially Chaucerian device: he interposes between himself and the text an intrusive narrator whose digressions, contradictions, and bizarre interpretations can only frustrate the reader looking for simple truths.

### The Text

Capgrave's *Katherine* survives in four fifteenth-century manuscripts. I have based this edition on Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poet. 118, which, scholars have long agreed, best preserves Capgrave's language and orthography. Indeed, F. J. Furnivall's foreword to the Early English Text Society's 1893 edition of the legend castigated its editor, Carl Horstmann, for editing the wrong manuscript, British Library MS Arundel 396, and apologized to the Society's members for the resulting “waste of some of their money.”<sup>27</sup> We can be so certain about Capgrave's language because all his writings except *Katherine* survive in autograph or

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<sup>24</sup> Nicholas Watson, “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409,” *Speculum* 70 (1995), 822–64.

<sup>25</sup> For classic studies of the Lollards, see Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) and Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hamledon Press, 1984). On the parallels Capgrave establishes, see Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, pp. 175–77.

<sup>26</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, pp. 168–74, and “Gynecocracy,” pp. 367–71.

<sup>27</sup> *The Life of St. Katharine of Alexandria*, p. xxiv.

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holograph manuscripts. The orthography of these manuscripts is remarkably consistent.<sup>28</sup> For example, Capgrave almost never uses the guttural “ght,” preferring instead “th”—thus, “rith” rather than “right,” and “lith” rather than “light.” Although the language of the Rawlinson manuscript is closest to Capgrave’s, its orthography — though clearly based on Capgrave’s — is extravagantly variegated, reflecting the idiosyncrasies of at least three different scribes.<sup>29</sup>

Since students might find the varied spellings of the same pronouns especially confusing (Middle English “hir,” “her,” and “here” are at various times used to designate modern English “her,” for example), I have normalized the pronouns in accordance with Capgrave’s own practices. Hence, in this edition, Modern English “her” is consistently written “hir,” Modern English “their” is written “her,” and Modern English “them” is written “hem.” The scribe of Rawlinson poet. 118 frequently writes “who” for Modern English “how.” Though Capgrave himself preferred “who,” I have for clarity transcribed “who” as “how” on the grounds that the “who” spelling does not represent a pronunciation different from the “how” spelling. To further facilitate comprehension, the second person pronoun, which is generally spelled “the” in Rawlinson poet. 118, is consistently spelled “thee” in this edition. Final “e” that is long and given full syllabic value is written “é.”

The Rawlinson manuscript is sloppily written but well preserved. However, it is missing several leaves (3.188–263, 4.1888–1963). I have supplied the missing text from Arundel 396. Following the policy of the Middle English Texts Series, I have spelled out all numerals; expanded all abbreviations; replaced thorn with *th* and yogh with *g*, *y*, or *gh*; and used the modern equivalent for *i/j* and *u/v*. I have emended what seem to be obvious errors in the manuscripts, documenting substantive alterations in the notes.

Punctuation and capitalization follow modern conventions. According to the policy of the Middle English Text Series, all pronouns and certain nouns (God, Lord, Son, Ghost, and a few others) referring to the Christian deity are capitalized; when designating Christ’s mother, “lady” is also capitalized.

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<sup>28</sup>See Lucas, “Toward a Standard Written English” and “Consistency and Correctness” (both reprinted in *From Author to Audience*).

<sup>29</sup>For a study of this manuscript and its scribes, see Lucas, “William Gybbe” (reprinted in *From Author to Audience*).

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# *The Life of Saint Katherine*

## *Prologue*

### *[The History of This Legend]*

	Jesu Cryst, crowne of maydenes alle,	
	A mayde bare Thee, a mayde gave Thee soke;	<i>bore; suckled you</i>
	Amongis the lilies that may not fade ne falle	<i>i.e., the saints</i>
	Thou ledyst these folk, ryth so seyth oure boke.	<i>lead; exactly; book</i>
5	With all her hert evyr on Thee thei loke;	
	Her love, her plesauns, so sore is on Thee sette	
	To sewe Thee, Lord, and folow thei can nott lette. <sup>1</sup>	
	Ryth thus be ordyr we wene Thou ledyst the daunce;	<i>Exactly; by; know; dance</i>
	Thi modir folowyth Thee next, as reson is,	
10	And aftir othir, thei goo rith as her chaunce	<i>their share</i>
	Is schap to hem of joye that may not mys.	<i>given; them; fail</i>
	But next that Lady above alle othir in blys	<i>i.e., the Virgin Mary</i>
	Folowyth this mayde weche we clepe Kateryne.	<i>call</i>
	Thus wene we, Lord, because that Thou and Thyne	<i>suppose</i>
15	Have gove to hir of grace so grete plenté	<i>given; her</i>
	That alle the privileges weche be in othir found	
	Ar sett in hir as in sovereyne hye degré,	<i>her</i>
	For in alle these rychely doth she habound.	<i>abound</i>
	Loke alle these seyntis that on this world so round	<i>Consider; saints</i>
20	Levyd here sumtyme, and in sum spyce or kynde,	<i>Lived; formerly; manner</i>
	Her vertues shal we in this same mayde fynde:	<i>Their</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 5–8: *They look to you with all their heart; / Their love, their joy, is so earnestly fixed on you, / Lord, that they cannot stop pursuing and following you*

*The Life of Saint Katherine*

- Thou gave to Jon, Lord, the grete evangelyst,  
 Thin owne presens whan he hens shuld wende;  
 That same presens, rithe evene as Thou lyste,  
 Thou gave this mayde at hir lyvys ende.  
 A welle of oyle eke Thou wold hir sende  
 Out of hir grave, as had Seynt Nycholas;  
 And for hir cleannessse Thou graunted hir that gras
- presence; go  
 just; wished  
 her  
 oil also  
 purity; grace
- Weche Seynt Poule had — mylke ryth at his throte  
 Ran out with bloode, men sey, in tokenyngis  
 That martyrdam and maydenhod ryth in o cote  
 Were medelede togydry. Thou, doutir onto the kyngis,  
 So had thou fully as these holy thingis.  
 To araye thi grave His aungellys eke Godd sent,  
 Ryth as He dyd sumtyme for Seynt Clement.
- identical (in one person)  
 mixed; daughter  
 also
- And as Seynt Margarete had hir petycyoun  
 At hir last ende graunted of Godd allmyth —  
 What maner man or woman that with devocyon  
 Askyth a bone of hir, he hath it ryth  
 As he wyl have, if he ask but ryth,  
 For ellis fayleth he, it is not to his behove<sup>1</sup> —  
 The same grace hast thow of Godd, thi love,
- almighty  
 favor; truly  
 correctly
- Purchasyd, lady, onto thi loveris alle. *Obtained*  
 Therfor wyl I thee serve so as I can  
 And make thi lyffe, that more openly it schalle  
 Be know abowte of woman and of man.  
 Ther was a preste, of flesch he was ful wan,  
 For grete labour he had in his lyve  
 To seke thi liffe yerys thyrtene and fyve.<sup>2</sup> *very pale*
- 40  
 45  
 50
- Yet at the last he found it, to his gret joye,  
 Fer up in Grece i-beryed in the grownde.  
 Was nevyr no knyth in Rome ne eke in Troye
- Far  
 knight; nor also

<sup>1</sup> For if he fails [to receive his request], it (what he asked for) is not for his profit

<sup>2</sup> To seek your life (biography) for eighteen years

## Prologue

- Mor glad of swerde or basnett bryght and rownde  
 Than was this preeste whan he had it fownde: *helmet bright*  
 55 He blyssed thee ofte, and seyd all his laboure  
 Was turned to solace, to joye and socowr. *you often  
relief*
- He mad thi lyff in Englysch tunge ful well,  
 But yet he deyed or he had fully doo. *very well  
died before; finished*  
 60 Thy passyon, lady, and all that scharp whele  
 He left behynd—it is yet for to doo;  
 And that he mad it is ful hard ther-too,  
 Ryth for straungenesse of his derk langage.  
 He is now ded, thu hast gove him his wage. *what he wrote is very hard to read  
obscure language  
given; reward*
- Now wyl I, lady, more openly make thi lyffe  
 65 Oute of his werk, if thu wylt help ther-too;  
 It schall be know of man, mayde, and of wyffe,  
 What thu hast suffrede and eke what thu hast doo. *done*  
 Pray Godd, oure Lorde, He wyll the dore on-doo,  
 Enspire oure wyttys with His pryvy grace *undo the door  
Inspire; special*  
 70 To preyse Him and thee that we may have space. *praise; capacity*
- Thys preeste of whom I spake not longe ere  
 In his prologue telleth all his desyre,  
 How that he travayled many a londe to lere  
 The byrth, the cuntré, the langage, of this martyre, *traveled [through]; learn*  
 75 Who was hir modyr and eke who was hir syre;  
 Aboute this mater he laboured yerys eytene *country; martyr*  
 With prayere, fastyng, cold and mekyll tene. *father  
eighteen years  
great hardship*
- So at the last had he a revelacyoun  
 All mysty and derk, hyd all undyr clowde.  
 80 He thowte he sey tho in his avysyoun  
 A person honest, clothed in precyous schrowde,  
 Whech evyr cryed upon the preest ful lowde:  
 “Beholde,” he seyth, “thu man, what that I am,  
 What thyng I schew, and eke why I cam.” *thought; saw; then; vision  
respectable; fine vestments  
loudly  
reveal*
- 85 For in his hand he held a boke ful elde,  
 With bredys rotyn, levys dusty and rent; *old  
covers; pages; torn*

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- And evyr he cryed upon the preest, “Behelde!  
Here is thi labour, here is all thin entente.  
I wote ful welle what thu hast sowte and ment;  
90 Ope thi mouth, this book muste thu ete;  
But if thu doo, thi wyll schall thu not gete.”
- know; sought and intended  
Open  
unless
- “A, mercy, lorde!” seyd this preeste to him.  
“Spare me now! Who schulde I this book ete?  
The roten bredys, these levys derk and dyme,  
95 I may in noo wyse into my mouth hem gete:  
My mouth is small and eke thei be so grete,  
Thei wyll brek my chaules and my throte —  
This mete to me is lykly to do noo note.”
- How  
covers; pages  
way; them  
jaws  
food; good
- “Yys,” seyd he, “thu mote nedē ete this book —  
100 Thu schalt ellys repente. Ope thi mowth wyde,  
Receyve it boldly — it hath no clospe ne hook.  
Let it goo down and in thi wombe it hyde;  
It schal not greve thee neyther in bak ne syde;  
In thi mowth bytter, in thi wombe it wyll be swete,  
105 So was it sumetyme to Ezechyell the prophete.”
- must  
otherwise  
harm; back  
As; formerly
- The preeste tho toke it into his mowth anon;  
It semed swete, ryth as it hony were.  
The other man is passed and i-gon;  
110 The preest is stoyned as thow he turned were.  
New joye, new thowte, had he than there.  
He awoke and was ful glad and blythe;  
Of this dreme he blyssyd God ofte sythe.
- then; at once  
as if it were honey  
astonished; though; demented  
ideas  
often since (many times)
- Aftyr this not long, depe in a felde,  
I-clad wyth flowres and herbys grete and smale,  
115 He dalf and fond this boke whych he behelde  
Before in slepe, ryght as I told my tale.  
There had he salve to all his byttyr bale.  
It was leyd there be a knyte that men calle  
Amylion fytz Amarak, of Cristen knytes alle
- plants  
dug  
suffering  
laid; knight  
son of

Prologue

- 120 Most devoute as onto this mayde.  
 He fond it among old tresoure in Cipire-londe. *Cyprus*  
 In Kyng Petris tyme, as the cronycle sayde,  
 Of that same Cipre where he this boke fond  
 And in Pope Urban tyme, as I undyrstond,  
*Cyprus*  
 125 The fyfte of Rome, fell all this matere *i.e., Urban V; happened*  
 Wheche ye have herd and yet ye schall more clere.
- There was a clerk with this same Kateryne  
 Whos name we clepe in Latyne Athanas; *call; Athanasius*  
 He tawte hir the reules, as he cowde dyvyne,  
 Of God of hevyn, of joye, and of grace,  
 130 And sche him also, for be hir he was *as he could understand them*  
 I-turnyd onto Crist and to oure feythe;  
 He was hir leder, as the story seythe. *by her*
- He wrote the lyfe eke of this same mayde;  
 135 He was with hir at hir last ende,  
 He say hir martyryd, as himselfe sayde. *saw*  
 He mote nede have hir lyfe in mynde — *must certainly*  
 He was a servaunt onto hir ryth kynde. *true nature*  
 What schuld I lenger in his preysyng tary? *spend more time praising him*  
 140 He was hir chauncelere and hir secretary.
- He gate hir maisterys thorowowte the partes *got; teachers*  
 Of all grete Grece, hir fadyres empyre,  
 To lerne hir be rowe all the sevene artes; *teach her in order*  
 This same man payd hem all her hire, *them; their salaries*  
 145 He was as in that courte fully lord and syre.  
 He knew hir kynne and hir counsell also, *family; advisers*  
 Hir fadyr, hir modyr, and all the line therto;
- Hir holy life he knew, hir conversacioun, *habits*  
 All hir holy customys wyll sche levyd here. *while*  
 150 He stode be hir in hir grete passioun. *by*  
 He say the aungelis, how thei hir body bere *saw; how*  
 Fer up into Synay and leyde it down there; *Far; Mount Sinai*  
 He saw the venjauns, eke, how it was take *vengeance, also*  
 On many a thousand eke for hir deth sake;

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- 155 He sey eke Maxense, how he was slain,  
 Dropped from a bregge down in a revere,  
 Deyd so ful sodeynly in ful bytter Payne,  
 Forthe was he draw into hell-feere —  
 Aungellys bare hir, the develys bare hys beere.  
 saw  
 bridge; river
- 160 Behold the sundry reward of vertu and of syne:  
 On is in hevene, the other is hell withinne.  
 fire  
 bore; bier  
 different  
 One
- Long aftyr the deth of this Maxencyus,  
 Byschop in Alysaunder, Katerynes cité,  
 Was this sam man, this Athanasius,  
 165 In whech he suffred ful mech adversyté.  
 I wot not veryly yef it were he  
 That made the psalme whech we clepe the crede,  
 Whech we at pryme oft-tyme syng and rede.  
 much  
 know; if  
 call  
 read
- 170 He deyd evyn there an holy confessoure,  
 And aftyr his deth myth unneth be knowe  
 The lyvynge, the lernyng, of this swete flowre  
 And martyr Kateryne, of hy ne of lowe  
 Tyl on Arrek dyd it new i-sowe,  
 For owt of Grew he hath it fyrst runge,  
 175 This holy lyff, into Latyne tunge.  
 right there  
 might hardly  
 i.e., of any class  
 Until a certain man Arrek sowed it anew  
 Greek; i.e., translated
- This clerk herd speke oft-tyme of this mayde,  
 Bothe of hir lyffe and also of hir heende,  
 How sche for lofe hir lyffe hath thus layde  
 Of oure Lorde Cryste, oure gostly spouse kende.  
 180 This made him sekere into that londe to wende,  
 To know of this bothe the spryng and the welle,  
 If any man coude it any pleynere telle.  
 i.e., the priest  
 end (death)  
 our dear heavenly spouse  
 determined; travel
- Twelve yere in that londe he dwelt and more,  
 To know her langage, what it myght mene,  
 185 Tyl he of her usages had fully the lore  
 With ful mech stody, tary, and tene.  
 Ful longe it was or he myght it sene,  
 The lyff that Athanas made of this mayde;  
 But at the last he cam, as it is sayde,  
 fully understood  
 much; time; hardship  
 before; might see  
 Athanasius

## Prologue

- 190 Ther as he fonde it from mynde all i-ded,  
 For heretykys that were thoo in that londe  
 Had brent the bokys, bothe the leffe and the brede,  
 As many as thei soute and that tyme fonde;  
 But, blyssyd be Godd of His hye sonde,  
 195 This boke founde thei not in no manere wyse —  
 Godd wolde not that the nobyll servyse  
 Of His owne mayde schulde be thus forgete.  
 A hundred yere aftyr it was and more  
 That this Arrek this new werk had gete  
 200 Fro the tyme of Athanas, for so mech before  
 Was he hens pased, i-ded and forlore  
 As from every tung, bothe his boke and he,  
 Of every man and woman in that cuntré.
- And be this preste was it onto Englischmen  
 205 I-soute and founde and broute unto londe,  
 Hyd in all counseyll among nyne or ten.  
 It cam but seldom onto any mannes honde;  
 Eke whan it cam it was noght undyrstonde  
 Because, as I seyd, ryght for the derk langage.  
 210 Thus was thi lyffe, lady, kept all in cage.<sup>1</sup>
- Nevyrthelasse he dyd mych thyng ther-too,  
 This noble preste, this very good man:  
 He hath led us the wey and the doore on-doo,  
 That mech the bettyr we may and we can  
 215 Folow his steppes. For thow he sore rane  
 We may him ovyrtake, with help and with grace  
 Whech that this lady schall us purchass.
- He is now ded, this goodeman, this preste;  
 He deyd at Lynne many yere agoo;  
 220 He is ny from mynde with more and with leeste;  
 Yet in his deying and in his grett woo
- i.e., out of circulation  
 heretics; then  
 burned; pages and covers  
 sought  
 through His high decree  
 way*
- Athanasius; so long ago  
 dead and forgotten  
 country*
- Known only by nine or ten people  
 obscure  
 accomplished much  
 though he ran hard  
 nearly forgotten by everyone  
 as he was dying*

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<sup>1</sup> *Thus the [story of] your life was kept locked up (little known)*

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This lady, as thei sey, appered him unto: *i.e., Katherine*  
Sche bad him be gladde in most goodely wyse; *manner*  
Sche wolde reward him, sche sayd, his servyse.

225 Of the west cuntré it semeth that he was *manner of speech*  
Be his maner spech and be his style;  
He was sumtyme parsone of Sent Pancras  
In the cité of London a full grete whyle.

He is now above us ful many a myle;  
230 He be a mene to Kateryne for us, *intermediary*  
And sche for us alle onto oure Lorde Jhesus.

Aftyr him nexte I take upon me  
To translate this story and set it more pleyne, *write it more clearly*  
Trostynge on other men that her charyté  
235 Schall help me in this caas to wryght and to seyne.  
Godd send me part of that hevynly reyne  
That Apollo bare abowte, and eke Sent Poule; *Apollo bore*  
It maketh vertu to growe in mannes soule.

If ye wyll wete what that I am, *wish to know who*  
240 My cuntré is Northfolke, of the town of Lynne;  
Owt of the world to my profyte I cam  
Onto the brotherhode whech I am inne.  
Godd geve me grace nevyr for to blynne  
To folow the steppes of my faderes before,  
245 Whech to the rewle of Austen were swore. *Augustinian Rule*

Thus endyth the prolege of this holy mayde.  
Ye that rede it pray for hem alle *read*  
That to this werk eythere travayled or payde, *either worked on or paid for*  
That from her synnes with grace thei may falle  
250 To be redy to Godd whan He wyll calle  
With Him in hevyn to drynke and to dyne,  
Thorow the prayere of this mayde Kateryne.

## Book 1

*[Katherine's birth, education, ancestry, and coronation]*

### Chapter 1

- Sumetyme there was a grete kyng in Grees,  
Of Surré and Cypre bothe lord and syre,  
As clerkes tel us in elde storyes.  
All thyng was rewlyd at his desyre,  
5 He governed full sadly that ilk empire:  
Costus men called this kyng thoo be name.  
A losyd lorde was he and of ful grete fame,  
  
A lombe to the meke, a leoun to the prowde,  
Thus was he noted, if ye lyst to lere.  
10 He was so wel i-know bothe styl and lowde,  
All dede him homage bothe fer and nere:  
Kyng, duke, erle, baron, and bachilere,  
For her behove to his presens soute  
And to his help eke whan hem nedyd oute.  
  
15 Many yldes longed thoo onto his grete lande  
And alle were thei buxum at his request.  
The grete see holy had he in his hande  
And all the havenes both est and west —  
He welded hem alle ryth as him lest.  
20 Were thei marchauntis, were thei marinoris,  
Alle were thei than to him as omageris.  
  
This kyng in pees regned many yeres,  
And because he was fayre and strong of bones  
He was wele beloved of all his omageres;  
25 A noble man, thei sayde, he was for the nones,
- Syria; Cyprus  
soberly; same  
respected  
  
lamb; meek; lion  
desire to learn [about him]  
  
far  
  
profit; presence; sought  
anything  
  
islands belonged  
they all obeyed his commands  
sea entirely under his control  
harbors  
ruled them all just as he pleased  
sailors  
subjects  
  
peace  
subjects  
for the occasion

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	Gracious in feld, peisible in wones, <sup>1</sup> Fre of his speche, large of his expens, Ful gladly with peynes wold he dispens.	Well-spoken; generous dispense with punishments
30	Was no lorde besyde that him wold do wrake For what man that dede he shuld it sone wayle Whan that he gan venjaunce to take — Preyer as than wold not avayle. To many a kyngdom made he asayle And many a castell beet he ryth down 35 Whan thei to his lawes wold not be bown.	harm soon regret began vengeance attacked bound
40	A goode man was he, this is the grounde: Meke as a mayde, manful at nede, Stable and stedfast evyrmore i-founde; Strong man of hand, douty man of dede, Helper of hem that to him hade nede; Wrong thinges tho wroute he nevere, 45 Petous of spiryt and mercyful was he evere.	reason Meek valiant needed him did Compassionate
45	Pees wold he put debate evyr above; That vertu cleymyd he only to himselfe. Alle his noble werkys onto pees and love Were mad as mete as ex onto helve. <i>suited to each other as an axe to its handle</i> Among all the lordes that men dyd thoo delve He was most worthy and eke most wys. Synne hated he hertly, harlatrye and vyis.	Peace claimed peace study <i>Sin; heartily, harlotry and vice</i>
50	Ful grete pyté onto oure thowt it is That swech a trew man schuld hethen be, But rith thus wrote thei that were ful wys: Oute of the harde thorn brymbyl-tree Growyth the fresch rose, as men may see; 55 So spong oure Lady oute of the Jewys And Kateryne of hethen, this tale ful trew is.	<i>we think it is</i> such <i>i.e., the Virgin Mary</i>

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<sup>1</sup> Honorable on the battlefield, a peacemaker at home

Book I

## Chapter 2

	Too cytes had this kyng among all othere Largest and grettest above hem alle: The on cost of gold ful many a fothere Or he had made it with toure and with walle; The other was made, as bokes sey alle, A full longe tyme er he was bore, In whech all kynges thoo crowned wore.	<i>cities</i> <i>one; a great amount</i> <i>Before</i> <i>before</i> <i>were</i>
60		
65	The fyrst hyth Amaleck; in Cypre it stant. The other hyth Alysaunder; in Egypt it is. The same lond of Cypre nothyng doth want, But is ful of plenté and full of blys, Of gold, sylvyr, frute, and men, iwys;	<i>is called</i> <i>Alexandria</i> <i>lack</i> <i>indeed</i>
70	A grete lond, closyd with the see abowte, On the northwest syde of Surre, it is no doute.	<i>surrounded by the sea</i> <i>Syria</i>
75	Therfore this kyng, ryght as for a keye Of all his kyngdame, set his town there; Who come to Surre mote come that weye. There may no shypp this cours forbere, Were it in pees or ellis in were.	<i>(see note)</i> <i>must</i> <i>avoid this route</i> <i>Either in peace or in war</i> <i>harbor</i>
80	It had a havene ful huge and ful grete, And castelle strong with turrettis feete, Open onto marchauntis, to alle that wille come. Because hir fredomys were large and fayre, Both oute of hethnes and of Cristyndome,	<i>pretty</i>  <i>(see note)</i>
85	It was a place of ful grete repayre. Undir him there the kyng made a mayere To kepe his lawes; thei shuld not fayle Too stuf it with men and eke with vytayle.	<i>a popular destination</i> <i>mayor</i>  <i>provision it; also; victuals</i>
	Thus myght this lord from Alisaunder ryde (In schyppes I mene) to this grete cité, And evyr on his owe lordchippe abyde; For on alle cuntres principale lorde was he, Were it of felde, of town, or of see,	<i>Alexandria</i>  <i>without leaving his own realm</i>

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 90  | Whech stode betwyx the grete cytes too.<br>All was it do there as he bad it doo.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Everything was done as he commanded</i>                                     |
| 95  | The other cyté, Alysaundre be name,<br>On the bordyre of Egypt it stant ful fayre;<br>A gret place, a large, and of hye fame.<br>Thei of Egypt mote nedys repayre<br>Onto this cyté, thorow wey and thorow wayre,<br>If thei to Affryk or to Cartage goo;<br>And thei of Affryk the same mote alsoo,                                     | <i>lofty</i><br><i>must necessarily go by road and by river</i>                |
| 100 | If thei in Egypete wyll bye or selle.<br>Thedyr was Seynt Mark the evangelyste<br>Sent be Seynt Petyr there for to dwelle,<br>To preche hem the gospell of oure lord Cryste.<br>He prechyd so there that hem alle twyst<br>Fro all her maumentrye and fals beleve;                                                                       | <i>There</i><br><i>turned</i><br><i>heathen practices</i>                      |
| 105 | He mad hem in Cryst for to beleve.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                |
| 110 | He that wyll know this more plat and pleyn,<br>Rede Philo, in his book whech he dyd calle<br><i>De vita theorica</i> . There schall he seyn<br>That thorowoute the cyté, in towre and in walle,<br>It was thoo fulfyllyd with hermytes alle,<br>Monkys and prestys and swech holy men,<br>Here thirty, here twenty, here nyne, here ten. | <i>clearly</i><br><i>Read</i><br><i>see</i>                                    |
| 115 | The cuntré all abowte was full of these men,<br>And ful of martires, ful of confessoures,<br>Of maydenes, wydowys, and chast women:<br>Who coude noumbyr all the fayre floures<br>That growe in the mede aftyr swete schowres,<br>Than myght he noumbyr hem, I trow not he may.<br>There were thei putte in ful scharp asay,             | <i>Monks; other such</i>                                                       |
| 120 | These vessels of gold, martires I mene,<br>With fyre and with yryng i-slayn and i-brent,<br>In furnes of sorowe were thei mad clene;<br>Was non that scaped but or that he went                                                                                                                                                          | <i>iron slain and burned</i><br><i>furnace</i><br><i>escaped unless before</i> |

Book 1

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 125 | He schuld be dede or turn his entent.<br>There was the fyrist exercyse of dyvyn scole,<br>Whech is a scyens that longith to noo fole,                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>i.e., renounce his faith</i><br><i>discipline; is mastered by; fool</i>                                                                     |
| 130 | For on Pathenus, as seyth oure book,<br>Full many a yere red there with besy entent,<br>And aftyr him Clement the scole up toke;<br>Orygene was the thirde aftyr that Clement<br>(Not Clement of Rome but another that us lent<br>Many a good coment and many a holy exhortacioun,<br>Most specyali in that book whech is called <i>Stromatum</i> ). | <i>a certain Pantaenus</i>                                                                                                                     |
| 135 | Thys same Alysaundre whech I spak of now<br>Was large, ryche, ful of purle eke,<br>For that fame every man thedyr drew.<br>Every knyght and marchaunt gune it than seke;<br>Thei thowt it was enow, whan thei schuld speke,<br>A kyng to be lorde ovyr thys alone,<br>Thow he had not ellys longyng to his trone.                                    | <i>people</i><br><i>drew every man there</i><br><i>did; seek</i><br><i>enough</i><br><i>no other lands in his realm</i>                        |
| 140 | Eke for the grete welth that was in that wonis,<br>Thei called her kyng none other name:<br>“Kyng of Alysaundyr,” thei seyd, “alone he is.<br>He is a lord; he is worthy swech fame.<br>Mote every tunge be doum and every kné lame<br>That oure noble lord neyther love ne drede;<br>And thei that do it, well mote thei spedē.”                    | <i>property</i><br><i>their</i><br><i>of such</i><br><i>May; dumb</i><br><i>i.e., honor him; prosper</i>                                       |
| 145 | Too hundred and fourty yere aftyr Crystys byrth<br>Was even and no more to these kynges dayes.<br>He levyth thus in joye and in mekyll myrth,<br>And honoured swech goddes as longed to his layes.<br>Or he wan his land he had scharp asayes,<br>But to othir thing we wyl go now pleyn<br>To telle forth oure tale as the cronycles seyn.          | <i>equal</i><br><i>lived; great happiness</i><br><i>belonged to his faith</i><br><i>won; vigorous attacks</i><br><i>directly</i><br><i>say</i> |

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**Chapter 3**

- 155 Almyty God that althing makyth growe  
 Doth many more merveyles than we can cast,  
 For whosoevr men heryn or ellis sowe,  
 It is sumtyme fyrst we wene shuld be last.  
 Oure witte onto His witte is but a gnast;  
 160 It mote nede be thus whan He wil have it so —  
 All His wyll only mote nede be do.
- Whan thyng is ferthest from oure opynyon,  
 Than werkynth He His wondres ryth at his wyll.  
 Beholde now the spedē and the savacyon  
 165 Of the chyldryn of Israel; God wold hem not spylle  
 But to kepe hem in daunger and miserye stille,  
 In whech thei were falle only for synne.  
 He halpe hem owte whan that thei cowde blynne;
- If He had sonere holp hem, thei myth a went  
 170 It had not be Goddes myght but her owne dede.  
 Therfor chaunged He all her entent:  
 He wold not help hem tyl that thei had nede.  
 Whan thei were in dyspeyre and myght noght spedē,  
 Than sent He His help and His socoure.  
 175 Thus doth oure Lord; thus doth oure Savyoure.
- Ryght in this wyse wroot oure Lorde here:  
 He wold send a chyld ful onlych to other  
 To these elde folk whech lyved all in dwere  
 To hafe any chyld, most specyaly the modyr.  
 180 The kyng had levere than of gold a fothyr  
 He myght be sekyr of wych a new chaunce.  
 Zacharye and Elysabethe stode in this traunce.
- So dede Abraham with Sarra, his wyff;  
 Sche conceyvyd not tyll sche was in age.  
 185 Joachym and Anne had the same lyff —  
 Maryes forth-bryngers — and the same wage.  
 God can ful well make of swech a rage
- imagine  
 however; heed; follow  
 suppose  
 compared to; spark  
 must necessarily
- prosperity; salvation  
 them; abandon  
 sin  
 might have perished
- have supposed  
 minds  
 despair; prosper  
 relief
- did  
 unlike any other  
 doubt
- rather; large amount  
 certain  
 predicament
- elderly  
 reward  
 torrent

*Book 1*

A ful fayre floode; blessed mote He be.  
So Kateryne is not alone in this degré,

*river; must*

- 190 For God to Himselfe this mayden had i-chose  
As for His owyn spouse and for His wyffe dere.  
Of swech speke all Crysten, as I suppose,  
“God send us part of his good prayere!  
Of all save on sche is Him most nere;  
195 Sche may, and sche can, and sche wyl alsoo  
Pray to oure Lord that we may cume Him too.”

*i.e., the Virgin Mary*

**Chapter 4**

Whan Godd, oure Lord, wold the seson schuld be  
That this fayre lady to lyth schuld be born,  
He ordeynd and sett it in swech a degré  
200 That of too folkes whech lustes had lorne  
Schuld this mayde spryng, as rose oute of thorne.  
This world wondred that this thing myght be soo,  
How so elde a lady with chyld schuld now goo.

*light*

*arranged*

*had lost their passion*

- Many a man and woman at this thyng low.  
205 Summe of hem sayd, “It is but a lye.  
The kyng is ful febilly, the qween ful eld now.  
Schal sche now grone? Schal sche now crye?  
Schal sche in this age in chyldebede lye?  
This thyng is not lykly!” Thus seyd thei alle,  
210 Ladyes in the chaumbyr and lordys in the halle.

*laughed*

- But the tyme is come: Sche begynnyth to grone,  
Cryeth, and wayleth, as do alle women,  
For of that penaunce was Mary alone  
Excused, and no moo, thus oure bokes ken,  
215 Whech that were writyn of ful holy men.  
Kateryne thei named that fayre mayd yinge.  
Hir fader men called Costus the kyng.

*no others; make known*

*young*

Hir moder, thei seyd, sche hyght Meliades;  
The kynges dowter sche was of Ermenye.

*was called*

*daughter; Armenia*

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- 220 Of bewté sche had prys in every prees  
 Thorowowte the londe of alle Sarcynrye.  
 Me lyst not in hir preysyng lengere to tarye:  
 Sche was full fayre and full goode eke;  
 It is schewyd in hir dowter, that men now seke
- beauty; stood out in every crowd  
 Saracens  
 wish; longer in her praise to tarry  
 daughter; seek
- 225 To be her help in myschefe and in nede.  
 But whan thre dayes were pased and i-gon,  
 This chyld for to hylle, to lulle, and to lede  
 Too worthy ladyes were ordeynd anon.  
 And not only thei to travayle there alone,
- their; trouble  
 clothe; rock; supervise  
 Two; appointed at once
- 230 But of other women a ful grete rowte,  
 Ryght for this cause: to bere it abowte,
- staff (company)
- To kepe it, to wasche it, and for to clothe;  
 To lyft it, to lull it, and to fede it eke;  
 To bathe it, to wyp it, and to rokke it bothe.
- it (the child)
- 235 Thei had her labour newly be the weke;  
 Thus is it kept, it schuld not be seke.  
 The kyng had of it a comfort ful hye;  
 The qwen coude not ther-fro kepe now her hye.
- They had their new duties every week  
 sick  
 took great joy  
 take her eyes off [the child]
- 240 Thus was it norched, this nobyl goodly chylde,  
 This gracious lady, tyll sche cowde goo.  
 Sche was fro hir byrth bothe meke and mylde.  
 Mercy fro the tetys grew with hir alsoo  
 And lested with hir all hir lyffe ther-too.
- nurtured  
 walk  
 meek  
 teats  
 lasted all her life
- 245 Sche was ful sone plesyd whan sche made mone;  
 No wondyr it is: thei hafe but hir alone.
- quickly gratified; cried

**Chapter 5**

- Thus provyd this princesse evyre more and more.
- 250 Sche was set to book and began to lere  
 All the letteres that were leyd hir before,  
 For of all the scoleris that are now or were  
 Sche is hem above; for neyther love ne feere  
 Mad hir to stynt whan sche began to ken  
 The lettyres and the wordys that sche spelled then.
- matured  
 learn  
 stop; learn

Book 1

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 255 | Sche had maystyres fro ferre that were full wyse<br>To teche hir of rethoryk and gramere the scole;<br>The cases, the noumbres, and swych manere gyse;<br>The modes, the verbes, wech long to no fole.<br>Sche lerned hem swetly, withoute any dole,<br>Bothe the fygures and the consequence,<br>The declynacyons, the persones, the modes, the tens.   | <i>from far away<br/>knowledge<br/>information<br/>which can be mastered by no fool<br/>grief<br/>forms; logic<br/>declensions; moods; tenses</i> |
| 260 | Among all othir, a wyse man there was<br>And ful sad therto; he was hir chauncelere.<br>Men called him be name Mayster Athanas.<br>He was survyoure to all that there were,<br>And, as I seyd ere, he payed her hyere.<br>He was an hye clerk and a sovereyne.<br>All the seven artes coude he ful pleyne,                                               | <i>serious at that; chancellor<br/>supervisor<br/>salaries<br/>high and distinguished scholar<br/>knew; clearly</i>                               |
| 265 | And ovyre this lady was his most cure<br>That sche schuld be occupied all the long day<br>In doctrine and stodye, save in mesure:<br>Sumtyme among had sche hir play;<br>Sumtyme to hir mayster wold sche sey nay —<br>Whan he bad hir play, sche wold sit stylle.<br>To stody and goodenes inclined was hir wylle.                                      | <i>concern<br/>but in moderation</i>                                                                                                              |
| 270 | Sche lerned the Greke, sche lernyd the Latyn tung.<br>Sche lerned of nature the pryyv weys alle<br>That ony philosophyre be his doctrine had runge.<br>Sche knew the effectis as thei schuld falle<br>Of all the bodyes whech we the planetes calle.<br>This was thorow besynes of Athanas the clerk,<br>Whech tended onto hir and set hir thus on werk. | <i>all the secrets<br/>wrung [from nature]</i>                                                                                                    |
| 275 | God of His grace, as seyth the story,<br>Agens alle heretykys that reygned thoo there<br>Wold all His conquest and His victory<br>Schuld be arered only be hir.                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>through the efforts<br/>supervised her studies</i>                                                                                             |
| 280 | Therfor lern sore, thou yong Goddys scolere:<br>Thu schall ovyrcome heresye and blasphemey<br>Thorowowte all Grek, thorowowte all thi reme.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>against; at the time<br/>accomplished<br/>earnestly; scholar of God</i>                                                                        |
| 285 | Greece; realm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                   |

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- 290 Ryght as be twelve ydyotes, seynt Austyn seith  
 (He meneth the Apostoles, for thei not lerned were), *illiterate men*  
 Thorowowte the word was sowyn oure feyth *world*  
 That every man may know and every man lere,  
 Godd wold not wynn us with wysdam ne fere *fear*  
 But with holy boystysnesse, if I schuld sey soo. *simplicity (humility)*  
 Ryght thus, as me thinkyth, in this caas hath He doo,
- 295 For whan that His chyrch was at gret neede  
 He ordeynd this lady for to geve batayle *do battle*  
 Ageyn all the word; thei schall hir not ovyre lede, *Against; world; overcome*  
 Ne alle her argumentis schal not avayle. *their*  
 Sche schal so be lerned that all her asayle *attacks*  
 300 Schall fayl and falle bothe cunnyng and bost. *boast*  
 Sche schall be myty with strength of Goost. *mighty; Holy Spirit*

**Chapter 6**

- 305 Hir fader, that sche schuld lern these artes alle, *so that*  
 This nobyll lady, his owyn douter dere,  
 Ded mak a paleyse large and ryalle *royal*  
 In whech he wold that sche schuld lere. *desired*  
 Bothe knytes and clerkes, all dwelt thei there  
 Whech were ordeynd to hir owyn servyse.  
 Now to make hir rest, now for to make hir ryse,
- 310 And eke new norture to tell hir and to teche, *lessons*  
 Many maysteres therfore thethyr were fett. *fetched*  
 As fer as her cunnyng myght strech and reche,  
 Thei lerned this lady withowte any lett. *taught; impediment*  
 Alle her wyttys were only on hir sett.  
 Ye may well suppose in youre owne dome, *their*  
 315 Evyr as sche grew, the grettere mayster come. *judgment*
- 320 Her stodyes there full craftily were i-pyght *furnished*  
 With deskys and chayeres and mech othir gere, *chairs; gear*  
 Arayed on the best wyse, and glased full bryght. *well-lighted*  
 Every faculté be himselfe, for thei of gramere were *discipline by itself*  
 Sett on the west syde, and eke thei that lere *study*

*Book I*

- Astronomye on the est, ryght for thei schuld loke  
Sumtyme on the hevyn, sumtyme on her boke. look  
book
- 325 All the other artes betwyx hem stode arowe,  
Ryght aftyr her age and aftyr her dgnyté. in their place  
according to  
Every man that cam there myght well i-knowe  
Whech was worthyere and hyer of degré.  
Hir fadyr the kyng seldom wold hir se:  
Onto these clerkes he hath hir thus take  
As thow he had hir only now newly forsake; teachers; he turned her over
- 330 For lettyng of hir lernyng dyd he than soo.  
Sche wex fast in body and lerned eke sore.  
Whan o mayster was goo, another cam hir too.  
Thus chaungyng of maystirys and eke of lore  
Had this noble mayde. Sche lerned mych the more. To avoid hindering  
grew; fervently  
one scholar went  
learning
- 335 Ye may wete nature lovyth variaunce:  
Sumtyme men stody; sumtyme thei daunce. know  
dance
- 340 The kyng dyd make there for hir alone  
A paleyse wallyd ryght on the sowth syde,  
Open to the sune there was hir trone — throne  
There is no swych now in this worde wyde. nothing like it; world  
It was made for Kateryne there to abyde  
Whan sche wold stody be hirselfe sole. alone  
In the grete garden was most hir scole.
- 345 It was fer awey fro every manere wyght.  
It was made and ordeynd at hir owyn devyse. person  
design  
There wold sche ly sumtyme, stody and wryght. write  
It was sett full of trees, and that in straunge wyse. uncommon  
There wold sche sytte, and there wold sche rise;  
There was hir walkyng and all hir dysporte. leisure  
350 Solitary lyf to stodyers is comfort. “studiers”
- Sche bare the key of this gardeyn — there had it no moo.  
Whan sche went in, sche schett it full fast. no one else had it  
shut it securely  
It was speryd ful treuly went sche to or froo,  
For of many thynges was sche sore agast fastened securely  
dismayed

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- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                      |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 355 | But most of inquietude. Stody may not last<br>With werdly besynesse, ne with his cure:<br>The olde wyse sey thus, I yow ensure.                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>worldly occupation; its care</i><br><i>wise ones</i>                              |
| 360 | The walles and the toures were made nye so hye,<br>Ful covertly with arches and sotelly i-cast;<br>There myght not come in but foule that doth flye.<br>The gatis, as I seyd, were schett full fast<br>And evyr more hirselfe wold be the last.<br>The key eke sche bare, for sche wolde soo.<br>Thus lyved this lady in hir stody thoo. | <i>nearly</i><br><i>artfully; cleverly engineered</i><br><i>birds</i><br><i>then</i> |

## Chapter 7

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                   |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 365 | Sche lerned than the liberall artes seven.<br>Gramere is the fyrist and the most lyth;<br>He tellyth the weye full fayre and full even,<br>How men schall speke, and how thei schall wryte.<br>Retoryk, the secunde, is sett in this plyte:<br>He doth ny the same, save that he arayeth<br>His maters with colourys and with termes dysplayeth. | <i>enjoyable</i><br><i>exactly</i><br><i>can be described thus</i><br><i>nearly</i>                               |
| 370 | The thyrde sciens calle thei dialetyk:<br>He lerneth men within a lythyll throwe;<br>If he be stodied there is non to him lyke<br>The trewth fro the falshed that techeth for to know. <sup>1</sup><br>Aftyr him than folowyth ryght be rowe<br>Arsmetryk, in whech the cunnyng so stant<br>Nowmbres schall thu know, thu schall not want.       | <i>discipline; dialectic</i><br><i>while</i><br><i>in order</i><br><i>Arithmetic; is such that</i><br><i>lack</i> |
| 375 | Thei tawt hir also the scyens of musyk;<br>Ful wel grownded was sche in this melodye.<br>Sche had a maystir — there was none him lyke —<br>He departyd this scyens in thre, withouten lye:<br>Into metyr, to ryme, and to armonye                                                                                                                | <i>taught; discipline</i><br><i>divided</i><br><i>harmony</i>                                                     |
| 380 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                   |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 374–75: *If it be studied, there is nothing like / Dialectic for teaching one the difference between right and wrong*

Book I

- 385 (Armonye is in voyse, in smytyng or wynde;  
Symphonye and euphonye arn of his kynde). *striking [of musical instruments]  
are*
- In geometrye was this lady lernyd also,  
In Euclidis bokys with his portraturye.  
That is a sciens mech stody longeth ther-too,  
For to know the letterys and the figures. *figures  
it requires much study*
- 390 If I speke therof I schal make forfetures  
Ageyn this sciens — I can not of that arte  
But swech as he can that makyth a carte!<sup>1</sup> *errors  
know*
- In astronomye this lady eke so hye steye  
Sche know the strenght and the stondyng styllle  
Of alle the planetis that regnen upon hey,  
Whech are of goode wyll and whech are of ille,  
Whech wyll help a mater and whech will it spille,  
And these she lernyd both more and lesse.  
Sche mowled not, I trow, in no ydylnes.<sup>2</sup> *i.e., is so learned  
position  
reign on high  
ruin*
- 400 Thus for hir lernyng had sche swech fame  
That hir fader dede gader thorowoute the land  
All the grete clerkys that were of any name *reputation*  
Ryth to this entent, as I undirstande:  
To wete yf his doutir dare take it unhand  
405 To be apposyd of so many wyse men.  
Thei were gadred in that place thre hundred and ten:
- Eche of hem schall now do all his myght  
To schew his cunnyng; if any straunge thyng *uncommon*  
Hath he lernyd his lyve, he wyll now ful ryght
- 410 Uttyr hit, for his name therby schall spryng.  
But there was ryght nowt but Kateryn the yyng  
Undyrstod all thyng and answerd ther-too;  
Her problemes all sche hath sone ondoo. *reputation; grow  
no one; young  
soon solved*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 391–92: *I know no more [geometry] than a cart-maker*

<sup>2</sup> *No moss grew on her, I believe, on account of idleness*

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415     “O good Godd,” seyd these clerkes thane,  
 “This mayd hath lerned more thyng in hir lyve  
 Than we supposyd, for more than we sche can.  
 We wondyr how sche may oure argumentis dryve  
 For hir conclusyoun now; in yerys fyve  
 Cune we not lerne that sche doth in one.”

420     Thus seyd these wysmen be row everychon.

*she knows more than we do*

*each one in turn*

Thei tok than her leve at the kyng alle;  
 Home to her cuntré, certeyn, will thei goo.  
 “This mayd, youre doghtyr, lord,” thei seyd, “ sche schall  
 Be a wondyr woman, and sche may leve ther-too.”

425     Of us nedyth sche noght; we hafe not here to doo.  
 Sche can that we can, and therto mech more.”

Thus seyd thei, certeyn, the wyse that there wore.

*took leave of*

*if she lives*

*nothing to do here*

*knows what we know*

*wise men; were*

Thys noble kyng hath reward hem full weele,  
 Gove hem grete gyftys and grete liberté —  
 430     Lordes dede so thanne; clerkes had every deel,  
 All that thei spent, of the liberalyté  
 And of the bountynesse of swech lordes fre.  
 Thus are thei rewardyd and home everychoone,  
 And Kateryne in stody is left thus alone.

*bit*

*generosity; liberal*

*everyone goes home*

**Chapter 8**

435     Whan all was welle and sekyr, as sche wende,  
 Than cam deth to hows and dyd his duté.  
 Of all hir joye he made sone an ende,  
 For he hath take awey hir owyn fadyr fre  
 And owte of this world hath ledd him, where he  
 440     Is in swech place as longyth onto him.  
 He is logged there with lordys of his kyne

*secure; thought*

*home; duty*

*noble*

*is appropriate to*

*lodged; family*

Whech deyd withouten feyth, without Crystendome;  
 Kateryne is swech on, yet sche schall not be long.  
 Owte of all Grece the grete lordes come:  
 445     But thei had do soo, thei had do grete wrong.  
 All her grete worchep oonly dyd honge

*such a one*

*Unless*

*honor; depend*

Book I

Upon the noble kyng; he lyght there now ded.  
Thei closyd him in clothe and aftyrward in lede.

*lies  
enclosed; lead*

450      Thei led him to the temple with solemnité  
(If wepyng and waylyng schuld be called soo).  
There was noon othir noyse than in that cité  
But “Welaway! Alas, what schul we doo?  
Oure lord is now gone — we gete him no moo.  
Who schall bere the crown now he is deed?  
455      He left us non eyre for to be oure heed

*heir; head (i.e., ruler)*

“But a yong mayde. What schal sche doo?  
Sche is but a woman! Yet had sche weddyd be  
Or tyme that hir fadyr went thus us froo  
It had be more sekyrnesse and more felicityé.  
460      There is no more to sey, but sekyrly we  
Are likely to be subject onto othir londys.  
We bounde sumtyme; now mote we suffyr bondys.”<sup>1</sup>

*Before  
certainty*

465      The noble qween eke, what sorow that sche made  
It is pyté to here, to telle, and to rede.  
There cowde no solace hir hert that tyme glade;  
The teeres fell down evyr as sche yede.  
The yung lady Kateryne hath chaunged hir wede,  
And hir coloure eke is now full pale.  
What schuld I of her sorow make lengere tale?

*gladden  
went  
dress*

470      The kyng was leyd in a toumbe made of golde and stones  
Ful ryaly, ye may wete, for he was her kyng,  
Anoynted eke with baume, that neythir flesch ne bones  
Schuld rote ne stynke — swech was the beryyng  
In that tyme to lordes — and mych other thyng  
475      Was seyd and do, whech nedyth not to rehers,  
For happily summe folk myght than be the wers

*royally; know; their  
balm  
the practice of burying  
need not be rehearsed  
perhaps; be the worse*

---

<sup>1</sup> Once we bound [others]; now we must suffer bonds

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- To here swech maumentrye and swych maner rytes. *learn of; idolatry; rites*
- The lordes abode there styl in that same place,  
Both dukys and erlys, bischoppys and knytes,  
480 Thyrt dayes evyn, for so usage was. *custom*  
The dayes rone fast and begune to pace. *pass*  
The lordes that there were, thei seyd that her kyng  
Mote hafe a memoryall for any maner thyng, *Must certainly have*
- And that of swech lestyng whech schuld not fayle. *permanence*  
485 Thus seyd thei all ryght with oon entent. *all in agreement*  
Peyntyng and wrytyng and graving in entayle,  
It wyll wanyse and wast, roten and be brent.  
Therfore to this ende are thei all consent: *ornamental engraving*  
The grete cyté whech her lord dyd make *vanish; waste; burned*  
490 Schall chaunge now his name for her lordes sake. *their*  
*its name; their*
- It schall no lengere hyght thus, the gret Amaleck. *be called*  
His name wyll thei turn thorowoute all the cost. *change; coast*  
Whosoevr thedyr come, with cart or with sek,  
Thei mote called it now the citee Famagost. *there; sack*  
495 Thus mad thei crye than thorowoute al the hoost *must; Famagusta*  
That all men of Grece mote have it in mowth,  
Dwelle he est or west, dwelle he north or sowthe. *assembly*  
*speak of it*
- And this is her cause: “For that cyté he made. *reason*  
In the same dwelt he most,” thus seyd thei alle,  
500 “In this cyté mych myrth and mych joye he had;  
In this cyté to deth eke he down dede falle.  
For these same causes his name bere it schalle.  
Evyr whyll it on grounde stant, it schall nevyr be lost,  
But evyr be in knowlech the cyté of Famagost.” *stands; i.e., forgotten*  
*Famagusta*
- 505 Thus it is called now and evermore schall be,  
With a G sett there the C schuld stande:  
The grete noble Famagost that stant on the see. *Famagusta; sea*  
Thus it is named thorowout every lande,  
There walkyth many a foote, and werkyth many hande.  
510 Thus schal the name of wordy men sprede,  
And schrewes shul sterfe nameles, swech is her mede. *worthy*  
*wretches; die; reward*

Book I

Chapter 9

- The qween sett a parlement at hir owe coste  
 Att Alisaundre the Grete, to whech sche wolde  
 Every lorde that held of hir husbonde Coste  
 515 To this parlement nedis goo or ryde shold;  
 But he come wylfully, he may be ful bold,  
 He schal be compelled. Sche sent ferre and nye  
 For alle the lordis, and no man wyst why. expense  
desired  
was bound to  
Unless; rest assured  
knew
- But why that sche sette the parlement in that place  
 520 O cause there was, for in that same cité  
 Alle kynges of that lond, as usage was,  
 Hadd receyved the crowne wyth solemynté.  
 And for a costom long hold may nott brokyn be  
 But yf it turbel meny men, therfore she held it there.  
 525 Many lord and lady att that parlement were. One reason  
custom  
because  
disturb
- Another cause there was: for the kynrode of hir  
 Had founded this cité and refounded eke,  
 Be whom and be whos dayes ye shal sone here  
 If ye wyl be styll and no man now speke  
 530 But I myselfe. Ye schal not nede to seke  
 Mo cronycles or storyes; ye schal lere of me  
 Alle the lyne and the lordes aftyr her degré. reason; her kin  
About them and their times  
seek  
More  
according to
- Ther was a lord sumtyme that the soudon was  
 Of Surré and of Egyp: Babel was his name.  
 535 He beldyd Alysaundre in that same place:  
 He called it Babilon, in haunsyng of his fame,  
 That it schuld not falle ne nevyr be lame.  
 This was his wyll; and aftyr many a day  
 It was called Babilon, sothly for to say, sultan  
Syria  
built Alexandria  
to enhance  
truly
- 540 Not Babilon alone, but Babilon the lasse,  
 For differens of the other that stant in the est.  
 Who wyll owte Egypt into Affryk passe,  
 Goo or ryde wheydir he wyll, this wey is the best:  
 This was anothyr cause why this gret fest the lesser  
To distinguish it from  
Africa  
where

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- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                      |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 545 | Was hold in that place, for hir ryall kyn<br>Oute of this Babell cam, bothe the more and the myn;                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | royal<br><i>the greater and the lesser</i>                                           |
| 550 | The third cause was this, as seyth Athanas —<br>Grettest of hem alle, as semyth onto me —<br>This same cyté in the londe of Egipt was,<br>In whech there reygned another kyng than he,<br>So was he called than for diversyté<br>Kyng of Alysaundyr alone, ryght for differens<br>Of the kyng of Egypt, this is the sentens.                            | <i>to distinguish between them</i><br><i>to distinguish himself</i><br><i>reason</i> |
| 555 | Thys wote I well of Athanases resoun<br>Whech that he makyth of the fundacyoun <sup>1</sup><br>Of this same Alysaundyr, whech oft with tresoun<br>Was nye disceyvyd of many straunge nacyoun.<br>But now wyll we leve all that declaracyoun<br>And tell forthe of Babel and of othir men<br>Whech long to the kynrod, mo than nyne or ten. <sup>2</sup> | <i>nearly</i><br><i>leave</i>                                                        |

## Chapter 10

- Thys same Babell had a sone aftyr him;  
Madagdalus he hyght. He was lord alsoo  
Of this Babilon many yere. And forth the same kyn  
Reygned in that same place mo than on or too, *more*  
565 For his son hyght Antiochus, the story seyth soo  
(Not Antiochus the grete, of whech spekyth Machabe,  
But another before, as ye schall sone se).

Thys Antiochus had a son men cleped Gorgalus. *called*  
A worthi man he was, of Surré lord and syre.  
570 He begate a sone men clepyd Antiochus,  
And aftyr Antiochus, reygned in that empyre  
His sone Seleucus. He sett ryght in a mire *swamp*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 554–55: *I know this well from Athanasius' account of the foundation*

<sup>2</sup> Which belong to that family, more than nine or ten

Book 1

- The cyté men clepe Seleuce for his owyn fame,  
And Antyoche he beldyd in his faderes name. built
- 575 This is the fyrst lyne of this ych Gorgalus,  
For we mote turn ageyn, if we truly telle.  
This same Gorgale yongere son hyght Mardemius;  
A manly man he was and of hert felle. same  
580 Gret Alysaundyr spong of him as strem owt of welle,  
For unto this Mardemy wedded was this fayre  
Meliore, the noble mayde of Macedonye the ayre, fierce  
Alexander (the Great)  
heir
- And of this Mardemye and Meliore the mayde  
Cam Kyng Phylyppe, fadyr to Alysaunder the Grete. Alexander  
Thus went the secund lyne, as oure auctour sayde.
- 585 Oute of Gorgales yong son the fyrst have we lete  
But for a lytyll whyle, for we wyll now trete  
Of the woundres that this Alysaundyr sowte in his lyffe —  
All his labure yet in every mouth is ryffe. abandoned  
Alexander sought  
rise
- 590 He conquered the kyng of Pers whych Dary hyght;  
He toke Arabe and Fenice, and eke his owyn cosyne,  
Antiochus Gorgalys sone, he ovrcame be myght.  
He wan this Babylon from him with gune and engyne; Persia; Darius  
There cessed the name of Babylon and forevr gan lyne,  
For he chaungyd it to his, and thus he called it than Arabia; Phoenicia  
595 Alysaundyr aftyr him because he it wanne. conquered
- Ten cytes mad this lord even oute of the grunde.  
All ten thei hafe his name, Alysaundyr thei hyght. founded  
Too cytes he chaunged and kept hem hole and sounde:  
Alysaundyr he wolde thei schulde hyght be ryght. Alexandria  
600 In twelve yere he wan this worlde with ful grete myght.  
Whan he schuld dey, he partyd his londe on twelve Two; renamed  
Whech he had governed alone sumtyme himself. divided
- To his lordes gave he his londes for to holde.  
Surry and Alysaundyr, Fenice and Palestyne, Phoenicia  
605 That gafe he to Seleucus, myghty man and bolde. mighty  
He was to this Alisaundyr of kyn ryght cosyne

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Of Gorgalus bloode, as I seyde, of the fyrrt lyne  
At whech I than left and now begynne ageyne.  
Alle thing may not be seyd at ones, as clerkis seyne.

## Chapter 11

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 610 | Too and thirty yere reigned Seleucus there.<br>He had an eyre aftyr him, kyng of that place,<br>A noble man thei called Antiochus Sothere.<br>Twenty wyntyr evene among hem he was,<br>And aftyr had the crown, the sceptyr, and the mace<br>His son, whech thei calle Antiochus Theos.<br>He reygned fiftene yere and aftyr him than roos            | heir<br>i.e., years<br>staff<br>rose                                                                                          |
| 615 | A man thei call be name Seleucus Galericus.<br>There reynged he twenty wynter, and than Seleucus Garanne                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                               |
| 620 | Thre yere bare the crown, and eftre Antiochus<br>Whech is called the Grete. He reygned thanne<br>Sex and thirty wynter. Jewes yet him banne<br>For the sorow that he dede onto her lond and hem<br>Whan he robbed the temple at Jherusalem.                                                                                                           | still curse him                                                                                                               |
| 625 | The noble book of Machabe wryghtyth his dedys,<br>His cruelnesse, his ire, and his treson, eke                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | also                                                                                                                          |
| 630 | His feyned repentauns. Therfore his mede is<br>Sorow for synne, for whan he was seke<br>He askyd mercy but not worth a leke.<br>He left a sone nyne of that same plyte;<br>Seleucus Philophator men seyn that he hyght.                                                                                                                               | reward<br>sin; sick<br>leek (i.e., worthlessly)<br>nearly of the same condition<br>was named                                  |
| 635 | He synnyd be his doghtyr ful onkyndely,<br>Therfore was he brent with the bryght levene.<br>In <i>Appollony of Tyre</i> ye may rede the storie,<br>How many lordes were dede be sex and be sevyn<br>For thei coude not gesse his problemes evyn.<br>He reygned there eleven yere, withowten any lees.<br>His son aftyr him hyght Antiochus Epiphanes. | against nature (i.e., incestuously)<br>bright lightning<br>i.e., by the dozen<br>solve his riddles<br>i.e., to tell the truth |

*Book 1*

640 His yeres were eleven and his son hyght thus,  
 Antiochus Eupatere. He leved yeres too,  
 And aftyr him sekyrly reygned Demetrius.  
 Thre yere he bare the crown, the story seyth soo.  
 Antiochus Sedites kyng was there thoo  
 Nyne yere evyn, and aftyr him reygned there  
 Another kyng thei calle Demetrius Sothere.

**Chapter 12**

645 In his tyme the Romaynes whon fro him  
 Mech of his londe and eke that gret cyté  
 Whech that he helde, and so had all his kyn,  
 I mene Alysaundyr. Thei set there her see —  
 The Romaynes dyd so. For he was fayn to flee  
 650 Forth into Egypt, he held him ryght there.  
 Thus led he his lyffe in sorow and in feere;

*capital*  
*Although he wanted to*  
*fear*

He lost all the londes whych his faderes wonne.  
 Foure-skore yere even reygned the Romaynes there  
 And in this servage newly thus begunne  
 655 Reygned the same kyng the tyme of twelve yere.  
 Alysaundyr, his son, than dede the crown bere  
 Nyne yere evyn, and than Demetrye, his brother.  
 He reygned foure yere and aftyr him anothir,

*new state of servitude*

Men calle him in bokes Antiochus Griphus.  
 660 He governed twelve yere all this forseyd londe.  
 In these foure kyngis tyme, myne auctour seyth thus,  
 All this ilke cuntré to the Romaynes was bonde  
 Tyll that Fortune turned so hir honde  
 Whan Helyus Adrianus emperor was of Rome,  
 665 Whych weddyd his doghtyr to on thei call Phalone.

*same*

This Phalon was sone onto the seyd Demetrius.  
 Be him cam Surry to ryght hold ageyn,  
 And all her subjeccyoun to Rome cessed thus.  
 Solaber was the name of the mayd thei seyn;  
 670 Ryght soo hyght sche. Thei that hir there seyn

*son*  
*its rightful governors*  
*saw*

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Seyn nevyr swych anothir; thus seyd thei alle.  
This same Phalon — summe men so him calle —

*Saw*

675 Had a ful fayre sone be this same Solabere.  
Zozimus he hyght, kyng aftyr his fadyr he was,  
And Archenon and Archibelon reygned also there,  
Than aftyr Antigonus, and than cam Claudace —  
Sune aftyr fadyr, all reygned in that place —  
Than aftyr Borus, ryght thus haf I founde,  
And thanne ageyn Claudace called the secunde.

680 This same Claudace Costus fadyr was,  
And this same Costus fadyr to Kateryne. *was Costus' father*  
Here may ye se of what men and of what place  
Cam this woman, this lady, this virgyne;  
Here is it schewyd hooly all the lyne.  
685 Thus I behyte you that I schuld doo.  
In this reknyng myne auctour and I are too,

*Her entire line is shown here  
promised  
account; are in disagreement*

690 For he acordeth not wyth cronicles that ben olde  
But diversyth from hem, and that in many thyngis.  
There he acordyth, there I him hold,<sup>1</sup> *agrees; are  
departs*  
And where he diversyth in ordre of these kyngis  
I leve him, and to othir mennys rekenyngis  
I geve more credens, whech before him and me  
Sette alle these men in ordre and degré.

*other men's accounts*

695 Butte men wyll sey now and happily repleye, *perhaps*  
“What menyth this lyne and this rehersayle,  
To rekene so many men and to multiplye  
Noumbres and yerys whech may not avayle?  
And eke, us thynkyth, it doth sumwhat fayle,  
For thow thei were men of grete lordschype,  
700 The kynrod of schrewys to God is no worchepe.”<sup>2</sup>

*are of no use  
is rather pointless  
though*

<sup>1</sup> *Where he agrees [with the old chronicles], I follow him*

<sup>2</sup> *The lineage of heathens does God no honor*

*Book I*

- I answerē hereto as do Seynt Jerome:  
 “Crist cam of schrewys,” he seyth, “for this skylle  
 The principall cause why to this world He come  
 To corect synneris; that was His wylle.” *heathens; reason*
- 705 For many men that synfull were and ille  
 Are in His genelogie, ye may hem there fynde,  
 My lady Kateryne stante in this same kynde. *evil* *situation*

**Chapter 13**

- Now to telle forth even as I fyrst sayde:  
 The lordys are come whech clepyd were. *summoned*
- 710 Agens the parlement the cité is arayd  
 With plenté of vitayle and all odyr gere.  
 Men lakked ryth nowt that were logged there;  
 Gret chepe had thei, all maner vitayle;  
 It is stuffyd so be resoun it may not fayle. *arrayed for the parliament* *food; other gear* *Lodgers lacked nothing* *abundance* *stocked*
- 715 The reall lordys wyt̄h baroun and bacheler  
 Are com now thedyr to do her servyse.  
 Byschopis and clerkys togedyr in fere —  
 Thei wyll now schew her wyttys wyse;  
 Thei schall have nede or that thei ryse. *royal; knight* *their* *in company* *before they go*
- 720 Summe lordys are come eke homage to make,  
 And ladys many ryth for the qwenys sake.
- This mayde is crownyd with all the observawns  
 Whech servyd that tyme in stede of the Masse. *rituals* *were practiced; Mass* *bless*
- 725 And to all the goddys, both more an lasse,  
 There was no god whech thei lete thoo passe.  
 The lordys swore all how that thei schuld  
 Her servyse evyr sewe and her sutes holde. *overlooked* *follow; claims*
- 730 Thanne begunne the festes, I trow gret inow,  
 As in that cuntré custome was thane.  
 To lord and to lady, and to povert low,  
 Full foyson was there; to every man  
 Many mo deyntys than I rehers can. *believe great enough* *the lowly poor* *plenty* *delicacies*

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- Every man had plenté in hale and in halle;  
 735 Thoo men that servyd it nedyd not hem to calle, *tents and in halls  
did not need to be called*
- Swech rewle and ordinauns was there i-had.  
 There was no gate warnyd to no maner wyté,  
 But that every man schuld be ryth glad  
 Thei were kept opyn both day and nyth.  
 740 The bordes evyr cured and the mete dyth,  
 Whan on had his mele in cam anodyr.  
 Of sylvyr vessell there was many a fothir. *closed to anyone  
so that  
night  
tables; tended; food prepared  
vessels; a large amount*
- No place was voyd, neydyr parloure nor chaumbyr,  
 But all were thei full of women or of men.  
 745 The grete paleys that stante at Alisaundyr,  
 It was full of puple, no man seyd “go hen”  
 Save reverens was had; lordes — here nyne, here ten —  
 Thus kept her astate. The cité eke all abowte  
 Was full of gentyllys withinne and withowte. *empty; neither  
people; “go away”  
respect  
gentlepeople*
- 750 Lordes and ladyes that were there of hir kynne  
 Onto that feste come, both on and odyr,  
 And all were thei loggyd in full riall ine. *i.e., one and all  
lodged; royal dwelling*
- Summe were of hir fadyrs syde, summe were of hir modyr.  
 Of curtesye and gentylnesse, game and non othyr,  
 755 Was than her carpyng. Save summe spoke of love,  
 Every man spak of thing whech was to his behove. *pleasure  
conversation; Except  
benefit*
- Justys were there, and thoo with the best;  
 Summe had the bettyr and summe had the werre.  
 The grete theatyrr there had ful lytyll rest:  
 760 Evyr was there ftyng, but there was no werre.  
 Many noble men whech were come fro ferre  
 In that same place were asayd ychoon,  
 As well in wrestyllng as puttyng at the ston. *Jousts; those  
worse [luck]  
theater  
war  
afar  
tested each one  
wrestling*
- And aftyr all this is endyd and eke i-don,  
 765 Justis, revellis, and festes gune to slake. *began to wind down*
- Thei toke her leve, homward for to goon,  
 But yet or thei fully had her leve i-take *before; taken their leave*

Book 1

- |     |                                                                                                                                             |                                                                |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | Ech lord whech had there any lady and make<br>Was gove two courseres (of whech the on<br>Was blak as cole, the other wythe as bon)          | <i>mate<br/>given; horses<br/>black as coal; white as bone</i> |
| 770 | With sadyll and brydyll of gold and of sylke.<br>Many moo rewardes eke than I can now seye:<br>Summe were gove mantellis wyght as the mylk  | <i>cloaks white</i>                                            |
|     | On whech were many a broche and many a beye.<br>Thus ryd thei homwarde foreth in her wey.<br>There is noght ellys now but farewell and goo, | <i>ornament</i>                                                |
| 775 | "I pray God be with yow." Thus is the parlement doo.                                                                                        | <i>nothing else<br/>finished</i>                               |

## Chapter 14

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                          |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 780 | Thys lady, as the story even forth telleth,<br>Kepyth hir chambyr and holdyth hir thus inne.<br>With hir modyr the qween as yet sche dwellyth.<br>Hir bokes for to loke on can sche noght blyne;<br>Whosoevr lett hir, he dothe full gret synne.<br>To offende his lady, what wene ye it is?<br>There was no man that tyme that durst do thys. | <i>Stays in; keeps to herself</i><br><i>cease</i><br><i>prevents</i><br><i>dared</i>                     |
| 785 | It was oonly hir joye, all hir entent,<br>For hir hert that tyme was set to nowt elles.<br>Ful hye honour therby aftyrward sche hente.<br>Bothe wit and wysdome owte of hir hert welles<br>Evyn as the streme rennyth fro the welles;<br>Swych fayre frute in stodye dyd sche fynde<br>With besy conceytes whech sche had of kynde.            | <i>i.e., study</i><br><i>nothing</i><br><i>gained</i><br><i>surges</i><br><i>a sharp mind; by nature</i> |
| 790 | There was no wyght that in hir presence<br>Durst onys touch of ony ille dede;<br>And if he dyd, he had hir offens.<br>Forevyr more he coude not aftyr spedē<br>As for to be hir servaunde, that is no drede.<br>Sche hated not the persone, but only the synne.<br>Of vertuous spech coude sche not blynne.                                    | <i>person</i><br><i>ever allude to</i><br><i>he offended her</i><br><i>prosper</i><br><i>cease</i>       |

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- 800 There was nevyr wrong founde in that may. *maiden*  
 The cors of hir governauns was evyr so clene, *pure*  
 Bothe pryvy and aperte; at every asay, *private and public; trial*  
 Stedfast and stable was evyr this qwene.  
 Sche was a very seynt, truly as I wene, *believe*  
 Thow sche were not baptized. So was Cornelius: *Cornelius was too*  
 805 His prayere was herde — scripture seyth thus —
- Of oure Lorde Godd or he baptized were, *By*  
 And therfore was Petyr sent unto him,  
 The articles of the feyth him for to lere. *teach*  
 He had feyth befor, but it was dyme. *faint*  
 810 He was made to Cryst a ful ryght lyme. *limb*  
 His feyth was not cause of his good werkes,  
 But his werkes causyd feyth, thus seye these clerkys.
- Thys same lady eke, thow sche not baptized were, *practiced; stirring; spirit*  
 Sche hauntyd holy werkys be steryng of the spryght *fear*  
 815 Whech made hir of synne for to hafe fere  
 And to love vertu bothe day and nyght.  
 The soule nedyth vertu as mech as yye lyght; *eyes need light*  
 This wote thei well that feel experyens. *who have learned by experience*  
 This was the cause that hir noble presens
- 820 Was noryschere of vertu and qwenchere of vyce, *nourisher*  
 For whan sche coud aspye any mysdrawte *perceive; misconduct*  
 Of man or of woman, that thei were nyce, *foolish*  
 For fere or for lofe wold sche leve nawte, *not hold back for fear or love*  
 But soone schuld thei full wysyly be tawte. *taught*  
 825 “It may not be thus,” sche sayd, “it is not honeste.  
 A man, but he be reulyd, he is but a beste.”
- “What wene ye now whan ye trespace? *What are you thinking of*  
 Thow I not aspye yow, I sey yow trulye. *see; tell*  
 There is oon above that loketh on oure face  
 830 And on all the membrys of oure bodye;  
 If he ony fowle dede may in us aspye,  
 He deynyth oure servyse. This is my preve. *disdains; contention*  
 Sey clerkys what thei wyll, thus I beleve,

Book I

- 835 "For wele I wote, above Jupiter and alle  
Is a maystir-rewler, and eterne He is;  
Upon this world whatsoevyr schall befaller,  
Falle whan it schall, He is evyr in blysse,  
And thei that love vertu schall not want, iwysse,  
Nevyr His gode lordschop. He may, as it is skylle,  
840 Make goddes of men whan that evyr He wylle." *lack, indeed  
proper*

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                  |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 845 | Thus wold sche sey, that noble lady dere<br>Onto hir servauntes and hem all exhorte.<br>Sche was homly as thow sche were her fere.<br>The dredfull and sekely wold sche comfort.<br>Mery and glad was sche at every disport,<br>Sad eke ther-to whan sche schuld sad be,<br>Godely of hir spech, of hir expens fre. | dear<br><i>unpretentious; their equal<br/>frightened and sickly [people]</i><br>amusement<br>Serious<br>generous |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Chapter 15

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                               |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | What is a lond whan it hath non hed?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                               |
| 850 | The lawes are not kept, the lond desolate,<br>The hertes hangyng and hevy as lede,<br>The comonys grucchyng and evyr at the bate.<br>There is kept non rewle, kept non astate.<br>Thus seyde the puple of Surry alle aboue:<br>“Oure kyng is now ded; oure lyth is nye owte. | <i>lead</i><br><i>people complaining; quarreling</i><br><i>people</i><br><i>light; nearly</i> |
| 855 | “Othir londys spoyle us, and that withoute mercy.<br>We mote nede suffyr — we may non odyr doo.<br>Thow we speke and calle and for help cry,<br>There is no man gladly wyll cum us to.<br>We have alleaway thouth that it schuld be so.                                      | <i>ravage</i><br><i>must; nothing else</i><br><i>always thought</i>                           |
| 860 | Wythowte a kyng, how schuld a cuntré stand?<br>We have lost forevyr oure name and oure land.                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                               |
| 865 | “We have a qween: sche comyth among no men;<br>Sche loveth not ellys but bokys and scole.<br>Late all oure enmyes in lond ryde or ren,<br>Sche is evyr in stody and evermore sole.<br>This wille turne us all to wrake and to dole!                                          | <i>i.e., keeps to herself</i><br><i>run</i><br><i>alone</i><br><i>bring us; harm; sorrow</i>  |

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                            |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | But had sche a lord, yet all myth be wele.<br>O thou blynd Fortune, how turnyst thou thi wheel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | might                                                                      |
| 870 | "Now hye, now lowe; now he that was above<br>Lyght low benethe in care and myschef eke,<br>And he that supposyd to conqwer now his love,<br>He schall noght haf hir of all this next weke!<br>Sumtyme be we heyle; sumetyme be we seke.<br>O very onsigyrnesse! O chaungand and variable,<br>Thu wordly lyffe, for evyr art thou unstable.              | expected<br><br><i>healthy; sick<br/>uncertainty; changing<br/>worldly</i> |
| 875 | "How schall this londe withoute kyng now stande?<br>It was nevyr seyn yet that the Sarsynrye<br>Was left alone unto a womannes hande.<br>Sche must be weddyd, this mayd — and that in hye —<br>Onto summe kyng. Oure lond may thus not lye.<br>Fy upon rychesse, but if thei worchep doo<br>To man that weldyth hem, for thei are mad ther-too.         | <i>Saracen lands<br/>in a hurry<br/>controls</i>                           |
| 880 | "We schall fare ellys as thise negardes doo:<br>Ley up her gold and evyr wyll thei spare;<br>In all her lyffe thei may not tend ther-too<br>To hafe any myrthe or ony welfare.<br>Ryght evyn thus now are we lyke to fare:<br>We schul haf rychesse and it schal do noo goode.<br>Godd forbede eke that this ryall blode                                | <i>otherwise; misers<br/>derive any pleasure or benefit from it</i>        |
| 885 | "Of oure noble kyng schuld cesse thus in this mayde.<br>We wyll require hir on all manere wyse<br>For to be wedded." Thus the puple sayd:<br>"There is noo reule in lorde ne in justyse:<br>Thei sett the schyere, the cessyons, and the cyse<br>Ryght as hem lyst. Will for reson goth now. <sup>1</sup><br>This governauns is nothyng unto oure prow! | <i>profit</i>                                                              |
| 890 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                            |
| 895 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                            |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 893–95: [Without a king] there is no regulation of lords nor of justices: / They arrange the shires, sessions, and the assizes (courts) / Just as it pleases them. Self-interest is disguised as reason

## Book I

- “And if we to batayle schuld us embrace,  
 Who schuld lede us? Who schall be oure gyde?  
 A woman kende nevyr yet able was  
 900 To reule a puple that is so grete and wyde,  
 To sette the standard the wengys on the syde.  
 And if we chese to capteyn any other lorde  
 Envye and rancure wyll cause sone dyscorde.”
- if we go to war  
 guide  
 known  
 (see note)  
 as captain  
 rancor
- Thys was her lay thorowowte all the londe:  
 905 “Why is oure qween thus long withowte a kyng?”  
 Bothe hye and lowe, all had this on honde.  
 “Why is sche unweddyd, this yung, this fayre thyng?  
 Sche is full wyse, sche is full lykyng,  
 Sche is ful able a husband for to have:  
 910 Sche mote so nedys yf sche wylle us save!”
- opinion  
 pleasing  
 by necessity must do so
- Upon this matere evene wyth a comon asent,  
 Thei made a gaderyng wythoute auctorité.  
 For serteyn lordes ryth sone have thei sent,  
 That thei shal come the common profyth to se.  
 915 Among hem alle this was than her décré:  
 Upon this matere a lettir wylle thei wryte.  
 In most goodly wyse, thei wyll that lettir endyte
- assembly  
 attend to  
 compose
- In whech thei shal onto her lady the qwen  
 And to hir modir, whech is her lady eke,  
 920 Wryte and pray that thei wyl to hem seen,  
 As thei be ladies both mercyful and meke,  
 Thei suffyr no more the lordes thus of Greke  
 Ovyrryde hem so — it was not the old gyse.  
 The lettir, certeyn, was wrytyn in this wyse.
- their  
 take care of them  
 Greece  
 Oppress; old way  
 indeed

### Chapter 16

- 925 “Onto oure ladyes, the elder and the yonge,  
 Be it now knowe that thorow all Surry-lond  
 It is seyd and spoke ny of every tunge  
 That thei were nevyr so lykly to be bonde  
 To othir londes whech have the hyer hond
- almost  
 upper hand

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930 As thei are now. Wherfore togyder thei crye  
Onto yow, ladyes, that ye wyll have mercye

“Upon youre men, upon youre lordes eke.  
Thei may not lyve but thei defended be.  
Youre hertys be so petouse and so meke,  
935 Ye wyl not lete this matere slyde, pardé!  
What is a lord but yf he have mené?  
What is a puple but yf thei have a lord?  
Loke every kyngdam thorowout all this world:

*unless they be defended  
compassionate  
by God  
subjects*

940 “But yf thei have a man that dare wele fyth,  
Thei are put undir. It was not sene or now  
That Surre and Cipre and that ylde that hite  
Candé the rych, whech hath a see ful rowe,  
Shuld be thus kyngles. To God we make a vowe:  
We may not lyve thus long in rest and pes;  
945 Of clamoure and cry wyll we nevyr i-ses

*Unless; fight  
island; was called  
Candia; rough sea  
peace  
cease*

950 “But evyr beseke you, as oure ladyes dere,  
Ye wyl be governyd and werk be counsayle.  
Thynk ye be to us both leef and dere,  
And think oure servyse may yet sumwhat avayle.  
Lete sum peté owt of youre hertys hayle!  
Suffyr youre puple have sum of her desyre.  
This was the losse certeyn of men of Tyre:

*beseech  
act according to counsel  
beloved  
be helpful  
pity flow from your hearts*

955 “Thei had no kyng, therfore thei had no grace.  
Whan Appolony was ded, fro hem passed and goo,  
Every man as there his owe maystir was.  
God forbede forevyr that it were so  
In Surre-lond, for than were it undo.  
It was nevyr sene, forsoth, ne nevyr schall be,  
And if it were, farewele than felicité!

*then it would be ruined  
truly  
then*

960 “This we desyre now, schortly for to telle,  
And thus desyrith all the lond bedene;  
This is conclusioun of all oure gret counselle:  
That oure yong lady mote nede weddyd bene.

*together*

*Book I*

965 Late hir have choys; sche is wyse, we wene.  
 Chois hath sche, for many on wold hir have.  
 Deliver this matere, so God youre soulys save.

*Let; choice  
 many a one  
 Act upon*

“This thing is all that we wylle sey as now.  
 We aske a answere, and that in hasty wyse.  
 We pray to God, to whom we alle mote bowe,  
 970 He sette yow soo and lede in swech a gyse  
 That ryth tomorrow or ye owt of bed ryse  
 And er ye come owte into the halle,  
 That ye dysyre as we desyre now alle.”

*such a way*

**Chapter 17**

975 The qwene answeryd and wrot rith thus ageyn.  
 Sche seyd, “This thyng allgatys moste be do.  
 To lyve alone in stody, it was nevyr seyn  
 That ony lady ony tyme dyd so.”  
 Therfor hir wylle is fully sette ther-to  
 That hir dowtir, qwene of that empyre,  
 980 Schall be weddyd hastyly to sum syre.

*i.e., Meliades  
 surely*

And upon this hir lettir hath she sent  
 Ryth in this forme and in this maner stylle:  
 “The Qween of Surry, of Cypre that was brent,  
 Of Candy eke lady and of many a myle,  
 985 Wyffe onto Costus, whech but a lytyle whyle  
 Is passyd and ded, onto her puple sche seyth,  
 She aloweth ful wele her manhode and her feyth;

*thereupon  
 Candia  
 acknowledges; their valor*

“Sche wyl as thei wyll, and hath do many a day,  
 That hir doutir onto sum kyng shuld be  
 990 Maryed or wedded. She seyd yet nevyr nay  
 But evyr hir wylle hath be into this degré,  
 Loke where ye wyll and whanne, for so wyl sche.  
 Sche wold ful fayn that this thing were i-doo;  
 It had be fynyschyd ful long tyme agoo

*wishes very much; done  
 It would have been*

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- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                           |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 995  | “Yf it had ley in hir or in hir wylle.<br>Sche thynkyth, certeyn, reson that thei say<br>To have a kyng it is ful goode skylle<br>Because a woman neithir can ne may<br>Do liche a man ne sey, it is no nay. | <i>very reasonable</i><br><i>very proper</i>                                              |
| 1000 | Go loke youreselv, for ye be wyse men alle.<br>My doutir, I trowe, onto youre wyll schal falle;                                                                                                              | <i>Do or speak as a man; no doubt</i>                                                     |
|      | “She was nevyr yete asayed in no degré<br>Of you, ne me, ne of no maner with.<br>As in this matere sche seyd nevyr nay ne yee.                                                                               | <i>questioned at all</i><br><i>By you; no other person</i>                                |
| 1005 | We may not blame hir in no maner plyth:<br>She doth to us as yet nothyng but ryght,<br>Ne non she cast, truly, as I suppose.<br>We wyll ful sone hir of this thing appose.                                   | <i>any way</i><br><i>she intends none</i><br><i>examine</i>                               |
|      | “Yf she consent, than have we al i-doo.<br>But this same thing, certeyn, touchith us alle:<br>It longyth nowth only to on or too,                                                                            |                                                                                           |
| 1010 | But all oure reme herto must we calle,<br>For grete perell ellys therof myth falle.<br>Yt longyth to the ferthest as wele as to hem                                                                          | <i>not</i><br><i>realm</i><br><i>peril; might arise</i>                                   |
| 1015 | That dwelle here ny. Ye wote ful wele, hir em                                                                                                                                                                | <i>pertains</i><br><i>uncle</i>                                                           |
|      | “The Duke of Tyre mote nede know this thing,<br>The Duke of Antioche eke, hir owne cosyn.<br>If we shul have a lord or ellys a kyng,                                                                         |                                                                                           |
| 1020 | Thei mote consent, thei mote make the fyn.<br>Lete this matere no lenger slepe ne lyne:<br>We wyll send oute now in all hastly wyse                                                                          | <i>conclude the matter</i><br><i>rest</i>                                                 |
|      | That every man shal com in his best gyse                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>array</i>                                                                              |
| 1025 | “Onto this Alisaundre, there we dwelle as now.<br>Thei shal sey and here alle that evyr thei wylle.<br>There shall no man, to God I make a vowe,                                                             | <i>where</i><br><i>hear</i>                                                               |
|      | Be lettyd for us, speke he loude or styllle.”<br>This was the sentense of the qwenes bille.                                                                                                                  |                                                                                           |
|      | The puple red it and was ful wele apayde.                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                           |
|      | “God save oure lady!” wyth o voys thus thei seyde.                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                           |
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>hindered by us; softly</i><br><i>content; letter</i><br><i>satisfied</i><br><i>one</i> |

*Book 1*

- 1030 Thus endeth this boke of this clene virgine  
In whech hir byrth, hir kynrod, and hir countré  
Is declared, so as she wold enclyne  
Hir gracious help to send onto me. *be inclined*
- Now ferthermore a newe boke begynne wyl we  
1035 In whech we schall onto hir worchep wryte,  
So as we can in oure langage endyte, *honor*  
*compose*
- The grete conflicte betwyx the lordes and hir,  
Ryth in the parlement whech was ful realy hold  
At grete Alysaundre. Many a ful stout syre  
1040 Onto that cité at that tyme cam ful bold.  
It wyl be long or that this tale be told;  
Therfore I counsell that we make here a pause  
And eke a rest ryth evene at this clause. *royally*  
*is finished*  
*take a break*

## Book 2

### *[The Marriage Parliament]*

#### Prologue

Loke, whanne ye see the sparkes fayre and bryth  
Spryng fro the fyre and upward fast to goo,  
Ye may suppose be reson and be ryth  
Summe fyre is nye; experiens telleth you soo.

5 There go no sparkes, neithir to ne fro,  
But there as fyre is; this se we ryth at eye.  
In this same maner of this same lady I sey:

*near*

These holy wordes, these holy dedes eke,  
Whech sche spake and used here lyvand,  
Alle thoo were tokenys that hir hert gan seke  
Hir gostly spouse; sche lefte not tyll sche found  
That blyssyd Lord. Sche knowyth not yet His hand  
As sche schall aftyr, but sche have tokenys gode,  
And all of God. Sche knowyth not yet the rode,

*did while she lived  
those; tokens; did  
spiritual; stopped*

*and yet; tokens  
way*

15 Sche knowyth not Crist, sche hath not herd His lore,  
But yet the fyre of charité and of love  
Brennyth in hir so that evyr more and more  
Hir hert is sette on oon that sytte above.  
I trowe that dowe the whech upon Crist dide hove  
20 Whanne He was baptized had mad in hir His nest.  
This wote I wele: sche cannot now have rest,

*teachings*

*Burns*

*i.e., Christ  
dove; hover*

*know*

25 But all hir spech is now to comed  
The grete vertu whech we virginité  
Amongys us name. Who coude thanne a wende  
That on this vertu so dewly thynk wold sche,  
For swech exaumples want in that cuntré.

*have thought  
duly, i.e., conscientiously  
are lacking*

Book 2

Ther is no man desyryth sche be a mayde —  
 “Sche mote be weddyd nedys,” thus thei sayde.

- 30 And as we see, the more is leyde to brenne, *burn*  
 The gretter fyre there is, it is no dowte,  
 For drawe awey the schydys fro it then,  
 Sone wyll the fyre be qwenchyd and be owte.  
 The more this lady vertues is aboute,  
 The more thei grow; thei have a full gode grownde.  
 35 Her cours, thei sey, as sercle it is rownd, *circle*
- 40 For every vertu folowyth ryth aftyr othyr:  
 Whanne on is come he callyth ine his felaw;  
 Thei love togydir as systir or as the brother,  
 Ech of hem all his besynesse doth to draw  
 Tyll all be come; ryth swech, lo, is her law. *their nature*  
 Begynne ageyn whan thu hast used the last;  
 Her serculed cours ryth thus lo have thei cast. *circular*
- 45 Thys made hir hate these fleschly lustys alle,  
 For in this sercle sche is so farre i-paste *she has so greatly excelled*  
 That from that whele sche cast hir not to falle.  
 Hir hert and thei be teyd so wondyr fast,  
 Of hem it hath take so swetly the tast, *resolves*  
 Thei are mette and mates now and evyr more,  
 Thei are now bownd togedyr wondyr sore. *i.e., virtues; tied taste*
- 50 It acordeth full weel, me thynk, to hir name *is appropriate*  
 That vicyous lyfe in hir schuld have no place;  
 These Latyn bokys, I suppose, sey this same.  
 Hir name, thei seyn, it is so full of grace  
 That synfull lyfe it can distroy and raze, *raze*  
 55 For thus it menyth, certeyn, it is no nay:  
 “Cata” in Grew in Englysch is thus to say, *Greek*
- “Ovyr all” or “all”; and “ryne” in oure langage  
 Sownd “fallyng,” as who schuld sey, in hir  
 Of synne and schame all the sory rage

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- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                      |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 60 | Destroyd was; it neyhyd hir not nere. <sup>1</sup><br>These holy vertues were to hir so dere,<br>Thei putte awey of synne all the flok;<br>Thei are schyt owt and sche speryd the lok.                                                                                           | <i>shut out; closed the lock</i>                     |
| 65 | O noble lady that art now us above,<br>Suffyr oure tungys, thow thei unworthy be,<br>To telle thi lyfe, thi langoure, and thi love,<br>That thu had here in thi devote sacr  e,<br>To telle the sorowe eke and that adversit  e<br>Whech with thi Lordys thu suffyrd as a clerk. | <i>distress</i><br><i>i.e., inner-most heart</i>     |
| 70 | We wyll now streyte dresse us to that werk.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>scholar</i><br><i>immediately apply ourselves</i> |

## Chapter 1

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                       |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Now is not ellys but ryde, go, and ren:<br>Messagerys are oute on hasty wyse<br>To calle to parlement alle maner menne,<br>That thei come alle now in her best gyse.<br>Clerkis must come, for thei be so wyse,<br>And lordes, eke, becausse thei be strong.<br>This gaderyng hardely was not taryd long,                     | <i>ride, go, and run<br/>in a hurry<br/>all kinds of men<br/>attire<br/>delayed</i>   |
| 75 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                       |
|    | For, as I rede, withinne wekys thre<br>Thei be come thydir, and that with gret prydē:<br>The Prince of Capadoce wyth a gret menē;<br>The Erl of Joppen cam ryth be his syde —<br>There myght men se who can best sytte and ryde.<br>The Prince of Paphon is come thedyr allsoo;<br>The Duke of Damask, with many another moo. | <i>splendor<br/>Cappadocia; company<br/>Jaffa<br/>Paphos (in Cyprus)<br/>Damascus</i> |
| 80 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                       |
|    | The Duke of Salence, the Duke of Garacen,<br>Thei were there reall, and eke so was he,<br>The Erle of Lymason: ful many strong men                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>Salins<br/>royally<br/>Limousin</i>                                                |
| 85 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                       |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 56–60: The Greek word “Cata” means, in English, / “Over all” or “all”; “ryne,” in our language, / Means “falling.” Together (i.e., “Catherine”) they connote that, within her, / All the turmoil of sin and shame / Was vanquished and never approached near her

*Book 2*

- Had thei with hem, these reall lordes thre.  
The Amerell of Alysaundyr, with solemnité  
90 He hath receyvyd hem; he was a full strong syre.  
He is come also, the noble Duke of Tyre.
- Admiral
- Last of all thedyr gan aproche  
A worthy man, hir owyn ny cosyne,  
Thei call him there the Duke of Antioche.  
95 All this matere he schall now determyne,  
Thus wene thei alle, for oute of o lyne  
Are thei come bothe; he may ryght nowt wante.  
His wyll in hir hert ful sone schall he plante.
- he will now settle the issue*  
*cannot fail*
- The day is come now whech assygned was.  
100 The lordes are gadred togedyr all in fere.  
The lenghe of the halle fully too hundyrd pace  
So was it, certen, in whech thei gadered were,  
Sytyng in her cownsell. Thoo men that were there,  
Thei mett it hemself, thei seyd it was soo —  
105 Swech howses in this world ar not many moo.
- in company*  
*measured*
- A grete lorde was chose there amongis hem alle  
To tell her wylle; spekere thei sey he was —  
I wot not veryly what that men him calle.  
He went ful esyly forth a ful soft pas  
110 Tyll he was come ryght befor the face  
Of this meke lady and than thus he seyd:  
“Myn sovereyn lady, ye schull not be dysmayde.
- very quietly*
- “Ye schall forgeve — and that I pray yow here —  
Thow I to yow sey treuth as I must nede.  
115 I am a servaunt, for I hafe take wage and hyre  
Of yow, my lady, and that in many stede.  
I am chose eke the nedys for to bede  
Of all youre reume, of lordys and of othyr.  
I except ryght noon, for certenly youre modyr
- wages and salary*  
*on many occasions*  
*to voice the needs*  
*realm*
- 120 “As in this case is ryght on of hem:  
Sche wyll and thei, that ye, my lady dere —

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- So wyll my lord the Duke of Tyre, youre hem  
(I sey not fals, for he is present here) . . . . . *uncle*
- 125    What schuld I lengere hyde now my matere:  
Ye must now leve youre stody and youre bokys  
And tak youre solace be feldys and be brokys.
- “Thynk on youre kyn, thynk on youre hye lyne:  
If ye lef thus the elde auncetrye *live thus*  
Schall fayle in yow. There is no dyvyne *die out*
- 130    Ne phylyssophre here wyll sey that I lye,  
For I sey thus: onto oure goddys hardylye *certainly*  
It is not plesaunce that ye schuld thus doo;  
It pleseth hem bettyr and ye consent ther-too *pleasure if*
- “And eke youre puple that ye a husband have,  
135    A real lorde whech may us alle defende.  
The goddys frenchep if ye wyll kepe and save,  
Onto this purpose ye mote nede condescende — *agree*  
Youre puple gretly therby schuld ye mende. *benefit*
- 140    Excuseth not that wyll noght be excusede;  
There is swech choys, it may not be refusede.
- “What lord is that if onys he myght yow see *once*  
But he wold have yow? Mech more, dare I sey,  
If he knew youre cunnyng, as now do we, *wisdom*  
He wold desyre yow in all manere weye — *in every way*
- 145    His crown, his kyngdam, wold he rathere leye *lose*  
Than he schuld want youre noble wyse presence. *lack*  
Who se yow onys desyryth not youre absence! *Whoever lays eyes on you*
- “Therfore, lady, youre servauntis are now here  
Besekyng that ye wyll of youre grace *Beseeching*
- 150    Ope youre eres and lyst to oure prayere. *Open; listen*  
For this cause only came we to this place  
Ryght all in feere. Ye may us graunte solace  
Or peyne and sorow, ryght as ye lyst to chese: *it pleases you*  
Youre answere, lady, schall cause on of these.”

Book 2

## Chapter 2

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 155 | Ful astoyned and all abasched sore<br>Was this lady whan sche herd him than.<br>“O noble Godd,” thowt sche, “that I now wore<br>No qwen ne lady, for I ne wote ne can<br>Voyde the sentens of this ilke wyse man.                                                                                                     | astonished; taken aback<br>if only I were<br>do not know how nor am able to<br>Refute the wisdom; same<br>private plan<br>be revealed |
| 160 | My pryyv counsell, whech I hafe bore long,<br>Now must it owte, and that thynkyth me wrong,                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                       |
| 165 | “For if I schewe that I so long hafe bore,<br>The pryyvest poynt of my perfeccyoun,<br>Me thynkyth swyrly than that I hafe lore<br>The hye degré of my devocyoun.<br>Whan veynglorye comth, vertu is than gon;<br>Vertu serveth to plese Godd only<br>And not the puple — ryght thus redd hafe I.                     | reveal; borne privately<br>most intimate<br>surely; will have lost                                                                    |
| 170 | “If I concelle my counsell, than schall I falle<br>In indignacyon of all my puple here;<br>If I denye her askyng in this halle<br>And tell no cause, I put hem more in dwere:<br>Whech thing I do I fall evyr in dawngere.<br>Yet wondyr I sore that my hert is sett<br>On swech a poynte that I cannot lett,         | conceal<br>doubt<br>Whatever I do<br>greatly<br>abandon                                                                               |
| 175 | “And yet it is ageyns myne owyn lawe,<br>Whech I am swore to kepe and to defende.<br>My mynd it faryth ryght as on the wawe<br>A grete schyppe doth, for whan he best wende<br>To be escaped, than comth the wawys ende,<br>He fyllyth the schyppe and forth anon is goo.<br>Onto this poynt I drede I am browte too. | goes; waves<br>ship; thought<br>waves'<br>at once<br>brought                                                                          |
| 180 | “I supposed ful welle to leve now at myn ese;<br>Now must I leve my stody and my desyre,<br>My modyr, my kyn, my puple, if I wyll plese.<br>I mote leve stody and wasch my boke in myre,<br>Ryde owte on huntyng, use all new atyre.                                                                                  | live as I please<br>fashionable dress                                                                                                 |
| 185 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                       |

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- Godd, Thu knowyst my pryy confessyoun: *intimate thoughts*  
 I have made all anothyr professyoun.<sup>1</sup>
- 190 “If I myght kepe it, I schall yet, and I may *if I may*  
 Contynue the same, to Godd I make a vowe.  
 Schuld I now chaunge my lyffe and myn aray  
 And trace the wodes abowte undyr the bow? *ride through the woods; boughs*  
 I loved it nevyr; how schuld I love it now?”
- 195 Thus thowt this mayde be hirself alone, *to herself*  
 And aftyr softly with syhyng gan sche grone. *sighing; to groan*
- Sche spak than lowde — thei myght here at onys: *hear*  
 “Gramercy, lordes,” sche seyd, “of youre good wylle! *Mercy*  
 Ye sey youre feldys and youre wonys *fields; dwellings*
- 200 Are in poynt for me to scatyr and spylle<sup>2</sup> *Unless*  
 But if I take a lorde now me untylle  
 Whech may put all this in governaunce;  
 Than schuld ye hafe bothe rest and abundaunce.
- “I suppose weeble that it schulde be soo.  
 205 Yet wylle ye graunte, pardé, of curtesye, *by God!*  
 That syth this thing muste nedys goo ther-too  
 That I myselfe in whom all this doth lye  
 May hafe avysement. I am not schape to flye  
 Ne to fle neyther. Me thinkyth ye everychon  
 210 Have ful gret hast and I haf ryght noon. *deliberation; about to  
 every one of you  
 haste*
- “I am but yunge; I may full weel abyde:  
 Thus schuld ye sey to me if I had hast. *haste*  
 Lete all this matere as for a whyle now slyde  
 Tyll mo yerys of myn age be past.
- 215 Therwhyles wylle I bothe lok and tast *Meanwhile; try*  
 Where I wylle sett me and telle yow myn avyse.  
 I wold noght men seyd I were hasty or nyce, *attach myself; plans  
 foolish*

<sup>1</sup> *I have professed a completely different lifestyle [than they wish for me]*

<sup>2</sup> *Are about to be dispersed and ruined because of me*

## Book 2

- 220     “For hasty schall I noght be in this matere.  
       I sewyre yow here I wyll no husband take  
       But if I telle my frendys whech be here,  
       Lest that I renne in daunger and in wrake.  
       What schuld I lengere to yow tale now make?  
       Tyme goth fast — it is full lyght of lope —  
       And in abydying, men seyn, there lyghte hope.
- 225     “Thus schall we bothe with avysement werk.  
       Best it is, me thinkyt, that we do soo.  
       Late the puple for a whyle jangyll and berk,  
       Spek at her lust, so are thei won to doo.<sup>1</sup>  
       The choys is myne; I mote consent ther-too.  
       Tyme of avysement to have, I pray yow.  
       Thys is all and sum that I wyll sey as now.”

## Chapter 3

- 235     Than ros a lord, a man of gret stature,  
       A rych man, eke, thei sey that he was.  
       His wordes were taut him with ful besy cure  
       Of a clerke there, the more and eke the lasse.<sup>2</sup>  
       His wytte was not sufficient as in this cas  
       To speke in this matere, ryth thus he thouth.  
       “Myn owe lady,” he seyde, “it is ful dere abowth,
- 240     “The absens of youre fader now in this land.  
       I have lost myselfe, and so have othir moo,  
       A thousand pownd that was thoo in my hand  
       Whan that he deyed and went us thus froo —  
       The same have othir men; I am sekyr it is soo.  
       We are come heder to here now youre entent  
       In this matere, and ye haske avysement.

<sup>1</sup> *Say what they want, as they are used to doing*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 234–35: *A clerk there had carefully taught him what to say, down to the least detail*

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- “Ye myth a be vysyd lady wele i-now  
 Long or this tyme if ye had lyste.<sup>1</sup>  
 In long abydyng is ful lytyl prowe. profit  
 All that evyr I mene I wold that ye wyste:  
 250 It is more sykyr a bryd in youre fyste certain a bird in hand  
 Than to have thre in the sky above  
 And more profitabyl to youre behove. success
- “The gray hors whyl his gras growyth  
 May sterfe for hunger,’ thus seyth the proverbe. die  
 255 Every wyse man as weeble as I now knowyth  
 The sore may swelle long or the herbe before  
 Is growe or rype — a grete clerke of Viterbe Viterbo, Italy  
 Seyd so sumtyme and wroot it in his boke.  
 We have ful grete nede to spye and to loke inquire
- 260 “That we now may have a kyng to rewle us and yow,  
 To governe the lawe that it schuld not erre,  
 To be to traytourys both cruel and row, rough  
 To lede the lordys whan thei go to werre: war  
 Fro youre kend this governauns is full ferre!  
 265 Youre blod is not so myty for to abyde mighty  
 To se man be slain be youre owyn syde,
- “To se the boweles cut oute of his wombe  
 And brent befor him whyll he is on lyve, alive  
 To se man served as thei serve a lombe, lamb  
 270 Thorowoute his guttys bothe rende and ryve, tear and cut  
 To se hem draw oute be foure and be fyve.  
 Youre pytous hert myght not se this chaunce,  
 For it wold mak yow to fall in a trauns. event  
faint
- “Therfore it is best to yow, thus we think,  
 275 To take a lord that may suffyr all thyss — endure  
 Whech may se men flete and also se hem synk, float  
 Suffyr hem to smert whan thei do amys, hurt; wrong

<sup>1</sup> Lines 246–47: *Lady, you could have thought this over well enough / By now, if you had wanted to*

*Book 2*

Whan thei do weell, to hafe reward and blys.  
Ryght thus I mene, I mak no lengere tale:  
280     But ye do thus, grettere growyth oure bale."

*Unless; harm*

**Chapter 4**

- Thys lady answerd onto this lord ageyn,  
"My faderes absence is more grevous to me  
Than to yow alle; this dare I savely seyn.  
And thow he levyd, he were no more, pardé,  
285     But o man: withoute men what myght he<sup>1</sup>  
Doo or sey but as o man alone?  
What nedyth yow now for to make swech mone
- safely  
by God!*
- complaint*
- "For losse of o man? Ye coude whyll he was here  
Defende youreself thow he with yow not yede.  
290     Youre enemyes alle ye put in full grete dwere;  
Than were thei kept full low in full grete drede.  
My lord my fadyr whan dyd he you lede?  
Not many yerys befor that he went hens.  
As ye dyd than, dothe now in his absence.
- 295     "Ye chose a capteyn thoo, so may ye now,  
To whom obeyd as in that jornay  
Every lord, loked he nevyr so row —  
Thei durst not onys to him than sey nay!  
Goode serys all, of pacyens I yow pray,  
300     Why may ye not do now as ye dyd thanne?  
What nedyth yow thus to gruch and to banne?
- went  
doubt*
- during that campaign  
rough*
- complain and curse*
- "Ye sey it is lost all that was sumetyme  
Wonne with swerde: I wote as weell as ye  
That many a theft and many a gret cryme  
305     Was hyd fro him be craft and sotelté.  
And summe were punychyd — he wold it schuld so be —
- i.e., King Costus; cunning*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 284–85: *Even if he still lived, by God, he would be no more / Than one man: without others what could he*

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And yet of this punchyng oft he knew ryght nowt.  
May it not now in the same case be wrowte?

*be done in the same manner*

310 "I vouch save ye ryd and eke ye renne  
To seke youre enmyes whech do yow this wrong,  
Distrayfe her cuntré, her houses down ye brenne,  
The traytours eke be the nek ye hem hong.  
What word seyd I evyr, eythere schort or long,  
Schuld let your corage? I pray yow tell me now!  
315 Be good to me ryght as I am to yow."

*vouchsafe, i.e., permit; run*

*burn*

*hinder*

## Chapter 5

Than ros a reall, a rych lord ther-with-alle;  
Thei called him Clarus, Prince of Capados.  
Upon his knees anoon he gan down falle.  
"Madame," he seyd, "youre conseytes are full clo  
Youre name is spronge, your cunnyng and youre  
All these are know; thei may not now be hyd.  
And yet ye may neyther doo ne byd

*prince*

## *Cappadocia*

*thoughts; secret*

*renowned; wisdom; fame*

*known*

“As may a man. Your fadyr — God hafe his sowle —  
As seyd this lord is ded and go us froo.  
Whatsoevyr men crye or elles gaule,  
We are full lykly to falle in care and woo.  
Come now who schall, he is i-pased and goo,  
And ye be left for to be oure qween.  
It lykyght us weel that it schuld so been,

*pleases*

330 "But yet the chaunge is wondyrfull, me think:  
For a man a woman now we have —  
And that a mayde. It may in no wey synk  
In oure hertys that ye myght us save.  
I schall sey treuthe, thow ye think I rave:  
335 Ye wyll wepe and ye youre fyngyr kytle!  
How schuld it than setyll in oure wytte

*incredible*

*if you; cut*

*could we be persuaded*

“Ye myght redresse all that was now spoke?  
A kyng is ordeynd ryght to this entent:

*Book 2*

- 340 To kepe his castelys that thei be not broke,  
 To kepe his puple that it be not schent. *ruined*  
 Now is this werk all othyrwyse i-went:  
 To kepe all this a woman is not strong enow — *enough*  
 We must enforce us therfore to kep yow. *strengthen; protect*
- 345 “And thow ye be the fayrest that beryth lyffe *is alive*  
 (For so wene I and so wene many moo) *think*  
 It wyll become yow full welle to be a wyffe,  
 Myn owne lady, and ye wold enclyne ther-too  
 To bryng forthe frute eythere on or too — *if you would be so inclined*  
 It schuld plese us thow that ye had twelve!  
 350 It schuld plese your modyr and eke youreselvē.
- 355 “All youre rychesse, what schall it us avayle  
 Hyd in youre cophyr and kept now thus clos? *coffer; guarded*  
 Ye may therwith make plate and mayle. *armor*  
 I dare well sey the lond of Capadoos,  
 If ye had on whech myght bere up your loos, *honor*  
 Wold pay a raunson with full good entent *ransom; humor*  
 So that ye wold onto this thing consent.
- 360 “And thow ye be the wysest of this worlde,  
 Yet have ye not o thing that ye wante:  
 Theroft youreself wyll bere me recorde. *bear witness*  
 Nature can not — ne wyll not, pardé — plante  
 Myght and strength in women, for thei it want.  
 In stede of strength, of nature thei hafe beuté.  
 Thow ye be fayre and wyse, yet want ye *Though*
- 365 “Bodyly strength wer-with ye schuld oppresse  
 Thoo wykkyd dedys whech reygne now ful ryve. *with which*  
 With deth and vengeance schuld ye thoo so dresse, *Those; rife*  
 Were it in man, in mayden, or in wyffe. *set right*  
 I tell yow sekyr, this is a kyngys lyffe:  
 370 He may not hafe his worchepe all with ese;  
 Summe of his puple oft he must dysplese.

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“Theyse thingis fall not, us thinkyth, to youre persone.<sup>1</sup>  
 Wherfore we wyll and ye consent ther-too  
 Ordeyn a meen: ye schall not lyve alone —  
 375 Spouseles I mene — as ye yet evyr hafe doo.  
 This is oure erand; my tale is fully doo.  
 Sped this matere, hold us not long suspens,  
 Than is it weeble wared, bothe labour and oure expens.”

*if you  
course of action*

*Expedite  
will rewarded*

### **Chapter 6**

“Gramercy, syr,” to him than seyd the qween,  
 380 “Be the tendyrnesse that ye to me have,  
 Ye love me weell and that is now i-sene;  
 Ye love my worchep, my londys wold ye save.  
 I thank you, syre, I sey not that ye rave,  
 But wysely spek all that ye have told.  
 385 And for this talkyng, I am to yow beholden.

*Mercy*

*By*

*honor*

*beholden*

“But evyr me thynkyth whan I avyse me weell,  
 If it so streyt were as ye sey with yow —  
 Whech dysse wold lek me nevyr a deell —  
 For if it were thus as ye pretendyn now  
 390 Ye schuld not hafe neyther feld ne plow  
 In no pes, if it were all as ye sey.  
 Therfore me thynkyth ye walk no trew wey.

*consider well*

*would not please me at all*

*allege*

*i.e., you mislead me*

“And as for conquest, seres, care ye ryght nowte.  
 Youre lordchepys frely wune were to your handys  
 395 Or ye coude goo and or that ye were wrowte.<sup>2</sup>  
 Ye fawte nevyr yet for townes ne for no landys.  
 Where ar your prisoneres whech ye led in bandys?  
 There was no werre syth that I was bore  
 But on oure borderes, and ye care not therfore,

*do not mind about that*

*fought*

*war since  
about that*

---

<sup>1</sup> *We think these practices are not suitable to you*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 394–95: *Your lordships (i.e., the titles and properties) were nobly won / Before you could walk, even before you existed, and only later came into your hands*

Book 2

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 400 | “For we fynde the sowdyoures that be there.<br>Ye pay ryght not — ne nowte I coveyte ye doo.<br>Pluk up youre hertes and be nothing in fere!<br>Arme yow not but if we send yow too.<br>Ye dwelle in pees and so do many moo;<br>Pleyn yow nowte untyll ye fynd grevaunce.<br>Ye sey also that I wold falle in trauns                                    | <i>provide for the soldiers<br/>nothing, nor do I desire you to<br/>fear</i>                                                                      |
| 405 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>Complain<br/>stupor</i>                                                                                                                        |
| 410 | “If domys were kepte evene as thei schuld be<br>And peynes gove to hem that schuld be ded.<br>I am a woman; therfore, it semyth not me<br>Ovyr swech bochery for to hold my hed —<br>Myn hert wold drupe hevy as any led<br>For very ptyé: thus ye gune replye<br>Ryght for ye wold I schuld be wedded in hye.                                           | <i>judgments were rendered<br/>punishments given; those who; executed<br/>it is not fitting for me<br/>Over such butchery to preside<br/>sink</i> |
| 415 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>Because you wished; in haste</i>                                                                                                               |
| 420 | “Her-to I answerē as ye mote nede sey alle:<br>A kyng, ye wote weill, hath so gret powere<br>Ovyr his puple that whom he wyll he schall<br>To mak hem fre or make hem pryonere;<br>He may graunt lyffe to hem that be in dwere<br>And ek in hope for to be hang and drawe.<br>Thus may he doo; he is above the lawe.                                     | <i>must all agree<br/>dissension<br/>expectation; drawn</i>                                                                                       |
| 425 | “Than I myselfe, rathere than I schuld swonne,<br>Myght graunt hem lyffe, thow thei not worthy were:<br>Thus dyd my fadyr full often in this towne —<br>Loke wel abowte for sume of hem be here<br>Whech were thus saved, I am nothing in dwere.<br>I alowe youre motyves whan that thei be owte. <sup>1</sup><br>I merveyle also that ye consydyr nowte | <i>faint<br/>doubt</i>                                                                                                                            |
| 430 | “That for because a kyngys gentyll hert<br>Hath swech fredam growyng ryght withinne,<br>Whan he may not se men blede or smert,<br>Therfor his deputees, the more and ek the mynne,                                                                                                                                                                       | <i>generosity<br/>lesser</i>                                                                                                                      |

<sup>1</sup> I accept your arguments, when they amount to anything.

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- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 435 | <p>“Swech deputees, sere, hafe we many and fele<br/>     That of swech materys nedys mote hem melle.<br/>     What man that sle, fyght, robbe, or stele,<br/>     Oure offyceres ful sikirly schul him qwelle —<br/>     Nay not thei, but the lawe that is so felle,<br/>     He sleth this meny; thei ar in this cas<br/>     Servauntyss to lawe, the more and eke the las.</p> | <i>sir; lots<br/>     must occupy themselves<br/>     kills, fights<br/>     certainly; subdue<br/>     ruthless<br/>     executes; group [of trespassers]</i> |
| 440 | <p>“All her powere, ye wote weell, of us thei have,<br/>     As thei had evyr in my fadyres lyffe.<br/>     Let hem deme, lette hem spylle and save:<br/>     This longyth to hem — I kepe not of this stryffe.<br/>     Be it to man, be it to mayde or wyffe,<br/>     That do amys, be hem thei dampned bene.<br/>     I schall be to juges bothe kyng and qween.”</p>          | <i>they have from us<br/>     judge; execute and pardon<br/>     is their duty; concern myself<br/>     wrong; condemned</i>                                   |

## Chapter 7

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 450 | The Erle of Jaff was called Syr Ananye.<br>He stode up than and to this lady sayde,<br>Agens hir answere he gan ryght thus replye:<br>“It is full perlyous,” he seyd, “to be a mayde<br>And eke a qween. Ye may be full sone afrayde<br>If any rysyng or ony scisme were sterde,<br>For of a kyng men wold be more ferde            | Jaffa<br><i>In response to schism; stirred up afraid</i>                                                                                            |
| 455 | “Than thei of yow are, it is no dowte.<br>The puple erryth: behold ye not how fele<br>Thorowowte youre londe in every town abowte<br>Renn as woodemen? Ye may it not consele:<br>Thei fyght, thei flyght, thei robbe, and thei stele.<br>All this aray me thynkyth ye sett at nowte;<br>It faryth as ye of all this thing ne rowte! | <i>do wrong; how many</i><br><i>Run; wildmen; conceal</i><br><i>fight; flee</i><br><i>disturbance; treat as nothing</i><br><i>do not care about</i> |
| 460 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                     |

Book 2

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                  |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | “Ye sett more, be Godd that sytt above,<br>Be on old boke and eke more deynté have<br>Than be werre or justys, lust or elles love.<br>Men sey thei schall bryng yow to your grave.<br>What do your bokys? Pardé thei wyll not save<br>Neyther man ne best; thei dull a mannys mende,<br>Apeyre his body, his eyne thei make blynde.  | <i>You set more store<br/>pleasure</i>                           |
| 465 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>Impair; eyes</i>                                              |
| 470 | “He that taute you fyrst this scole, I pray<br>He mote be hangyd — I trow he is worthy:<br>He hath yow browte and put in sweche aray<br>That myrth and joye ye late hem slyde forby!<br>Evyr at bokes ye sytte, knele, and lye.<br>Alas, madame, who lese ye youre tyme —<br>I wepe so sore I may no lengere ryme!                   | <i>educated you<br/>habits<br/>let them pass you by<br/>lose</i> |
| 475 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                  |
| 480 | “For Goddys lofe and for youre puples sake,<br>Chaunge now youre lyff and let your bok be styll.<br>Loke no lengere upon thoo letteres blake,<br>For, be my trouth, stody schall yow spylle.<br>Tend onto myrth; tak a lord you tylle:<br>Than schal your body be full heyll and qwert,<br>And mech more ese schull ye haf at hert.” | <i>truly<br/>unto you<br/>healthy; sound</i>                     |

## Chapter 8

- |     |                                                   |                                                  |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|     | “Ye wold allgate that I schuld wedded be          | <i>on all sides</i>                              |
| 485 | Ryght for this skylle: ye sey men drede me nowte; | <i>for this reason</i>                           |
|     | If any scysme were reysyd in this cuntré          | <i>schism; raised</i>                            |
|     | It were not likly be me for to be browt           |                                                  |
|     | To ony good end — men sett at me ryth nowt.       | <i>take no account of me</i>                     |
|     | Ye schuld drede more a man than ye do me.         |                                                  |
| 490 | And I sey thus: I knowe as wele as ye             |                                                  |
|     | “A man alone, be he nevyr so wyse                 |                                                  |
|     | Ne eke so strong, he may no more, iwys,           |                                                  |
|     | But evyn as I may. His puple shal be nyse         | <i>Indeed, he may do no more than I; foolish</i> |
|     | And eke evele tetched; the powere is not his      | <i>ill-dispositioned</i>                         |
| 495 | To amend alone all that is amys:                  |                                                  |

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- His lordes must help to his governayle *governance*  
 And elles his labour it wil lytyl avayle.
- “Help ye on youre syde as I shal on myn!  
 Loke ye be trew onto my crowne and me,  
 Lete no treson in youre hertys lyn, *lay*  
 Than schal this lond ful wele demened be. *managed*  
 O noble God, who grete felicité *what*  
 Shuld be with us if we were in this plyth;  
 We myth sey than oure levying were ful ryght. *living*
- 505 “Wyl ye now here how puple may make her kyng *hear*  
 To erre sumtyme and sumtyme to do amys?  
 Ryth be ensaumple shal I prove this thing:  
 There was a kyng here besyde, iwys, *indeed*  
 Fere in the est, that lyved in joy and blys *Far*  
 510 In Babilony; evene Nabugodonoser he hyth. *Nebuchadnezzar; was called*  
 His puple made him to do ageyn the ryth, *do wrong*
- “For he had with him in maner of a preest,  
 A ful goode man and of grete abstinenese.  
 Ful pryvy thingis bare he in his breest; *secret*  
 515 He coude telle all of derth and of pestilence. *famine*  
 O thing there was in whech he dede offence:  
 He worshiped not swech goddes as we doo. *the same*  
 Danyel he hyth. But among lyones too *was called; two*
- “Was he putt, ryth for the puple so wolde. *because*  
 520 The kyng durst not wythstand hem in that cas; *oppose them*  
 He must do soo, thow he wold or nolde.  
 Ful sore repentaunt aftyrward he was,  
 For Danyell was saved ryth be Goddys grace.  
 (Whech God he servyd God, wold I myght Him know,  
 525 That noble Godd that made His myght so growe
- “In swech lowe puple.) Here may ye see and ken *know*  
 For puples crying a kyng may oftyn erre. *Because of*  
 The woode opynyon of swech fonned men *crazy; foolish*  
 Makyth a lord oft tyme to do the werre, *worse*

Book 2

- 530 To make him mevyd, to sett him oute of herre. *incite him; off his hinge*  
 Fy on her cry whan thei no reson hafe!  
 Ye sey alsoo, for that ye wold me save,
- “I must leve book, I must leve stody eke. *leave*  
 My bokes, seres, Godd help, what greve thei yow?
- 535 This wordly governaunce were not worth a leke *leek (i.e., worth nothing)*  
 Ne were these bokes; thei are to mannes prow  
 Full necessarye, for oure myndys are swech now  
 It slydyth forby, all that evyr thei know,  
 And be oure bokes ageyn full fast thei grow. *Were it not for; improvement*
- 540 “How schuld we wete that the fyrst man of alle  
 Had hyght Adam and eke his wyff Eve  
 Save that in a booke whech Genesis thei calle?  
 (I sey it onys wrete and red it on a eve; *in writing; read; evening*  
 Yet is that book not of oure beleve
- 545 Receyved as yet; me thinkyth it must nede,  
 Because he tellyth the begynnyng and the dede *must be*  
*it tells*
- “Of oure olde faderes.) Who schuld eke know  
 The worthy conquestys of elderys that were here  
 If bokes teld hem not only be rowe? *rehearse; one after another*
- 550 We can forgete that we dyd this yere! *what*  
 Wherfore oure bookes tell to us ful clere  
 Swech manere thinges as we had forgete.  
 Youre opynyons, therfore, sere, now must ye lette, *sir; abandon*
- 555 “For Goddys lawe, ne mannys, schuld not be know  
 Ne were oure bokes, this dare I savely say. *Without our books; safely*  
 Oure preestes arn fayn to loke hem be row  
 Ageyn a feest, ageyn an holyday, *eager; systematically*  
 Whan thei wyll preche of any swech aray,  
 Eythere of Jubiter or Neptune, his brothyr. *In preparation for*  
*conditions*
- 560 Leve we than this matere and carp of summe othyr. *speak*
- “Blame not swech thing that stant in full grete stede! *great respect*  
 Curse not my mayster, for than wyll I be wrothe. *angry*  
 It semyth you bettir for to bydde youre bedde *You would do better to say your prayers*

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- 565 Than to sey swech wordes. (Eke it is ful lothe  
 To me to sey thus, but only for myn othe<sup>1</sup>  
 Whech that I made to meynteyn al maner thing  
 Whech longe to our goddis and to her offring.)” govern

**Chapter 9**

- Than spake a lord thei called Ser Hercules,  
 The Prince of Paphon, of that gret cuntré. Paphos (in Cyprus)
- 570 Every man sat stille and held his pees  
 To here the speche, the tale whech that he  
 Began to telle, for his auctorité  
 Was thoo ful gret in special for his age. hear  
especially  
 His wordes were acordyng to his visage. matched his appearance
- 575 Thus he began: “It isbettir, my lady dere,  
 In swech a caas whan it mote nedis be doo,  
 To do it at onys than for to lyve in dwere  
 And for to abyde eythir yer or too. When something must be done  
perplexity
- 580 Take ye no heed? Consyder ye not ther-too,  
 How Ovyde seyde and wrote it in his booke:  
 ‘Whan thing is newe bewar betyme and looke What  
soon
- “For to amende it, for medecyn comyth ovyr late  
 Whan that the man his ded and hens i-goo  
 And with his frendes born oute at the gate’? too late  
is dead; gone hence  
carried
- 585 Youre londes, lady, if ye take heed ther-too,  
 Ly fer asunder, for fro this cuntré, loo, apart; indeed  
 Whech we be inne rith onto Famagost  
 Is many a myle. How schuld ye with your host
- 590 “Ryde sweche a way? And if that ye schuld sayle, sail  
 It wold yow fese the salt watter row. scare; rough  
 Youre hert wold drede, withoutyn ony fayle;  
 That I sey now, me thinkyth it for youre prow. benefit  
 The lond of Cipre that I cam thorow now

<sup>1</sup> Lines 564–65: *And I hate / Having to say this; I do so only because of my oath*

Book 2

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                      |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 595 | Is eke ful ferre. It mote nedes be a man<br>Whech schal, wil, and eke that may and can,                                                                                                                                                            |                                                      |
|     | “Do al this labour both in flesch and gost,<br>Ryde and seyle, labour to se his lande,<br>Sumtyme here, sumtyme at Famagost.<br>Thus shal he governe the lond, the see, the sand.                                                                  | <i>body and spirit</i>                               |
| 600 | Than may ye have youre bokes in youre hand<br>And stody youre fille; it shal not greve us.<br>Me thinkyth sewyrly that ye shul wil thus:                                                                                                           | <i>surely; wish</i>                                  |
|     | “Ye shul desyre to be more at youre ese,<br>To weld youre leysere as ye desyre to have.                                                                                                                                                            | <i>manage; leisure time</i>                          |
| 605 | There is mech thing that doth you oft displesse<br>Whech shuld not than. <sup>1</sup> Therfor, if ye wil save<br>Youre owne astate and thus no lenger wave<br>Both too and fro, doth be oure counsayle.<br>In tyme comyng it may yow mech avayle.” | <i>preserve<br/>rank; waver<br/>benefit you much</i> |

## Chapter 10

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 610 | “Gramercy, sere, of youre goode counsayle,”<br>Thus seyd the qween, “if ye be as ye were,<br>Youre myth and cunnyng may us mech avayle,<br>And, as me thinkith, no man schal us dere.<br>On Paphon or Cipre shal there be no were<br>Whil that ye lyve — herof I drede ryth nowth!<br>Now, wold God so, it were ful dere iboute | <i>Thank you, sir<br/>i.e., if you have not changed<br/>might challenge us<br/>war</i> |
| 620 | “Upon my body, in case that it stood soo<br>Thorow all my lond as it in Cipre stant! <sup>2</sup><br>I mith than stody, than myth I tend ther-to,<br>And al my wil therof now I want.<br>Ye shuld plese God if ye wold set and plant                                                                                            | <i>might<br/>do as I wish, as I now cannot</i>                                         |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 605–06: *I.e.*, *Were you to marry, you would not have so many annoying duties*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 616–18: *If only God would allow that at whatever cost — / Upon my body — things ran as smoothly / Throughout my land as they do in Cyprus*

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- Youre knythly maneres in yong men that be here,  
To lern hem just, I wolde wele qwite youre hyere. *knightly  
joust; reward; labors*
- “Of that gret godd ek whech governeth all batayle —  
Mars I mene — whos knyght ye hafe be founde,  
Ye schall haf worchep, thow ye hafe non avayle,  
To tech hem holde the schafte that be rounde.  
With youre praysyng my tale schuld more abunde  
But that we schuld noght preyse men in presence.  
630 Than in youre londe I lak not now the absence *been found [to be]  
success  
*I would praise you further  
to their faces  
do not feel the absence**
- “Of my lorde my fadyr; it is noght gretly aspyed  
His deth with yow. I sette cas ferthermore  
That if I were, as ye wolde, now newe alyede —  
Weddyd I mene — what schuld than youre sore  
635 Therby be esed? That man is not yet bore,  
Were he nevyr so wys, manfull, or stronge,  
Of hert fell, of body broode and longe, *detected  
newly allied  
how; grievances  
fierce*
- “That myght at onys be in all these places  
Whech ye spak of ryght now in youre tale.  
640 Thow he had plenteuously all the grete graces  
Whech kepe a man fro byttyr peynes bale  
And save him harmles, as withinne the wale  
Of a strong schyppe a man is bore alofte,  
Yet myght he noght, rode he nevyr so softe, *suffering bitter pains  
preserve; gunwale (plank)*
- 645 “Be in too places at onys. For ryght as a stone  
Whan he is layd in his naturall place  
May not that tyme be founde but there alone  
Where he was leyd, ryght so in this cas  
O man may not be in dyverse place  
650 And that at ones, fore be oure phylosophye  
It is condempned as for an heresye. *just as  
it; its  
but only there*
- “Therfore, ryght thus we conclude oure clause:  
Every body hath his naturall rest *habitats*  
Aftyr his kende or aftyr his pryvy cause  
655 Whech that the goddes ryght evene as hem lest *nature; individual reasons  
just as it pleases them*

## Book 2

Have departed. To opyne thus than holde I best:  
 He that is here, he is here and noowhere ellys.  
 Example, lo, I mene, whosoevyr that dwelles

*To conclude [an argument]*

- “At grete Alysaundyr, he dwelleth not in Famagost.  
 660 Than must every man nedys himself remeve  
 And cary his men thorowowte all the coost,  
 Ete at noone, rest him eke at eve,  
 Here and there as his jornay wyll preve.  
 Ryght so may I, thow I a woman be.  
 665 Than in your argument me thynkyth no difficulté.”

*remove  
coast*

*turn out*

### Chapter 11

The Duk of Damaske was wroth with this answerē.  
 He stooode up tho and thus he gan to sey,  
 “In my yong age ryght thus dyd I lere:  
 The pupyll must nedys onto the kyng obeye,  
 670 Love him and drede him evyr tyll thei deye,  
 For thei are bounde full sore thus to do,  
 And we wyll evyr hertly bowe ther-too.

*angry*

- “So is a kyng swore eke ful depe  
 To love his pupyll, be thei heye or lowe,  
 675 Ryght and trouth amonge hem alle to kepe  
 So that noo wrong schuld hem ovyrthrowe.  
 Thus are ye swore, madame; ye it knowe  
 Bettyr than I what is to breke an othe.  
 Reson may not, ne schall not, make yow wrothe.

*sworn also very deeply*

*truth*

*angry*

- 680 “Youre othe was this, if ye remembyr yow welle,  
 To ordeyn so for londe, for man and town,  
 That alle these thingys at every tyme and seele  
 Schuld be redressed, be it up or down,  
 For that thei longe alle onto youre crown.  
 685 This othe may ye not save non other wey  
 But if ye wyll onto oure wyll obeye

*govern  
occasion*

*are all subject to  
preserve*

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“For to be weddyd onto summe worthy man.  
 ‘Where is no lorde there is no lawe,’ men say.  
 Now, be my trouth, in no wey think I can *truly*  
 690 That ony woman if there come a fray  
 Schuld sese us sone, and specyaly a may. *subdue; immediately; maiden*  
 Ye bere us down with youre philosophye,  
 But at the last ye must bowe hardylye.” *surely*

**Chapter 12**

“Sere,” seyd the qwene, “ye make now swech a skyll *claim*  
 695 Ryght in your tale whech ye enforsoed now *set forth*  
 That I wold thus, and that it were my wylle,  
 That ye no governauns had. And I sewyre yow *assure*  
 I thowte it nevyre; it were not to my prow,  
 For thow I schuld noye alle oure oost,  
 700 Thys wote I well, it schuld touche me moste.<sup>1</sup>

“I kepe and schall myn othe whech I made — *oath*  
 Tyll that I deye I schall it nevyr breke.  
 Ye may wel carpe and in your langage wade, *speak; wallow*  
 New wordes reherse and new resones speke  
 705 Whech were rehersyd and have her answers eke. *their*  
 Me lyst not for to remembre swech thyng ageyn, *be reminded*  
 But thus mech, sere, to yow dare I seyn:

“As for my fadyr, he left yow in rest and pes *conflict*  
 And in noo debate, ne lykely for to be. *cease*  
 710 If there ryse ony, ye may youreself it ses *unless*  
 And but ye do ye be ontrewre to me,  
 Not to me oonly but to the magesté  
 Of my crown and gylty for to deye.  
 Avyse yow bettyr whan that ye lyst to seye.”

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 698–700: *It would not be to my advantage, / For though it (failure to govern) would vex everyone here, / I know very well that it would affect me most*

Book 2

Chapter 13

- 715 A gret clerk thoo stod up be himselfe  
 That was ful scharp in wytte as I wene.  
 In this matere he thowte thoo for to delve  
 A lytyll deppere; therfor unto the qwene  
 Thus he spake: "These lordes all bedene,  
 720 Thei can not, lady, aspye as yet youre art,  
 Who pregnantly ye can kepe youre part.  
*dig*  
*A little deeper*  
*together*  
*comprehend*  
*cogently; hold your own*
- "Ye arn lerned and so be thei nowte;  
 It is less wondyr thow thei concluded be.  
 But evyr wondyr I gretly in my thowte,  
 725 Ye sett no more be that hye degré —  
 Grettest of all, I mene the regalté.  
 Who schuld preys it but ye? I supposyd,  
 Aftyr the name with whech ye are losed,  
*not at all*  
*overcome*  
*royalty*  
*appreciate*  
*In keeping with; honored*
- 730 "That ye wold enhaunse this ilk degré  
 Most of all women. What eylyth now your wytte?  
 I am in poynt to leve it is noght ye.  
 This matere, lady, onto myn hert it sytte  
 So sore, iwys, me thynkyth it will it kytte.  
 735 Ye drynk so sore, I trowe, of poetrye  
 And most in specyale of him, Valerye,  
*promote*  
*ails*  
*inclined; believe*  
*cut*  
*so ardently, I daresay*  
*especially*
- "Whech wold, it semyth, that no man wedded schulde be:  
 He counseled so to on Ruffyn, ye know it welle.  
 'Ya ovyrwelle, what nede is for me  
 For to rehers the sorow, the langoure everydelle,  
 740 Whech that longyth unto that fykil whelle  
 Of spousalye,' as wrythyth this hold clerke,  
 Valerye, the moost in this forsayd werke.  
*Who wishes*  
*to a certain Rufinus*  
*But indeed,*  
*every bit*  
*marriage; old*  
*most of all; aforesaid*
- "But thow in the pore be often swech myschauns,  
 It is not thus in swech grete magesté  
*though*

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- 745 With whech we wolde yow, lady, now avauns.<sup>1</sup>  
 And evyr contrarye onto oure wylle are ye.  
 Thynk ye not what ye seyd wole late, pardé? *just recently*  
 Ye spake not long sythe and seyd ryght even thus:  
 Ye wold, ye seyd, have on to governe us. *someone*
- 750 “What schuld he be but he were a kyng?  
 There may no man governe this grete reem  
 But swech a man that is able in all thing *in every way*  
 To wedd you, and for my lord your em  
 May not wed you, neyther in whech ne drem,  
 Therfore he may not here as in this place *because; uncle*  
 Bere noo crown, for it stant in your grace *awake nor asleep*
- 755 “Who schall it bere; it longeth onto your ryght. *it is your right to decide*  
 Syth ye have graunted than that we schall have  
 A governoure to sett us in good plyth,  
 Than have ye graunted all that evyr we crave; *Since*  
 And fro this purpos este ye turn and wave  
 And sey ye wyll no husbonde have as yitte. *condition*
- 760 Beholdeth now wysely if so be that your wytte  
 “Be stedefastly i-sett evyr upon o poynt.  
 Me thynkyth nay, ye changen too and froo:  
 Now wyll ye, now are ye in another joynte,  
 And than wyll ye not. Who schuld we come ther-too *again*  
 To know youre purpos whan ye vary soo?  
 Let us know pleynly, lady, what ye mene!  
 770 We be youre men; thinkyth ye be oure qwene.” *yet* *direction*
- 765 *bear in mind that you*

**Chapter 14**

- “Sere,” seyd the qwene, “ye be lordes fele  
 And wyse also. What nedyth yow thus to care *many*  
 Whan ye be yung, lusty, and in good hele? *Why; worry*  
*health*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 743–45: *But though such bad fortune [in marriage] is often found among the poor, / It is not thus among such great royalty / As those with whom we now wish to promote you*

Book 2

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 775 | Eke your countres beth as now not bare<br>Neyther of corn, of men, ne of welfare.<br>But to yow, syr, I wondir mych more than ye,<br>For ye sey in this matere ye hafe merveyle of me;                                                                                                                                        | <i>I am much more amazed</i>                                                                                                     |
| 780 | “And where ye sey that I wold now disseyve<br>With my termes, my lordes, whech I love,<br>I pray yow hertly that ye wyll noght conceyve<br>Of me swech thing. For truly, it wold not prove.<br>Swech japes to make were not to behove,<br>Neythyr to me ne to non other wyght.<br>To be a dysseyvoure, it is a grett despyte. | <i>deceive<br/>arguments<br/>heartily; imagine<br/>prove true<br/>jest; befitting<br/>person<br/>deceiver; really despicable</i> |
| 785 | “Ye sayd eftstone that I dyspyse a kyng,<br>Eke that astate I trede all undyr fote.<br>Thow I be not enclyned to your askyng<br>As for to be weddyd whan I schall, Godd wote,<br>Yet am I come bothe of that stok and rote —<br>I may not hyde it for it is know so wyde —<br>Bothe on my faderes and on my moderes syde.     | <i>earlier<br/>office (i.e., kingship)<br/>Although<br/>stock; root (i.e., royalty)<br/>so well known</i>                        |
| 790 | “Schuld I than dyspyse that hye degré<br>Whech that is ordeynd be Goddys providens,<br>Whech is eke come be descense to me?<br>Godd forbede in me that gret offens,<br>Or that I were founde in swech neclygens.<br>I wote full weeble a kyng is all above,<br>Ovyr his ligys, bothe in fere and love,                        | <i>has been passed on to me<br/>subjects</i>                                                                                     |
| 795 | “And thei be to him, as it were, botraces<br>To schove and holde fast and stedefastly,<br>To meyten ryght ageyn all wrong traces.<br>A kyngis myght full small is, hardyly,<br>Withoute swech help, ye wote as weel as I.<br>But that ye lyst to seye as for youre part,<br>Than semeth it, sere, that I use treuly myn art   | <i>buttresses<br/>prop up<br/>maintain; paths<br/>certainly<br/>correctly</i>                                                    |
| 800 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                  |
| 805 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                  |

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- “And not pretende in no manere terme  
 Non othyr sentens than the terme schuld have<sup>1</sup>  
 But use my langage stably and ferme. *in a fixed and stable manner*  
 Myn entent is swech, so Godd me save,  
 810 And evyr schall be, I trow, nevyr to wave *trust; waver*  
 Fro that purpos whylys that I am here.  
 This is my mynde, if ye wyll it here.
- “Ye list also me eft to reprove *again*  
 For I graunted yow to have a governoure;  
 815 Therfore ye sey fully I gave you leve *permission*  
 To have a kyng, lord of town and toure. *fortress*  
 Lett be youre sophym! Your termes are but soure, *sophistry*  
 For thow ye bryng forth alle your hool bunch *whole*  
 Ye schall not mak an elne of a unch. *ell (about 45 inches); inch*
- 820 “I sett cas a man hath gove to you a best: *suppose*  
 It folowyth not ther-of that he gave yow an ox  
 He may as weell paye the more as the lest,  
 He may chese to geve yow a hors or a fox.  
 Your termes come owte of that sotyll box *subtle*  
 825 Of Aristoteles *Elenkes*, made in swych wyse *such a way*  
 Who so that lerneth hem, he schall seme wyse. *learns*
- “So graunted I to yow to have youre choys fre,  
 To chese a duke whech that schuld lede yow,  
 Not for to have no governauns upon me,  
 830 But to my byddyng he must lowte and bowe. *kneel*  
 All this entent yet eft I new alowe: *repeat*  
 Thus schull ye have your wylle and I schall have myne,  
 For of myn answere, sere, here is the fyne.” *conclusion*

### **Chapter 15**

- “Madame,” quod the Erle thoo of Lymasones, *Earl of Limousin*  
 835 “Alle these lordes that now here sitte

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 806–07: *And in not one of my words do I misrepresent, / With a meaning other than the word should have*

## Book 2

- Wondyr full sore of your grete resones. *impressive reasoning*  
 Thei wayle, eke, that ye have swech a wytte. *complain*  
 Youre wordes are scharpe — thei can bynde and kytte — *cut*  
 But had ye ben as other women are  
 840 Than schuld ye a ferde as other women fare. *have fared*
- “Youre scole wyll schath us, iwys, we skape it nowte. *learning; harm; escape*  
 We hoped of you to have had summe grete emprise, *noble act*  
 But all is turned nothing as we thowte.<sup>1</sup>  
 In many materes men may be ovyre wyse. *too wise*  
 845 Youre conceytes, madame, set hem in summe syse. *views; moderate them*  
 For love of Godd, whech is oure governoure, *who*  
 Accepte oure wyttes and leve sumewhat of youre.
- “We may weel doo rith as ye sayn, *exactly*  
 Chese us now a ledere, if that we list,  
 850 Whech schall be to us in manere of a chevetayn. *chieftain*  
 But in this lond it was yet nevyr wyst; *it is unheard of*  
 He myght be swech, paraventure, that he schuld fro your fyst  
 Drawe mech of youre lande evyn unto him.  
 Avyse yow ryght weeble; this matere is full dym. *Think carefully; very uncertain*
- 855 “Eke thow we peyned us alle him to plesē,  
 He schuld noght lyke us, certeyn, lyvyng yow;<sup>2</sup>  
 Oure hertes schuld not have no rest ne no ese  
 But he were lorde, ryght as ye be lady now. *just*  
 It is full harde ageyn wylle to bowe. *to submit willingly*  
 860 He cowde not be chose eke among ony of us,  
 And hard it is to leve in langoure thus.”

## Chapter 16

- Than answeryd schortely that fayre, swete may: *maiden*  
 “Sere erl,” sche sayde, “ye may full wele tryst *trust*  
 There is but o poynt to whech I sey nay,

<sup>1</sup> *But nothing has turned out as we expected*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 855–56: *Also, even if we labored to please him, / He would not please us, with you alive*

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- 865 And my cawse is this: I have yet no list  
 That ony man my maydynhod schuld twyst  
 But if I knew bettir what that he were.  
 Thus say I now and thus sayde I ere:
- purpose  
*take my virginity*  
*before*
- 870 "I wyll abyde tyll bettir tyme may come,  
 A yere or two tyll that I elder be,  
 For to wedde yet me thynk it full sone,  
 And to youre governawns thus I demene me.  
 If ye lyst not to have on, I graunt you two or thre  
 Whych men may governe withowtyn envye.  
 875 I profyr yow reson whatsoevyr ye crye."
- still; too soon*  
*submit myself*  
*one [regent]*  
*no matter what you argue*

**Chapter 17**

- Than spak the Amyrell of gret Alisaundre. *Admiral*  
 Thus he gan sey, ryght in this manere:  
 "Youre wordis to your wysdam are but slaundre,  
 Thus thynk your frendis all that sytte here.  
 880 Loke that ye throw not now all in the mere,  
 Loke that ye lese not now your gret namyd lose  
 Whan that ye may so heylly it endoos.
- are a disgrace to your wisdom*  
*throw everything into the sea*  
*lose; reputation*  
*increase it so highly*
- "How honour ye youre owne grete astate!  
 Why hate ye now that ilk lady must have?  
 885 Wherfore have ye swech thing in hate  
 That may youre londes and eke yourself save?  
 If ye were not my lady, I wold wene ye rave,  
 For yf all these conceytes had come of wyt  
 Mo folk than ye wold have usyd it!
- Look how you honor; rank*  
*what each lady*  
*despise such a thing (marriage)*  
*suppose*  
*opinions*  
*held them*
- 890 "Men seyn, madame, that he maddyth more  
 That doth lich no man, and is more oute of herre  
 Than is a foole that can not se before,  
 Ne can not knowe the best fro the werre.  
 Be ye ware betyme that ye no lengere erre.  
 895 Schape not youreself ne youre lond to schend;  
 Thynk now betyme what shal be the ende!
- is crazier*  
*like; off-hinge*  
*look ahead*  
*worst*  
*before it is too late*  
*Drive; ruin*

## Book 2

“Ye wote that I am keper of this grete cité,  
 And in this same cité, as now standyth it soo,  
 There is many a man and many dyverse degré,  
 900 Both Cristen and hethen frely com ther-too.  
 I woote not sumtyme what is best to doo.  
 I dwelle here soo in swech maner drede,  
 I knowe not my frend whan I have nede.

*know  
such a state of dread*

“I se also here anothir grete myscheffe  
 905 In you, madame, and ye lyst to here:  
 Ye be to every man both deynty and leffe,  
 And ye no man count not at a pere.  
 It wyll not prove, swech solen daungere.  
 Thinke on othir that have abyden long,  
 910 And at the last thei have walkyd wrong.”

*danger  
if it pleases you to listen  
esteemed; beloved  
pear (i.e., deem worthless)  
succeed; singular resistance  
waited (i.e., put off love)  
have chosen the wrong path*

### Chapter 18

“And dede thei so,” seyd this noble qwene,  
 “So shal I not wyth grace of God above.  
 My wyttes, I telle you, nothing besy been  
 In swech matere, neythir to lust ne to love.  
 915 Fy on tho hertes that evyr on swech thing hove!  
 Dred yow not of me in this matere:  
 Beth not aferd tyl ye more thing here.

*Although*

*have not been occupied*

*dwell*

“And as for youre puple that amonges you dwelle,  
 Have ye not powere and ful auctoryté  
 920 To put out hem whech beth of hert so felle,  
 Or hem that use falshed or sotylté  
 Be whech oure rewme happily harmed myth be?  
 Syth that ye may, why do ye not youre dede?  
 Thei that lett yow are worthy to be dede!

*malicious*

*treachery*

*perhaps*

*duty*

*hinder; dead*

925 “Ye are a man large and grete of bones:  
 Yf youre hert be as youre grete body is,  
 Ye ar ful lyckly to do more note at onys  
 Than othir thre men. A schame for soth it is  
 That swech a man schuld fere ony of his

*good; alone  
in truth*

*fear any of his subjects*

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- 930 Whan that he may correct hem himselfe —  
I wold wene ye alone shuld oppresse twelve!"

*overpower*

**Chapter 19**

- An othir duke gan than to approche.  
Ser Clamadoure thei calle his ryth name,  
A worthi man and Duke of Antioche,  
935 The qwenes cosyn, a lord of ful grete fame.  
"Thei that lerned you ar ful mech to blame,  
As in my conceyt," thus seyd he to the qwene,  
"For of swech wytt and of swech cunnynge ye been,

*who taught  
In my opinion  
cleverness*

- "It passith oure wittis; there is no more to say.  
940 Lych to an egle ye flye us all above,  
Yet in as mech as ye be yet a may  
And eke a qwene, it fallyth to youre behove  
To fostre hem whech you drede and love.  
Despise hem nowt thow that thei be dulle —  
945 Nout lich to you, for ye be in the fulle,

*surpasses  
maiden  
behoves you  
To take care of those who  
even though; stupid  
replete [with wisdom]*

- "As I suppose. I pray God, as for me,  
Grow ye no hiere — youre wyt is hye inow.  
Than thow oure wytt be not in swech degré,  
Yet oure good wyll must ye nedes alow —  
950 What shal men ellys wryte and sey of yow,  
That ye dysdeyne the pore creature  
And hauns youre witt out of all mesure.

*higher  
admit  
exaggerate*

- "What thing letteth yow that ye wil not us leve?  
And be we youre men and youre servauntis alle,  
955 Youre counsayl, lady, whech shal yow not greve,  
Ye shuld tel us, for it may so falle  
That thebettir end that mater schale  
Be browt to, for the mo wyse hedes there be  
In ony matere, thebettir is it, as thinkyth mee."

*keeps you from believing us  
Since  
council; distress*

Book 2

## Chapter 20

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 960 | “Cosyn,” sche seyd, “ye preyse sore a kyng,<br>But I wold wete of you the cause qwy<br>That o man above many shall have governing,<br>To byd and comaund, send both fer and nye.<br>What is the cause that he hath swech maystry<br>Ovyr all men and no man hath ovyr him —<br>He his lord of lond, of body, and of lym?                                       | <i>arduously<br/>why<br/>is; limb</i>                                             |
| 965 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                   |
| 970 | “In elde tyme, for stryff and for debate<br>Amongys the puple that reygned to and froo, <sup>1</sup><br>And for to staunch bothe envye and hate,<br>For to have reule, thei were compellyd ther-too<br>To chese a leedere hem for to governe thoo.<br>This was the cause why thei chose a kyng:<br>Thei schuld ellys a streve for many a thyng,                | <i>To restore order<br/>have striven</i>                                          |
| 975 | “For whan there is not ellys but pere and pere,<br>There is non as than wyll do for othy:<br>On seyth here, another seyth it schall be there. <sup>2</sup><br>This stryffe, it fallyth betwyx brother and brother;<br>Ageyn the son sumtyme stryvyth the modyr.<br>Than were thei chose ryght for this entent:<br>To bryng in reule thing that was wrong went. |                                                                                   |
| 980 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>into order</i>                                                                 |
| 985 | “Summe were chose for wysdam and for wytt,<br>Summe for strenght, summe for humanityté.<br>That I sey treuth, cronycles wytness it.<br>So than a kyng as in auctorité<br>Excellyth his puple, for there be as wyse as he<br>Oft tyme seyn ryth withinne his londe.<br>Than may ye se that all this servyle bonde                                               | <i>compassion<br/>testify to it<br/>in terms of<br/>though there are [people]</i> |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 967–68: *In past times, on account of the strife and conflict / That reigned everywhere among the people*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 974–76: *Because, when all are equal (peers), / There is no one who will do anything for anyone else: / One person argues for one opinion, another argues for the opposite*

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- “Came oute of fredam; the puple was sumetyme fre once  
 And had noo lord, but ych man reuled himselfe.
- 990 Thus cam thei than oute of her liberté:  
 Be her fre choys, ten of hem or twelve By their  
 Were draw awey; thei schuld no lengere delve dig  
 Ne do no laboure but reule the cuntré abowte;  
 And to her heed hemself yet must thei lowte. around them  
head; bow
- 995 “But for ye wyll allgate know myn hert, in any case  
 What that I thynk, I tell you platt and pleyn:  
 There schall nevyr man, be he nevyr so smert  
 Ne eke so strong, wynne me — that is to seyn,  
 Have me to spowse — I wyll no lengere feyn, dissemble  
 1000 But if he be so strong himself alone  
 That he be able to fyght with all his fone. foes
- “Thys is the ende and this my wyll now is; final word  
 Let us no more as in this matere speke.  
 So God my soule bryng onto his blys, unto  
 1005 This covenaund made ne schall I nevyr breke. covenant  
 Ye may well carp, stryve, clatyr, and creke;  
 Whan all is doo, this schall be the ende.  
 Your wordys therfore lett hem falle fro mende.” talk, argue, clatter; creak  
i.e., be forgotten

**Chapter 21**

- Than was there woo and waylyng eke enowe. woe; enough  
 1010 Thei morned alle and made mekyl mone much moaning  
 Whan that thei sey where-to the matere drowe. matter was concluded  
 Carefull wytys were thei than ilkone. Unhappy creatures; each one  
 The qween hir modyr gan to syghe and grone.  
 Sche seyd, “Doghtyr, this is noght your avayle; advantage  
 1015 Put not your purpos in swych grete perayle.”
- “Your dotyng dayes, I trow, now be come! days of dotage; believe  
 What wold ye hafe? Wote ye what ye say?

---

<sup>1</sup> Do not set your mind on a plan of such great peril

## Book 2

- 1020 Thorowoute this worlde, in Grece ne in Rome,  
Is no swych man that this thyng do may,  
Schuld kepe a londe of so gret aray,  
And he alone. What wene ye for to hafe?  
It is impossible that ye desyre and crafe!
- who may do this thing  
manage; complicated affairs  
all by himself  
what; crave*
- 1025 “Avyse yow bettyr and take another day  
Tyll that your wytte is chaunged and your thowte.  
Is your wysdam now turned to swech aray  
For to desyre swych thing as is nowte?  
Cursyd be thei that yow here-to browte  
Onto this errorur, to do as no man dothe,  
That every poynt thei varye fro the sothe.”
- such a condition  
nonexistent  
In every detail; truth*

### Chapter 22

- 1030 “Madame,” sche seyd, “this thing whech I schall doo,  
I not who sett it in myn hert, treuly:  
It is so fast I may not fle ther-froo;  
It clevyth so sore it wyll not slyde forby;  
Wheythyr I goo, sytte, knele, or elles ly,  
1035 For noo counseyll I may it not forsake,  
Ne for noo crafte awey I can it schake.”
- know not  
fixed so firmly  
clings; slide by*

### Chapter 23

- 1040 Than wept the qween and was in care and woo,  
And to the lordes sche sayd, “All is i-lorn!  
What schall we say? What schall we speke or doo?  
I wayle the tyme that evyr sche was born:  
Hir hert is harde and tow as is the thorn;  
Hir wytte is sett so hye I wot not where.  
There is no man that may hir here answere!
- i.e., Katherine's mother  
lost  
bewail  
tough*
- “What sey ye cosyn, lord and duk of Tyre?  
1045 What comyth hero? Can ye owte ferther say?
- anything*

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- For as wyth me, dunne is in the myre.<sup>1</sup>  
Sche hath me stoyned and browte me to abay: *stunned; to bay*  
Sche wyll not wedde; sche wyll be stylly a may.  
It schall cause my deth but mech sonere, loo, *sooner, indeed*  
1050 Because I leve thus in swech care and woo!"

## Chapter 24

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|      | Than roos this lord, em to the qween,<br>Gaufron he hyght. He was hir omagere<br>And Duke of Tyre. Mech thing had he seen;<br>He had passed, eke, many a grete daungere.                                                              | <i>uncle; i.e., Katherine<br/>subject</i>             |
| 1055 | He was the next of hir kynrod there;<br>He myght more boldly sey all his entent.<br>“Madame,” he seyd, “a thing that was nevyr ment,                                                                                                  | <i>overcome</i>                                       |
|      | “What ayles yow that ye desyre so sore<br>(And ye so yung and wys woman alsoo)                                                                                                                                                        |                                                       |
| 1060 | A thing that lawe forbedyth evyrmore?<br>(Nature eke wyll geve no leve ther-too!)<br>This ye desyre, ye wyll not twynn ther-froo.<br>What is youre wyll — I wolde wyte what ye mene —<br>Wyll ye youre bodye fro alle men kepe clene? | <i>will not consent<br/>depart<br/>pure</i>           |
| 1065 | “What boote was it to us that ye were born<br>If that ye wyll not do ryght as thei dede —<br>I mene youre fadyr and modyr yow beform?<br>Ye had not come ne sote now in this stede<br>Had not your modyr with mech care and drede     | <i>benefit<br/>did<br/>before you</i>                 |
| 1070 | Browt yow forth and to this lyght yow bore.<br>Folow ye the steppys of hem that went before!                                                                                                                                          | <i>would not have; sat; place</i>                     |
|      | “Ye do wrong ellys onto tho chyldryn alle<br>Whech ye are lykly to bryng forthe and bere.<br>What desese and what myschefe may falle                                                                                                  | <i>those</i>                                          |
| 1075 | But if ye do thus I trow youreself wot nere:                                                                                                                                                                                          | <i>distress; trouble; befall<br/>you have no idea</i> |

<sup>1</sup> As far as I am concerned, the horse is stuck in the mire (i.e., I am at a loss)

Book 2

To put all this thyng oute of drede and fere  
 And that this synne in yow schuld not be sene,  
 A kynges doghtyr to dey bothe mayd and qween,

*so that  
die*

1080 “I counsell yow thus and ye receyve it wold,  
 To fle this chauns of feyned chastité,  
 Hewe not so hye but if ye may it holde,  
 Desyre no thyng that may not gotten be.  
 Lerneth this lessoun if that ye lyst of me:  
 Sche is not born, me thynkyth, that myght wynne  
 1085 To grype a degré so grete as ye begynne.”

*if you would accept it  
venture; affected  
Climb  
be gotten  
from me  
grasp*

**Chapter 25**

“Uncle,” sche seyd, “and that were me full lothe  
 To clyme so hye that I myght not come down,  
 For, as I wene, that matere wold greve us bothe  
 And lese oure londe be cyté and eke be town,  
 1090 It were destruccyon eke to oure crown,  
 God He lede us that we come not there  
 To ley oure worchep so lowe undyr brere.

*I would hate  
lose  
God grant  
briars*

“But for ye say to me it schuld be joye  
 To hafe a lord schuld governe both yow and me,  
 1095 I sey yow nay, it schulde be but a noye  
 Onto myn hert. For if it were so that he  
 Were lovyng and gentyll and all his hert on me  
 That he loyvd me and I him best of alle,  
 What sorow hope ye onto myn hert schuld falle

*an annoyance  
do you expect*

1100 “If that he deyd or ellys were slain in felde  
 And I forgo that thing that I loved best?  
 It myght fall also, thow it hap but selde,  
 That this love betwyx us too myth brest  
 And part asundyr; this were a full hard rest  
 1105 Onto oure hert! Therfore to put alle oute of dowte:  
 I wyll not entere whil I may kepe me owte.

*died  
turn out; happen; seldom  
burst  
rough resting place  
enter; stay out*

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“What, counsell ye me swesch game to begynne  
Whech is not stedfast in lowe ne in astate? *commoners; nobility*  
In all her gladeness, sorow is evyr withinne,  
1110 And with her plesaunce eft medeleth debate. *pleasures; mixes*  
Therfore that lyfe I despynce and hate  
That hath noo sewyrté but evyr is variable; *security*  
I wold hafe lyffe and love that evyr is stable.”

## **Chapter 26**

“O mercy Godd,” seyd the gret Baldake,  
1115 He was thoo lord and prince of Palestyne,  
“There may no man my lady grype ne take; *grip; overcome*  
Hir craft is swech we may hir not enclyne. *cunning; persuade*  
There is no philosophyre ne ek noo divine *prophet*  
Whech sche dredyth — hir termys be so wyse.  
1120 Whatevyr we say, sche gevith of it no prycce. *she thinks it worth nothing*

“I sey yow, madame, as it is seyd before,  
We want a leedere, if we owte schuld doo. *need; anything*  
Bethynk yourself: fro tyme that ye were bore  
To Gorgalus tyme thre hundred yere and moo  
1125 It is, certeyn, and yet stod it nevyr soo  
As it stant now, madame, in no lond of youre.  
Of thing that ye rejoye we schall hafe langoure!” *distress*

## **Chapter 27**

“What wold ye hafe,” seyd this noble qween,  
“Have ye not gove to me bothe crown and londe?  
1130 I am your lady; my subjectis all ye been: *you all are my subjects*  
I wot full wele what longyth to the bonde *contract*  
Of regalté whech I hold in myn honde. *royalty*  
For every werk, sothely, it stant in too:  
In good councell and eke in werkyng alsoo.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 1133–34: *Every action, truly, has two parts: / Planning the deed, and actually carrying it out*

Book 2

- 1135 “The wytt and councell, syre, that schall be oure —  
 We schall telle how we wyll hafe it wrowte —  
 And all the labour and werke, that schall be youre.  
 Youre grete lordchype ye schul nogt have for nowte:  
 The lond of Palestyne, it was nevyr to yow boute;  
 not have for nothing  
 1140 It was gove youre elderes yow before  
 To serve my crown and ther-to be ye swore.”  
 bought by you

Chapter 28

- Than spake anothyr, lord of Nychopolye; Nicopolis  
 He seyd wordys whech seempt full wyse . seemed  
 His name was called thoo Syre Eugeny.  
 1145 To the qween he spake than ryght on this wyse: exactly in this way  
 “The estate of regalté is of swych a pryce value  
 Ther may no man sothly to it atteyne truly; attain it  
 But if he hath both powere and wytte, certeyne.
- “Therfor, sey I yett that we nedys muste  
 1150 Be rewled be on whech that hath these too, these two [qualities]  
 Bothe wytt in sadnessse and powere eke in lust,<sup>1</sup>  
 And elles oure reule sone wyll breke in two.  
 As other londys are reuled, let us be reulyd soo;  
 Let us suppose thei be as wyse as we,  
 1155 For thus he wrythyth, the astronomere Tholomé, Ptolemy
- ““Who-so wyll not doo as his neyboure werk  
 Ne wyll not be ware be hem whan thei do amys, learn from their mistakes  
 Of him schul other men bothe carp and berke  
 And sey, “Beholde this man, lo, he it is,  
 1160 Wheythyth he do weel or wheyther he do amys,  
 He wyll none exaumple of other men i-take;  
 Exaumple to othyr mene he schall be for that sake.
- “““All othir mene schul be ware be him,  
 For thei schul se and fele in hemselfe warned

<sup>1</sup> Both wisdom when serious and power in obtaining his will

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- 1165 That his werkys were bothe derk and dyme.”” *dark and dim (i.e., misguided)*  
 Therfore, madame, what schuld I lengere delve *why*  
 In this matere? Me thynkyth ten or twelve  
 Schuld geve exaumple rathere than schall oone. *provide examples*  
 Ye have my mocyoun, for my tale is doone.”” *I have said my piece*

**Chapter 29**

- 1170 The qween full sadly answerd to this lord: *gravely*  
 “I wold wyte,” sche seyd, “of yow whyll ye be here *know; from you*  
 And alle, I trowe, togyder mote acorde, *agree*  
 If that I dede this tyme at youre prayere, *as you request*  
 To leve my wyll and put me in daungere, *someone else's power*  
 1175 I sett cas the man whech that I schall chese *Suppose (Imagine the proposition)*  
 To be youre lord, that he have non of these —
- “That is to sey neythyr wytte ne strength.  
 What sey ye now? Who schall reule yow than  
 Youre londys that ly so fer in brede and length?
- 1180 The febyll may nott, the fool eke ne can *Govern; curse; lament*  
 Demene swych thing; than wyll ye curs and bane *fool*  
 That evyr were ye subjectys to swech a foole *grief*  
 And to youre hert it wolde be full grete dole.
- “Ye schuld be fayn, than, for to reule him, *Then you would want*  
 1185 To councell and rede that he do not amys. *advise*  
 This were noo worchepe to me ne to my kyn! *honor*  
 And sekyrly a full grete cause it is *certainly*  
 That I wedde nowte, for owte of joye and blis  
 Schuld I than passe and make myselve a thralle; *servant*  
 1190 Held me excused, for sykyrly I ne schalle! *Hold*
- “For syth ye sey that I am now so wys,  
 Than have I o thing whech longeth to regalté.  
 There is no man but if he be ovyr nys  
 But if he wyll sey and held with me  
 1195 That it is bettyr whan it non other wyll be

## Book 2

To chese the on than for to want bothe.<sup>1</sup>  
 Chese ye now; we be no lengere wrothe."

### Chapter 30

- Yet gan to knele eft befor the qween,  
 Bothe maystir and Duke of Athenes, that cyté;  
 1200 Mayster he was in scole and long had been,  
 And duke i-chose be the purple thoo was he,  
 For her choys there as than was fre,  
 To have what man whech hem liked to heed.  
 Thus in his tale began he in that steed:  
 1205 "We supposyd, lady, evyr onto this tyme,  
 That ye had come of that gentyll bloode  
 Of your modyr descendyd down be lyne,  
 And of your fadyr that was ful gentyll and good,  
 But oure opynyoun is chaunged and oure moode,  
 1210 For as it semyth ye are nothing of kyne,  
 And if ye were, ye coude not cese ne blyne  
 "To folow the steppes of your elderys before,  
 As grayn reall growyn oute of her grounde,  
 For nature wolde, thow ye the revers had swore,  
 1215 That ye were lych hem, certeyn, in every stownde.  
 And in oure philosophye, I hope, thus it is founde  
 That naturaly the braunch oute of the rote  
 Schall tak his savour, be it soure or swote.  
 "Ferthermore, yet sey oure bokys thus:  
 1220 That every lych his lych he schall desyre.  
 Be all these menes, it semeth than to us,  
 Eyther ye cam nevyr duly to this empyre,  
 Or ellys your hert dyspysyth joye as myre!
- likewise  
scholar  
as ruler  
place  
lineage  
no kin to them  
cease nor  
before you  
royal grain  
opposite  
respect  
I believe  
from the root  
flavor; sweet  
like seeks like  
For all these reasons  
rightfully  
as if it were mire

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1193–96: *No man, unless he is really stupid, / Will do otherwise than agree with me and say / That it is better, when there is no alternative, / To take the one thing (wisdom) / Than to lack both (wisdom and strength)*

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- I can no more — I speke oncurteslye.  
 1225 I may not chese, I am so vexed trulye.”
- uncourteously*  
*I cannot help it*

**Chapter 31**

- Onto the duk thus answerd thoo the qween:  
 “Ye make a resoun of ful gret apparens;  
 Ye schew full wele where that ye hafe been,  
 In the grete nest of bysy dylygens,  
 1230 Where stody and wytt is in experiens —  
 I mene Athenes, of wysdam it beryth the key;  
 Who will oute lerne, lat him take thedyr the wey.
- an argument that looks good*  
*put to use*  
*bears*  
*learn anything; go there*
- “But nevrthelasse, thow that ye be endewyd  
 With wordly wysdam and can all thing pleynly  
 1235 So that ye may with no sophym be pursewyd,  
 Yet to your motyff answere thus may I  
 And voyd youre resoun well and pregnantly,  
 If ye wyll here and take entent to me,  
 For if men take heed, oft tyme thei may se
- know everything*  
*sophistry; answered*  
*argument*  
*cogently*  
*pay attention*
- 1240 “Owte of a tre growyng dyverse frute,  
 And that same tre that sumetyme bare the grene,  
 Now bereth he reed or whyte of dyverse sute.<sup>1</sup>  
 Be this example pleynly thus I mene:  
 My modyr is and so am I a qween,  
 1245 In this we acord, and that I am a may,  
 In that we dyverse, I can not ther-to sey nay.
- agree; maiden*  
*differ*
- “It semeth me that lych a griff am I,  
 I-planted be God upon an elde stoke  
 Of anothir kynde, anothyr savour hardyly,  
 1250 And evene as be miracle the elde blok  
 Whech is clovyn in foure with many a knok
- graft*  
*stock*  
*altogether*  
*just as; stump*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1241–42: *And the very tree that once bore green (unripe fruit) / Now bears red or white fruits of different sorts*

## Book 2

Schall rathere folow the gryff than the gryff him,  
So faryth it be me and be my eldere kyn:

*goes it with me*

- 1255     “Thei schul rathere consent to leve all sole,  
As I do now, than schall I folow hem,  
For certeynly I kepe not of that scole  
Where that her joye is but lych a drem.  
Farwell fadyr, farwell modyr, and eem:  
Whan that her counsell is not profitable,  
1260     I take swych lyffe, I hope, is ferm and stabyll.”
- live all alone*
- uncle*

### Chapter 32

- 1265     Whan thei had sayd all that evyr thei coude,  
Thei went asundir and parted for a space,  
Comound her wyttyss styl and nothing lowde,  
Evyr hopyng and lokyng aftyr grace  
Of this same mayde, if thei it myght purchase.  
And at a day sette, thei cam togedyr ageyn  
To have an answere of hir, plat and pleyn.
- time*
- Pooled their wits*
- some concession*
- obtain*
- appointed*
- plain and simple*
- 1270     Thei chose a clerke to telle hir alders tale,  
Whech was full wys and of full grete cunnyng.  
For very stody his vysage was full pale;  
Alle his delyte and joye was in lernyng.  
Be alle her consent, he had enformyd a thyng  
Whech he wyll uttyr if he may owte spede,<sup>1</sup>  
And all is lost but sche ther-to take hede.
- to speak for all of them*
- Who; very*
- From so much studying*
- 1275     “Foure thinges,” he seyde, “madame, be in yow,  
Whech schuld excite yow wedded for to be.  
If ye comaunde, I wyll declare hem nowe:  
The fyrst of hem is that grete dygnyté  
Of your bloode ryall; I trow that there non be
- believe*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 1272–73: *By common consent, he had composed an argument / Which, if he has any luck, he will present*

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- 1280 In all this world whech is so hye alyed. *i.e., nobly born*  
 The secunde also may be sone aspyed, *readily apparent*
- “For it is open to every mannes eye,  
 I mene your beuté, God mote it preserve.  
 There lyvyth no man that evyr fayrere syye — *saw a fairer one*  
 1285 Evyr lest it tyll tyme that ye sterfe!  
 That blessed lady whech we clepe Mynerve,  
 Sche hath gove yow the thryd that I of sayde,  
 Whech is cunnyng—it is so on yow layde *Minerva*  
*I spoke of*
- “It may not fall fro yow be no weye.  
 1290 And eke the fourt is the gret rychesse *wield; count*  
 Whech that ye welde — I can not tell ne seye,  
 For, as I suppose, no man may hem gesse. *guess*  
 Suffyr me, lady, my resones to expresse  
 So that thei may be onto yow plesaunce, *please you*  
 1295 And eke your puple, I hope, it schuld avaunce. *benefit*
- “The fyrist of alle, as I seyd before,  
 Is youre bloode, your reall stok and lyne *royal stock and lineage*  
 Owte of whech ye were begote and bore.  
 This schuld your hert bothe drawe and enclyne  
 1300 For to spedre oure purpos well and fyne. *to support*  
 Wote ye nott welle of what lordes ye came?  
 Kyng Alysaundyr that all this worlde wan
- “Was of your kyn, and so was that noble kyng  
 Whech made this cyté, Babel, I mene, be name.  
 1305 Eke many another that here in her lyvynge  
 Were enhaunshed hyely with gret fame. *exalted highly*  
 Take heed herto, for Goddys sake, madame:  
 Syth thei weddyd were and ech on had a make,  
 Doth ye the same for youre kynrod sake! *mate*
- 1310 “On the other syde, of your bryth beuté, *For my next point, about your shining beauty*  
 Thus dare I say and I dare stand therby:  
 There is no man that evyr with eye yet see *saw*  
 Swech anothyr as ye be hardyly. *Another woman like you*

Book 2

- 1315 I flatyr not; I am non of thoo, sewyrlly — *i.e., flatterers; surely*  
 It is not presyd in noo book that I rede. *I.e., Flattery; praised*  
 Than sey I thus, that Nature, withoute drede, *without a doubt*
- “Whan sche wyll peynt, there can no man do bettyr,  
 For sche schapyth parfytely all that evyr sche dothe; *shapes*  
 Sche is undyr Godd made be patent lettyr  
 1320 His vycere generall, if I schall sey sothe,<sup>1</sup> *whatever; that it pleases her*  
 To geve mankynd bothe nase, eye, and tothe,  
 Of what schape that hir lykyth to geve,  
 And of hir werk, no man hir to repreve. *reprove*
- “Sche hath gove, lady, ryght onto your persone  
 1325 Youre bryght colour and fayre schap eke withalle *besides*  
 To this entent: ye schuld not leve alone  
 But with charyté departe this gyfte ye schall;  
 But ye do thus, ye may sone have a fall,  
 For sche may take thing that sche gafe, certeyn,  
 1330 And doth allday fro hem that are dysdeyn, *take back things*  
*every day; ungrateful*
- “Whech can not thank hir of hir hye grace. *Who*  
 Therfore, madame, taketh heed herto I pray:  
 Lese not your holde, lese not your purchase,  
 Lete mekenesse dwelle with swych a fresch may,  
 1335 Than schall we sykyrly of yow syng and say *assets*  
 That all is well, ryght as we wold it have.  
 Ferthermore, so Godd my sowle mote save, *within; young*  
*truly*
- “I trow thow Nature had coupled in o persone *if; combined*  
 All hir gyftis, as if sche wyll sche kan,  
 1340 Than trowe I welle ye have hem all alone.  
 Of youre charyté, than, take to yow summe man:  
 Lete him have parte of swech thing as ye han.  
 Swech goodely gyftis wold not evyr be hyd —  
 If Nature were here, the same sche wold byd! *as she can do if she wishes*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1319–20: *To tell the truth, she was appointed, by patent letter, / To be God's viceroy*

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- 1345 “And for the thyrd poynt in whech I yow commende,  
 Whych is your wysdam and your gret lernyng:  
 Youre wyttys are swech there can no man amende  
 Youre conceytes hye, for if ye had a kyng  
 He myght ful well trost in your cunnyng  
 Thow he himself had not as ye have,  
 And, as me thinkyth, your soule can ye not save
- “But if ye comoun this gyfte to other mene:  
 It is not gove yow to have it all alone!  
 The Fyrst Mevere, as oure bokes us ken,  
 Whech sytthyth above the sterrys in His trone,  
 He gevith summe man more wysdam be his one  
 Than have twenti only for this entent:  
 That he to other schall comoun that Godd him sent.
- “Take heed, herto, for perellis that may falle  
 If ye dysplese that Mevere whych sitt above:  
 His gyftis fro yow draw awey He schall.  
 That I spek now, I sey it of very love,  
 And, as me thinkyth, mech to youre behove.  
 The fourt poynt of theyse and last of alle  
 Is the rychesse whech is onto yow falle.
- “Ye be so rych the world wondyrth of it.  
 What schall ye do with alle this welth alone?  
 I sey of this as I seyd of youre wytt:  
 Thei were i-graunted of Godd to youre persone  
 That ye schuld part all this welth and woone;  
 That schall ye best do if ye take a kyng.  
 Here is my tale, here is myn askyng.”

**Chapter 33**

- 1375 Than answerd sone that swete gracyous wyght,  
 And to this mayster sche seyd thus ageyn:  
 “Youre commendacyoun whech ye dyd endyth,  
 If it be soth as ye sayd, plat and pleyn,  
 Schall cause me, there is no more to seyn,

Book 2

To plete that Lord with all hert and mynde,  
That in His gyftis hath be to me so kynde

*i.e., the First Mover*

1380 “And sent me graces whech othir women want.  
Ye seyd eft for that I am so fayre  
And eke so wys and rych as ye warant,  
Therfore me must purpos to have a ayre,  
To chese an husband, good and debonayre.

*because  
affirm  
plan; heir  
gracious*

1385 Avyse yow, syre, what that ye have sayde:  
We wyll not lyght lowere than ye us layde.<sup>1</sup>

“Ye have sett oure loos above so hye  
We pase all women that now formed are.  
And on youre grounde ageyn I thus repley:  
1390 I wold know to me who that worthy ware.  
This is your argument, this is your owne lare,  
That I am worthyest lyvynge of all women,  
Than must I hafe the worthyest of all men:

*honor  
surpass; who now exist  
on your own terms  
is worthy of me  
instruction*

1395 “It folowyth full evene ryght of your tale,<sup>2</sup>  
If ye take heed. I pray yow, where dwellyth he,  
So wyse, so fayre, so rych, withouten bale,  
And of swech lynage born as we be?  
But if ye fynde swech on, ye may leve me,  
I wyll non haf; therfore, loke well aboute —  
1400 The more ye plete, the more ye stand in doute.

*beyond measure  
Unless; such a man; believe  
argue*

“But ye wyll wytē allgate what I desyre;  
I schall dyscryve myn husband whom I wyll hafe.  
Above all lordes he must be withoute pere,  
1405 Whom he wyll to spylle or elles to save; *Able to kill or spare whomever he wishes*  
He must be stable and nevyr turn ne wave  
Fro noo purpos that he set him on.  
But he be swech, husband schall he be none

*nonetheless know  
describe  
peer*

*set himself to*

<sup>1</sup> *I will not settle for less than you rated me*

<sup>2</sup> *It is the logical conclusion of your arguments*

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- “As onto us, whom ye hafe so commended.  
He must be wyse alsoo that he knowe alle,  
1410 Every thing, that it may be amendyd  
And reryd ageyn or it fully falle.<sup>1</sup>  
If there be swech on, receyve him sone we schall,  
And ellys, sekyr, we wyll have husband none.  
Loke well aboute if ye can fynd swych on!
- 1415 “Ferthermore, yet must he have swech myght  
That him nedyth no help of no creature  
But he himself be suffycyent to do the ryght  
And evyr his myght demened with mesure.  
If that ye wyll swech on me ensure,  
1420 I wyll him hafe; I schall nevyr sey nay.  
Herkenyth also more what I wyll say:
- “I wold eke that he schuld be so rych  
That him neded not of othir mennys goode.  
No lorde in erthe I wold have him lych.  
1425 I desyre eke he schuld be so large of goode,  
Fre of hert, and manfull eke of moode,  
That what man onys asked him any thing,  
He schuld hem graunte more than her askyng.
- “He must be fayre also, he whom I desyre,  
1430 So fayre and amyable that he must pase me,  
For syth he schall to me be lord and syre,  
It is good resoun that his schynnyng ble  
Pase hir coloure whech schall his servaunt be<sup>2</sup>  
And onto his lordchype bothe servaunt, spouse, and wyffe.  
1435 Ferthermore, yet schall this lordes lyffe

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 1410–11: *Know how to set right everything [that might go wrong] / Before it completely collapses (goes completely wrong)*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 1432–33: *It is reasonable that his shining face / Should surpass the brightness of her who is his servant*

*Book 2*

- “Be eterne — elles all this is nowte,  
All that is sayd, but he have this --- *worth nothing*  
For syth he schall with so gret labour be sowte,  
As me semeth, the game went sore amys *sought*  
1440 Whan all were well and all in joye and blys *sorely*  
Sodenly to fayle and falle fro swech welth.  
Therfor, I tell yow, I dysyre that his helthe,
- “His age, his strength, that all these fayl nevyr  
But evermore lest, for sorow that it wold make *cause*  
1445 To me, whech tyme that we schuld dyssevyr,  
For other lord wold I nevyrmore take,  
But wepe and morne all in clothys blake.  
Therfor ye schull me warant he schall not deye,  
This lord to whom ye wold me newe alye. *part*  
*guarantee*  
*ally me*
- 1450 “And than consent I to all that evyr ye crave —  
Elles nowt. Wene ye that I wold fare  
As many other do, and have as thei have,  
Lych to my modyr, the sorow, the wo, the care,  
Whech sche had whan thei departed ware, *parted*  
1455 My lord, my fadyr, and eke my lady, asundyr?  
That I fle this, me thinkyth it is no wondyr!” *apart*

**Chapter 34**

- Whan sche had seyd these wordes all alowde  
And uttyrd hir conceyte pleynly to hem alle,  
There was no man as than that him kepe cowde  
1460 Fro wepyng; teres full sore thei gun down falle.  
Hir modyr fel down as rownd as any balle — *quickly*  
For very sorow sche swoonyd in that place, *swooned*  
For now sche seeth there is non othyr grace. *hope*
- Sche was lyft up and comforted new agayn,  
1465 And at the last, whan sche had caut wynde, *caught her breath*  
“Alas,” sche seyd, “sorow hath me nye slain!  
Where schall we seke? Where schall we swych on fynde?  
My dowtyr, I trowe, hath not well hir mynde —

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- 1470 Sche wote not what sche seyth, sche is so made! *knows; mad*  
 Who may it be? Where may swech on be hadde
- “As sche desyryth? It is not, pardé, possible.  
 Ther is non swech, than schall sche nevyr have non!”  
 “Nevyr deye, nevyr seke? He must be impassible! *immortal*  
 We may well see sche scornyth us echon. *each one of us*
- 1475 Go we fast hens, let hir have it aloon.  
 Worchesp and rychesse, sche schall ful soone lese;  
 No defaute in us for we may not chese”: *No fault of ours*
- 1480 Thus wayled the lordes as thei sote bedeen, *sat together*  
 Cursyng hir maysterys, cursyng hir bokes alle. *her teachers*  
 “Alas,” thei seyd, “that evyr any qween  
 Thus schuld be comered! Oure worchesp is down falle. *encumbered*  
 God send nevyr rem kyng that wereth a calle.<sup>1</sup>  
 We pray Godd that he nevyr woman make  
 So gret a mayster as sche is, for oure sake.” *scholar*
- 1485 Thus with wo, mych care, and grucchyng, *complaining*  
 Thei parte asoundyr, ech man onto his home.  
 Thei goo, or ryde, or sayle, at her lykyng,  
 For with the qween wroth thei are echon.  
 Sche is now left for hem to dwell alon:
- 1490 Sche may stody, rede, reherse, and wryght.  
 Thus is the parlement fynchyd and every wyght *finished*
- 1495 Is in drede and leveth with hert suspens, *in suspense*  
 Lokyng alwey aftyr new chaungyng.  
 Alle her wyttes and all her grete expens  
 Are now but lost. And here schall be the endyng  
 Of this same boke, whech tretyth of the pleyng *debate*  
 Betwyx this qween and all hir lychemen. *vassals*  
 God send us parte of hir prayere. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> *May God never send any realm a king who wears a caul (woman's cap)*

Book 3

## *[Katherine's conversion and mystical marriage to Christ]*

## Prologue

	Sith no man may here in this lyffe present Doo no good dede but he enspyred be Of that Goste whech fro the omnipotent Fader of hevyn and fro the Sune so fre Is sent to us, ryght so beleve now we That it is best that we oure laboure commende Onto this Gost if we wyll have goode ende.	unless freely
5		
	For I have tolde yow schortly as I can The byrth, the kynrod, the nobyllhed of this mayde; The gret disputyng of lordes, who it began; And eke hir answere, what sche to hem sayde. This have I pleynly now befor yow layde In swech ryme as I coude best devyse. Schall nevyr man lese no laboure ne no servyse	nobility
10		
	15 Whech that he doth onto this noble qween. <sup>1</sup> And now hens forwarde schall be my laboure To tell of hir be ordre and bedeen, How sche was wonne to Crist, oure savyoure, How marvelously he entred to hir toure —	forthwith
	20 I mene daun Adryan, the munke whech oure feyth Fyrst to hir tawte, as this cronycle seyth.	tower brother; monk
	And if ye dowte, ye reders of this lyffe, Wheyther it be soth, ye may well undyrstande	true

<sup>1</sup> Lines 14–15: *Any labor or service done for this noble queen (Katherine) will not be wasted*

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- |    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                            |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | Mech thing hath be do whech hath be ful ryve<br>And is not wrotyn ne cam nevyr to oure hande,<br>Mech thing eke hyd in many dyverse lande.<br>Evene so was this lyffe, as I seyd in the prologue before,<br>Kept all in cage aboute, it was not bore.                                                                               | <i>well known</i><br><i>brought forth</i>                                                                                  |
| 25 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                            |
| 30 | Now schall it walk wydere than evyr it dede<br>In preysyng and honour of this martir Katerine.<br>Hir lyff, hir feyth, hir passyoun schall nevyr be dede<br>Whyll that I leve. I wold ful fayn enclyne<br>Hir holy prayere to be my medycyne                                                                                        | <i>i.e., lost to the world</i>                                                                                             |
| 35 | And eke my tryacle ageyns the venom foule<br>Whech that the devyll hath throwyn on my soule.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>medicine</i>                                                                                                            |
| 40 | I dresse me now streyt onto this werk;<br>Thow blyssyd may, comfort thou me in this.<br>Because thou were so lerned and swech a clerk,<br>Clerkes must love thee — resoun forsoth it is.<br>Who wyll oute lerne, trost to me, iwyss,<br>He dothe mech the bettyr if he trost in this may —<br>Thus I beleve and have do many a day. | <i>apply myself directly</i><br><i>maiden</i><br><i>scholar</i><br><i>it stands to reason</i><br><i>anything; trust me</i> |

## Chapter 1

- |    |                                                  |                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|    | There was an hermyth, as elde bokes telle,       | hermit                          |
|    | A munke, a man of ful hye grace and fame.        | monk                            |
| 45 | Be the see thei sey sett was thoo his celle.     | located                         |
|    | Adryane I rede that it was his name.             |                                 |
|    | His knelyng had made his knes full ny lame.      | nearly                          |
|    | A prest he was eke, sothely as I fynde.          |                                 |
|    | He had a chapell in whech he song and dynde,     | dined                           |
| 50 | Slepe and welk, for other hous had he non.       | <i>Slept; walked</i>            |
|    | This man knew the counsell of this mayde         | <i>inner thoughts</i>           |
|    | Fyrst of alle, for Athanas, of whom long agon    |                                 |
|    | We spoke befor, was not than arayde              |                                 |
|    | Ne eke anoynted with baptym, ne assayde          | baptism                         |
| 55 | With Godyis scorge, for he was turned be hir —   | <i>converted by [Katherine]</i> |
|    | And sche convertyd be miracle, as ye schul here. | <i>was converted</i>            |

Book 3

- This man was ordeynd lych, I undyrstande,  
To seynt Joseph, oure Lady to lede and gyde,  
For evene as Joseph into Egypte lande  
60 Went with oure Ladye, evermore be hir syde,  
So was this ermyte than in that tyde  
A bodily leder to this gostly werke  
Whech tyme that Cryst this noble mayd schulde merk
- With His crosse to make hir strong and stabyll  
65 Ageyns the flesch, ageyns the affluens  
Of wordly delyte, and make hir to Him abyll  
Bothe spouse and wyffe, whech feestly dylgents  
Was wroght so wondyrly it paseth experiens  
Of wordly men. Wherfore I am agast  
70 To speke therof, knowyng it passeth the gnast
- Of my cunnyng,<sup>1</sup> but that I leve in hope  
That thorow the prayere of hir and Adryane  
I schall have myght and strength eke to grope  
This holy matere, to telle forth of this man,  
75 How that he lyvyd and how he vytail wan,  
For onto town wolde he nevyr aproche,  
But tyllyd his londe heye upon a roche.
- Sumetyme of schyppes that ryden there fastby  
Had he comfort of mete and eke of drynke.  
80 Sexty yere this lyffe he led sothely,  
That nevyr went he awey fro that brynde.  
Thus party with elmesse, party with his swynke,  
Alle blyssydly in abstinenſ and prayere,  
This lyffe led he, this ermyte or this frere ---
- For frere was name than to all Crysten men  
Comoun, I rede, and ermytys were thei called  
That dwelt fro town mylys sex or ten,  
Were thei growen, were thei bare or balled.

<sup>1</sup> Lines 70–71: *it lies beyond my little spark / Of wit*

*The Life of Saint Katherine*

Because thei were eke all soole i-walled,  
 90 Sume men called hem munkys, withowte drede,  
 For these wordes munke and soole are on, as we rede.<sup>1</sup>

*alone cloistered  
monks*

**Chapter 2**

	Whan this ermyte was fall stope in age And myght not byd his bedys as he was wont, Than wold he goo forthe a grete passage 95 Ryght be the see on stones scharp and blunte, And evyr his body wold he chyde and runte: “What eylyth thee now? Why art thu so sone oute Of holy prayere, of werkes that be devoute?	<i>hermit; stooped with say his prayers distance scold ails; indisposed</i>
100	“Now God,” he seyd, “that sythest hey in trone, Forgeve it me that I do not so weele As I was wone. My body is cause alone And not my soule — ful sykyrly this I feele. I may not wake ne fast nevyr a dele; I can no more all this — defaute is myne.	<i>used to hold vigil or fast at all the fault</i>
105	If any goodenes have I, Lord, that is Thine.	
110	“Demene not me, Lorde, aftyr my febyll myght But aftyr my wylle, that evyr desyreth in-on With blessed dedes to be alowed in the syght Of Thi mercy. For thow my myght be gon, Yet is my soule as stable as any ston, And evyr schal be, as I can best devyse, In Thi drede and eke in Thi servyse.”	<i>Judge; according to steadfastly sight though; strength In awe of you</i>
115	Unnethys had he ended his oryson, He saw a syght, a mervelous tho he thowte, For as he walkyd the strondes up and down, He fond a thing whech he had long i-south, A blessed syght onto his eye was browte:	<i>Scarcely; prayer then shores sought sight</i>

<sup>1</sup> For these words, monk and solitary, mean the same thing, as we read

*Book 3*

- A qween, he sey, of vysage and stature  
 Passyng full mech alle erdely creature.      *queen [Mary]; saw; appearance; height  
 Surpassing by far*
- 120 All hir aray accordyng eke ther-too—  
 So bryght a corown, so bryte clothys eke,  
 He wot not what him is best to do.  
 He is not febyll, he is no lengere seke;  
 His blode is come ageyn onto his cheke,  
 His eyne have caute of new comfort a lyght,  
 His body is youthyd, he thinketh himself ful lyghth.      *appropriate to [her state]  
 eyes  
 made young*
- Than gan this ermyte stalk ny and nyne  
 To se this syght, this selcowth new thing.      *closer and closer  
 marvellous*  
 “O benedicité!” he seyd, “mech merveyle have I  
 130 That this lady fresch and fayre and yng  
 Is come so sodenly hydry in this morownyng —  
 And schyppe ne boote ne can I now here see,  
 Neyther on lond ne fletyng on the see.”      *boat  
 floating*
- Thus merveylyng betwyx joye and drede,  
 135 A ful softe pase onto hir ward he went,  
 For as him thowt sche also to him yede.  
 But sche spake fyrst with full meke entent:  
 “Brothyr,” sche sayde, “the Lord omnipotent  
 Whech made the hevyn, the watyr, and the londe,  
 140 He save yow evyr and blysse yow with His honde.”      *Very slowly toward her  
 came  
 May he*
- The ermyte than onto oure Lady sayde,  
 “Gramercy madame! And He kepe yow alsoo  
 Fro all myshap that ye be not afrayde  
 Of noo dysese but evyr withowten woo —  
 145 I pray to Godd ye mote be on of thoo  
 Whech that schall dwelle with Him in His blys,  
 Where may no joye ne no solace mys.”      *be lacking*

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- “Good syre,” seyd sche, “I wolde yow pray full fayn  
To do a message fro me unto a whyte<sup>1</sup>
- 150 Whech that I love and trost. Ye may hir sayn  
So doth my Sone, for werkys that be ryght  
Whech that sche usyth, that mayde fayre and bryght.  
And ye syre oure messangere I wold ye were,  
Oure wyll and oure wordes to this lady for to bere.”
- “My Son does too; because of  
she practices
- 155 “O, mercy Godd,” seyd thoo this Adryan,  
“What, wold ye now I schuld forsak my celle,  
Forsake my servyse, and to be youre man?  
I have made covenauant evyre here to dwelle  
Whyl that me lestys brethe, flesch, and felle,
- 160 Tyl Jesu wyll fecch me that was maydenys Sone.  
Spek not ther-of, for it may not be done!”
- “While I still have; skin  
maiden's Son

### **Chapter 3**

- Than sayd that mayde ageyn onto him,  
“Art thu avysed what thu hast seyd to me?  
Thu prayed full late, whyll the nyte was dyme,  
165 That God Himself nothing wrothe schuld be  
With thin age ne wyth thi febylté.  
Thu prayed eke His modyr — I herd it loo —  
Sche schuld be mene ryght betwyx yow too.
- i.e., Mary; in response  
Do you realize  
night was dark  
intermediary*
- “I am sche to whom that thu so ofte  
170 With pytous voys hast cryed bothe day and nyght  
That I schuld help thi dulnes for to softe.  
Therfor, I wyll thu force thee with thi myghte  
To be my messangere and eke my gostly knyth  
Onto that lady whom I love full wele —
- 175 Yet hath sche of me knowyng nevyr a deele.
- night  
relieve your sluggishness  
force yourself  
messenger; spiritual knight  
Though she knows nothing of me*
- “Therfore, busk thee to Alysaundyr for to goo,  
Onto that cyté whech men called sumetyme
- prepare*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 148–49: *I wish greatly to ask you / To take a message from me to a person*

Book 3

- Grete Babell — there be swych no moo  
 In all this world, thus seyth every pylgryme. *there is no greater*  
 180 What schuld I lengere tary in my ryme:  
 Thou schalt fynde there a qween full reall  
 And onto hir bodily speke thu schall. *royal*  
*in person*
- “Sey ryght thus: ‘The Lady bothe modyr and mayde  
 Gretyth hir well, and that in goodely wyse,  
 Ryth be me, for sche both comaunde and prayde  
 That I schuld doo to hir this goode servyse.’ *Through me*  
 185 Thus schall thu sey, ryth as I devyse.  
 Sche schall make straunge and be astoyned sore;  
 Leve not this message for that cause nevyr the more. *exactly*  
*act surprised*  
*Abandon; errand*
- 190 “It is not goo now but a lytyl whyle *just a little while ago*  
 Syth that this lady was with hir counsayle,  
 In whech there was ordeynyd many a wyle,  
 And many a mene, and spent mych travayle,  
 To do hir wedde, but it myght not avayle,<sup>1</sup>  
 195 For I myselfe have ordeynd hir a lorde *chosen a husband for her*  
*purity*  
 To whom sche schall in clennesse well acorde.
- “Eke that thu schuld the more deynté have  
 To do this message and all this grete laboure,  
 I wyll thee telle pleynly — I wyll not wave,  
 I wyll not varye — but the lynage, the honoure,  
 200 The vertu, the occupacioun, of this swete floure,  
 Thou schalt it knowe be informacyoun of me,  
 Bothe hir goodenes, hir cunnyng, and hir degré. *pleasure*  
*information I provide*
- “Fyrst of alle, thu whyte sche is a qween — *you [shall] know*  
 205 A rych, a reall, a wys, and eke a fayre,  
 For in this worlde swech no moo there been.  
 Sche hath no chylde, ne sche hath non ayre,  
 For if sche leve, sche schall love bettyr the hayre *none like her*  
*heir*  
*believes; hair shirt*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 192–94: *During which time many strategies / And methods were used, and much labor was spent, / To make her marry, but it could not succeed*

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- 210 Than any reynes aftyr that sche be drawe *fine linen*  
 Onto my servyse and to my Sones lawe.
- 215 “Sche is also in sothenesse a ryth grete clerke,  
 And eke a sotyll in alle the Sevyn Scyens — *suble one; Seven Liberal Arts*  
 That schewyd sche welle bothe with word and werke,  
 In the parlement where was grete expens *deed*  
 Of wordly rychesse, and eke grete dylygens  
 Of wordly wytte, to make hir wedded be,  
 But thei sped not. A heyere lord of degré *succeeded; higher ranking*
- 220 “Schal be hir spouse, whom sche yet not knowyth.  
 Sche must forbere fyrst mech thing, certayn. *give up*  
 225 I mene, the rychesse in whech sche now flowyth,  
 For of povert schall sche be as fayn *abounds*  
 As evyr sche was of rychesse, soth to sayn,  
 Or of ony welth or ony grete honour.  
 I schall be to hir a comforTour
- 230 “In all hir nede. Whan that sche schall fyght  
 Ageyns the heresye of philosophye, *count as nothing*  
 Of all her resones sche schal rek but lyght. *sophisms*  
 Thow thei her sophymes sotyly multypplye,  
 Sche schall asoyle hem and ageyn replye *assail*  
 235 So myghtly that thei schul lese her art *their skills*  
 And sche schall drawe hem to be in Goddis part, *on God's side*
- 240 “For aftyr me, I tell thee sykyrlye,  
 There was nevyr swech another lady lyvande *living*  
 That withowte ensaumple cowde leve parfytely, *precedents*  
 As sche hath now newly take on hande,  
 So holy a lyffe. Therfore, thu undyrstande  
 Sche schall have eke as gloryous a hende *end*  
 As evyr had woman that lyved here in kende.” *as a human*

**Chapter 4**

- 240 Whan that oure Lady had seyd all this thing,  
 This ermyte fell to grounde plat and pleyn. *flat*

Book 3

- He was aferd and ravesched in swownyng,  
And sche full mekely lyft him up ageyn.  
“Be not aferd,” sche gan thoo to him seyn.  
And he answerd, “Gramercy, now, madame!  
245 Forgyfe me now in that I was to blame
- “That I knew not Crystis modir dere,  
But all wytles, rekles, and boystous  
Was I, Lady, full late in myn answere.  
Ye may well se my wytte is komerous!  
250 Your comyng was to me so mervelous,  
My wytt was goo than I sey yow veryly,  
My Lordes moder, myn advocate, my Mary —
- “And I hir servaunt and evyre hath be and cast!  
Allas, allas! And it is wrete full pleyn,  
255 A hard thing, of whech I am agast:  
Who wyll not know schall be forgete certeyn.  
This is my thowght, my Lady sovereyn:  
Because that I so recles was full late,  
That youre love schuld now turn to hate.
- 260 “Therfore, youre grace with pytous voys I pray,  
To punch and snybe yourself as ye lest.  
And I am redy evermore, nyght and day,  
To be obedyent ryght at your request,  
To do your message so as I can best —
- 265 But sewyrlly this gret cyté large  
Of whech ye spoke whan ye dyd me charge,
- “I know it noght, ne eke the wey ther-to;  
I have not herd but lytyll of it certayn.  
But as ye wyll, ryght so mote I do:  
270 To fulfull youre byddyng myn hert is ful fayn;  
Thow I for werynesse dey or elles be slain,  
I schall go thedyr. Yet hafe I full mech care  
Of wylsom weyis or that I come thare.
- stupid, thoughtless, and blustering*  
*recently*  
*cumbersome*
- gone when I saw*
- always; intended to be*  
*reckless; just now*
- punish; rebuke; as you yourself*
- honestly*
- die; killed*  
*worry*  
*hazardous paths*

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*



## Chapter 5

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                    |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
|     | Than seyd the qween onto him ageyn,<br>"Well may thu blys that Lord that boute us alle,<br>That He be thee wold send or elles seyn<br>This reall matere and eke ther-to thee calle.<br>Go now thi wey: thu may not stumble ne falle<br>Whan swech a ledere is to thee a gyde.<br>But whan thu comst within thoo gatis wyde,    | <i>bless; redeemed<br/>through you; say</i>        |
| 285 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>guide</i>                                       |
|     | "Whomevyr thu mete, if he spek to thee,<br>Spek not ageyn in no manere wyse.<br>I tell thee why: the hye noble secre<br>To whych thu schall do laboure and servyse,<br>If unworthy herd it, thei myght it dyspyse.<br>Eke thiself, thi mouth must thu spere<br>And kepe thi wordys only for this matere.                       | <i>Do not make any reply<br/>mystery<br/>spare</i> |
| 290 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                    |
|     | "So schall thou goo thorow that grete cyté<br>Tyll that thu come onto the paleys reall<br>Whech that he made — Costus, the kyng so fre —<br>Both dych and hylle, doungon, toure, and wall.<br>Many a knyth and many a sqwyere thu schall<br>Fynd there and se the gates for to kepe.<br>Be not aferde; my Son schall thee kepe | <i>moat<br/>guarding the gates</i>                 |
| 295 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                    |
|     | "Fro all her manace and all her grete daungere.<br>Blesse thee well, and eke my Sones name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>their<br/>Bless yourself</i>                    |
| 300 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                    |

Book 3



<sup>1</sup> Lines 303–04: *Mark and display my Son's sign (i.e., the Cross) on your forehead*

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- 335 Schall lyste ful sore aftyr this new doctrine. *listen closely to*  
 Allehir wyttys therto wyll sche enclyne —
- “No wondyr it is, for my Sone in sothenesse  
 Hath chose hir specyaly above all othir lyvande *living people*  
 For hir vertew and for hir grete clennesse. *purity*  
 340 He wyll wedd hir in schort tyme comande. *coming*  
 Thu schall be messangere and tak this werk on hande:  
 Thu schall brynge hir evene unto this place,  
 Thiselvē alone, withowtyn othyr solace. *comfort*
- 345 “Thys same tokne schall thu to hir bere,  
 For if sche enqwyre who thee thedyr sent,  
 The same lord, sey ageyn to hir,  
 Whom that sche chees sytting in parlement,  
 For wech choys sche was full nye i-schent *nearly ruined*  
 Of hir lordes, so as thei than durst. *dared*  
 350 Sche toke the bettyr and forsok the wurst.
- “Withinne hir stody thus schall thu hir fynde.  
 Be not aferd of hir sotell cunnyng — *subtle*  
 Thu schall not fayle of answeare to the kynde *on a par with*  
 Of all hir wytte and all hir stodyng.  
 355 Go now forth fast and hedyr sone hir bryng: *Prepare assiduously; tuck in your robe*  
 Gyrde thee sore and tuk up well thi lappe;  
 Tak with thee thi staffe and eke thi cappe!”

**Chapter 6**

- 360 Thus goth this ermyte forth ryght in his way, *on his way*  
 Trostyng on gydes swech as long to hevene,  
 For thow he non aungellys thoo herd ne say, *saw*  
 Withoute dowte her ledyng browte him evene *guidance*  
 Onto this cytē long or it was evyne — *long before evening*  
 Nowt that same day, but aftyr a full long whyle,  
 Whan he had go and rune full many a myle.

Book 3

- 365 Thus wyll God with ful onlykly thing,  
 As to the world, werk whan that Him leest:<sup>1</sup>  
 He chesyth sumetyme onto His hye werkynge  
 Full febyll and sekely and awey can kest  
 The strong and wyse — Poule seyth this best  
 In his epistles, who that wyll hem rede —  
 Ryght thus dede he here, withouten drede.
- for his lofty missions  
 cast  
 Paul
- 370 Ful onlikly was this man to this message  
 But that God chese him of his goodenesse;  
 He is now goo forth in his vyage,  
 Be hyllys and pleyn, felde and wyldyrnesse.  
 He is now come where as this emperesse  
 Satte in hir gardeyn, stodyng than ful sore.  
 Sodenly enterd set he is hir before.
- open field  
 He suddenly found himself
- 375 Ful sore astoyned were thei than, both twoo,  
 The on for mervayle of hir hye beauté,  
 The other was marred, if we schuld sey soo,  
 That sche a man so sodeynly there gan se  
 Befor hir knele now ryght in hir sacré.  
 As if ye wyll this conceyt here more pleyn  
 The ermyte in his wytte was astoyned certeyn,
- astonished  
 one  
 dumbfounded  
 private quarters  
 thought
- 380 For he fond hir than lenyng on a booke  
 In sad stodye, ful solitarye, all alone,  
 And often among to hevene gan sche look;  
 But swych beuté sey this man nevyr none  
 As now he sethe in this same persone —  
 Save oure Lady, blessed mot sche be —  
 So bryght and scynyng was thoo hir fayre ble.
- poring over  
 serious  
 at frequent intervals  
 bless her!  
 shining; countenance
- 385 “A marvelous Godd,” thowth he in his mynde,  
 “Wend I nevyr a seyn swech creature lyvyng!  
 I trow in erde as in womannes kynde
- I never expected to have seen  
 no earthly woman

<sup>1</sup> Lines 365–66: *Thus God will work, when He pleases, / With what looks to the world like a very unlikely instrument*

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Is non so bryght, so beuteuous in all thing!  
Blessed be Jesu, that hye hevyn kyng,  
That me sent hedyr to se this creature,  
For aftyr oure Lady sche passeth withoute mesur

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                              |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 400 | “Alle othir women.” And with this thouth anon<br>Sche lokyd on him and was astoyned sore<br>How that he myght ovyr tho wallys of ston,<br>This olde man, clyme — or ellys if he wore<br>Crope thorow the gate than mervelyth sche more<br>Syth that hirself had be there last,<br>For sche bare the key and sperd it wondyr fast. | <i>Sneaked through the gate</i><br><i>locked</i>             |
| 405 | With this same stoynyng hir bloode gan to renne<br>Mech more freschere than it was before:<br>In cheke and forhed newly doth it brenne;<br>And if sche fayre and bryght were before,                                                                                                                                              | <i>surprise</i><br><i>burn</i>                               |
| 410 | It is amendyd a hundred parte more,<br>As to his syght. This olde ermyte lame,<br>He knelyth down and seyth, “All hevyl, madame!”                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>She was a hundred times more so</i><br><i>In his eyes</i> |

## Chapter 7

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                        |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 415 | Sche ryght thus ageyn onto him sayde,<br>“Good syre, tell me how may this be,<br>For of youre persone be we sore dysmayde<br>That we so sodenly yow in oure presens see,<br>I-come thus alone withowte othir menee.<br>This ask we fyrist, for sekyr wete we must.<br>Wheythir this is truthe or apparens, it schall be wust | <i>company</i><br><i>certain know</i><br><i>illusion; known</i>                        |
| 420 | “What manere mane myght make yow so maisterly<br>To clyme oure wallys whech are so hye.<br>I trow be enchauntment or be nygromancye<br>Are ye entyrd now here before oure yye!<br>We wyll wete this thing, be ye nevyr soo slye:<br>Who gave yow hardynesse for to be so bolde<br>Withowte oure leve to entre to owre holde? | <i>enable you</i><br><i>necromancy</i><br><i>eyes</i><br><i>permission; stronghold</i> |
| 425 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                        |

### Book 3

- “For of all the lordes and knytys that we have  
 Is non so hardy, but we gefe him leve — *unless*  
 430 But if he wyll reklesly his lyff lave — *forfeit his life*  
 Onys to entre neythir morow ne eve  
 Oure privy secre. Therfor is it repreve  
 Onto your age to tak swech thing on yow.  
 It wyll not fall happyly onto youre prow. *private quarters; discredit*  
*turn out well for you*
- 435 “Therfore, now, tell me schortly in a clause,  
 Who gave yow boldenesse to do this grete folye?  
 Sekyr may ye be, we wyll wete the cause *You may be sure*  
 And every mene thorow whech ye were hardy. *means*  
 Peraventure if treson be found in oure meny  
 440 This schall ye telle or ye fro us wende — *If, by chance; household*  
 Ye gete of us elles no ryght fayre ende!” *before you; depart*

### Chapter 8

- Be this was the erymyte comforted ageyn,  
 For with bolde spech he gave this answere,  
 And with manly voys thus gan he seyn:  
 445 “Sche that me sent is gretttere, if ye wyll lere,  
 Than ony lady in erde that dwellyth here,  
 And eke the lest that longyth to hir boure  
 Is more of astate than kyng or emperoure. *least of her personal servants*  
*of higher rank*
- “Eke for ye ween that ye be so fayre,  
 450 So rych in welth, as it is seyd certeyn,  
 Yet may ye not to hir beauté repayre,  
 Ne nevyr ye schal, sothly dar I sayn — *compare*  
 Bothe hir and yow with eyne haf I seyn. *eyes*  
 I may thee more boldely mak this commendyng:  
 455 Sche paseth yow, certeyn, in all maner thing, *surpasses*
- “Eke hir grete powere that is spred so fere.  
 Sche may doo what that evyr sche lyst,  
 For be yon gate whech ye dyd spere, *fasten*  
 Sche browte me in, sekyr, or I it wyst. *truly, before; realized*  
 460 If sche be wrothe, no man skapyth hir fyst; *escapes*

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Therfore, avyse yow, lady, what ye wyll sey,  
Lest that my Lady turne fro yow awey."

*consider*

**Chapter 9**

- Than gan the qween merveyle of this word  
More than sche dyd evyr hir lyve before  
465 Of ony mater. Cryst had made His horde  
Or this ermyte cam and leyd His grete tresoure  
Ryght in hir hert, emprended full sore,  
For thow He sent the ermyte as his messangere,  
Or the ermyte cam, Crist Himself was there,
- 470 Ryght as Gabriell whan he fro hevene was sent  
Onto oure Lady to do that hye message.  
Into Nazareth in forme of o man he went,  
Fayre and fresch and yong eke of age,  
But ere that he cam onto this maydes cage,  
475 Cryst was there, as we in bokes rede.  
Ryth so dyd He here, if we wyll take hede.
- But thow God were come as than to hir hert,  
It was fer as yet fro hir knowlechynge.  
Therfore, with wordes that were full smert,  
480 Sche turneth ageyn onto the same thing  
Whech we left ere, and thus in apposyng *From which we digressed before; arguing*  
Sche thus procedyth, seyng to this man,  
“How may youre Lady be so worthy woman
- 485 “As ye commende now in your tale to me,  
Of hir hye worchepe and also of hir wytte?  
The worthyest of all women we wene that we be —  
We herd nevyr of non worthyere yttte!  
The worthyest of all women we wene that we be —  
490 Who is hir lorde — or wheyther is sche lordelees?  
Ye telle us thingys whech we holde but lees!
- honor*  
*believe*  
*yet*  
*is located*  
*lies (i.e., give little credit to)*
- “Wheythyr is that dame lyvynge in spousayle  
Or levyth sche sool as we do now?
- marriage*

*Book 3*

- 495 If sche be weddyd, sykyrly sche may fayle  
 Mych of hir wyll, for sche mote nedys bowe  
 Onto hir lord, loke he nevyr so row; *rough*  
 And if sche lyve be hirself alone,  
 Than may sche make full oft mech mone, *many complaints*
- 500 “Ryght for vexacyoun of hir lordes aboue —  
 This know we well; we are used ther-to!  
 Therfor, goodeman, put us oute of doute:  
 Tell us the sothe, be it joye or woo,  
 Whech that this lady most is used too,  
 And we wyll thank and rewarde yow eke  
 With swech plenté that it schall yow leke!” *On account of please you*

**Chapter 10**

- 505 “Iwys, madame,” seyd this ermyte thoo,  
 “The grete lordscheppe of my Lady sovereyn *domain*  
 Is spredd ovyr hevyn and ovyr erd ther-too  
 And ovyr the see eke, sothely to seyn.  
 There comyth noo sune, no dewys, ne no reyn *dew; rain*  
 510 But be comaundment of hir Lord and hir desyre —  
 Swech is hir myght and allso hir powere.
- “Hir ladyscheppe eke therto is so strong *i.e., power/authority*  
 And evyr so stedfast that it may not fayle.  
 There may no man treuly do hir wrong,  
 515 For thow thei doo, thei lese her travayle. *if they try, they waste their effort*  
 There may no myght ageyn hir myght avayle.  
 Hir Lord and sche, thei lyve in full grete pees,  
 With many mylyons of men and mekyll prees. *a great crowd*
- “He is hir Lord and eke to Him sche is  
 520 Moder and noryse, yet is sche a mayde. *nurse*  
 Lord and Sone bothe togedyr, iwys,  
 This longyth to Him, and yet eft, as I sayde,  
 Levyth my tale and beth nothing dysmayde, *Believe*  
 For sche is modyr and also clene virgyne;  
 525 This schall ye know aftyr well and fyne.” *understand very well later*

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**Chapter 11**

- “Sere,” seyd the qween, “now merveyle I ful sore,  
For ye preche of this hye degré  
Of this same lady, for ye seyd this more,  
Sche passyth all othir in very felycíté  
530 Whech that be here now or evyrmore schall be.  
Than wondyr we sore that sche sent us here  
So evyll arayd, so sympyll a messangere,
- Such a badly clothed*
- “For to hir astate it had be full convenient  
To send moo men and not send on alone,  
535 Where sche so many hath at hir comaundment!  
Eke, as me thinkyth, to swech a grete persone  
Schuld long all servauntis that are in hir wone  
To clothe more clenly for worchyp of hir hous,  
For, syre, your clothynge semeth not ryght precyous.”
- appropriate*
- retinue*
- refined*

**Chapter 12**

- 540 “Madame,” seyd he, “if ye wold me leve,  
I wold tell yow pleynly the cause and why  
To mak me messangere dyd this Lady meve,  
For thow that sche hafe many mylyons of meny,  
Sche is in hert nevyr the hyere hardyly,  
545 And swech as sche is are hir servauntes, lo,  
For all that love hir thei must do ryght so.
- give me permission*
- chose to make*
- attendants*
- i.e., follow her example*
- “Ye wote well, madame, for mych thing ye know,  
That gostly aray passeth in sovereyn wyse  
Bodyly dysgysyng, in hye and in lowe;  
550 The sete of verteu is sett in swych asyse,  
Even as thei witnesse, clerkes that be wyse,  
That treuth is fayrere be many degrees  
Than evyr was Eleyn the fayre lady of Grees.
- clothing; in the highest way*
- position*
- more fair*
- Helen*
- “Therfore, that Lady that me to yow now sent  
555 Desyreth more gostly inwardly aray  
Than golden clothys spred on bodyes gent.
- genteel*

*Book 3*

- And ferthermore — yet boldly dar I say —  
 Sche hath before hir in hir paleys ay  
 Many a thowsand wyth faces bryght and schene  
 Swech as in erde yet nevyr were sene. *shining*
- 560
- “Sche sayde to me, that hye, noble qweene,  
 That my servyce plesyd hir so weeble  
 That sche wold send me with this aray mene  
 To sey hir wyll onto yow every dele. *humble clothing*  
*convey all her will to you*
- 565 And be this processe may ye see and feel,  
 If ye wyll this ladyes frendchyp now wynne  
 Fro wordly delyte mote ye part and twynne, *argument*  
*separate yourself*
- “For erdely welthys sett my Lady at nowte,  
 Therfore hir servauntis schull not have. *considers worthless*
- 570 Whoso hir love holy mote be her thowte,  
 With devoute lyvynge her sowles to save. *Those who love her must by their*
- The more thei forsake here, the more may thei crave  
 Whan that thei come there her Lady is, *request*  
*where*
- 575 To hir regyoun where thei dwell in blys.
- “But, lady, to the purpos now wyll we goo:  
 Thys blessed qween a tokne dyd me take *give*  
 Whan sche me sent youre reverens onto.
- 580 Thus sayd sche than, ‘My messangere I thee make  
 Onto yon maydyn. Sche may it not forsake  
 The tokne I take thee, so enprended it is *impressed*  
 Onto hir hert sche can it not mys.’
- “Thys is the tokne: that ye, sytting in parlement  
 With princes, dukes, and erles in fere, *together*  
 This was your answere and this your entent —
- 585 Ye wold no lorde ne kyng have but if he were  
 So strong, so myghty, that he had nevyr fere, *fear*  
 So fayre, so gentyll, that no man were him lych,  
 So endwyd with good that no man were so rych.
- “Thys was at that tyme, lady, your desyre:  
 590 That this lorde whech that ye wold have

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- Schuld lyve evermore; nevyr with watyr ne fyre  
 Be dreynt ne brent, but evyr hymselfe save. *drowned; safe*  
 Ye wold be with him evyr and nevyr fro him wave — *stray*  
 This was your wyll and fullfyllyd schall it be.
- 595 My Lady sent yow bode, if ye wyll folow me, *sent word*
- “For this same Lord whech with my lady is,  
 He hathe alle these more pleynteously, I telle,  
 Than ony man in this world may think, iwys,  
 For of alle vertues He is the very welle.
- 600 Come ye forth with me, hom to my celle,  
 And if ye fynde my wordes be unstable,  
 Another day arest me be youre constable!
- “Ye schull have hir Lord and hir Sone eke —  
 A gracyous lynage that may noght mys, *fail*  
 605 A merveylous kynrode to lerne if ye leke:  
 He is hir Lorde, sche His modyr is;  
 He is hir Sone and sche mayde iwys;  
 He made hir, sche bare Him in hir wombe;  
 The synnes of the world He clensyth, this Lombe.” *Lamb [of God]*

**Chapter 13**

- 610 Than was this mayden sore marred in mynde, *shocked*  
 Men myght se in hir coloure, in cheke and in pytte, *(see note)*  
 So ran hir bloode, so changed hir kynde, *visage*  
 For nevyr was sche or now put in this wytte.  
 Sche is in swech a trauns, wheyther sche stant or sytte
- 615 Sche wote not hirselfe; sche is in swech cas, *such a state*  
 For to sey a soth, sche wote not where sche was. *to tell the truth; knew*
- Betwyx too thingys so is sche newly falle,  
 Whech sche schall leve or whech sche schall take. *leave*  
 If sche leve hir lawe whych hir lordes alle
- 620 Hold at this tyme and now it forsake,  
 Falle to a newe for a straunge lordes sake,  
 Sche seeth not what perell in this matere is. *peril*  
 But for the ermyte speake of this Lordes blys,

*Book 3*

- 625 His wordes have enclyned now ful sore hir thowte  
 That sche schall have a thing long desyred.  
 Alle hir goddys and hir goode set sche at nowte,  
 So sore is hir hert with this love i-fyred,  
 It schall no more, sche cast, with the world be myred. *determined; polluted*  
 Therfore to the ermyte eft sche gan thus sey,  
 630 "All your informacyoun I bere well awey, *receive well*
- “Save that of o thing grete merveyle I bere:  
 Ye seyd me ryght now whan ye told your talle  
 That this grete Lady, if I wolde lere,  
 Bare a noble chyld withouten any bale,  
 635 And yet sche is a mayden at asay and sale — *upon inspection*  
 This same matere is ageyn kynde. *nature*  
 What, wene ye sere, that I were so blynde
- “That I cowde not undyrstand of generacyoun  
 The prevy weyes? Thow I non exersye *procreation*  
 640 Hafe had in my lyffe of swech occupacioun — *experience*  
 Ne nevyr wyll have, be that hye justyse  
 Whech ye to me now newly gan devyse — *to relate*  
 Yet know I wele, and ilk man it knowyth,  
 Who wyll have a chylde, seed sumetyme he sowyth!”

**Chapter 14**

- 645 “Wythouten seed, lady, or withoutyn synne  
 May God make a man, and so He dede or now: *create*  
 For if we at Adam or at Eve begyne,  
 It is full pleyn for to schew onto yow.  
 For whan that same Adam slept in a swow, *swoon*  
 650 Oure Lord owte of his syde than made Eve.  
 Than be this ensaumple pleynly may ye preve, *conclude*
- “Sith that He made a virgyne of a man,  
 He was of powere eke for to make  
 A man of a virgyne — thus He werk can,  
 655 This gracyous Lorde whech ye to make *as your mate*  
 Chosen in your parlement. Yet, for your sake,

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Another demonstracyoun in this same materie  
I wyll to yow schewe, if ye wyll it here:

660 "There may no man, if we take good hede,  
Preve be any resoun how all thing began —  
Speke we now of creatures and leve the Godhede. *set aside*  
The sune and the mone, the bryght and the wan,  
Of her begynnyng there can nowe no man  
Have no remembrauns ne tell in what plyght *circumstances*  
665 That thei were made, eythere day or nyght.

“Than syth no man may of these erdely werkis  
Tell the pryyv cause, no wondyr is certeyn  
That thei of feyth schull tell ony merkys,<sup>1</sup>  
For feyth is not provable, as clerkys seyn.  
670 Therfore oure wyttes must be ful beyn *inclined*  
To leve swech thingys that we can not prove:  
Lete argumentys walk, thei are not to oure behove.” *Forget arguments; profit*

## Chapter 15

## Chapter 16

680 "For myschef, madame, that man fell in misfortune  
Whan Adam the appyll ete in paradys  
Wold this Lord in erde lowly take His ine, abode  
Not levynge that place full of dellys, delight

<sup>1</sup> Lines 666–68: *Since no one may explain the hidden origin of these earthly works, / It is no wonder that they (the earthly works) / Should reveal themselves through faith*

Book 3

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                  |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
|     | But bothe here and there at His devys<br>He dwelt, as we leve, oure soules to leche.<br>This semyth to yow full wondyrfull speche.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | devising<br>heal |
| 685 | “And that same Lord as nobyll marchaunt<br>His blood for oure synne on crosse wold spylle.<br>Of that same deth we may make avaunt:<br>It waschyth from us alle that we dede ille.<br>Of oure feyth, lady, this is the grettest bylle:<br>That Cryst His bloode payed for oure synnes alle.<br>Best of all marchauntis, therfore, we Him calle.” | boast<br>article |
| 690 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                  |

## Chapter 17

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 695 | <p>“How may ye couple now that ye have sayd?<br/>     He is Lord of all — eyre, watyr, and londe —<br/>     Lyvynge in pees with His modyr and mayde.<br/>     Her-<i>too</i> thus ye adde that He is so bonde<br/>     That He suffrede to be slain with wykkyd honde —<br/>     How can ye acord that this gret possessyoun<br/>     Schuld long onto Him and eke this strong passyoun?</p> | <i>reconcile</i><br><i>air</i><br><i>bound</i><br><i>allowed himself to be</i><br><i>agree</i> |
| 705 | <p>“How may that Lord lyvyn evyr and ay<br/>     Whan He is coupled of contraries too?<br/>     For of man and Godd His persone, as ye say,<br/>     Hath take resultauns.<sup>1</sup> And yet sey ye moo:<br/>     He is bothe eterne and temporall, loo.<br/>     Lok if youre spech be now no heresye —<br/>     This wote I weel, that it offendyth phylosophye!”</p>                     | <i>eternally</i><br><i>composed</i><br><i>is not heretical</i>                                 |

## Chapter 18



<sup>1</sup> Lines 703–04: *His person, as you say, / Has resulted from the union of man and God*

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With these argumentis whech are full of dole  
 Wyll sche not medelle be no manere preve —  
 There were no mede than in oure beleve.

*deceit*

*Then believing would have no merit*

- 715    “Therfor, lady, if ye wyll, lerne this thing;  
 Ye schall mech bettyr whan ye your groundys have,  
 For of oo poynt I geve yow full warnyng:  
 Ye can nevyr grace of youre Lorde crave,  
 Ne youre soule eke schul ye nevyr save,  
 720    But if ye forsake forevyr your elde beleve,  
 And trow swesch thing as ye can not preve.

*have grasped the basics*

“How knew ye that Costus, kyng of this londe,  
 Was fadyr onto yow? And what evydens have ye  
 That ye were bounden sumetyme with a bonde,  
 725    Armes, bodye, bak, legges, and kne,  
 Layde thus in cradyll, as chyldyr are, pardé?  
 Of all these thingys can we make no preve,  
 Wherfore full mekely we must hem beleve.

- 730    “So schall we beleve all manere thing  
 Whech that oure Lord comaundeth onto us,  
 For that same Lorde that all hath in weldyng —  
 Oure blessed God, oure savyoure Jesus —  
 Whan that He byddyth that we schall do thus,  
 Suffyseth us as than to be obedient,  
 735    For but if we be, I holde us but schent!

*rules all*

*ruined*

- 740    “Yet, for ye argue be your demonstracyoun  
 That this same doctrine schuld be contrarius,  
 Because that I seyd in my declaracyoun  
 Who that blessed lord whech is full delicyous —  
 I mene Jesu, oure Savyoure, of all most vertuous —  
 That He schuld be God and man eke in fere,  
 Of this same doctryne example may ye lere.

*contradictory*

*delightful*

*at the same time*

- 745    “And for ye dowte eke of this coupelyng,  
 That we two natures in Cryst sey and preche,  
 I wyll preve this be your own felyng,

*because*

*senses*

### Book 3

And ye yourself your owne selve schall teche —  
 Myn arbytroure I make your owne tung and speche.  
 For withinne yourselfe, if ye take heede,  
 Two natures haf ye, withouten any drede,

- 750     “Whech contrarye be. I preve it be this skyll,  
 For that the on desyreth, the other wyll nouth;  
 Contrarye than be thei, these too, in wyll,  
 In desyre, in werkynge, in appetyte, in thowth.  
 Ryght so in that Lorde that us alle hath bouth  
 755     Bethe too kyndes and wylles eke too,  
 Bothe in oo persone, oure feyth seyth ryght soo.

*argument*

*bought*

*two natures and two wills*

- “Now wyll we declare onto youre reverens  
 How God is eterne and withouten ende.  
 For if ye loke wysely, that same sentens  
 760     Schul ye have in youre bokes that trete of kende.  
 Thei determin thus, if ye have mende:  
 All thing that is made begynnyng must have.  
 And for thei fro that heresye schuld hem save

*doctrine*

*metaphysics*

*recall*

*in order to avoid heresy*

- “Whech two begynnynges puttyth in kynde,  
 Therfor on hafe thei chose and thus thei Him calle  
 The Fyrst Mevere, if I have mynde,  
 Of whech mevere other causes alle  
 Her oryginall spryng both have and schall,  
 All that have ben and evermore schul be —  
 770     Of youre owyn bokes this is the degré.”

*First Mover; understand*

### Chapter 19

- Whan Adryan the ermyte these wordes had herde,  
 Assoyled alle these questyons and many moo,  
 Onto the lady thus he last answerde:  
 “Madame,” he seyth, “if ye wyll now goo  
 775     And walk forth with me, non but we two,  
 This Lord schall ye see, this Lady schall ye speke,  
 Howses schall ye have there schull nevyr breke.”

*Resolved*

*converse with  
collapse*

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- These wordes went so depe sche left bokes alle,  
 So astoyned sche was, sche wot not veryly  
 Wheyther sche schall this ermyte a man now calle  
 Or ellys an aungell come down fro hye,  
 For his clothys to his wordes are full onlykly:  
 An olde man and hore, clade in clothys bare,  
 A wyse man, a well avySED, and a ware;
- 780
- A man lych a begger whan men him see,  
 A man lych a doctoure whan thei him here.  
 Few wordes and wyse and full of sentens had he,  
 He semyth not so wyse be aray ne chere  
 As this lady hath prevyd in dyvers manere.
- 785
- Wherfore aftyr his counsele certeyn sche wyl do,  
 No man schall lett hir for sche wyl so,  
 For anoon as the ermyte buskyd him to fare  
 Forth in his jornay, sche folowyth apace.  
 All lordes and knytes that in the castell ware,
- 790
- Thei herd not, thei sey not, of all this solace,  
 Ne thorowoute the cyté as thei gun trace,  
 Was no man aspyed hem, but as invisible  
 Thei passed forby. Ryght so seyth oure byble
- 795
- Of the men of Sodom aboute Lothis hous,  
 How thei neyther dores ne gates myght fynde.  
 Godd smet hem thoo with a sekenes mervelous —  
 It is called acrisia, it maketh men seme blynde  
 As for a tyme, for sykyr all her mynde
- 800
- Schall be so astoyned that thei schull not see  
 Thing that in her hand up hap than bee.
- 805
- So was all the cyté astoyned ryght than,  
 Be Goddes providens, fully as we wene.  
 Lete hem curse now, let hem chyde and banne:  
 No man knowyth now whedyr is the qweene.
- 810
- Thus goo thei forth, walkyng bedeene,  
 Tyll thei come to the stronde where that his hous —  
 This ermyte, I mene, this man mervelous —
- unsuited  
 hoary; worn  
 prudent
- theologian
- physical appearance  
 many ways  
 she will take his advice
- prepared to depart
- were  
 joy  
 went
- Lot's
- struck; sickness
- Temporarily
- happens to be
- complain; swear
- together  
 shore

### Book 3

- Was won for to stande, but all is agoo. *Used to stand; gone*
- 815 There is no home — all is wyldyrnnesse.  
He wayled, he loked, he went too and froo;  
He cast the cuntré, but he coude not gesse — *searched; figure it out*  
Thus is he lefte in care and hevynesse.  
“Good Lord,” he seyth, “with me do what Thou lest,  
But as Thou hyght me, comfort my gest.” *promised*
- 820 In how long tyme or in how many dayes  
That thei fro Alysaunder went to his celle, *It took them to go*  
It is full harde to telle, for sewyrly tho wayes  
Were so mervelous we can not with hem melle. *concern ourselves with*  
Therfor of this matere no more wyll I telle.  
825 But He made hem myghty this jornay to take  
That be the aungell led Abacuc to the lake. *Habakkuk; lions' den (see note)*
- Thus mornyth this man, thus turneth he aboute; *mourns*  
He lokyth every coost sekyng his celle,  
He is falle now sodeynly in full grete doute,  
830 For all his sorow, sothely for to telle, *to tell the truth*  
Was for this lady, where sche schall dwelle.  
Thus seyd he to hymselfe, “Sche schall ween I were  
A fals deceyvoure, a ontrewe messangere.” *think I am*

### Chapter 20

- The qween aspyed be the ermytes face  
835 For very vexacyoun how he chaunged moode. *frustration*  
“Good syre,” sche seyd, “I pray yow of youre grace,  
Have we any tydylnges othyr but goode?  
That ye are turmentyd, I se be youre bloode.  
Telle me what doute that ye stand now inne?  
840 Councell ha ye non but me, more ne the myne.” *have; neither more or less*
- “Madame,” he seyd, “here left I myn hous  
Whan I went for yow as I was sent,  
And now the cuntré to me is mervelous.  
Alle is agoo, i-drenchyd or i-brent!  
845 I must seke a new hous, for myn elde is schent. *unfamiliar  
washed away*

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- I had nevyr thowth myn herborow to chaunge; *dwelling*  
*I must do so*
- Now mote I nedys, and that schall be straunge.”
- 850     Tho sayd the qween to the man ageyn,  
“That Lady that sent yow for to fech me,  
Sche is so gentyll, so trew as ye sayn,  
Sche wyll not suffyr us in this adversyté  
To be lost or devoured in this straunge cuntré.  
Trost we upon hir and hir gentylnesse,  
For in good hope lyghte sumtyme sykyrnesse.” *Sometimes our security resides in faith*
- 855     “Now evyr be ye wele,” seyd the ermyte, *Bless you!*  
“Ye hafe set your trost hyere than myselve.  
Thow ye be entered into the feyth but a lyte,  
Ye wyll pace in schort tyme other ten or twelve!  
Beth not aferde of best ne of elve,  
860     For that same Lady whos Son ye choos,  
Sche schall us save, I leve soo douteles. *believe*
- “But all my thowth is now for my celle:  
Schall I now grubbe and mak all newe ageyn? *labor*  
Schall I now delve and make me a welle?  
865     My myght is i-goo, sothely for to seyn;  
To chaunge my dwellyng was I nevyr fayn.  
This is my grucchyng, lady, this is my care. *gone*  
But for your comfort well mote ye fare.” *complaint*  
*You should be cared for*
- 870     Godd suffered this man to falle thus in trauns,  
That he schuld not hymselfe magnyfye *become self magnified*  
Of so grete sytys and of swech dalyauns  
Whech that he had with oure Ladye.  
It is the use of oure Lord to lede men hye *sights; interaction*  
Fro full low degré, as David fro the schepe  
875     Was led to the kyngdam, if we take kepe. *practice*  
*pay attention*

**Chapter 21**

In all this feere whech the ermyte hadde,  
Evyr was this qween comfortour to his age:

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- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                               |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 880 | The more he hevy was, the more was sche gladde,<br>And evyr with full goodely, full frosty langage<br>Sche seyd on-to him, “Lete youre hevynesse swage,<br>Lete it be lost that lost now wyll be.<br>But trewly I telle, a solempne thing I se                                                                                           | <i>unhappy</i><br><i>confident</i><br><i>unhappiness abate</i><br><i>sublime</i>                                              |
| 885 | “Evene yondyr above, sere. Se ye nowth?<br>The woundyrfull wallys schynnyng as sune,<br>Swech another thing was nevyr wrowte —<br>There was nevyr swech thing in erde begune!<br>The stones are bryght, the roves are not dun.<br>Loke up, man, meryly, se ye noght yon syght —<br>The castell yondyr whech schynyth so bryght?”         | <i>Do you not see it?</i><br><br><i>made on earth</i><br><i>buildings (roofs); dim</i><br><i>joyously</i>                     |
| 890 | The ermyte behelde but he sey nowth,<br>Neyther wall ne gates, and tho sorow gan he make.<br>“Lady,” he seyde, “in blessed tyme were ye browte<br>Onto this grounde youre spouse for to take.<br>He hath do now more for your sake<br>Than I hafe felt all my lyffe levande.<br>Ye be more worthy, as I undyrstande.”                    | <i>looked; saw nothing</i><br><i>then</i>                                                                                     |
| 895 | Tho wept he full sore, and sone than he say<br>That same vysyoun, but sore astoyned he was:<br>His chapell was turned all in other way,<br>For this whech he sethe is bryghtere than glas —<br>The othir was elde, all growyn with gras.<br>His elde hous was lytyll, this new is large.<br>Than gafe he the mayden a full grete charge. | <i>experienced in my lifetime</i><br><br><i>saw</i><br><br><i>transformed</i><br><br><i>overgrown</i>                         |
| 900 | Thus seyd he to hir, “Madame, now goo ye<br>Onto yon castell, on-to yon toure.<br>Trostyth no lengere of the ledyng of me,<br>For I am not worthy to prese to that boure.<br>God graunt that I may be youre successoure,<br>That I may sumetyme come to that place,<br>If ye may, I pray yow, aske me that grace.”                       | <i>tower</i><br><br><i>Rely no longer on my guidance</i><br><i>press on; dwelling</i><br><br><i>request that favor for me</i> |

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- Than went the mayden forth be hir one, *by herself*  
 Desyryng sore to se this goodely place,  
 But Adryan folowyd whan sche was gone.  
 Oute of hir hardynesse he gan him purchace  
*courage; acquire*  
 915      Onto his comfort now a new solace.  
 But whan thei were come at the gatys wyde,  
 There where thei receyved on every syde
- With swech manere persones of face and of clothyng  
 We can not speke it. I trow thei told it nowte,  
*express; revealed*  
 920      For thei that are lyfte to swech mysty thing,  
 Thei telle what thei sey whan thei were thedyr broute,  
 But thei cannot expresse her wyll ne her thowte  
 In whech thei hade that manere solace<sup>1</sup> —  
 It is anothyr langage that longyth to that place.
- 925      But these too persones, as many other moo,  
 Were lyft up in soule swech sytes for to see.  
 Seynt Poule hymselfe was on of thoo  
*Paul*  
 That was thus i-raveched, yet dowted he  
*transported*  
 Wheythyrr his body or nowte were in that secrece.  
 930      But this doute I not, that the body of this mayde  
 Was in that temple where sche was arayde  
*partook in that mystery*  
*adorned*
- With holy baptem and anoynted eke  
*baptism*  
 With holy crisme, as oure Lord wolde.  
 No man may be baptyzed, if we treuly speke,  
 935      But thei have a body, be thei yong or olde —  
 Thus sey the elde bokes, therof are we bolde.  
 God may do whatevyr Him lyst  
 And dothe mech thing whech is not wyst.  
*Unless  
we have confidence*  
*known*
- 940      Thus are thei receyvyd in the fyrst warde,  
*outer entrance*  
 But aftyr mech bettyr and of worthyere men  
 Whan sche to the secunde cam, whech savoured as narde —  
*smelled like nard*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 921–23: *They tell what they saw when they were brought there, / But they cannot convey the feelings and thoughts / They had when they were experiencing that joy*

Book 3

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                  |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 945 | Nay mech swettyr. There met sche mo than ten —<br>Of hundredes, I mene — but non can sche ken.<br>Thei were other maner persones than sche had seyn,<br>But all these in fere onto hir gan seyn, | recognize<br>seen<br>together; say               |
| 950 | “Wolcom, syster, onto this holy place!<br>Wolcom to oure Lorde, whech hath yow chose<br>For to be His spouse ryght of His grace!<br>Wolcome of clennesse very swete rose;                        | rose sweet in purity                             |
|     | For youre virginité, wythowte ony glose,<br>Schal we receyve yow.” And thus forth thei hir lede,                                                                                                 | truthfully                                       |
|     | These gostly folkys in wondyrfull wede,                                                                                                                                                          | apparel                                          |
| 955 | Tyl thei to the temple cam. But there was a syght:<br>There came kynges, there cam emperoures,<br>There cam a meny with habytes so bryght,<br>It is not possible to erdely successoures          | company; clothes<br>followers<br>describe        |
|     | To expresse thoo fresch, thoo gay coloures!<br>Sche sey hem than in her goodely aray;<br>We leve in hope to se hem anothyr day.                                                                  | live; i.e., after our death                      |
| 960 | Thei led hir thoo forthe a full softe pace<br>Onto the barres of the temple gate.                                                                                                                | at a leisurely pace                              |
|     | Hir wolcomyng at that tyme swech thoo it was:<br>“Wolcom oure syster, wolcom oure mate!                                                                                                          | comrade                                          |
| 965 | As ye be now were we full late,<br>For sumtyme had we bothe flesch, fell, and bonys,<br>As ye hafe now, had we all ones!”                                                                        | once<br>skin                                     |
| 970 | Upon her habytes certen tokenes thei bere —<br>Sum man oo tokyn, sume man another bare<br>Aftyr the passyones whech thei suffred here.<br>So were thei merked with tokenes full bare;            | emblems                                          |
|     | Thoo toknes were sett there, ryght to declare<br>That men had thei be and with grete distresse<br>Oute of this herde com to that holynesse.                                                      | According to; i.e., on earth<br>emblems; exposed |
| 975 | But whan this lady to the dore was browte,<br>Sche loked in, hir leders louted alle;                                                                                                             | they had been humans<br>earth<br>guides bowed    |

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- Sche herd there melodye, as to hir thowte, *in her opinion*  
 Sche herd nevyr swych. Therfore is sche falle  
 Down all in trauns — there was nevyr man ne schalle  
 That may susteyn in body swech hevynly blysse, *Who*  
 980 For who schall it susteyn must dye fyrt iwys.
- Oute of hir traunce whan sche was wakyd, *awakened*  
 Sche folowyd forth than to that noble place.  
 Than sey sche oure Lord whech all thing makyd,  
 Whech had called hir to that noble grace,  
 985 Sittyn full reall — but upon His face  
 Durst sche not loke, for no manere thing,  
 So was sche aferde at hir fyrt comyng. *on no account*
- Than wyst sche wele it was more than man  
 That sche had sowte and now sche hath it founde,  
 990 For with all the wytt that sche gadyr can  
 Dare sche noght fixe hir eye in this stounde *at this time*  
 But evyr sche in poynt is to falle onto the grounde —  
 Hir body is cause. It must be claryfyed,  
 And all the carnalyté fully purfyed, *about to*  
*made morally pure*
- 995 Or sche swech thinges eyther fele or grope. *examine*  
 Thus is this mayden all in hevynesse  
 Left and leyd in manere of wan hope,  
 For that same Lord whech of His goodenesse  
 Lyst for to chese hir as a specyal spousesse  
 1000 Now is so straunge — sche may noght hafe that grace *unfamiliar*  
 To come sumewhert nyher and se His face.

**Chapter 22**

- Tho cam oure Ladye and left hir up sone. *lifted her up at once*  
 Thus sayd sche to hir: “Be of good comforde.  
 Youre hevynes is pased, ye hafe youre bone; *your request is granted*  
 1005 All this grete hevynesse schall turn to dysport. *joy*  
 I sent aftyr yow that ye schuld resorte  
 Onto this howsolde, for ye schall hafe this grace: *make your way*  
 Next me aforne all women to be in this place. *household*

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- 1010    “Therfore come forthe now, for I wyll yow lede  
       Ryght to my Sone, onto that magesté.”  
       Both maydes in fere thus forthe thei yede.  
       But this noble Adriane, at that tyme where was he?  
       Myn auctour telleth noght, but sekyr may ye be,  
       He had blysse enowe assygned to his parte,  
       He had so mech he was lothe to departe!
- went*  
*was happy enough*  
*reluctant to leave*
- 1015    Thus are these ladyes even onto the trone  
       Of oure Lord allmyghty walked forthe apace.  
       Withouten othyr company, thei went thoo aloone.  
       Peraventure other folk stood not in that grace;  
       So ny that magesté, so ny Goddys face,  
       To approche at that tyme it was a specyalté  
       Ordeyned of purpos at this solemnyté.
- As it happens*  
*privilege*  
*especially for this ceremony*
- 1020    Oure Lady had the wordes whan sche cam there:  
       “Sone,” sche seyth, “and makere of all maner thing,  
       I hafe browte a mayde here in full grete fere;  
       The spouse whech Thu lovyst, here I hir bryng.  
       Sche desyryth that Thu schalt now with a ryng  
       Despouse hir to Thiself for evyrmore —  
       This is hir desyre and hath be full yore.”
- reverence*  
*Esposue*  
*for a long time*
- 1025    1030    Oure Lord spake ageyn mysty wordes too,  
       Whech that this mayde full hevy thoo made:  
       “Modyr,” He seyth, “ye know yourself, loo,  
       The cause that this company in joyes thus wade  
       Is the look of Myselfe whech dothe hem glade;  
       For thei that hafe that, thei nede noo othyr thing.  
       But thei that schul hafe this gracyous syght lestyng
- in response mysterious*  
*go*  
*the sight of Me; gladden*  
*enduring*
- 1035    1040    “Full clene must thei be in body and in gooste,  
       Wasched fro all synnes that be fowle and derk;  
       Of swech hafe I here — ye see a grete hoste  
       Clensyd with My blode and merkyd with My merk.  
       All this was My laboure and My bysy werk  
       Whan I in erde was to bye mankynde,  
       Whech that I fynde full oft to Me onkynde.
- i.e., their redemption*  
*redeem*  
*ungrateful*

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- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1045 | “Therfor, modyr, thus I answer unto yow:<br>This mayde may not hafe as now that grace<br>Whech that ye aske for hir sake now,<br>I mene the vysyon, the syght of My face.<br>Lete hir goo clense hir, lete hir goo purchase<br>The holy baptem, than hath sche My merke.<br>Bryng hir than to Me and I schall hir merke                         | <i>as of now</i><br><i>obtain</i><br><i>baptism; will have</i>                         |
| 1050 | “With swech a tokne that nevyr mayde but ye<br>Had it so specyal. Lete this thing be doo.<br>A prest hafe ye redy, and a man, pardé,<br>Bothe in flesch and goost; lete him goo thertoo.<br>Performe he schall this werk with his handys too;<br>Myn aungellis wyll I noght occupye with this dede —<br>It longyth to mankynd, withouten drede. | <i>no maiden but you</i><br><i>done</i><br><i>on hand</i><br><i>no doubt</i>           |
| 1055 | “And yet thow We myght of Oure hye powere<br>Graunte onto aungellis this specialtee,<br>That thei schuld baptize men in erde here,<br>Yet wyll We noght that thei occupye schuld bee<br>With swych manere offyce as to humanyté<br>Longyth and schal longe as for most ryght —<br>Go now and baptize that noble wyght!”                         | <i>privilege</i><br><i>earth</i><br><i>more properly</i><br><i>person</i>              |
| 1060 | Than spake oure Ladye to swage hir hevynesse,<br>“Beth not discomfortyd in no manere weye<br>With my Sones wordes, for in sykyrnesse<br>Ye must to His byddyng ful buxumly obeye.<br>It is a goodely usage, sothely to seye,<br>Who schal be weddyd onto duke or kynge<br>Befor hir weddyng to hafe a bathynge                                  | <i>assuage</i><br><i>graciously</i><br><i>take a bath</i>                              |
| 1065 | “For to mak hir swete, for to make hir clene,<br>Ellys myght sche renne in ful grete offens.<br>Be this example onto yow I mene<br>Do ye youre devere, do youre dylygens<br>For to plese youre Lorde. Anon goo we hens<br>Into yon chapell to your baptistery —<br>Aftyr your waschynge, ye schal be full mery!”                                | <i>incur his displeasure</i><br><i>I mean to say</i><br><i>duty; make every effort</i> |
| 1070 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |
| 1075 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |

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Chapter 23

- Thus are thei walked, the mayden and the qween,  
1080 Into this chapell on the mynsterie syde. *attached to the temple*  
There fond thei redy a funt, as I wene,  
With watyr and with crisme in a vessell wyde. *font*  
Adriane is called fro the puple asyde,  
For he must do all this holy servyse,  
1085 Lych as oure Lady the manere schall devyse. *chrism*  
  
Thus seyd sche to him, “Go do now this dede —  
It longyth to thin ordre Cristen folk to make. *i.e., the priesthood*  
Aray thee anone in swech manere wede  
Whech I myself here thee now take. *garments*  
1090 This mayde schal be bathyd for hir loves sake  
In this cold watyr, and Crysten schal sche be.  
My Lord, my Son, thus comaundyth He. *present to you*  
  
“I myselfe schal of hir clothes strepe  
And make hir all naked, redy to this thing. *undress her*  
1095 Hir name Kateryne styl schal thu clepe,  
Ryght for this cause and for this tokenyng:  
That thei whech knew hir ethir eld or yyng  
Schul hafe an evydens sche is styl the same *proof*  
Whech sche was befor. Therfor styl hir name  
  
1100 “Schal sche thus kepe, in confirmacyoun  
That all thing is trewe whech we do here.<sup>1</sup> *tricks; connivance*  
No wyles wrowte are, ne no collusyoun;  
We wyll noght suffyr that in no manere.”  
Tho was Kateryn spoyled, but blynd was the frere,  
1105 Bothe in hir spoylyng and in hir bapteme. *stripped*  
Of that solempne fest this was the theme: *during; undressing*  
  
“I baptize thee here in the blessed name  
Of the Fadyr and the Sone and the Holy Gost,

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1100–01: *to confirm / That everything we perform here is authentic*

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- 1110 In presens and wyteneſe of oure reverent dame, *witness*  
 Modyr unto Cryst, of all women moſte, *greatest*  
 Godmodyr onto thee, and that may thu boſt. *boast*  
 Lok thu beleve, dowtyr, as I ſeyd to thee:  
 That oo God there is and perſoneſ thre.
- 1115 “Beleve eke in bapteme and in Holy Kyrk; *Church*  
 Beleve in the paſſyoun of oure Lord Jesu;  
 Beleve that the miraclē whech He dede werk  
 Were withoute deceyte, ſtable and trewe;  
 Beleve that of a virgyne His manhode grew,  
 And ſche undefouled. For ſche is preſent, *undefiled*  
 1120 ſche can bere wytteſſe of this teſtamente.”
- 1125 Kateryne anſweryd onto theſe artiſles alle:  
 “I believe hem, ſere, as ye rehers bedene. *just as you ſay them*  
 Therfor on knes as I now down falle,  
 In this ſame funte, whech ye may not ſene, *font*  
 Baptize me, par charité, and make me clene, *please*  
 For this is the wyll of the ſoveren Lorde above,  
 And my wyll is it eke ryght for His love.” *on account of*
- 1130 Thus was ſche baptiſzed, and in this manere  
 Conferred eke, and renewed hir name.  
 Oure Lady hirſelfe ſervaunte was here; *took off*  
 Sche dede of the clothes of this ſwete dame. *film*  
 All this ilk tyme there was a hame  
 Of blyndenes before this ermytes yye, *eyes*  
 For of all this werk nothing he ſyee.
- 1135 But ſone aftyr this ſacrament is doo, *was performed*  
 His lyght receyvyd he newly ageyn. *sight*  
 The myrth, the joye that the man made thoo  
 We can not eſyly exprefſe now ne ſeyn.  
 Ful ſekyrly wende he nevyr eft a ſeyn — *he thought he would never ſee again*  
 1140 Now thanketh he Godd, of His hye grace,  
 That evyr he cam into that holy place.

Book 3



## Chapter 24

- Now is oure Lady forth with this mayde  
 1150 Into the temple entred ageyn.  
 Yet in hir going thus swetly sche sayde,  
 "Dowtyr myn, Kateryne, loke ye be glad and feyn,  
 For youre desyre schul ye have, certeyn,  
 Ere ye goo hens — beleve this sykyrly."  
 1155 Swech wordes talked thei, walkyng sobyrly.

Now be thei come evene before the trone  
 Of oure Lord God, the mayde and the qwene.  
 Oure lady had the wordes hirself alone —  
 Swech was the ordre of hir tale, I weene.  
 1160 "O kyng of kynges, blyssed mote Thu beene!  
 I have browte here the doghtyr of clennesse,  
 Prayng Thee, Lorde, with alle humblynesse

"That Thou schew now the blysse of Thi face  
 Onto Thi spouse, onto Thi creature.  
 1165 Evene as Thu grauntyd that grete grace  
 To kepe hir virginité in clenly trappure,  
 So graunte hir now that hye portrature  
 Of Thi blyssyd ymage to se and beholde,  
 For than are sche and I mech to Thee beholde."

Oure Lorde answerde onto His modyr ful fayre:  
 "Whatsoevyr ye wyll, modyr, it must be doo;  
 All heven and herde to yow must repayre  
 For help whan hem nedyth to refresh her woo.  
 1170 I graunte your petycoun, I wyll it be soo."

*Daughter*

*This is what she said, I think*

*purity*

*in a pure state*

*picture*

*greatly indebted to You*

*earth; appeal*

*relieve their sorrow*

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- 1175 Than fell that qween down plat to the grounde,  
Hir corown sche toke of that was ful rownde, *flat  
off*
- Sche leyd it befor Him and thus sche spake:  
“Lord of all creatures that be lyvande,  
Nothing that I aske of Thi grace I lake, *lack*  
1180 Evyr be Thu honowred in hevyn and in lande.  
I myselfe am werk of Thi hande;  
Thow I Thi modyr be, Thi servaunt am I.  
Thi grace I thank, for Thi mercy I crye!” *I am grateful for*
- Oure Lord bad hir ryse and sche rose sone.  
1185 Sche was corowned ageyn or thei were ware. *realized*  
Tho men myght see what is to done  
Of ony creature whan thei come thare;  
This same exaumple sat thoo full sare *weighed heavily*  
On Kateryns hert; sche fell down anoone,  
1190 Plat on the grounde, stylly as the stoone.
- Thus seyd sche, in schort, for to tell pleyn:  
“I se wele, Lorde, that of all maner thing  
Thou art makere of erde, eyre, and the reyn — *air; rain*  
All be obeyent to Thi comandynge.  
1195 Mercy I crave, Lord, at my begynnyng — *to start with*  
Have I Thi mercy, I desyre not ellys,  
For I have lernyd of mercy here the welle is.” *the well of mercy is here*
- Sche was lyft up be oure Lorde Hymselfe.  
Thus seyd He to hir: “Wolcom, doutyr, to Me.”  
1200 Aboute hir stode vyrgynes ten or twelve,  
Wondyrly arayed and full of bewté.  
Oure Lady had called hem onto that deuté, *duty*  
To comfort this mayde and do hir servyse.  
Tho spak this Lorde, this hye justyse:
- 1205 “Ask what ye wyll, Kateryne, ye schul it have  
Of Me at this tyme to your wolcomyng.  
Syth ye forsake bothe castell and cave  
For love of Me and for My byddyng,

Book 3

- 1210 I will graunte yow youre hertis desyryng,  
For I am that same whom ye in parlement  
Ageyn all youre lordes and comouns consent *the one  
the will of lords and commons*
- “Chosen onto spowse. Who leke ye now?  
Wyll ye now have Me for evyrmore?” *What do you think?*  
With these swete wordes sche fel in swow *swoon*
- 1215 Plat onto the grounde, the good Lorde before.  
But whan He hir wyttes ageyn gan restore,  
Thus spake sche than onto that kyng:  
“O Soveren, makere of all manere thing, *Flat  
to her senses*
- “Of angell, of man, of best, and of tre,  
1220 If I were worthy onto Your hye presence  
For to be couplede with solemnyté,  
Than wold I desyre of Your excellens,  
That Ye forgefe me all manere offens — *everything I have done wrong*  
Make me Your servaunt and not Youre wyffe;  
1225 I am not worthy to so hye a lyffe!”
- “Yys,” seyd oure Lorde, “My modyr wyll here  
That I schall wed yow — so wyll I, saun fayle.  
Therfor I ask yow, youre wyll for to lere.  
If ye consent onto this spousayle, *wishes*  
1230 With many joyes I wyl you newly rayle.  
Consent ye Kateryne? What sey ye nowe?” *without fail  
learn  
marriage  
adorn*  
“Lord,” sche seyd, “thoo I wyll as wilt thou. *in that case*
- “I forsake here, Lorde, for Thi love,  
Crown and londe, castell and town,  
1235 Gold and sylvyr, bothe hows and rofe, *roof*  
Brochys and ryngys, mantell and gown.  
Suffyr me no more, Lord, for to fall down  
In delectacyoun of wordly thingys. *On account of my love for*  
Kepe me Thiselfe, Lorde, kyng of all kyngys.
- 1240 “All that evyr I hafe, that wote I wele,  
I hafe it of Thee, Lord — of whom hafe I elles?  
My spech, my thowt, my mende — every dele —

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- My bones, my body, my flesch, and my felles! skin  
 Now as in Thee of plenté be the welles, *Now, as the wells of plenty are in You*  
 1245 Suffyr me nevyr for to part Thee froo,  
 For fro Thi presens kepe I nevyr to goo.” seek
- Than spak oure Lorde ryght on this wyse:  
 “Long was it ordeynde befor this tyme  
 That ye schuld come onto Oure servyse.  
 1250 Above all othir I wyll that ye clyme —  
 Save only My modyr, schortly to ryme, rhyme  
 Ye schal be next joyned to My presence,  
 Ryght for your chastyté and youre obediens.
- “For thow all thoo maydenes that kepe hem clene Although; themselves  
 1255 For My sake and for My plesaunce  
 Be wyves unto Me all bedene,  
 Yet is there to yow schape a hyere chaunce. prepared for you; higher fortune  
 Befor hem all schal ye go in the daunce, dance  
 Next My modyr, ryght for this cause:  
 1260 For ye forsoke, to say schortly in clause, to put it bluntly
- “Emperour, kyng, and duke, for My sake.  
 I receyve yow, therfore, be a specyalté. in a special way  
 My wyffe forevyr here I yow make  
 Because of your constans in virginité. commitment to  
 1265 And a new conflycte in schort tyme schul ye  
 Begyne for My sake, but drede yow noght.  
 Whoso offend yow, ful dere it schal be bowte!” Enter into  
will pay dearly
- Tho spak oure Lady ryght in this manere:  
 “Syth that this spousayle mote nedys be doo,  
 1270 This same mayde, Lord, geve I Thee here.  
 A mayde geveth a mayde; Thu servyd me soo, did the same for me  
 Whan Thu commendyd Jon me untoo  
 Where that Thu hyng on the blody tre. hanged  
 Here is the ryng, Lord, and here is sche.”
- 1275 Oure Lord tok that ryng in His honde;  
 He put it on the fyngere of this clene virgyne.

Book 3

- “This is a tokne,” He seyd, “of that bonde  
 Whech ye youreselfe, as on of Myne,  
 Lyst now youre wyll to My wyl enclyne.  
 1280 This tokne eke beryth wytnesse full ryffe  
 That here I tak yow for My weddyd wyffe.” *apparent*
- Certeyn men that had seyn this ryng,  
 As myn auctour seyth, thei told it pleyn.  
 Thei seyde that it is a fayre gravyn thing  
 1285 Oute of a ston whech, as thei eke seyn,  
 It is clepyd a calcedony. Lych a clowde of reyn  
 Or ellys lych the watyr, swech his coloure is.  
 His vertues are touchyd many, iwys; *described it clearly*
- The auctoures sey that he is gracyous  
 1290 To the berer of him if that he wyll trete  
 Of ony materes whech that be perlyous;  
 He schall have fortune down for to bete  
 All the bate and stryffe in toun or in strete;  
 He is vertuous eke to geve men a tast *debate*  
 1295 For to kepe hir body bothe clene and chast. *an inclination*
- Tho began a song in heven all abowte,  
 The wondyrfull notes that evyr man myght here,  
 Wordes sounded thei to the notes full devoute,  
 Full well acordyng to her song there.  
 1300 The song that thei sungyn, if ye wyll lere,  
 Was this same *Sponsus amat sponsam*,  
 The overt thertoo, “*Salvator visitat illam.*” *prologue*
- So semeth it well this song in heven began  
 Amonge aungellis and seyntes in blysse;  
 1305 Well may it than be sunge of mane  
 Here in this vale of wrecchydenesse. *by humans*  
 This chyrch must folow for sothe, I gesse,  
 The chyrch above in all that it may.  
 Thus endeth the weddyng of this may. *i.e., this earthly life*  
*i.e., the church on earth* *maiden*

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**Chapter 25**

- 1310 Tho lest oure Lorde His leve to take  
Of His new spouse as for a space.  
That same hand whech all thing dede make,  
He lyfte on hye, and of His goode grace  
He blessed this swete, bothe hede and face.
- 1315 “Farwell,” he seyth, “My wyffe ful dere;  
Lete no dyscomfort yow noy ne fere.
- “Thow that ye lese your londe, youre welth,  
Thynk it is bettyr that I yow geve;  
Thow sekenes come in stede of helth,
- 1320 Kepe ye youre cunstans in trewe beleve.  
And thee, Adryane, make I My refe  
As in this matere: thu schall hir teche  
Of Myn incarnacyon the manere speche;
- “Teche hir the feyth eke of the Trinité,  
1325 The Fadyr, the Sone, and the Holy Gost;  
Teche hir of the Godhede the unyté;  
Truly teche hir, withouten boste.  
Of all this cuntré, I trust thee now moste.  
Therfor, do truly my comaundment —
- 1330 But if thu do, thu may sone be schent!
- “Thys werk, this lessoun, truly to performe,  
Eyt dayes wyll I sche dwell with thee.  
My modyr schall I sende hir to enforme  
Aftyr that tyme, with solemnyté,  
1335 Of many other thinges touchyng hir and Me.  
But Kateryne, wyffe, this schall I yow geve,  
Above all women that now erdely leve,
- “Myn aungellis schul honour yow with a servyse,  
In tokne that we be wedded in fere.
- 1340 There was nevyr sey yet swech funeral offyse  
Of no seynt that in erde deyed here.  
This schal I do for youre love dere.

*wished to take leave  
for a while*

*disturb; frighten*

*what I give you is better*

*reeve*

*how to speak of*

*pride*

*Eight*

*live on earth*

*together*

Book 3

Farewel now, and think ‘not longe.’”  
Thus pased oure Lorde with myrthe and song,

*departed*

1345 And all thoo creatures fayre and bryght,  
Alle are i-passed; the temple eke is goo,  
So is that chapell, that funt, and that lyght,  
Of all this thing thei se now no moo  
But Adryanes celle, where that thei too  
1350 Are left alone among trees olde.  
But than was it reuth for to beholde,

*a pity to see*

To se this swete, how sche than felle  
Down in a swow, as ded thoo sche lay.  
Adriane now is runne to his welle;  
1355 With watyr he comyth and grete afray.  
“Awake, madame,” he gan thoo to say,  
“Allas that evyr ye come in this place!”  
He rubbyd hir chekys, the nose, and the face;

*swoon; as if she were dead*

1360 He wept, he prayed, he cryed ful sore  
To sche awoke, sat up and spake.  
Adryane sayde to hir, “Lady dey no more —  
For and ye do hens schal I me pak!  
Alle manere comfort here we do lak  
That schuld yow rere; therfore I charge yow  
1365 Fall no more in swech manere swow.

*Until*

*unless you do*

*sustain*

“Thynkyth thow your love as for a tyme  
Hath left yow here, yet hath He nowth  
Forsak yow, lady, but as a pylgryme  
He wyl ye be in dede and in thouth.  
1370 I wote full wele ye nevyr mech rowth  
Of no wordly ne erdely plesauns;  
It may yow nothing so hlyly avauns

*that although*

*thought*

*delighted*

*can never promote you as highly*

“As may that Lorde to whom that ye be  
Wedded now newly. For Goddys sake,  
1375 Comfort yerselue and think how that ye  
This same blesse sumetyme schul i-take

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In swesch manere sewyrnesse that schal nevyr slake.  
Therfore beth glade and loke on your ryng —  
It wyll remembry yow youre gloryous weddyng.”

*never end*

Therfore beth glade and loke on your ryng —  
It wyl remembryr yow youre gloryous weddyng.'

*remind you of*

## Chapter 26

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                   |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1380 | “But now must ye, myn own lady dere,<br>Youre beleve undyrstand, ful sykyr and pleyn.<br>Youre swete spouse bad I schuld it yow lere,<br>Whom ye in flesch now full late seyn,<br>In whech He soked and also was slain,<br>1385 But of His Goddehed, whech is grownd of all,<br>Feythfully the treuth tell now I schall.       | <i>seen just now<br/>suckled</i>                                  |
| 1390 | “Thys must ye beleve, as I told yow ere,<br>Whan ye were baptized, if ye hafe mynde —<br>Sette your hert therto and bysyly it lere:<br>Oure Lord Godd is of swech a kynde<br>That sykyrly, as I of Him wretyn fynde,<br>He is on in substouns and in nature,<br>Thre eke in persones I yow ensure.                             |                                                                   |
| 1395 | “O God, o Lorde, o maker, o magesté:<br>The Fadyr and the Sone and the Holy Goost,<br>Thre persones in o Godhede, thus beleve ye,<br>Of whech non is smallere, ne non is most.<br>All are of evene powere in every cost,<br>For the pluralyté of persones is no prejudyse<br>1400 Onto the unyté of Godhed, in no manere wyse. | <i>respect<br/>does not contradict</i>                            |
| 1405 | “And yet He that is the Fadyr is not the Sone,<br>Ne the Sone the Gost, withouten fayle;<br>O wyll hafe Thei in all that is done,<br>O myght, o powere, o lyght, o counsayle:<br>This lessoun must ye hyde in your entrayle<br>Ful sadly, madame, for it is oure grounde,<br>On whech to beleve ful sore are we bounde.        | <i>One will<br/>keep in your heart<br/>foundation<br/>obliged</i> |

### Book 3

- “Dystynctyoun in personnes, in nature unité,  
This is oure scole — it must be oure besynesse. *doctrine; we must accept it*
- 1410 The Fadere geveth to the Sone, thus beleve we,  
All substauns of deité and He hath nevyr the lesse.  
The Fadyr begeth the holy Sone, in blesse *bliss*  
The Sone is begotyn, the Goost fro Hem too  
Procedyth, the thryd persone, thus belefe we loo.
- 1415 “To the Fadyr longyth myght, to the Sone cunnyng,  
Godeness to the Goost: thus couplede be Thei, I gesse,  
And yet must we sey for ony manere thing  
O myght, o cunnyng, and eke o goodenesse,  
That the Fadyr is allmyghty, the Sone hath nevyr the lesse.
- 1420 Thow the Sone have cunnyng the Goost hath the same,  
Goodenesse have Thei alle, wete ye wel, madame.”
- Swech manere dalyauns had these folk than *discussions*  
All thoo eyte dayes in hye communicacyoun. *eight*  
Mech more thing was seyd than — more than I can  
1425 Reherse at this tyme. Suffyseth yow this lessoun,  
For all thoo holy wordes of swech exhortacyoun  
May bettyr be thowth than thei may be spoke —  
Swech langage in synfull tunge is but brok. *broken*

### Chapter 27

- At the eyte dayes ende, as was promission, *promised*  
1430 Comth oure Lady with lyght down fro hevene;  
Chaunged sodenly is thoo that mansyon, *dwelling place*  
For it semyth now brytere than the levene. *lightning*  
Aungellys were there mo than sex or sevyne —  
It longeth onto hem to do her dew servyse *due*  
1435 To the emperesse of hevyn, modyr to the hye justyse. *i.e., Christ*
- Many other ladyes come thoo with the qwene —  
With Mary, I mene — so ded Jon Baptyst.  
There were eke vyrgines full fele, as I wene. *a great many*  
He was there eke, Jon the evangelyst;

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- 1440 Who had be there of joye he myght a wyst.<sup>1</sup>  
 Oure Lady hirselfe onto this blyssed mayde  
 Swech manere wordes at that tyme sayde:  
 “Dowtyr to me, wyffe onto my Sone,  
 My Sone grethyth yow with His good blesyng.  
 1445 As He behestyd yow, now am I come  
 To tell yow the manere of youre endyng.  
 A tyraunt — a wers was nevyr levynge —  
 Schal distroye youre regne and your body sle.  
 We wyll not ye repent yow, we wyll not ye fle.
- 1450 “Abydyth styl, ryght in youre owyn place.  
 Boldly stryve ageyn his tyrannyne.  
 My Sone wyll endew yow with swech grace  
 Was nevyr no woman honoured so hye.  
 But fyrst mote ye sufyr schame and vylonye,  
 1455 Losse of your godys, in your body passyoun,  
 Deth at the last — this is the conclusyoun.
- “I must goo now onto my Sone ageyn,  
 Ye to your owne courte schall repaire.  
 All this tyme thei mysse yow not, dare I seyn.  
 1460 Farewele my dowtyr, farewel ye fayre!  
 Whyl ye with my Sone were in the ayre  
 A qween leche to yow all that tyme kept  
 Youre grete astate: sche ete and slept,
- “Spake and comaunded, bothe dempt and wrote —  
 1465 All this dyde sche ryght in your stede.  
 There was no man withinne that mote  
 That cowde aspye in hir womanhede  
 Ony manere differens, sat sche or yede.  
 My Sone ordeyned this for youre sake.  
 1470 Whan ye are ded and your corown take,

<sup>1</sup> Anyone who had been present would have experienced joy

*Book 3*

- “Than schall ye know swech pryvy thingys —  
How thei ar doo and in what manere.  
Yet of another matere I geve yow warnyngys:  
The qween your modyr, the whych dyd yow bere,  
1475 Is i-pasyd and ded, leyd low on bere.  
But beth not dyscomfortyd — now wyll I be  
Modyr onto yow, my Sones wyffe, pardé. *by God*
- “Too yere in your place and sumwhat more  
Schull ye dwell or this Maxencius  
1480 Come for to spoyle your tresore — *destroy*  
Of that same rychesse be ye not desyrous.  
Kepyth your chambyr with levyng vertuous,  
With prayre, fastyng, and almes dede;  
Geve to the pore folk bothe mete and wede. *Keep to your chamber*  
*alms-giving*  
*clothing*
- 1485 “Aftyr this tyme be pased and i-goo  
Than schall this tyraunt mak sone a hende *an end*  
Of yow, doutyr, and of many moo.  
This lesson I wyll that ye emprende,  
Now and evyr set it in youre mende.  
1490 Farewel, now fyrst I wyll yow kysse,  
I go to my Sone, to evyrestyng blysse.”
- Thus is oure Lady sodenly i-goo  
As now fro this qween. Sche is home, eke,  
Unto Alysaundyr — myn auctour seyth soo.  
1495 Thei that wyll rede him, thei may it seke.  
Wheyther sche cam thedyr in day or in weke  
I wote noght now, but there now sche is.  
Was non all that tyme that dede hir mys *during; missed*
- For that tyme whech sche was oute;  
1500 Thus was it ordeynyd be oure sovereyn Lorde.  
This same book whech we hafe be long aboute  
We wyll now ende, if ye therto acorde.  
God send us alle of unité acorde  
To plese Him oonly above all mene.  
1505 Therto sey we alle with oo voys, Amen.

## Book 4

*[Katherine challenges Maxentius and debates the fifty philosophers]*

### Prologue

- These erdely dwellers whech lyve now here  
Are lykened to bees whech dwell in hyve,  
Or ellys to dranes, if that ye lyst to lere. drones  
It faryth with men ryght thus in her lyve:  
5 Summe wyll labour and summe wyll nevyr thryve.  
Dyverse conceytes there be, and diverse eke degrees.  
The goode laboureres are likened to the bees,
- Specyaly thei that oute of Goddys lawe  
Of dyvers partyes<sup>1</sup>, sytting on the floures,  
10 Lerne and teche, bothe soke and drawe,  
Of goode exaumples of holy predecessoures  
Swete conceytes, wel famed savoures: suck  
Alle these be bees whech to the housolde bryng  
Alle her stiffe and alle her gaderyng. tastes
- 15 Othir there be whech are not profitable: useful  
Thei ete and drynk, devowre eke and wast;  
Thei labour noght but if it be at table,  
For onto werk have thei no grete hast. they are in no hurry to work  
Fylle wele her bely and geve hem goode repast,  
20 Than wyll thei slepe sekyr with the best.  
We sey not of hem but “dranes lofe well rest.” can only say of them; love
- Yet to goostly laboure dranes wyll not drawe drones will not engage in spiritual toil  
For that in her thoughtis thei have noon delectacyoun

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 8–9: *From different portions of God's law*

Book 4

- 25 In the heryng yet of Goddys lawe.  
 Thei not encresse ne promote her stacyoun,  
 For thei hemselfe to goostly occupacyoun  
 Wyll not draw at no mannes reqwest.  
 Suffyseth hem her full bely and rest.
- 30 Thus semeth it to me that Holy Scripture is  
 In manere of a felde with flowres fayre arayde,  
 And Holy Kyrk is benethe iwys.  
 Sche is the hyve with many stormes afrayed;  
 The vertuous bees in this hyve have portrayed  
 Her dyverse celles of hony and of wax.
- 35 What all this menyth, if ye lyst to axe, *ask*
- Ye may it lerne. I sey the grete labour  
 That goode men have to rede exaumples olde,  
 It is to hem of solace newe socour  
 Her vertuous levyyng stably to beholde *comfort and fresh aid*  
 40 And eke to fyght with corage fresch and bolde  
 Ageyns this wordly deceyvable affluence,  
 Ageyne the fleschly slulkyd neclygens. *lurking*
- 45 On of these bees was this same qweene,  
 The mayd Kateryne, whech with besynesse  
 Of every floure whech was fayre to seene  
 Sokyd oute hony of gret holynesse,  
 Bare it to hyve, and there sche gan it dresse — *prepare*  
 For it wyll do servyse bothe to God and man.  
 That same lycoure whech sche gaderyd than,
- 50 This hony gadered sche fere and woundyr wyde:  
 In the lawe of nature laboured sche formest,  
 Where sche the vyses lerned to ley osyde *foremost*  
 And vertues to chese as a clenly nest,  
 To do to no man, dwelle he est or west, *aside*

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55      Werre than he wolde he schuld onto hym do.<sup>1</sup>  
 This ladye gadered in this felde ryght soo:

In the wretyn lawe sche gadered eke mech thing,  
 The ten comaundmentys to kepe treuly in mynde.  
 There lerned sche the mervelous begynnnyng  
 60      Bothe of the world and eke of mankynde;  
 There lerned sche the lame and eke the blynde  
 To fostyr and clothe, bothe helde and ying;  
 This was hir laboure, this was hir gaderyng.

*old and young*

65      In the lawe of grace soked sche swettere mete  
 Of ryper floures: feyth, hope, and charyté.  
 Sche bare hem, and there sche gan hem lete  
 Into this hyve, to Holy Chyrches secré —  
 There ly thei yet as tresoure, trost thu me.  
 Who that wyll laboure may fro that swetnes wryng  
 70      Mech bettyr than ony galey can bryng.

*i.e., Christianity*

*allow*

*inner recesses*

*galley*

75      And forthe in this swetnesse wyll we now procede,  
 Whech that sche gadered, this lady, here lyvande.  
 God send us parte ryght as we have nede  
 In vertuous lyvynge stably to stande  
 And for to come to that heavenly lande  
 Where sche is now, for forthe to hir processe,  
 Undyr hir socoure, streyt I wyll me dresse.

*while she was alive*

*story*

**Chapter 1**

80      In the tyme of Costus, as oure bokys telle,  
 Were thre emperoures in Rome cyté.  
 The fyrst was a man of hert full felle,  
 Maximinus Galerius, ryght so hyght he.  
 The secunde hyght Maximian, the threde, pardé,  
 Was namede at that tyme Dyocleciane —  
 He was many a Crysten mannes bane.

*was called  
Diocletian*

<sup>1</sup> Worse than one would want a person to do to him

Book 4

- 85 The fyrst emperour, Maximinus Galerye,  
 Dwelt styl at Rome and kept there the pes;  
 The domes, the sacryfyses, dyd he thoo gye.  
 The other too men, withouten any lees,  
 Were sent owte with ful grete prees  
 To brenne and sle, to take and to save —  
 This was offyce bothe to knyght and knave.
- continually  
 judgments; direct  
 without lying, i.e., to tell the truth  
 force  
 slay  
 charge
- 90 But these same too, for very werynesse,  
 Left her honoure and resygned her ryght.  
 Full grete excuse had thei in sekyrnesse:  
 Thei seyd her grete labour and her fyght  
 Avayle hem ryght noght now it myght,  
 For the more thei dyd the more thei had to doo.  
 Werfore in sykernesse thus thei too
- cannot do them any good now
- 95 Resygned her ryght onto this same man,  
 And he undyr him made thre emperoures  
 To help his empyre al that thei may or can  
 In all batayles, in all scharp schowres,  
 To wyne cytes, castelles, town, and towres.  
 The fyrst hyght Maximinus, as seyth the gest;  
 He was assygned to governe all the Est.
- i.e., Maximinus Galerius  
 assaults  
 history  
 East
- 100 And to the secunde, whech hyght thoo Severe,  
 Was eke assygned the kepyng of Lombardye,  
 Of Almayn, Tussy, the story seyth so here,  
 And many othir cuntres in that partye  
 Undyr his powere were tributarye.  
 Eke of Brytayn, the londe in whech we dwelle,  
 Was Constantyne mad lorde, sothe to telle.
- Severus  
 Lombardy  
 Germany; Tuscany  
 region
- 105 This fyrst emperour, Maximinus Galerius,  
 For pryde and sorow and synfull lyffe  
 Was kylled in a batayle — the story seyth thus.  
 He had defowled many a mayde and wyffe,  
 And therfore, or he dyed oute of this stryffe,  
 He stank on erde as evyr dyd carayn —  
 Let him go walk in Salysbury playn!
- defiled  
 carrion  
 i.e., To hell with him

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- 120 Thoo toke the Romaynes the yong Maxens,  
Sone onto Maximyne that was in Est. *Maxentius*  
*Maximinus*
- Thei corowned him realy with grete expens,  
With mych solemnyté and full grete fest. *ceremony*
- The fame went oute to more and to lest  
That he was emperor and his fadyr forsake. *has forsaken his father*
- 125 This made his fadyr, schort tale to make,  
  
To leve his conqwest and com to Rome there.  
But or he cam there his pryd was i-cast: *cast down*
- In Cycile he deyd — ryght so dyde I lere  
Of cronycles whech that I sey last. *Sicily*
- 130 There blew he owte his endyng blast,  
And there lyghte he to abyde his chauns,  
Wheythyr it be to wepyng or ellys to dawns. *consulted most recently*  
*dying breath*  
*remains to await judgment*  
*dancing (i.e., hell or heaven)*
- 135 Thys Severus eke that dwelt in Lombardye  
Gadered up Almayne and all his myght,  
For with this eleccyon had he grete envye; *Lombardy*  
*Germany*
- Therfor bothe be day and eke be nyght  
He laboureth be wrong and eke with ryght  
To dystroye this Maxence, sothe for to sayn,  
That he myght reygne whan he were slain. *by whatever means, right or wrong,*  
*Maxentius*
- 140  
  
But or he cam fully at this same Rome,  
He was slain of his sowdyoures be the weye. *killed en route by his own soldiers*
- Than was there no more for to done  
But Maxence reygneth, sothe for to seye,  
As now alone; every man must obeye  
If he wyll kepe his lyffe o lofte — *stay alive*
- 145 But if he do so, he slepe noght ellys softe. *soundly*
- Thus regned this Maxence in Rome al alone.  
No man speke to him whatevr he wyll doo:  
There was no mayde, no wyffe, ne no matrone,  
But whan he sent thei must come him too  
To suffyr his lust, to suffyr what he wyll doo.  
What husband lett it, he schuld anoon be dede — *hindered*
- 150 Upon his gate thei schuld sett his heede.

Book 4

- 155 He turned the lawe; all went than be powere. *overthrew*  
 The pepyll cursyd the wombe that him had born.  
 Was no man durst in opyn langage there *[who] dared*  
 Onys sey to him, “Lord your lawe is lorn.” *ruined*  
 Of all the senate sett he but a scorn.
- 160 Pryde and powere had enhaunsed him soo  
 All that he coveyte, he wold haf it doo.

Chapter 2

- Tho the Romaynes with a comoun consent  
 Letteres prvyli of gret sentens ded wryght *secretly, importance*  
 And into Bretayn to Constantyn hem sent, *them*
- 165 In whech thei prayd him, as he was a knyte, *knight*  
 That he come help hem ageyn this tyraunt to fyght;  
 Thei wold betray him, thei seyd, he schuld not sped. *prosper*  
 This was her ende: “Com help us at oure nede!” *their*
- Anon this man ded gader a grete strenght, *i.e., Constantine*  
 Bothe of this londe and of Fraunce there too, *i.e., Britain*  
 Evyr gan his ost encres in brede and lenght *army*  
 Be every cuntré in whech he gan goo.
- In Ytayle reyswd he up puple many moo  
 Than evyr ded Severe, ryth for this tyrannyne *Severus (see lines 134–36)*
- 175 Of this fals Maxence and for his lechherey. *abandoned*
- He is at Rome. The hostys togedyr mette,  
 But Maxence trostyth oonly on the cyté there.  
 He is deceyvyd: alone thei him lette *went*  
 With his howsholde in mech care and fere.
- 180 Be this ensaumple wyse men may well lere  
 To trost in the puple, for thei wyll fayl at nede,  
 So ded thei here, so streyt fro him thei yede *went*
- To Constantyn, that now came fro Brytayn.  
 Thus is he fledde, the same Maxencius,  
 Deceyvyd ryghtfully thus be her trayn — *their treachery*  
 Ryght for his lyvyng, that was so vicyous.
- 185 He fledd to Pers and there as man vyctorous *Persia*

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- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                        |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | Dede grete thingis and many strengthes wan.<br>Soo as for lord, and for he was a man,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | fortresses<br>because                                                  |
| 190 | Thei crowned him there and called him king of Pers.<br>Thus hath Constantine wonne the feeld this day,<br>The othir tyraunt is put al to the wers.<br>Al this is told to this ende, sooth to say,<br>To knowe how Maxcens with soo grete aray<br>Cam to Alisaundre, swech maystries for to make,<br>Whan he this lady ded arreste and take. | Persia<br>battlefield<br>company<br>presumptions                       |
| 195 | For whan he was thus exalted in Pers,<br>Thus set in astate, and in his faderes office,<br>Tho wex he in condicouns evyre wers and wers,<br>And more inclined to synne and to vice.<br>He sente oute letteres onto every justise,<br>To serche the Cristene, to hange hem and to drawe,<br>For truly, he seith, he wil destroye that lawe.  | Persia<br>honor<br>his morals grew ever worse<br>faith                 |
| 200 | These letteres come to Surry al aboute,<br>And he himself folwed aftir hem sone.<br>The copy of hem I wil, withouten doute,<br>Write here in English, me thinkith it is to done:<br>“The lord of lordis that dwellith undir the mone,<br>Maxcens, the emperor of Pers, withouten pere,<br>Greteth weel oure lyges thurghoute oure empere.   | Syria<br>I think it appropriate<br>subjects                            |
| 205 | “We wil ye wete oure faderes here beforne<br>That worshiped goddis with her dew servise<br>Were nevyre in batayle neythir convicte ne lorn,<br>Sweche was the keepynge of goddis tho ben wise<br>Ovyr her puple. Therfore, we as justise<br>And as a preest in religion of Saturne<br>Wil that ye alle fro alle veyn lawes turne,           | our ancestors<br>the service entitled them<br>vanquished nor abandoned |
| 210 | “Most special fro Crist, whech heynge on tre,<br>That no man be soo hardy Him for to name.<br>What maner God schuld He now be<br>That was i-brout into swiche fame                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                        |
| 215 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                        |
| 220 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                        |

Book 4

To be hanged on a tre with so moche schame?  
 Therfore, noo man dwellynge now in oure lond  
 Schal be so hardy, neyther fre ne bond,

- 225     “To name Him oones or for to sette  
 His merke in the forhed, as is the usage  
 Of alle these Cristen. We wil hem lette  
 Of alle her cerymonies and her pilgrimage —  
 If that thei forgete, thei schul have wage  
 230     Swech as thei deserve, for to have  
 Lordschip ne richesse schal hem not save.
- “Therfore, what man ony goddis honour  
 Othir than we doo now in oure sette,  
 We wil that thei be take with officeris oure  
 235     And led to prison withouten ony lette.  
 We wil ordeyn for hem swech a gette  
 Thei schul nevyre eft swech maystries make  
 In all her lyve, and that we undirtake.”
- This is the sentens of the letteres longe  
 240     Whech he sente oute onto al the Est,  
 Commaundynge lordis and knythes stronge  
 That thei come in hast, bothe more and leest,  
 And in most special onto that grete feest  
 Whech he wil make with ful grete store  
 245     That ilke same day whech he was bore.
- The messangeres arn goon bothe fer and wide  
 To bere these copyes into divers londe.  
 The emperor himself, he wil abide  
 Onto that tyme, as I undirstonde,  
 250     In grete Alisaundre, with ful myty honde,  
 In whech cité eke this noble qween soo dere  
 With a pryvy mené leved al in prayere.
- To this cité cam king and soo ded qween,  
 Thedir cam lordis mo than I can telle:  
 255     The innes arn ful as hyves of been,
- i.e., a cross; forehead  
 prohibit*
- will be punished  
 Appropriately*
- throne*
- delay  
 punishment  
 presumptions  
 guarantee*
- content*
- provision  
 same; born*
- i.e., the letters  
 retinue*
- bees*

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There is now not elles but bye and selle,  
In special mete and drynk, for there was nevyre welle  
More plenteuous of water than was the cité of mete,  
Soo were thei stored there, the marchauntis grete.

food

*provisioned; merchants*

- 260 Whanne alle were come whech schuld be there,  
The Emperour thre poyntis dede tho declare,  
Whech poyntis he seyde, withouten dwere,  
Even as thei in sentens stoode platt and bare  
He wold every man, what-so-evyre he ware  
265 Or in what party he dwelt of his dominacyoun,  
Schuld kepe hem in peyn of dampnacyoun.

doubt

*as they were written*

*Or where in the empire he lived*

**Chapter 3**

- The fyrst poynt was that Cristen all and summe  
Must leve her feyth and that grete honoure  
Whech that thei do to Cryste, Goddys Sunne,  
270 Whom eke thei clepe now her salvatoure:  
“His dyscyples into full grete error  
Have browte all men that wyll tend hem too,  
Ryght with the feyned miracles that thei doo.

*i.e., any and all*

*savior*

heed

- “Therfore wyll we that thei now alle  
275 To oure presence for to see and here  
What manere degré that we geve schall.  
Onto swech wycchys bothe fer and nere  
We think for to mak oure lawe full clere,  
And whan all are loked to chese the best,  
280 This is the relygyoun that we hafe keste.”

*witches (heretics)*

*decided on*

- The secunde poynt whech he schewyd thoo  
Was this: he seyd thei had rememberauns  
How that of Rome not long agoo  
He helde the honoure and all the governauns,  
285 But betrayed he was with hem of Bretayn and Frauns,  
Whech on Constantyne had browte in fere,  
A grete puple and a stately powere.

*assembled as a force*

Book 4

- Thus had this traytour, he seyd, this Constantyne,  
As a fals intrusore entred into his lande, *usurper*  
290 Wonne his cyté with gunnes and wyth myne, *(see note)*  
There myght no walle ne noo toure thoo stande.  
Thus bare Maxence the lordes on hande  
Whech were with him at Alysaundre that tyde. *time*  
Wherfore, sekyrly, he seyth, he wyll ryde
- Evene to Rome his ryght to conqwere,  
To venge him on this tyraunt, on this Constantyne.  
Wherfore, he prayed the lordes that be there  
That thei schal be redy with bowes and engyne, *siege engine*  
For he wyll rewarde hem with gyftis good and fyne,  
300 With rentys, londys, castelles, and toures eke. *incomes*  
If thei wynne Rome, rychesse nede hem not seke.
- The thyrd poynt whech that he purposyd there,  
Sittyng himself ryght in the parlement,  
He seyde he wold renew, withouten dwere,  
305 Alle thoo servyses and all that dew rent *proper tribute*  
Whech to the goddis was ordeynd be comon assent.  
The goddis, he seyd, schuld be more propicious  
If that her cerymonyes were renewyd thus.
- A byschop stood up thoo, with mytere and with crose, *crozier*  
310 Swech as thei used thoo in her lawe.  
There was cryede every man kepe close *hold*  
His mouthe and his tunge and herken to his sawe. *listen to his speech*  
Whan he had his brethe a lytyll whyll i-draw,  
Thus spake he than, in maner of sermonyng:  
315 “I wyll ye wetyn,” he seyth, “that Jupiter that hye kyng *know*
- “Hath turned awey his good conservacye *withdrawn his favor*  
From all oure nacyon. I tell yow schortly why:  
We have forsak him and fall in maumentrye. *fallen into idolatry*  
Many of us here, I drede me, are gyltye  
320 In this same matere. Wherfor, Jupiter allmyghty  
And Saturn his fadyr, be pryvy apparicyon  
In slepe, gove warnyng be very revelacyoun.

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- “Thei bode we schuld the puple teche to renewe  
 The held cerymonyes and the elde rytes  
 Whech oure fadres used or we anything knew,  
 And so used many lordes and many knytes.
- Who geveth us helpe in pees or in fytys  
 But Jupiter alone? Helth evyr upon him,  
 Honour and servyse to him and to his kyn!
- 330 “No man may make so grete maystrye  
 As Jupiter dothe whan he with hangyr qwakyth.  
 The grete thundyr whech he maketh flye,  
 The orrible lytenyngys eke whych he makyth,  
 Alle these schew to us that what man him forsakyth,
- 335 He is ful lykly with venjaunce to be brente.  
 Turn to him ageyn, therfore, lest ye be not schent;
- “Leve all this newe thingys, kepe stylly your olde.  
 What, schall Cryst among goddys put Him in place?  
 The schepperdys and plowmen in feld and in folde,  
 Thei wote ful well it stant not in mannys grace
- 340 Onto all the world salvacyon to purchase,  
 As sey this Crysten (for Cryst, as seyth her boke,  
 With His blode fro the world all synnes toke).
- “He must be eterne that schall swech thingys doo,  
 That schall geve encrese to ilke generacyoun,  
 For to a godd of ryght this it longyth, loo,  
 To have in his nature evrlestyng duracyoun.  
 Repelleth fro youre counsell this Crysten nacyoun —
- 345 This charge I yow in the goddys name —  
 Save your sowles and your bodyes fro blame.”
- This was the sentens of this grete sermoun  
 Whech that the byschopp at that tyme spake,  
 And this was eke his determinacyoun:  
 That no man in that londe, but he wyll into the rak
- 350 And on that same ly with a broken bak,  
 Be so hardy in no manere wyse  
 Speke ageyn the goddys or her servyse.
- ancient*
- war*
- exert such power*
- anger*
- vengeance*
- so that you not be lost*
- know*
- it pertains of right to a god*
- judgment*
- lie on the rack; back*
- their*

Chapter 4

- 360 The cyté of Alysaundre whech is full large,  
It is now repleschyd, withoute and withinne, replete  
With lordes and ladyes; there was many a barge  
At the princypale porte, for thei lay not thynne.  
Welle is he at ese that may cacch an inne,  
The puple was so grete, the pres was so strong.  
There is now not elles but trumpyng and song, they were packed in  
find accomodations at an inn  
crowd was so dense  
trumpet-playing
- 365 For the nyte was come of that festful day  
In whech Maxence was bore. Therfore he dyd crye  
That every man there schall in his best aray  
Sercle the cyté with noyse and mynstralsye. parade around; music  
He that schall slepe this nyght must be full slye careful  
370 That he be not perceyvyd for indygacyoun  
Whech he schall have for he went not his stacyoun.<sup>1</sup>
- 375 There was noyse of trumyps and noyse of men,  
Mech more of bestys that deyd in her bloode,  
For all that nyght, sekyrly ye may ful well ken,  
The bocheres laboured as thei had be wode. butchers worked like madmen  
The waschyng of the carcays down in the flode,  
Schewid the grete morder of the bestys slain — river  
The water was as blody, saverly dare I sayn. confidently
- 380 To the tempill thei goo the next day betyme, early  
The bischoppis have arayed hem to do the servyse. perform the service  
There was no matens seyd, servyse, ne pryme,  
Thei had anodyr usage than I can devyse.<sup>2</sup>  
Thus mech can I sey: the emperor as justyse judge  
Was sett upon hye that he myth all see,  
385 Who the puple honoured that solempnité.

<sup>1</sup> Lines 370–01: *Because of the indignation / He would incur for not playing his part in the festivities*

<sup>2</sup> *I am not familiar with their religious practices*

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- Thei knelyd and thei cryed with marred devocioun, dazed  
 All this beheld the emperor with sad yye, eyes  
 For evermore hath he a fals suspecioune wicked  
 That some are there whech will not sacryfye.
- 390 The fyrst god of all, whech stod most hye, horse  
 Was the bryth sunne with his hors and carte, very artfully carved  
 Whech was i-grave of full sotyll art.
- Next was the mone, whech we clepe Diane, moon  
 With hir wellis nyne and the maydenes eke.
- 395 Next here was Saturne, with his bittir bane, destruction  
 With his sekyll in hand. Many men him seke, seek  
 For non other cause but whan thei are seke, sick  
 Thei wene than it were of his venjaunce,<sup>1</sup> '  
 So cruell is his planete in his governaunce.
- 400 The auter next him was ful well arayed altar beside him  
 On whech that Jubiter stode all on hye  
 With his wyfe Juno ful well i-porterayed.  
 Venus the fayre, sche stood next by,  
 With hir blynd sone Cupide, so wene I.
- 405 Thei calle him so that owe him servyse — idolatry  
 I owe him non, for maumentrye I despysye.
- Mech more thing was there not to purpos nowe, that I see no point describing  
 But thus mech I telle: there were grete offeryngis.  
 Thei spared neythir hors, ox, bere, ne kowe, bear; cow  
 410 But sle and sle, these were her cryingis.  
 The bischoppis and the prestys, thei do her thingis; their rituals  
 The mynstrelles fayl not, for thei schul have wage; so they will be paid  
 Every man makyth noyse aftir his age.
- 415 The elde seyd thei sey nevyr in her dayes  
 Swech another sacryfye as this emperor  
 Hath renewed in her tempyll in many maner wayes:  
 “The grete goddes all, thei send him honour,

<sup>1</sup> *They attribute it (their sickness) to his vengeance*

Book 4

- |     |                                                                                                                                                 |                                |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 420 | Long lyffe and stable, make him a conquerour."<br>The yong men daunsed joylyly on the ground —<br>There was revell among hem; lyghtly and round | <i>nimbly and boisterously</i> |
|     | Traced thei that tyme at that solempnité.<br>The noyse is herd aboute a myle on every syde.                                                     | <i>Danced; celebration</i>     |
|     | Thus leve I hem in myrth these seres stoute;<br>Thus ar thei occupyyed in mechil pryde.                                                         | <i>bold lords</i>              |
| 425 | The emperor himselfe lokyth on every syde<br>Who do most reverens to his goddes there.                                                          |                                |
|     | This made the Crysten to have ful grete fere.                                                                                                   | <i>fear</i>                    |

## Chapter 5

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                               |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 450 | <p>“Is not so hardy this mater to disobeye —<br/>Thei schal be dede that ageyns it speke.<br/>Kepe stille youre closet; there is no more to sey.<sup>1</sup><br/>It is not oure powere his will for to breke.<br/>Lete hem calle, lady, lete hem cry and creke.<br/>Suffisith you if ye may lyve in pees.</p>                       | <i>speak foolishly</i>        |
| 455 | <p>The man is comorous, withouten ony lees,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>undoubtedly oppressive</i> |
|     | <p>“For he have made, if ye will leve me,<br/>A strong degré whech he will we kepe,<br/>That all sectes of his sect now shull be.<sup>2</sup><br/>The childe anon as he gynnyth to crepe</p>                                                                                                                                        | <i>believe</i>                |
| 460 | <p>Schal be tawth upon the goddes to clepe,<br/>In peyne of deth the faderes shul him teche —<br/>This herde I this day the grete bischop preche.</p>                                                                                                                                                                               | <i>crawl</i>                  |
| 465 | <p>“Wherfore, madame, now is come that hour<br/>That was thoo drede of youre frendys alle,<br/>Whan that ye wold receyve no concelloure,<br/>For no thing that men myght on you calle.<br/>I am ful sory, for now are lyckly to falle<br/>All tho myshappys whech were seyd before.<br/>Avise you wele what ye wil do therfor.”</p> |                               |
| 470 | <p>Whan this mayd had herd these wordys alle,<br/>Sche gan remembryr how oure Lady seyd<br/>Whan sche passed fro hir, what schuld befallie.<br/>Sche spake thus: “To yow I telle, my mayde,<br/>Ye schalle hereaftir be ful sore afrayde<br/>Of a enmy both to my Son and me.”</p>                                                  |                               |
| 475 | <p>At hir leve takyng swech wordis seyd sche,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <i>She (Mary) attacked</i>    |
|     | <p>Oure blyssyd Lady Mary, to this qwene.<br/>“Therfor,” this qwene thought, “now is the hour<br/>Whech sche behestyd, now is it wel i-sene,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                    | <i>promised</i>               |

<sup>1</sup> Stay quietly in your chambers; there is no alternative

<sup>2</sup> That people of all religions shall convert to his religion

Book 4

- 480 Ryth be the boldnes of this emperour  
 Whech ageyn oure Makere and Creatour  
 Thus boldly rysyth in destruccioun of His name  
 Whos wyffe I am and servaunt to His dame.”
- 485 Thoo sche remembred what covenant that she made  
 Rith in hir baptim, whan she waschid was,  
 Eke in hir weddyn with behestis ful sadde, *solemn vows*  
 That she schulde nevyr for more ne for las,  
 Thow sche were throwe in hote caudron of brasse,  
 Forsake hir love whech she had only chose. *brass caldron*  
*only love*
- 490 Thoo wex she ruddy and fayre as a rose,  
 Rith in remembrauns of that swete spousayle *wedding*  
 Whech that she caute be ledyng of Adriane. *had through Adrian's guidance*  
 It is so emprended within hir entrayle  
 Of wordly lustys there shall no fekill fane  
 495 Blow it awey<sup>1</sup>; neythir Juno, Venus, ne Diane  
 Fro in hir hert this love thei shul not race. *eradicate*  
 Thus walkyd she forth softly than apace,
- 500 Ful sore astoyned what is hir best to doo. *uncertain*  
 If she holde silens than is she not trewe  
 Of hir behestis, rith so thoute she, loo; *vows*  
 The fayre ryng whech was sumwhat blewe *blue*  
 Whech was eke gove hir at hir weddyn newe  
 Sche thoo behelde, and seyd thus be hir one: *recent wedding*  
 “Fy on the world, fy on crown and trone! *said to herself*
- 505 “I shal kepe that trewth whech that I made  
 Onto my husbond, thow I shuld be dede.  
 I shal the soner com to Him that me made,  
 For in this worlde is nouth but slepe and brede.  
 Allas that evyr ony lord or hede

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 493–95: *[The memory of her marriage] is so impressed on her heart / That no fickle weathervane of worldly desires will / Blow it away*

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510 Shuld thus boldly men dradge and drawe  
Ageyns all treughth, ageyns a rithful lawe!

“Why sufferth my spouse now swech cursyd men  
To breke His chirchis, His servauntis for to kyll?  
O cause there is only, that wele I ken:  
515 His servauntis here shul not have her will;  
Who loveth this world, that love will him spill.  
Tribulacion is ordeyned for His servauntis here  
Whech to hevyn shul streyt fro the bere.”<sup>1</sup>

*One*

*i.e., on earth  
ruin*

**Chapter 6**

520 Thus walketh she forth, sobyrly apace,  
Thorowe hir pales; she hath forgote all thing. *palace*  
Thei folowe hir eke, the servauntis of that place,  
Not many, but summe, for thei go to the kyng; *i.e., Maxentius*  
Thei wote not eke what she in hir goyng  
Purposith to do, for betwix love and fere  
525 Stakere the servauntis all that sche hath there. *Waver*

The tempill gates so full of puple now be,  
So ful repleschid no man may entere there.  
And evyr onto the porters thus sayd she,  
“Late us enter, late us oure erand bere  
530 Onto the emperor, for and he wist what we were *if he knew who we were*  
He wold not suffyr us no while stand without.  
We will him lerne sone, withouten doute, *teach*

“These solempnitesbettir for to make,  
Not to no vanité, to no presumpcioun,  
535 But to His worship that all thing dede make.”  
This was at that tyme hir peroracion. *tirade*  
Thoo mette she lordes of ful straunge nacioun *foreign land*  
Whech had performed her offeryngis and i-doo  
Forth to her innes thei dressyd hem to goo. *prepared to return to their inns*

<sup>1</sup> *Who will proceed straight from their coffins to heaven*

Book 4

- 540 The emperoures sone cam with these lordis in fere,  
 But whan thei sey this lady so bryth and shene  
 Thei turned her jornay and with ful mere chere  
 Thus spake thei all full godly to the qwene:  
 “Madame,” thei seyde, “the grete puple that ye sene  
 545 Are com fro fer with grete devucion.  
 Blame hem noght, thow thei wold have don.<sup>1</sup>
- “But we shall, lady, for youre reverence,  
 Turne with yow onto the tempill agayn.  
 We shall make space with strenght and resistance,  
 550 That ye shall enter, schortly for to seyn.”
- With mace and manace thei made bare the pleyn,  
 Till she was entrede rith to the hye autere.  
 Than seyd she swech wordis lich as ye shull here.
- 555 Thus she began and thus she spake to him:  
 “Both kend and curtesie wold teche us this,  
 To honour thi crown because of thi kyn,  
 And yet for thi degré mech more iwis.  
 Alle these shulde excite us thee for to blys  
 560 And for to loue with reverens, ne were o thing  
 Whech thu hast do agayns the grete kyng,
- “Lorde of all lordes, Jesu Crist I mene:  
 Thu takyst here fro Him His hye honour  
 And gevest it to maumentis, as is wele sene,  
 Whech may neythir help thee ne eke socour  
 565 In non of thi causes, in no maner dolour.<sup>2</sup>  
 But if thu wold leve this cursid ydolatrye  
 And know thi God that sitt above ful hye,
- 570 “Whech made the sune, sterres, and the mone,  
 Than wold we honour thee with dew servyse,  
 Knele down onto thee and oure homage ful sone

<sup>1</sup> Do not blame them for wanting to leave [and thus not escorting you back to the temple]

<sup>2</sup> Lines 564–65: Which may neither advance / Your causes nor alleviate your distress

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For to bryng onto thee as oure justyce.  
But because ageyn Cryst thu makyst men to ryse  
And worship swech develles that be in helle,  
Therfor, sothly, sire, I will thee telle,

- 575     “Oure servise will we for a tyme withdrawe  
Rith fro thi persone till thou thee amende.  
Turne fro this cursydnes, fro this wickyd lawe,  
Knowe nowe thi makere that all thing can send,  
Onto His byddyng loke thou condescende,  
Than shall thou have more prosperit   
Than evyr thou had yete, trost upon me.
- 580     “These Cristen men here, whech are i-drawe  
To offyr to thin idolis magr  her hede,  
Agens all reson ageyns all the lawe,  
585     Thu thretist hem with turment and with dede,  
With bath of picth and beverych of lede.  
I sorow for her sake; thei dare non  thir doo.  
If thei were stabill, thei shuld not werke so.
- 590     “Thi goddes are develes and thi prestis eke,  
Deceyvors of the puple, rith for covetyse;  
Thei wote as wele as I, thow men hem seke —  
These maumentis, I mene — thei can not sitt ne ryse,  
Thei ete not, thei drynke not in no maner wyse.  
595     Mouth without spech, fote that may not goo,  
Handes eke have thei and may no werke doo.
- 600     “Wherfor, turne thin herte fro this illusion,  
Knowe thi Godde that made the and all thing for thee,  
Be not unkend in thi condicion,  
Ageyns thi makere, ageyn the Trinty .  
But if thu be amended, thu shall leve me,  
Grete peynes God shall thee send,  
Whech peynes shul nevyr have a ende.”

*ordain*

*Bow to His will*

*against their judgment*

*death*

*pitch; beverage; lead*

*entreat*

*idols*

*unnatural*

*unless you reform*

Chapter 7

- 605 The emperour behelde hir wordis and hir chere, *disposition*  
 Wondiryng sore how she durst be so bolde,  
 Befor swech puple, rith in his presens there,  
 And not consyderyng the fest whech he had holde,  
 For that same tale whech sche hath now tolde  
 Durst no man telle but if he wold be dede. *Dared*  
 Hir fayre coloure betwix qwide and rede *white*
- 610 Whech shone ful bryth he gan to beholde,  
 Astoyned with hir beuté, party with hir plesauns.<sup>1</sup> *folded his arms*  
 Ful sobirly his harmes thoo gan he folde,  
 And thus he seyd with angry countenauns:  
 “Beware, good woman, of that grete venjauns  
 615 Whech oure goddes on her enmyes hath take.  
 Many a proude man ful low have thei shake.
- “For but her mercy were more than her justice,  
 Ye shuld sone falle in that sory trappe  
 Whech thei have ordeynyd to thoo that hem despycē —  
 620 A woofful chaunce hafe thei and a sory happe. *misfortune; bad outcome*  
 Beware, systyr, that thei yow noght clappe  
 With her venjauns, ryght for youre blasphemē!  
 Ye speke of helle, ye speke also of hevyne, *strike*
- 625 “And thei may graunt yow bothe to your wage. *whichever you deserve*  
 Kepe your tung clos, kepe your lyff on loft. *stay alive*  
 Ne were the reverens of your grete lynage,  
 Ye schuld not this nyght slepe, I trow, ryght soft.  
 Ye were wel worthy to be lyft on lofte  
 630 Ryght on a gybbet for your bytter spech  
 With whech ye now ageyn oure goddis preche.” *deserved to be hanged*

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<sup>1</sup>*Astonished by her beauty [and] partly by what she wanted of him*

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### **Chapter 8**

- Thoo seyd the mayde with ful sad vysage: solemn  
“How be thei goddys, these maumentys that we see? are they gods; idols
- Rede in your boke, loke in her lynage,  
Than schall thu know that erdely as we bee
- 635 Were thei sumtyme, for your Saturn, pardé, once  
Was sumtyme kyng, as bokes telle, of Crete,  
And so was Jubiter, thus seyth youre poete.
- “Because thei myght not bothe in that lond acorde, get along  
Jubiter, the sun, made Saturn, his fader, to fle
- 640 Ryght into Ytale, your bokes wyll it recorde, then  
In whech tyme there thoo regned he  
Janus ye call with dobyll face, pardé,  
Because he lokyth to the elde yere and the new.  
Than is this soth, than is this tale trew,
- 645 “That men thei were and are noght eterne.  
How schuld thei be goddys whan thei were made?  
It longyth to a godde to be sempysterne!<sup>1</sup> comfort  
Ful falsly the puple ye deceyve and glade.
- 650 He is a Godd that may nevyr fayle ne fade,  
He is a Godd that mad all thing of nowte,  
He is a Godd of whom your goddys were wrowte.” by whom; made

### **Chapter 9**

- The emperour thouth thoo bysly in his mynde, then  
In worchep and strenght of his beleve,  
Bothe with ensaumples of craft and of kynde, of power and of nature
- 655 His secte wyll he trew and stable preve.  
“Mayde,” he seyth, “I trow I shall you meve  
Fro that ground that ye have newly take.  
Lete youre wordis as for a while now slake, cease

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 646–47: *If they were themselves created, how can they be gods? / A god is supposed to be eternal*

Book 4

- 660     “For I will preve now opynly first of alle  
 That youre sect, whech ye Cristen clepe,  
 May not stand, for it must nedis falle  
 Right for the impossibiles whech therin ye hepe.  
 Alle that I sey now loke that ye sadly repe.  
 How shulde a mayde in hir wombe bere  
 665     A child and she mayde as she was ere?”
- call  
 withstand scrutiny  
 impossibilities you attribute to it  
 take in  
 and remain a virgin
- 670     “This thing is contrarie, ye may se, to nature;  
 This thing is impossible onto scoles alle.  
 Remeveth youre hert, for I you ensure  
 In swech errorre ye may so depe down falle  
 That thow ye aftir mercy cry and calle  
 We may not graunt you, because that oure lawe  
 675     Will condempne yow to be hange and drawe.”
- Change your mind
- 675     “Therfor chaunge youre feyth, I rede, and forsake  
 Swech maner opiniones that ilke man o lyve  
 As for heresies evyr more hath take.  
 Ye sey a childis blode with woundis fyve  
 Shuld washe fro every man and every wyve,  
 From every childe her synnes echon —  
 These fonned conceytes reson have non.”
- advise  
 living  
 their  
 foolish

Chapter 10

- 680     Unto these wordes whech sempt so wyse  
 Answerd the qwene with ful grete constauns:  
 “Sere emperour,” sche seyd, “I wolde devyse  
 To prove onto you with grete circumstauns —  
 But that the tyme lettith us of swech daliauns —  
 685     That youre groundis are no thing trewe  
 Of youre beleve, neythir the elde ne the newe.”
- seemed  
 constancy  
 prevents such an undertaking  
 premises
- 690     “Ye take the barke, whech is open to the yye,  
 Then ye fede you ryght in youre dotage.  
 The swete frute whech withinne doth lye,  
 Ye desyre it nought. Lo, swech is the wod rage  
 Of youre customes in all youre age:
- rind; can be plainly seen  
 in your stupidity you eat it  
 madness

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The leves ye take, the frute leve ye stille.  
More opynly my sentens declare I wille:

- “Who sekith roses there no rose growe?  
Who sekith grapes oute of the brere? *briar*
- 695 The hye very God, this may ye wel knowe,  
Is not nowe visible among us here;  
He is fer above, without any dwere,  
Dwellyng in blysse with His servauntis alle.
- 700 Therfor, I sey yow, thow ye cry and calle
- “Upon these stokkes to send yow good grace, *chunks of wood*  
To send you of myschef relef and socour,  
Levyth this wele, ye shal it nevyr purchase *obtain*  
Because ye forsake youre creatour,
- 705 Worchip creatures and geve hem honour  
To whom ye shulde no swech honour geve.  
Be this example I may than wele preve
- “The rotyn barke of thingis visible here,  
Whech ye se outwarde, this byte ye and knawe;  
710 The swete frute, the solace eke so dere,  
Whech schuld be the parfytnes of youre lawe,  
Fro that swetnes ye youreselue withdrawe *ultimate achievement*  
With ful grete hert of cursyd obstinacy  
Whech hath you brought in ful grete heresy.
- 715 “And as long as ye thus dullyd be  
In this same rudnes of opynyon,  
Shul ye nevyr, sekyrly, leve now me,  
Of very treuth have the possession.  
Therfor repent you of youre transgressioun,
- 720 Than are ye able to receyve the feyth.  
This is the treuth, what evyr ony man seyth.”

### **Chapter 11**

Thou myth a seyn at this tales ende  
Many man there al othir wyse i-cheryde

Book 4

- 725 Than thei were here<sup>1</sup>; summe her browes gune bende  
 Rigth on thou ydolis whech he had reryd.  
 For peyne and deth had hem so i-feryd  
 Befor this tyme, that in all her observauns  
 Onto the goddes thei made but feyned plesauns. *began to frown  
 he (Maxentius); elevated  
 frightened  
 feigned propitiation*
- 730 But now this lady with hir wordis swete  
 A newe lyth of grace onto her hertis all,  
 Whech besfor her feyth thus had lete,  
 Hath brought in, for now thei gun to calle,  
 “Mercy Jesu, graunt us nomore to falle  
 Into swech errorr, to swech apostasye.” *abandoned*
- 735 This was her noyse and thus gune thei crye. *their*
- 740 This sey the emperour and with ful hevy chere.  
 He gan to chaunge his coloure and his face.  
 “In evyl tyme,” he thought, “I graunted here  
 Onto this mayde, whan sche cam to this place,  
 To sey this sermone with a sory grace.<sup>2</sup> *saw*
- Myn owne men, me thinkith, thei gyne despysye  
 Alle my goddes and all my sacryfyse.
- 745 “The othir seyde, whech thei Crysten calle,  
 Thei have caute boldnes, and that marvelously,  
 For in my presens thei have late down falle *side*  
 Alle her offeryngis, and that sodenly.” *are marvelously infected with*
- Thus thought this man and eke ful besly.  
 He than beheld the beuté of this mayde,  
 And than ryght thus onto hir he seyd: *dropped*
- 750 “Mayde,” he seyth, “here have we newly gunne  
 A blissyd sacryfyse onto oure goddys to make,  
 And ye ful onreverently ageyn oure god the sunne —  
 Whech every man for a god hath take —

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 722–24: *You might have seen by the end of her speech, / Many people disposed otherwise / Than they were before*

<sup>2</sup> Lines 738–40: *It was an evil hour when I made the mistake of allowing her to speak*

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- 755 Spend youre spech. But now I rede ye slake  
 Till that oure servyse endyd be this tide,  
 That tyme we will ye drawe you asyde.
- “Apollo graunt that ye no venjauns have  
 For youre blaspheme newly here i-sowe!  
 He may you dampne and eke he may yow save —  
 Ye youreselue, I wote wele, this ye knowe.  
 Right for youre bewté aute ye stoupe ful lowe  
 To thanke him therof, thow there were not ellis;<sup>1</sup>  
 Now are ye most, I trowe, of his rebellys.”
- I advise you to desist  
 are over for the day  
 are not punished  
 newly sown blasphemy  
 the greatest*

**Chapter 12**

- 765 “Whi shuld Apollo bere any deité,”  
 Seyd the mayd, that all men myth here,  
 “And is but servaunt to Goddis magesté,  
 With his bemes schynyng fayre and clere?  
 He walkith no cors, neythir farre ne nere,  
 But at the byddyng of his makere above,  
 Whom we are bownd only to drede and love.
- “But traytouris are we the most part, dare I seyn,  
 And yete He suspendyth His grete venjauns.  
 A opyn example before yow will I leyn:  
 Ye be a lord of ful grete pusauns;  
 Ther is no swech betwix this and Fraunce,  
 For as I have lernyd of all the oryente,  
 Youre meny calle you kyng omnypotent.
- 775 “I sett caase nowe that ageyn youre regalye  
 Certeyn of youre men wyth treson wold ryse,  
 Despite youre degré, youre persone defye.  
 Shuld ye not than as a trewe justyce  
 Youre grete powere fully exercyse
- Since he is only a servant  
 course  
 clear; offer  
 might  
 this (i.e., Alexandria)  
 East  
 followers*
- Suppose that; sovereignty*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 760–62: *you know / That you should bow down and for your beauty / Thank him if for nothing else*

Book 4

To kyll thoo traytouris that thei leve nomore?  
But ye dede thus ye shuld repent it sore!

*Unless*

- 785 "Right thus it semeth be oure creatour,  
God of hevne that all made of nought.  
Ye take awey fro Him that dew honour  
That He shuld have, whech He ful dere bought  
Whan that in erde bysly oure helth He soughte. welfare

790 This same honour geve ye to develes ymages,  
Whech ye have sett here solemnly on stages.

795 "Loke nowe youreselue in what ye are falle —  
Traytouris are ye and as traytouris shuld ye brenne,  
For other name will I you non calle  
Onto that tyme that ye youre Lord kenne! Until; recognize  
Lete all these vanytes fro youre brest renne,  
Goode sere emperour, and turne to youre Lorde —  
Than shul ye and I ful sone acorde."

## Chapter 13

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                            |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 800 | Now is the emperor steyned more and more.<br>All her servyse as for that day is done;<br>This tormentith him in his hert ful sore,<br>For neythir to sonne, to Venus, ne to mone<br>Will no man lowte now and passed is the none.<br>Wherfor he thinkyth ryth thus in his herte:<br>“Thow that I ponysh this lady with peynes smert, | stunned<br>sun<br>bow; it is past noon<br>sore             |
| 805 | “Thow that I sle hir, strangill, or ellis brenne,<br>Yet shal hir doctrine no thing herby sees;<br>Wherfor I thinke a slyer wey to renne,<br>That hir purpos schal not thus encrese.<br>Ageyn oure goddes is she and ageyn oure pees.<br>Therfor with resones will we hir oppresse —<br>This hold I best ageyn hir sotylnes.”        | cease<br>devise a slier plan<br>will not advance her cause |
| 810 | Therfor hath he nowe — and that in grete hast —<br>Clepid his counsell into a pryy place.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | summoned                                                   |

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- 815 With ful grete sadnes thou gan he cast  
 How that he may fro this lady race  
 Hir newe oppynyon — wheythir with solace  
 Or ellis with peyne be best to procede.  
 His counsell seyd rith thus in that stede,
- 820 That he shall send aftir grete clerkis,  
 Lerned in gramer, rethoricke, and philosophie,  
 Whech have in sciens so sekir merkis  
 That no man ageyn hem may replye.  
 Thei shall sonest destroy this heresye
- 825 Of this same lady, thus seyd thei all.  
 Anon the emperor dede forth i-calle
- Many messangeres, for letteris wille he sende  
 Thoroweout the lond of Cipre and Surré.  
 Alle thou clerkys that will her lyvelode amende,  
 Thei must com nowe to this palastré,  
 Onto this place where this conflicte shal be.
- 830 The letteres are wryte nowe and sealed ech on;  
 The messangeres in hast for these men are goon.
- 835 The emperor himselfe, as of a specialté,  
 Sealed these letteres with a precious ryng,  
 Whech was i-grave with ful grete sotilté.  
 The sentens of the letteres whech that this kyng  
 Wrote at that tyme, if youre desyryng
- 840 Be forto lyst it, ye may here it sone:  
 “Maxence, the lorde, save sune and mone
- “Most grettest in erde whech hath i-be,  
 Thre tymes consul in Rome, that cité hye,  
 Fader of the puple and to the deit   
 Of Jupiter the kyng of kynrod ful nyne,  
 Sendith love and helth to all the clergye
- 845 Of Surr  and Cipre and othir provincis all  
 Whech to his lordchip newly are falle.
- deliberate*  
*eradicate*  
*pleasure*  
*learning; such expertise*  
*most expeditiously*  
*increase their income*  
*arena*  
*debate*  
*to mark the occasion*  
*close in kinship*  
*scholars*  
*recently have fallen under his rule*

Book 4

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 850 | <p>“We will ye wyte, we send at this tyme<br/>Onto youre Providens counsell to have.<br/>We ax not of you nethir taske ne dyme,<br/>But only oure feyth and oure sect to save,<br/>For these Crysten folke make oure puple to rave<br/>With sotill suasions whech that thei use,<br/>On whech sotiltees we oureselue muse.</p>          | <p><i>your Wisdoms</i> (<i>polite form of address</i>)<br/><i>toil; tithes</i><br/><i>arguments</i><br/><i>marvel</i></p> |
| 855 | <p>“But most specialy a lady have we new i-caut,<br/>Enforsed with eloquens marvelosly.<br/>Mech of oure puple so hath sche taught<br/>That fro oure feyth fle thei sodenly.<br/>Thus party with witte, party nygromancy,<br/>Sche pervertith oure lond in wondir wyse.<br/>Therfor, we byd ye that are wyse,</p>                       | <p><i>Bolstered</i><br/><i>partly by cleverness, partly by magic</i></p>                                                  |
| 860 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |
| 865 | <p>“Ye hast now to Alisaundre for this same cause,<br/>To loke if ye may this woman oppresse,<br/>For this I telle you schortly in clause,<br/>But she be ovyrcome with youre besynes,<br/>All shul be Crysten, the more and the lesse,<br/>And if ye convicte hir avaunsed schul ye be<br/>With plenté of ryches, if ye trost me.”</p> | <p><i>suppress</i><br/><i>diligence</i><br/><i>overcome; rewarded</i></p>                                                 |
| 870 | <p>Thus are the letteres wretyn and i-goo.<br/>The emperor is walkid forth with the mayd<br/>Onto the pales with lordes many moo,<br/>Whech was at that tyme ful wel arayd.<br/>Many plesaunt wordis to hir he seyde,<br/>And many grete behestis thoo he behyte,<br/>To turne hir opinion yf that he myth.</p>                         | <p><i>palace</i><br/><i>he made many great promises</i></p>                                                               |
| 875 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |
| 880 | <p>He hite hir, if she wold to him consent,<br/>To have ful powere of all maner thing,<br/>More than any lord of his parlement,<br/>For all men shuld bowe onto hir byddyng.<br/>She shulde be qwene as he was kyng;<br/>Hir ymage wold he sett in the merket place,<br/>Whech shuld be like hir in bodye and in face,</p>              | <p><i>promised</i></p>                                                                                                    |

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- And alle maner of men shull worship geve  
Onto that ymage as onto a goddesse.
- 885      Thei shal not chese, if that thei will leve,  
Worchip shull thei hir both more and lesse.  
That was his promysse, that with swech worthines  
He will hir avaunce only if sche will forsake  
Hir Cristen feyth and his feyth now take.
- They shall have no choice*
- 890      But all these promissis sett sche at nought,  
This blesyd lady, ryth for Crystes sake.  
This same vers was thoo in hir thought  
Whech oure Lady hirselfe gan make:  
“Thei that are proud, God will hem forsake,
- 895      Meke He will lift for her mekenes.”  
Than seyd she to the emperor with sadnes,
- he will elevate the meek*
- “All this world have I, for my Lordys love,  
Jhesu I mene, forsake forevyre more.  
There shall no mene of drede ne of love
- 900      Put myn hert fro that grete tresore;  
It shall ly full stille there as a good store  
Till that I dey and yelde up my goost  
Onto that Lord whom I love most.
- no strategy involving fear or love*
- 905      “But sith that thi goddis of swech myth be  
As thu hast pronounced here in this place,  
Late hem take venjaunce nowe upon me —  
If that thei may — late hem my body race.  
Her myght is nought, ne nought is her grace;
- 910      Therfor I despice hem as thei stand a rowe,  
For fendis are thei — ful well that I knowe!
- destroy*  
*Their*  
*in a row*  
*fiends*
- “And, sere, to you I will touch anothir thing:  
I wole ye shull encline all youre entente
- 915      To herkyne my wordis and my talkyng.  
It is not unknownen to all the Orient  
That both be descens and be testament
- devote all your attention*  
*by right of descent and of charter*
- This cité is myn as for heritage  
To whech ye have made nowe this pilgrimage.

## Book 4

- 920     “Sith ye are kyng and rythwesnes shuld kepe,  
Whi make ye swech mastries in otheris mennes londe,  
Compell my tenauntis, thow thei sore wepe,  
To go with her offeryngis rith in her hondis,  
With trumpes and taburs befor you to stonde,  
Withoute my leve, withoute my licence?  
This is wronge to me and to God offence!
- 925     “If yowre goddis teche you for to do thys synne,  
Than are they unryghtfull in her comaundment.  
If ye ageyn her byddyng thus wil begynne,  
Than do ye wronge ageyn her intent.  
On what maner wise ye make youre went,  
930     I wyl not tary you with no tales long,  
But thus I conclude — that ye do me wrong!”
- 935     Than was the emperour ful of malencolye.  
He myght no lenger suffyr hir in his presens.  
To a knyght he commawnded that stod fast by  
He shal take thys lady and lede hir thens,  
Put hir in prison for hir offence,  
Loke he kepe hir so she go not awey —  
For if that she doo full horrabyly shall he dey.
- 940     Gladly and jocundly with the knyght she goo,  
As a spowse to chambre for hir Lordis love,  
Nothyng dismayd, nothyng is she wroth:  
Thus can oure Lord the paciens prove  
Of hem that are chosyn to dwelle all above  
In hevyn in His presens. But thus I lett hir lye,  
945     And forth I shall telle of thys story.

*should uphold the law  
do you commit such outrages*

*drums*

*No matter why you do this  
delay; speeches*

*a bride to her wedding chamber*

*leave her for now  
tell more*

## Chapter 14

- 950     Whyll Kateryne is in prison thus i-closyd  
The emperowr is rydyn into the lond  
For certeyn causes; as it is supposed,  
It was for brekyng of a certen bond  
Betwyx too cites. As I undyrstond,

*breach of a certain agreement*

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He rode to sesse the sisme that was new begun;  
Iche of hem of othyr had spent many a gonne.

*mend the rift  
made war on the other*

But he hath made pece and his jornay is sped.  
He is cum home now to Alisaundyr ageyn.

*accomplished*

955 The messangeres that he sent eke thei hafe led  
All theys clerkis to Alisaundre eke certeyn.  
Thus be they cum both, shortly to seyn,  
The emperor and the clerkis thus mete in fere;  
A cowncell is sett now of lordis that were there.

*together*

960 The philosopheres are enterd into the same cowncell  
To wete why the emperor for hem hath sent.  
There was a fayre syght, withowtyn ony fayll,  
For owt of the costes of all the Orient  
Are theys maystires chose ryght for thys entent:  
965 To conquer thys lady be philosofie.  
The nombre of hem, if I shuld not lye,

*from all parts of the East*

Myn auctour seyth was fyfty evyn,  
Lernyd men in arte and in arsmetrike,  
In rethorike, gramer, and all the Sciens Sevyn.

*arithmetic*

*Seven Liberal Arts*

970 In all the world were non hem lyke:  
They had stodyed the grownd of all musike.  
The emperor is ful glad now of her cunnyng.  
Thus seyd he to hem at her enteryng:

*foundation*

*their*

“Maysteres, we sent for yow for thys matere:  
975 We hafe here a mayde whyche with obstinacye  
Reneyhithe owre lawes whyche we use here,  
For she is falle into that cursyd heresye  
Whyche the Crysten clepeth, full of yopocrisye.  
Sche eke so depe is into thys errowr falle  
980 That all owre goddis devylles dothe she calle.

*Repudiates*

*Christian*

“And I suppose veryly ye teche but trewth,  
Because that ye be so grete lernyd men.  
To sle so yong a lady me thynketh rewthe;  
Therfor, the ryght wey I wyll ye hir kene,

*To kill; a shame  
teach*

Book 4

985 To converte hir to owre lawe, ellys I must hir brenne.  
 Thys is the cause why I sent for yowe.  
 Go cast yowre wyttes in the best maner now

“How ye wyll procede, for she shall cum anon.  
 Hir answeres are sly; grete is hir lernyng.  
 990 I make yow sekyr, ye shall not hens gon  
 Onto that tyme that ye hir bryng  
 Into the same feyth whych hir fadyr the kyng  
 Lyved all his lyf and hir modyr also:  
 Thys is the matere whyche I wyll hafe do.”

995 On answerd for all, and thus spake he:  
 “We wene here is gadered swyche a cumpayne  
 In all thys world shuld not a man fynd three  
 So wyse, so studyous in philosofye.  
 But ovyr all theys maystires Ariott is most worthy.

1000 He nedith not his labowr on a woman spend! *waste his energies on a woman*  
 He shall unto hir but his disciples send,

“And if she conclude hem be auctorité, *out-argues them by citing authorities*  
 Or ellys be reson, leve me full wele,  
 I wyll sey than that a goddes is she  
 1005 And most worthy to be sett on the whele  
 Of naturall sciens. But I cannot fele  
 In no maner that a woman shuld cum therto.  
 I hafe not hard speke that ony woman dyde so.”

Aftyr thys sermonyng untyl the next day, *discourse*  
 1010 The emperour comawnded knytes hem to chere, *knights to make them comfortable*  
 To lede hem to her innes with full good aray — *furnishings*  
 In specyall of bokes and swyche othyr gere *equipment*  
 As longith onto men that swyche sciens lere. *study*  
 Thus leve I hem styll in thowghtfull besynes,  
 1015 And Kateryne, oure maydyn, in prison and distres.

**Chapter 15**

- The othyr day is cum, but the emperor thought  
 To assay himselfe with his pryyv councel  
 For to conquer hir — but it avayleth nowght,  
 For whan most nede is, his resonys wyll whayle,  
 1020 So wele can owre mayd hir proporcions rayle.  
 Lordes were there many thoo in presence,  
 Statty, manfull, and of grete expence. *next*
- The Kyng of Ermenye was tho in that place  
 Where she was opposed of hir beleve; *Armenia*  
 1025 So was the Kyng of Mede, a fayre man of face;  
 The Kyng eke of Macedon, whyche made many a preve  
 Ageyn thys lady but he cowde hir not mend;  
 The Provoste of Perse was there also, *Media*  
 With bischoppis and lordys many moo. *Macedonia; effort*
- 1030 They made her resones but thei avayled nowght.  
 Fyrst seyd the emperorw ryght thus to thys may:  
 “Myn owyn systir, hedyr I hafe yow browte  
 Befor my specyall frendis thys day  
 To se whedyr ye wyll stylle in your old lay *Persia*  
 1035 Held your perseveraunce or ellys consent to us  
 And reney for evyr that traytour Jesus, *made their points*  
*maiden*
- “To turn to Apollo, Venus, and Minerve,  
 For your prison shuld cause yow, I suppose, *Minerva*  
 To chaunge your lyfe, leste that ye sterue,  
 1040 For of all maydenes, ye be the rose,  
 And to maydens it longeth to be led with glose. *for maidens it is fitting to follow advice*  
 Lat se now telle how ye avised be.” *imprisonment*  
*Let it be seen*
- Onto theys wordis thus answerd she:
- “A love hafe I, syr, whyche lykyth me so *pleases me so much*  
 1045 That all worldly delyte to me is but peyn  
 And all worldly joye to me is but wo,  
 If I very trewthe to yow shuld seyn.  
 Therfor know thys: for a certen

Book 4

1050 I wyll nevyr chaunge whyll I hafe lyfe;  
I shal be evyr to Him trewe spowse and wyfe."

Thoo seyd the emperour, "Than is all nowt  
That we with oure wyttes hafe laboured yow to safe.  
Turn yowre wordis, turn eke yowre thowght,  
Or ellys swyche ende must ye now hafe  
1055 As longeth to traytours that thus wyll raffe.  
Avise yow of two thyngis whyche ye wyll take:  
Ethyrl shall ye dye or yowre lawe forsake."

*for nothing  
racked our brains*

*rave*

*Pick one of these two things*

1060 And eke the grete Kyng of Armenye,  
Eem to Kateryne he was, as I wene,  
"Cosyn," he seyd, "leve thys heresye.  
Thynk of your kynrode, both kyng and qwene:  
Was nevyr non of them swych thyng wold susteyn.  
Alas! Why, woman, why, dyspyse ye Saturne?  
He may and he wyll into a ston yow turn!"

*Armenia  
Uncle  
kinswoman*

*hold such beliefs*

1065 The Kyng of Mede, whyche sat thoo besyd,  
In owre Lord Jhesu he put swyche blame:  
"Your God Cryst," he seyd, "is know full wyd  
That He was a wyche and so was His dame,  
And the grettest in wycchecrafte as is the fame.  
1070 Fye on swyche wysdam! Fye on swyche feyth!  
Thys same recorde all the world seyth."

*sorcerer*

*Everyone says so*

1075 Another thyng was there, and he hir thus reprevyd:  
She stode in thys mater, he seyd, but alone.  
There is non but she that in Cryst levyd.  
"Loke now," he seyd, "whedir o persone  
Is more worthy to be levyd than we ichone:  
Reson wyll conclude that where multitude is  
There is the trewthe — a man may not mys."

*believed*

*fail [to find truth]*

1080 The Kyng of Macedoyne, Syr Caspanus,  
Onto the lady full sobyrly thus sayd:  
"Yowre God, yowre Lord, whyche ye calle Jesus,  
As ye sayd He was bore of a mayde,

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- |      |                                                                         |                                             |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|      | But why sufferd He to be arayed<br>Of His owyn servauntis so as He was? | <i>treated</i>                              |
| 1085 | And a wyse lord had stond in that case,                                 | <i>If a wise lord had been in his place</i> |
|      | “He wold have hanged hem of very justyce!”                              |                                             |
|      | Thus seyd the byschoppis, thus seyd they all,                           |                                             |
|      | Onto thyss lady in her best wyse,                                       | <i>as persuasively as they could</i>        |
|      | And with besynes sore on hir they calle                                 | <i>diligence; exhorted her</i>              |
| 1090 | And she fro thyss vanité nedis muste falle                              |                                             |
|      | And make of hir enmyes hir frendis dere.                                | <i>turn from</i>                            |
|      | Than spake thyss lady, ryght as ye shall here:                          |                                             |

## Chapter 16

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                        |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | “Syr Emperour,” seyd she, “I hafe or thyſ<br>Onto yowre reverens declared ful wele                                                                                                                            | <i>previously</i>                                                                      |
| 1095 | Why my Lord Jhesu of seruauntis His<br>Wold suffyr all thyſ peyn every dele,<br>But of my feyth nothyng ye fele,<br>So are ye hardyd with obstinacye.<br>Therfor hold I nowe but a grete folye                | <i>I consider it</i>                                                                   |
| 1100 | “Youre demonstraciounes for to declare.<br>But thus myche I say to yow everychon:<br>Yowre mahowude of whyche ye make swyche fare<br>Shall not save yow whan ye shall gon<br>Down into peynes, hevy as stone. | <i>to argue with you</i><br><i>false god; display (commotion)</i><br><i>i.e., hell</i> |
| 1105 | He may not deliver himſeſe from that peyne<br>Where he is bownd with many a cheyn.                                                                                                                            |                                                                                        |
|      | “But wycche was he nevyr, my Lord,<br>Ne His blyſſed modyr Mary, that may,<br>He was God and man as bokes record,                                                                                             | <i>sorcerer</i>                                                                        |
| 1110 | And all tho myrakyls were put in asay<br>Be His mortayll enmes with full gret aſray<br>And evyr were thei fownde trew and stedfast.<br>Therfor, ley down that orible blaste                                   | <i>tested</i><br><i>assault</i>                                                        |

Book 4

- “Of your cursyd tungis, ye lordis, I yow praye.  
 1115 Berke now namore ageyn that holy name, *Bark*  
 For ye shall sumtyme se that day  
 Ye shall for thys berkyng be put onto blame. *be called to account*  
 Alas that ony wreichys shuld defame  
 So hyghe a Lord, so grete a dignité,  
 1120 To Whome mote nede bowe every kne!” *must*
- Than spake the Provost of Perse full sone: *forthwith*  
 “Sende aftir theys clerkis, syr, and let hem sey;  
 They can owre feythe, they wote what is to done. *know our doctrine*  
 Lat hir beleve hem or ellys shall she deye!  
 1125 She shall chese on, there is non othyr weye.  
 With thys long clateryng, tyme lese we here.  
 They wyll oppose hir in othyr manere.”

**Chapter 17**

- The phylosophers are enterd to the councell.  
 The emperowr seyd thus: “Thys is the howr  
 1130 In whyche we shall se if conyng wyll avaylle. *knowledge*  
 Therfor, maysters, do now yowre labowre,  
 For ye muste defende us from thys scharp schowre *assault*  
 With whyche we are haylyd now on every syde; *attacked*  
 But ife ye spede owre feyth wyll sone slyde.” *Unless you succeed; fall*
- 1135 They answerd ageyn: thei seyd they had skorne *replied*  
 That so many men ageyn a mayden yinge *young*  
 Shuld now dispute, for he is not borne  
 In erde as yete that durst stere ony thyng *utter*  
 Ageyn her conclusyones, neythir duke ne kyng.  
 1140 Swyche grete rōwse was made tho in that place: *commotion*  
 “Lete hir cum,” they seyd, “lete us se hir face.”
- But whyll they were karpynge in thys matere,  
 A knyght is gun to hir in prison in haste,  
 Warnyng hir as a gentyll officere,  
 1145 In what manere the emperour will hir ataste. *test*  
 What nedyth now moo wordys for to waste?

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The lady seyd that it was glad tydyng;  
There cowde no man gladdere to hir bryng.

1150 Thoo fell sche down plat, all in a traunce,  
Commendyng hir cause ryght onto Godd alone:  
“Graunt me,” sche sayde, “Lord, perseveraunce,  
To serve Thi Godhed whech sytthyth in trone,  
Of whech Godhed Thi Sone, the secunde persone,  
Deyd in erde for synne of all mankynde,  
1155 Whech onto Him ful ofte He fynt onkynde. *untrue*

“Thou graunt me, Lord, this day eloquens  
To safe Thi feyth ryght as Thu best can.  
Suffyr not these clerkys to make resistens  
Ageyn that doctrine whech Thu, God and man,  
1160 Here in this worlde with woundis blew and wan *black and blue*  
Confermed thus. Geve me, Lord, that Gost *i.e., the Holy Spirit*  
Whech can put down soone all worldly booste,

“And as Thu grauntyd to Thin apostles here —  
Whan thei schuld stande befor prynce or kyng,  
1165 Thu sayd to hem thei schuld not be in dwere *doubt*  
What thei schuld speke, neyther to elde ne yyng, *young*  
For Thu shuld graunte hem wytt in awswering  
Ageyn whech there schuld no man replye,  
Neyther of the secte of hethen ne of heresye — *Neither heathens nor heretics*

1170 “Ryght so graunt now to me, Thi servaunt here,  
That I hafe strength Thi cause for to defende,  
That I may preve be reson scharpe and clere  
Thi chyrches feyth, for whech Thu kan descende  
Evene fro hevyn, oure maners to amende. *our ways*

1175 This pray I Thee, put this in my breest,  
As Thu art God and man, bothe kyng and preest.

“Thu art my conyng, Thu art my hardynesse, *knowledge*  
Thu art all in Whom ononly I trust.

## Book 4

- There comth no vertew but of Thi worthinesse.<sup>1</sup>  
1180 Let not Thi powere as this day be lost.  
Thu makyst all thing, bothe the hete and the frost,  
Wherfore, I pray, Lord, thow I a woman be,  
Yet for Thi worchepe yette so enforce me *for your honor; strengthen*
- “That I may speke wordys to Thi plesaunce,  
1185 As Thu graunted Ester to plese hir Assuere,  
To leve his stately solemne contenaunce  
And spek to hir wordys of goodely chere,  
So graunt me now, Lord, Thi servaunt here,  
That I may plese and plete in Thi cause:  
1190 This is the sentens that I pray, in clause.” *plead  
in brief*

### Chapter 18

- Whan that this lady had made hir oryson, *prayer*  
There cam an aungell glydyng down fro hevene,  
With mervelous noys cam he that tyme down,  
As bryth he semyd, as it were the levene. *lightning*  
1195 Alle the prison, whech had voutes sevene,  
Was lyght that tyme ryght of his presence. *vaults  
illuminated by his presence*  
The derke corneres coude make noo resistens,
- And sche myght not susteyn that vysyoun,  
So was sche ravyschyd with that new lyght;  
1200 Ryght with his comyng sche fell sone down.  
The aungell comforted hir and bad hir be lyght:  
“Drede noght,” he seyth, “thow that I be bryght.  
I am a servaunt bothe onto Godd and to yow,  
And for your conforte fro hevyn cam I now. *to be cheerful  
though*
- 1205 “My Lord, your spouse, be me greteth yow wele.  
For very lofe this message now He sent:  
He comaunderd yow to drede nevyre a dele  
Of theyse clerkys; ye schal not be circumvent. *fear nothing*

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<sup>1</sup> All virtue proceeds from Your worthiness

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- Ye schall conceyve full clerly her entent  
1210 And yet moreovyre thei schul hafe no powere  
For to conclude yow now, in noo manere. *overcome*
- “But your powere schal be ovyre hem more large,  
For ye schall convycte hem with grete auctorite.  
Ye schall lede hem onto the Peteres barge,  
1215 Whych fygureth oure feyth, as seyth dyvynyté,  
And not only thus, but so devoute schul thei be,  
That as martyres for Cryst thei schul deye.  
This same prophecye whech I to yow seye
- “Is determynde above be Goddis provydens.  
1220 These clerkys schul now despycē her bokys alle,  
In whech thei hafe had a full grete confidens;  
Alle her grete trost now schall fro hem falle  
With whech thei hauntyd her goddys for to calle.<sup>1</sup>  
This schall oure Lorde do, lady, be youre laboure.  
1225 Ryse up now and thank youre Savyoure. *through*
- “And ye youreself, aftyr that thei be dede,  
Schul suffyr for Him mech more thinge  
Than I hafe leysere to tell now in this stede. *leisure*  
But of thus mych I geve full warnyng:  
1230 Ye schall make the qween for to forsake hir kyng  
For Crystys love and dey soo in hir blode;  
Ye schul be cause, lady, of all these werkys goode.
- “Geve credens to me as to a trew messagere  
And as no feyned spyryte with dobylnesse; *duplicity*  
1235 My name is Mychael, if ye wyll it here, *hear*  
Archaungell of hevyn, whech hath that besynesse  
That all sowles, the more and eke the lesse,  
That schall to blysse, I peyse all be wyght,  
Wheythyr in goodeness thei be hevy or lyght. *occupation*  
*weigh them all by weight*  
*[To determine] whether*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1222–23: *They will lose the confidence / With which they used to call upon their gods*

Book 4

- 1240 "This is myn offyce, leve me, lady, wele.  
 There is a sete ordeyned in hevyn above  
 For yow, lady, aftyr your scharpe whele  
 Whech ye schall suffyr for your spouses love.  
 Was nevyr no mayde to swech sete myght prove,  
 1245 Safe Mary alone, Crystes modyr dere.  
 Farewell now, lady, and beth of ryght goode chere."

- Thus was sche comforted and left all that nyght  
 In prison styll, in swete oryson alone.  
 The savour abode and sumwhat of the lyght  
 1250 Aftyr the tyme that the aungell was gone.  
 He hath made hir hardy and stable as the stone;  
 There schall noo peyn hir hert now remeve  
 Fro the feyth ne fro hir beleve.

**Chapter 19**

- Now is the cité for to se this mayde  
 1255 Gadered in fere with noyse and rumour.  
 Every man there aftyr his cunnyng sayde,  
 "Now is come the day and eke the houre  
 In whech there shall fall full grete honoure  
 On summe party, or ellys full grete schame."  
 1260 And because this lady was of so grete fame
- Every man is bysy to stand that tyme ny,  
 That he myght here and se all that was doo.  
 The emperour is sette, the lordes sytt fast by;  
 The clerkys eke were sette be too and too.  
 1265 The may is sette in a sete also,  
 Ryght be hirself, for sche is left alone.  
 The emperour sittynge all hye in his trone,
- Thus exorted he these noble clerkys alle:  
 "Maysters," he seyth, "here is this concionatrix,  
 1270 Here is the mayde on whom we dyd so calle,  
 Here is the new dyvynoure, here is the new Ulix,  
 Here is sche whos errorr is so fix

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And so sore glewyd sche wyl not fro it remeve! *firmly glued*  
 Therfore, youre schaftys on hir now must ye preve.” *arrows (intellectual ammunition)*

- 1275 Than made the mayde onto the emperour  
 A full straunge chalenge, seying on this wyse:  
 “Onto these clerkys whych are here this hour  
 Gadered togedyr befor yow as justise  
 Ye hafe graunted a guerdon of grete apryse *precious reward*  
 1280 If that thei convicte me; to me graunte ye noon.  
 Wherfore, me thinkyth all wrong hafe ye goon. *overcome*
- “But wold ye graunt now to my guerdon  
 That if I spede and convicte hem all o rowe, *as my reward*  
 That ye schall leve your maumentrye ful sone,  
 1285 And my Lord Jhesu as for your Godd to know, *succeed; altogether*  
 Than wold I sey with wordys meke and lowe  
 That ye were juge, juste man and trewe.” *acknowledge*
- With these wordes the emperour chaunged hewe. *color*
- He seyd unto hir with ful stout cuntenaunce: *arrogance*  
 1290 “What hast thu to do of oure reward now?<sup>1</sup> *do not complicate matters*  
 Defende thi feyth with all the circumstauns  
 That thu can; think it schall be lyt迤lly enow.  
 Lett be, damysell, make it not so towे: *Mind your own business*  
 Entermet thee where thu hast to done;  
 1295 If thu hafe wytte it wylle be sene ful sone.” *soon be evident*
- Thoo spake the mayde onto the clerkys alle:  
 “Syth ye be gadered now into this place,  
 Upon me only for to crye and calle,  
 With youre argumentis to loke if ye may chase  
 1300 My wytt, my mynde, fro that new purchase  
 Whech I hafe wunne, I mene fro Crysten feyth,  
 Lette se what ony of yow to me seyth.”

---

<sup>1</sup> Just what has our reward got to do with you?

Book 4

- 1305 Thoo spake a phylosophre of full grete age,  
An honourable man, Amphos of Athene:  
“We are come,” he seyth, “at the emperoures wage,  
For a mayde, he wrote, of yerys eytene — *expense eighteen*  
That same is ye, pleynly, as I wene.  
But wherfore we come as yet know we not now — *why*  
Of that matere the answere lythe in yow.

1310 “Syth ye be causere than of this afrai,  
Sey ye your growndis and we schull purveye *cause; proceedings beliefs; give*  
Answeres thereto or we goo hens this day.  
We cast us sekyre newly yow to conveye  
Onto that feyth whech ye dyd reneye *We are resolved to return you renounce*  
1315 Be wykkyd counsayle. Therfore, fyrst schall ye *By*  
Speke in this matere and than answere we.”

## Chapter 20

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                            |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | The mayde stode up and with full goode chere<br>Sche crossed hir heed, hir mouth, and hir breeste,<br>Than spake sche to hem ryght as ye schall here:                                                                                                 |                                                            |
| 1320 | “In me it lyghte at the begynnnyng of this feest<br>To pronounce fyrst, thow that I be leest<br>And most unworthy. But oure Lorde Jhesu,<br>Blessyd be He, syth tyme that I Him knew,                                                                 | <i>It falls to me</i>                                      |
|      | “I hafe left all my auctoures olde,<br>I fonde noo frute in hem but eloquens.<br>My bokes be go, goven or elles sold.<br>Farwell Arystotyll, for full grete expens<br>Made my fadyr and had full grete diligens<br>To lerne me thi sotill bokes alle, | <i>no substance; only literary skill<br/>given away</i>    |
| 1325 | Of dyverse names as thu ded hem calle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>teach</i>                                               |
| 1330 | “Of Omere eke hafe I take my leve,<br>With his fayre termes in vers and eke in prose<br>Ful erly sat I and eke full late at eve<br>To lerne the texte and to lern the glose —<br>I hafe chose bettyr, treuly, I not suppose                           | <i>Homer<br/>commentary on the text<br/>I do not think</i> |
| 1335 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                            |

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

But wote full well. Farwell eke Ovyde;  
Thou loved full wele blynd Venus and Cupyde.

*But know for certain*

“I hafe take leve of Esculape and Galyene  
And of all her pryy sergyng of nature.

*Aesculapius; Galen  
searching into nature's secrets*

1340 I hafe a lessoun mech trewere to susteyne  
And more direkte to know creature.<sup>1</sup>  
Ye, Plato bokes eke I yow ensure  
We hafe do now, we schall nevyr more mete,  
Ne him Phylstyoun, bothe phylosophyre and poete.

*Plato's*

*finished with; encounter*

1345 “Behelde, ye maystrys, alle these mennys werkys  
Have I stodyed and lerned full besly.  
Thei were red me of full sotell clerkys;  
There lyve noo bettyr at this day hardyly.  
And in these bokes no othyr thing fond I  
1350 But vanyté or thing that schall not lest.  
And evyr me thowte that swech lernyng was best

*clever*

“That tretyth of thing whech evyr schall endure.  
Swech thing lerne I now, turned to Criste Jhesu:  
I lerne how Godd is Lord of creature;  
1355 I lerne how He the hevyn whyght and blew,  
The watyr, the fyyre, the erde or that it grew,  
Made all of noght—this is now my lernyng.  
I lerne also that He, a chyld full yng,

*creation*

*blue and white sky*

*i.e., before it became fertile*

1360 “Was bore in erde of Mary, and sche a mayde,  
Grew onto manhode to thirti wyntyr and thre,  
And than wylfully, as the prophetys sayde,  
For synne of man hyng upon a tre.  
Many miracles in erde thoo dyd He  
1365 Whyll He went here, this I yow ensure;  
By dyvers werkys know was sundry nature:

*by his own choice*

*walked*

*his dual nature was known*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1340–41: *I have a teaching (Christianity) to uphold that is truer [than paganism] / And that leads more directly to an understanding of creation*

Book 4

- “That He was Godd He schewyd be werkis grete,  
For all the elementys obeyd his comaundment.  
That He was man ful esy is to trete:  
Thei sey and felt Him that with Him were present.
- 1370 I tell yow pleynly now all myn entent.  
This is my scole, this is my philosophye;  
Thys is the sciens I hope schall nevyr lye;
- “Thys is my feyth; this is my victorye.  
What evyr men sey, a Godd must we hafe,  
1375 Above all men that evyr reyngned erdely,  
Most sofren Lord whos powere may all safe.  
Loke on your goddys, how thei tumbyll and wafe  
Ryght whan men swepe hem, so lytyll is her myght.  
Wype ye that blyndenesse whech hath hyllyd your syght,
- 1380 “For Cryst seyd so whan He the Gospell sew:  
‘Thei that se,’ He seyth, ‘schall be blynde,  
And thei that nevyr of My vertew knew,  
Ful truly wyll thei hafe Me in her mynde.’  
But pull we the frute owte of the rynde
- 1385 To tell yow platly what this sentens is:  
The seeyng men betokne yow, iwys,
- “For ye can se all thing that to nature  
Perteyneth, be crafte whech ye of bokes hafe.  
But your savacyon, that I yow ensure,  
1390 Consyder ye nowte, ne how ye may be safe.  
Youre blasyng scyens make yow so to rafe  
That endles treuthe can ye nevyre more fynde.  
This same errorr is that makyth yow blynde.
- “But in His name whom I now rehers,  
1395 I schal be strong all materes to conclude.  
There schall no man have myght me to reverse,  
Thow ye bryng a grettere multitude.  
He can make wyttys that be ful dull and rude  
To schyne with sciens on the freschest wyse,  
1400 My Lord Jhesu, and foles ofte He make wyse.”
- is easily established*  
*knowledge; trust*  
*on earth*  
*sovereign*  
*tumble; waver*  
*brush*  
*obstructed*  
*sowed*  
*nor how you may be saved*  
*brilliant learning*  
*declare*  
*settle*  
*confound*

*The Life of Saint Katherine*

**Chapter 21**

- Whan this mayde of this fayre processe  
 Had made a hende, there stode up thoo a man  
 Of fers corage, thow it were wodeness,  
 Maystir Astenes so thei called him than;  
 1405 For very angyr of coloure was he wan.  
 With cryng voyse, he fellyd thoo the place.  
 Thus spak he than: “Alas what is oure grace?”
- “Ye of Rome, lordes and citeceyns alle,  
 Ye bloode ryall, ye men of nobylnesse,  
 1410 What cause schul men hafe yow to calle  
 Wyse men endewyd with sobyrnesse?  
 If wysdam were with yow, than wold I gesse  
 Ye schuld not suffyr these Crysten folke here  
 Reprove oure goddys with swech veniable manere.
- 1415 “For we were called be oure emperour,  
 Fadyr and keper ful gracyous of this londe,  
 To convicte, he seyd, here a new error—  
 Whech is not new ye may well undyrstonde.  
 Many of hem hafe I brent with bronde
- 1420 Of these Crysten, ryght for this entent:  
 That thei call feyth, we calle delyrament.
- “Oure goddys may sey that we be onkynde,  
 For all the benefetis that thei to us sende  
 We to suffyr the yngth of womankynde
- 1425 Thus openly Cryst for to commende  
 And all His tresoun with coloures to defende,  
 Oure goddys eke develes for to calle,  
 This suffyr we, and that is werst of alle.
- “Wherfore, syre kyng, beware of here offens —  
 1430 Suffyr now this lady no lengere for to speke.  
 These lewyd folk that lysten with gret sylence,  
 With apparent resonis sche schall sone i-cheke  
 That fro her feyth sche schall sone hem breke.

*an end*

*haughty disposition; madness*

*special virtue*

*fire*

*lunacy*

*unnatural*

*youth*

*rhetorical tricks*

*ignorant*

*entrap with spurious arguments*

Book 4

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|      | Thei come nevyr home, thow we wold hem drawe.<br>To suffyr swesch prechouris, it is ageyn oure lawe.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>i.e., return to our faith</i>                        |
| 1435 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |
|      | “We cam now hedyr to here summe novelté,<br>And sche begynnyth with Jhesu Nazareth,<br>Cryst thei call Him and prophete of Galilé,<br>Sche callyth him Lorde of wynde and of breth,<br>Of erde, of watyr, of londe, and of heth.<br>This elde errorr know we well enow:<br>I hafe myselfe convicte many of yow —                | Galilee<br><i>heath</i>                                 |
| 1440 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |
|      | “Of your secte, I mene. How may ye for schame<br>Reherse of Jhesu that grete doblynesse?<br>Summe men seyn that He had a dame<br>Whech was a mayde in very sothfastenesse<br>Aftyr the tyme that sche had suffred dystresse<br>Of chyldbyrth: this know all men a lye —<br>This lewyd doctrine is not worth a flye!             | <i>duplicity</i><br><i>mother</i><br><i>i.e., silly</i> |
| 1445 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |
|      | “Ye magnyfye Him for this cause alsoo:<br>Ye sey He roos fro deth to lyffe ageyn,<br>But of His disciples in sekyrnesse were there too<br>Whech went to the grave, as I herde Jewys seyn.<br>Thei stole the body ful prvyly in a reyn,<br>And than seyd thei her mayster was i-goo<br>Be very myracle, and thus seyd many moo.” | <i>rose</i><br><i>secretly during a storm</i>           |
| 1450 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |
| 1455 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                         |

## Chapter 22

- Onto these wordes, onto this blaspheme,  
Answerd the mayde, with most goodely chere.  
Sche seyd thus: "At my Lord of hevene  
1460 Toke I begynnyng of my conflycte here."<sup>1</sup>  
A makere is there withouten any dwere  
Ovyr all this worlde whech was or it began.  
For, as I hafe provyd, Jubiter was but a man;

*creator; doubt  
before the world's creation*

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1459–60: *I began my disputation here by speaking of my Lord of heaven*

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- “No more was Saturn, whech his fadyr is.  
 1465 Than syth thei were men and toke here begynnnyng,  
 Than must we ferther procede now, iwys,  
 To seke Him whech befor this thing  
 Was evyr in heven eterne regnyng.  
 This same is Godd of whom now I preche,  
 1470 Ageyn all synnys most sovereyn noted leche,
- “Spryng of all thing that evyr begynnnyng hadde,  
 So is He called, in whom all thing is eke,  
 Of whom all good thing and no thing badde  
 Procedyth newly bothe be day and be weke,  
 1475 Be whom all creatures be thei wylde or meke  
 Are conserved, at Him thus I began —  
 But if I dede, I were no wyse woman.
- “Make no comparison betwyx your godd and myn,  
 For my Godd hath made all thing of nowte,  
 1480 Eke youre goddis are not so goode as swyn —  
 Thei can not gruntyng whan hem ayleth owte!  
 As sore as ye in this matere hafe I sowte;  
 I fonde no trewth, therfore fro yow I flede.  
 In trewer weytes ful sykir am I lede.”
- 1485 Thys man was thoo of these resones grete  
 So troubled, he qwok betwyx ire and drede.  
 Lett oþir men now in this matere trete,  
 For he hath done, he hath sowe his sede,  
 A sikyr helpe whan there cometh grete nede.
- 1490 But God wold hafe him turned in this manere —  
 His mervelous menes schul we nevyre lere.
- had a beginning*  
*Source*  
*the same*  
*every day and week*  
*tame*  
*preserved*  
*Unless I did so*  
*swine*  
*grunt; something ails them*  
*diligently; sought*  
*securely*  
*quaked*  
*sown; seed*  
*ways; fathom*

**Chapter 23**

- Anothyr clerk stode up thoo in hast.  
 Onto the mayde he made swech evydens:  
 “All your wordes hafe ye not spent in waste.  
 1495 I undyrstand full wele your grete eloquens.  
 Ageyn oure goddis ye make this defens:
- presented this argument*  
*said in vain*  
*argument*

Book 4

Ye sey her ymages whech we worcheper here  
May not fele, ne hafe no powere.

their

1500 "Thys wote I wele — thei be but figures  
Representyng othir manere thing.  
Lych to these fayre rych sepulcures  
Whech betokyn in her representyng  
That there is byryed duke or ellys kyng,  
So are these ymages toknes of goddis oure  
1505 To whom we geve with hert gret honoure

*is buried there*

“Not for her cause but for significacyoun  
Of the worthy whom thei represent. *not in themselves*

Therfor I answere to your replicacyoun, reply  
Servynge sumwhat now youre entent: *Agreeing with you somewhat*

1510 Thei that made hem nevyr oþir wyse ment  
To sett hem up but for this cause only —  
That to hyere devocþoun men schuld go therby."

Than seyde the mayde, "I wold ye schuld now schewe  
Of all these goddys whech that worthyest be.

*Which of these gods is worthiest  
in a row*

1515 For as thei stande in your temple o rewe  
I can perceyve in hem no dyvynyté  
More in on than othyrs, for your Saturn, pardé  
Whyl that he lyved was a fals traytoure —  
Homycyde cruell, debatere and robboure.

### *brawler*

1520	"His wyffe was a woman nyne of that same vyce: Veniable, dispytous, chydere every tyde, Of hir condycyon unstable and ful nyce. There myght no man with hir no whyle abyde — Hir owyn chyldren kyllyd sche be hir syde.	<i>equally vicious Vengeful, mean, always complaining character; foolish remain for long</i>
1525	Jubiter was gelt of his fadyr Saturn, eke, Banyched his lond, his herborow gan he seke.	<i>was castrator of dwelling</i>

<sup>1</sup> So that people should proceed through them to a higher devotion.

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- “His owyn syster Jubiter defouled thoo.  
 His fadyr aftyr banychid he owte of londe. *he then banished*  
 These are the dedys of your goddys, loo!
- 1530 How may your lawe eternaly thus stonde  
 Whan it is bylyd on so brytyll bonde? *built from such weak bonds*  
 Pluto was ravyscere of maydenes ful violentt;  
 Venus was lecherows and also violent. *ravisher*
- “Vulcane was cruell and yet was he cokholde;  
 1535 Hov/ schuld swech persones to ony Godhed prove! *attain the status of gods*  
 Summe are yong, summe of hem are olde.  
 Cupyde encresyth in men that unclene love.  
 These grete vylonyes can ye nevyr fro hem schove. *misdeeds; dissociate*  
 Of wychcraft nooted was your godd Mercurye,  
 1540 Maystir of charmes and of swech sorcerye.
- “Youre godd Apollo, whan he was drunk of wyne  
 Than wold he jangyll in manere of prophecye, *chatter as if he were prophesizing*  
 Ful sotyll lesyngys wold he thoo dyvyne *subtle lies*  
 To hem that knew not his trescerye. *treachery*
- 1545 Sunietyme soth sawed, sumetyme dyd he lye. *he spoke truly*  
 These are your goddys which that ye honoure —  
 Alle to vyses sett was her laboure. *their energies were given to vice*
- “Ycure offeryngis, eke, thei be abhominable:  
 To summe goddys offyr ye swynys dunge; *swine's dung*  
 1550 There comth noo mete besor yow at the table  
 Tyl. youre godd hath awey the tunge.<sup>1</sup> *recited*  
 If aill youre harlotrye thus openly were i-runge  
 It wolde schame yow. Therfor, ye that be wyse  
 Fle this folye, drede the hye justyse.”
- 1555 Thoo stode the man, afayd as owte of mynde.  
 He cowde not speke to hir o word moo.  
 Oure blessed Lord his hert gan thoo bynde  
 Onto His servyce; therfore, let him goo

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1550–51: *No meat is served at your table / Until your god has been given the tongue*

Book 4

- 1560 Sitt and rest, as for that tyme with woo. *unhappily for the time being*  
 Thus schull thei stynt whan God wyl sey “pees”; *stop*  
 Of all wysdam He can sone make relees. *an end*

**Chapter 24**

- 1565 Anothyr clerke thouth deppere to procede.  
 He stode up thoo and this was his sentens:  
 “Of oure goddys ye schew the schamful dede; *expose; deeds*  
 Nothyng speke ye of her good provydens. *wisdom*  
 We hafe in this matere ful mysty intellygens *a very dim understanding*  
 Whech may not be comyn to every man,  
 But to yow, lady, so now as I can, *be conveyed*
- 1570 “Wyl I that comown, ryght for this entent: *impart*  
 Because yourselfe of wytt sotyll be  
 And for these lordes eke that be present,  
 These same motyves at this tyme meve me, *considerations*  
 For I wyll tell now the most pryvy secré  
 Whech that we have in oure philosophye  
 Towchynge the goddys and her progenye.
- 1580 “Saturne the fyrst, whom ye so dyspreve, *refute*  
 Him take we for tyme because he is olde,  
 And tyme, pardé, aftyr oure beleve,  
 As for a godd amongis us now is holde. *He represents time according to our faith is considered a god*  
 Jubiter the kyng, as the treuth is tolde,  
 He is take for fyre, and Juno eke his wyffe,  
 Sche is take for eyre that us gevith lyffe. *air*
- 1585 “Thus are oure goddys in manere of allegorye  
 Resemble to natures whech that be eterne. *Equated with natural elements*  
 Than is oure seyth groundyd on no lye  
 But on swech thing whech is sempysterne. *eternal*  
 Myn owne lady, ye sowt not well this herne  
 Whan ye blasphemyd oure goddys all o rowe.  
 I tell yow this; I wold all men it knowe.” *examined; [intellectual] nook*

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- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                        |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1590 | The lady answerd with sad avysement.<br>Sche seyd sche know his circumlocucyoun;<br>The Kyng of Thebes a book had hir sent<br>In whech sche fonde swech exposicyoun,<br>But sche halt it now but for abusyoun.                                                                                      | <i>what he paraphrased</i><br><i>considers; deceit</i> |
| 1595 | Yet these resones whech the man had schewyd<br>Be very resoun sche wyll prove hem lewyd.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>foolish</i>                                         |
|      | For at the tale whech this man had tolde<br>Glaed the emperor, tremelyng evyn for joye.<br>To speke than was he wax ful bolde:                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>as this man spoke</i><br><i>trembling</i>           |
| 1600 | “Clerke,” he seyd, “Saturne kepe thee fro noye!<br>I tryst this ladye wyll bere hir now more koye.<br>What sey ye mayde — where is youre answere?<br>If ye can owte, lete us now it lere.”                                                                                                          | <i>harm</i><br><i>demurely</i>                         |
| 1605 | The mayde seyd onto the mayster sone,<br>“Your schamful doctrine wold ye ful fayn hyde<br>With fygure and coloure, as ye are wone to done, <sup>1</sup><br>But ye must ley these exposicyouns asyde.<br>Are not these planetys knowyn wondyr wyde?<br>May we not se hem whan thei schyne so clere — | <i>replied; promptly</i>                               |
| 1610 | The sune, the mone, whych schyne onto us here?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                        |
|      | “Thys wote we wele that thei be no men —<br>Why are thei grave thus of ston and of tre?<br>This errorr is ful esy for to ken:<br>That men are thei not ne nevyr more schal be.                                                                                                                      | <i>know</i><br><i>explain</i>                          |
| 1615 | In these figures than full fowle erre ye;<br>Ye worchep the schadow and leve the substauns.<br>Here is in yow a full grete varyauns.                                                                                                                                                                | <i>images</i><br><i>fickleness</i>                     |
| 1620 | “Eke the planetys whech schyne thus above,<br>Thc w thei schuld stand evyr and be eterne<br>Yet can ye not with youre bokes prove<br>That thei hafe evyr before be sempiterne.                                                                                                                      | <i>always existed</i>                                  |

<sup>1</sup> With rhetorical flourishes and ornaments, as you are accustomed to do.

## Book 4

If phylosophye were loked in his pryyv herne,  
Ye schuld fynde there that planetys all be made.<sup>1</sup>  
What wyl ye ferther in this matere wade?

- 1625 "If thei be made, than are thei creatures,  
And he that made hem, he is Godd alone,  
Ley hem in watyr all your mysty figures,  
For nowt are thei, neyther the stok ne stone.  
Onto that hye God loke ye make youre mone;  
1630 Prey Him to send you of errour repentauns,  
Than have ye of treuth the very assurauns."

*Give up  
they are nothing*

### Chapter 25

The phylosophres merveylyd of this answer,  
Of hir wytt and of hir eloquens.  
Thei that now in presens are there  
1635 Herd nevyr before swech manere sentens —  
Sche can al thing of very experiens.  
A mastere stode up and spake thoo to hem alle:  
"I wold a supposyd," he seyd, "that the hevyn schuld falle

- "Rathere than woman swech sciens schuld atame.  
1640 Lete us leve, felawes, now oure elde scole,  
Geve entendauns at this tyme to this dame,  
For in this worlde in cunnyng stand sche sole.  
All oure lernyng wyll turne us to dole  
But if we folow as mech as we may  
1645 To lerne the treuth whech schall lestyn ay.

*learning; master*

*Pay attention  
her knowledge is peerless  
cause us grief*

- "Wherfore lete us lerne now of this mayde  
What that God is whech made thus all thing.  
With this matere hafe I be oft dysmayde,  
For I cowde nevyr with naturall arguyng  
1650 Dyvyne so fere, and evyr oure stodyyng

*On this subject; frustrated*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1622–23: *If you explored philosophy's secret recesses, / You would find that all the planets were created*

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- Hath be therto ful directe, as me semeth. *directed*  
 I wyl beleve now as this lady demeth.” *says*
- Thus is consentyd now all the cumpayne.  
 Thei wyll lere of hir, thei sey plat and pleyn,
- 1655 For it is above alle her phylosophye *i.e., their philosophy cannot reveal*  
 What Lorde He is that made the wynde and reyne.  
 That there is swech on can thei wele i-seyne, *a one*  
 But what He is or what is His name  
 This desyre thei to lerne now of this dame.
- 1660 The mayde eke was as glad as thei  
 To enforme hem in this same matere. *inform*  
 Onto these men ful sadly gan sche sey,  
 “Syth that ye take the forme now of scolere,  
 Ye are the redyere these mysteries for to lere.
- 1665 But we wyll leve this Godhed for a tyme  
 And of the manhode a whyle wyll we ryme.
- “Ye schall know fyrst that oo God is in heven,  
 Distinct in persones, as we beleve, thre:  
 Fadyr and Sune and Holy Gost ful evene.
- 1670 These same persones oonly oo God be.  
 Oure auctoures sey that if Godd had be  
 Oonly o persone than schuld not His holy blys  
 Be comounde to other so parfytly as it is, *conveyed*
- “For creature non myght receyve no swech: *comprehend*  
 Therfore He ordeyned be His eterne counsayle  
 That thre persones in myght and nature lych *alike*  
 In oo Godhed, to us ful gret mervayle,  
 Schuld be consederyd to mannys grete avayle; *be seen; benefit*  
 And ech of other His substauns schuld thus take,  
 1680 Non lesse, non more; thus oure feyth we make.
- “Of the thre persones, the secunde, whech is the Sune,  
 Cam down to erde here; He tok mankynde, *assumed manhood*  
 For man had lost all that evyr was done *lost all he had*  
 Whan he to God was fall so unkynde — *behaved so unnaturally*

*Book 4*

- 1685 He brake the precept with whech he gan him bynde  
 Amongis the trees in the place of delyce  
 Whech that we clepe in bokes paradyce. *God's commandment  
delight*
- “And for there was no man able in erde therto  
 To make unyté betwyx God and man, *reconcile*  
 1690 This was the cause that that Lorde dede soo.  
 He lyght to herde and in a yong woman,  
 A clene maydyn, of flesch and bloode He nam.  
 Therin He deyed to sle oure synnes alle.  
 This is the God on whom we Crysten calle.” *descended to earth  
chose (took)  
kill*

**Chapter 26**

- 1695 The mayster principale whech the wordis hadde  
 For hem alle at that same day and tyme  
 Of hir doctryne was ful joyful and gladde,  
 For God hath poyntyd in him a newe pryme.  
 Oure Lord Jhesu had purged him of his cryme, *ordained; new beginning  
sin*  
 1700 Made him dysposed to his conversyoun.  
 But he mervelyth sore of this informacyoun. *wonders greatly at*
- He seyd to the lady in ful fayre manere,  
 “O thing there is here in youre techyng  
 Whech I cannot conceyve it yet ful clere:  
 1705 For God and man in her coupelyng  
 Be ful diverse, and yet sey ye this thing:  
 That bothe natures be joyned in oo persone  
 There was nevyr swych but if it be He alone,
- “For if He be God, than must He be eterne,  
 1710 If He be man, than is He corruptible;  
 A nature or persone whech is sempiterne  
 To sey of it that it is possible  
 Semeth to me a ful grete insolible. *transitory  
contradiction*  
 This is the mocyoun, lady, ye must declare,  
 1715 For in this matere oure wyttys be but bare.” *proposition; explain*

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- Thus to this mocyoun answerd thoo the mayde,  
 “Ye must conceyve,” sche seyde, “in your mynde  
 That these too natures in oure Lord Jhesu were layde  
 And coupled togedyr ageyn used kynde: *ordinary nature*
- 1720 Thus we of Him in solempne bokys fynde.  
 But the very prove of His werkys grete  
 Is ryght enow this matere for to trete, *sufficient to settle this matter*
- “For He that reysyde Lazare fro the grave  
 Where he had lay four dayes evene, *lain*  
 1725 He that Petyr in the see dyd save *sea*  
 And walkyd there as men do on a grene, *lawn*  
 He that comaunded the wynd that was so kene *sharp*  
 That he schuld cese and blow no more that tyde, *it; time*  
 He that so meruelously onto heven gan glyde
- 1730 “Body and all, He was more than a man,  
 For be His Godhede wrowt He these mervayles. *brought about*  
 Mech more thing now reherse I kan,  
 But I pase ovyr, gevyng to your assayles *attacks*  
 Tyme and space. I pray God that youre entrayles *hearts*  
 1735 He endew with grace that ye may know the treuth;  
 Of your dampnacyoun have I ful grete reuth. *I would hate to see you damned*
- “But all these werkys whech were so grete  
 Schew be reson that more than man was He.  
 Whan He the Jewys met ryght in the strete  
 1740 There schewyd He than His dyvynyte;  
 Thei durst not loke but fel down at his kne.  
 There myght no creature be resone do these werkys  
 But He were God, thus prove oure clerkys.
- “And that He ete His mete, slepe, and went,  
 1745 Spak and drank, restyd and wery was eke —  
 This servyth ful pleynly to your argument *answers fully*  
 In whech ye gan ful sotylly for to seke.  
 Youre answere hafe ye, if it may yow leke, *if you please*  
 That these too natures whech in Him were  
 1750 Dyverse werkynge had whyll He was here. *manifested themselves differently*

Book 4

- “Yet of your auctouris may we take wyttnesse.  
 Sybylle seyd marvelously in this matere:  
 ‘That holy God,’ sche seyd, ‘evyr be in blesse,  
 Whech schall be hankyd lech a thefe here  
 1755 Ryght on a tre and aftyr leyd on bere.’  
 What wyll ye more what schuld I to yow say?  
 Onto this auctrix ye may nevyr sey nay,  
*Sybil*  
*hanged like a thief*  
*bier*  
*female authority*
- “For as an auctoure admittede in your lawe  
 Is sche receyvyd, and pleynly to oure feyth  
 1760 Beryth sche wyttness in hir mysty sawe,  
 For these too natures in oure Lord sche leyth:  
 God He is full byssyd, as sche seyth,  
 And manhod it is that hyng upon the tre —  
 Oute of youre lawe cometh this auctoryté.”  
*as an acknowledged authority*  
*vision (prophesy)*  
*attributes*

Chapter 27

- 1765 Anothyr mayster evene ful of eloquens,  
 Of curtesye eke, and a ful semely man,  
 Spak to this lady with full grete reverens.  
 He seyd hir wytt before her wyttes ran  
 So grete apace it cannot be ovyrtan,  
 1770 But yet he prayed hir that he myght seye.  
 In his arguyng ful naturaly he toke the weye,  
 For nature, he seyd, be swech influens  
 Was so confermed that it myght not fayle.  
 Every thing, therfore, that makyth resystens  
 1775 Ageyn nature ful sone wyll it qwayle.  
 Withoutyn nature may nothing avayle,  
 Wherfor he wolde swech thing as sche shall preche  
 Be naturall resones hir thingis shuld she teche,  
 For harde it is to constreyn a mannes wil  
 1780 To trow a thing whech he cannot prove.  
 Who shal beleve good thing or ellis il,  
 That same beleve must com of very love  
 And very trost whech is onto his hond.  
*So far ahead; overtaken*  
*the flowing of such a medium*  
*strengthened*  
*give way*  
*persuade someone*  
*believe*

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- 1785 Therfor this man desyrith that naturaly  
 Hir conclusiones she prove now openly.
- She seyd she wold with good entent,  
 So as hir wit wold serve hir for this tyme  
 And so as God of His grace hath sent  
 Onto hir knowlech at that day to dyvyne,  
 Ful fayn wold she now this maystir enclyne,  
 For she to Cryst cast hir him to drawe;  
 He shall no more trost now on his lawe.
- This same example put she to him tho,  
 Of body and sowle whech we bere abouth,  
 How thei are joyned in on thus these too,  
 And on his hyd, the othir is sene withouth.  
 She seyd, “To all men it is ful grete douth  
 How that the sowle, whech that mevere is,  
 Cam to the body whan he cam fro blys,
- 1800 “What wey he cam or ellis in what hour  
 Whan to the body he cam it for to qweke  
 It is but foly to spend oure labour  
 Swech prevy thingis for to serge and seke.  
 Ye may leve this thing if ye like:
- 1805 That soule and body are joynyd now in fere  
 In what persone that ye se walke here.
- “And if ye list not to beleve this thing,  
 Ye may leve but ye shall it nevyr i-knowe  
 The maner or tyme of this pryyv werkynge.
- 1810 Youre scole therto is yete ovyr lowe;<sup>1</sup>  
 Ye may wele bost of youre conyng and blowe,  
 But ye shal fayle whan ye com to the poynt —  
 Oure Lord God hath hyd fro you that joynyt.

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1807–10: *And if you do not want to believe this thing, / You may believe only [that] you shall never know it, / [Namely] the time and manner of this mysterious occurrence. / Your learning is too inferior to reveal it*

## Book 4

- “Than sith ye may be no naturall weye  
 1815 Have the knowlech of these creatures here,  
 How shuld we of you now than sey  
 That ye shuld know thing above clere? *understand heavenly matters*  
 How schuld ye knowe that Lord that hath powere  
 Ovyr all thing? How schuld ye to Him gesse  
 1820 Whan that ye may not know mech thing lesse?” *speculate about him  
much lesser matters*

### Chapter 28

- Whan that this answere was gove thus to this man,  
 Ech man besyde that stod thoo abouthe *bystanders*  
 Ful mervelosly chaunge thei began,  
 For thei that Cristen were, withouten doute,  
 1825 Whech to the maumentis befor tyme dede loute,  
 Now wayle thei sore with grete repentauns,  
 Demyng hemselfe ful worthy grete penauns.<sup>1</sup> *most powerful God  
whereas  
is inappropriate  
frailer sex  
stronger ones (i.e., men)*
- Thei have remembred her God most of myth,  
 And wher that a woman prechith constantly,  
 1830 There thei forsake Him. “This thing goth no ryth,  
 That the freler kyd shall so stably  
 Confesse oure feith, wher that more myty  
 Held her pees and dare speke rith nought”:  
 Of the Cristen this was both cry and thought. *pagans*
- 1835 The othir syde, thoo, that paynemes were,  
 Thei sey hir resones and hir grete evydens  
 Whech stoyned the clerkis all that be there.  
 This put the puple in conceytis ful suspens, *confused the people*  
 For all her labour and all her grete expens,  
 1840 For this thing her reward shal be woo.  
 Grete murmur was there and summe begun to goo.

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 1824–27: *For indeed those Christians / Who had just rendered service to the idols / Now wail out of deep repentance, / Judging that they deserve a severe penance*

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- Ovyr all this the emperour he is now woode. *mad*
- Onto the clerkis with full angry face
- He cryed: "Be armes, bones, and be blode, *By*
- 1845 It was a shame and a sory grace *misfortune*
- That fele clerkis gaderid in a place
- Shulde be astoyned sodenly of a mayde!
- Coward churles," rith thus to hem he seyde,
- "Plucke up youre hertis; lete not oure lawe thus falle!
- 1850 Lete not oure goddis suffir thus this wronge —
- But if ye do, the most part of you shall, *otherwise*
- Ere long tyme, by the necke shul be honge!
- Speke, men, for shame; the tyme is not longe —
- It passith fast and we do no note; *accomplish nothing*
- 1855 Me thinkith ye stand evene as men that dote!" *fools*

**Chapter 29**

- Thoo stode up with a new motiffe *argument*
- A freshe clerke, maystir Apollimas. *young*
- So aferde was he nevyr in all his lyffe
- Of no matere ne of no dyvers cas *adverse circumstance*
- 1860 So as of this matere now he fesed was. *disturbed*
- But thus sayd he than softly to the mayde:
- "In youre declaryng, lady, me thought ye sayde
- "Too sundry thingis; if we considre weeble, *different*
- Contradiccion ful sone in hem shal be founde:
- 1865 Youre Lord Jhesu, whech is know full weeble,
- As ye sey, He made this world so rounde.
- Adam and Eve He formed fro the ground,
- And all othir thing whech that have substauns —
- It was made, ye sey, be His ordinauns.
- 1870 "Ageyn you now thus I will replye, *problematic*
- Provynge ontreuth in youre marred feyth,
- I have made rekenyng whech may not lye, *an infallible calculation*
- Amongis oure stores what ony man seyth.
- The byrth of Jhesu full treuly oure booke leyth, *histories sets forth*

Book 4

- 1875 For He was born undir Octavyane,  
At litil Bethlem in a lewde lane; *Since; Octavian  
Bethlehem; lowly*
- “It is not fully yete thre hundred yere  
Sith that youre Jhesu was of His modir bore.  
How dare ye than in swech presens here  
1880 Afferme of thing that was so long before  
That He this worlde shuld make or restore?  
How myth He make thing whech thousandis fyve  
Had here duracion er that He toke lyve? *existed*
- “This is my motiff — an answere I desyre  
1885 In pleyn langage, without distinction. *proposition  
rhetorical tricks*  
This sympil puple have ye set on fyre  
With youre crafty circumlocucion!  
Answere in schort to this conclusion;  
Than schal I sey that ye be that mayde  
1890 Swech another no man hath assayde.” *encountered*

**Chapter 30**

- Thus spak the lady onto the clerk ageyn:  
“Alle youre groundis, sere, in youre arguyng  
Have take oo partye and, schortly for to seyn,  
Lefte the othir; wherfore the concludyng  
1895 Fayleth ful foule now in your rekkenyng:  
His manhod counte ye and His birth temporal  
And not that birth whech is eternal, *premises  
considered*
- “For this temporal birth, as ye seyde late,  
Was now before us not many yeeres goo, *as you just said  
past*  
1900 As to comparison of the largere date *i.e., His existence as God*  
It may be counted but for a yeer or too.  
But of this mater the mistery wil I ondo,  
For of this same have ye grete mervayle,  
As me semeth rith be youre assayle. *to judge from your attack (lines 1862-90)*
- 1905 “At the gynnynge first schul ye undirstande  
That God eternally hath evyre oure Jesu be, *To begin with  
Jesus has always been God*

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- Makere and schapere of all thing that is levande,  
Thus is He called and thus beleve we.  
But now of late dayes, of His charité,  
1910 He took oure kende to oure redempcion,  
In whech kende He suffred passion.
- Recently, out of charity,  
assumed our nature to redeem us*
- “For the manhood was not able to doo this thing  
And the Godhed mith not suffre swech desese,  
Wherfore of these too He made a coueling,  
1915 The Faderes offens thus for to plese,  
The develes power thus for to fese.  
In Godhed and manhood He took this batayle,  
For manhood alone mith not avayle.
- Because; i.e., redeem  
i.e., death  
atone for the offense to His Father  
rout  
engaged*
- “Thus, for His Godhed hath be eternally,  
1920 Therfore sey we that He made al thing  
Thurgh power of the same, and eke that body  
Whech was conceyved of a mayde yinge,  
That same body on the crosse hyng;  
That same body at Bethlem was bore,  
1925 For the Godhed hath be eternally before.”
- Whan sche had sayde this glorious vers,  
The man stood stoyned and marred in mende.  
Noon of hir wordes coude he revers;  
Thei passed of his lernyng al the kende.  
1930 Resons ageyn hir coude he noon fynde,  
But thus seyde he tho openly with cry:  
“As ye beleve, lady, soo beleve I.”
- thunderstruck  
refute  
capacity*

**Chapter 31**

- Anothir maystir made hir this motif:  
“Ye preche of Crist,” he seith, “and of His dede,  
1935 How He for man thus frely lost His lif  
For to bryng him to that heavenly mede.  
His deth, ye sey, awey tho gan lede  
Alle maner synne, the power eke of helle  
With His deth that Lord gan than felle.
- death  
reward  
took away  
defeated*

*Book 4*

- 1940 "Mith not that Lord with His real power  
 A maistred the devel and putte him soo to flith?  
 Mith He not a sente an aungell or a messenger?  
 What was the cause that He Himself wolde fith,  
 Suffre swesch passion and lese soo His rith?  
 If He was myty, why suffred He that wrong?  
 Answere my tale for it is nowt long!
- "If He Himselfe mith not redresse this thing,  
 Than was it foly to take it on hande,  
 And if He were, as ye seye, soo myty a king,  
 There mith no powere than ageyn Him stande.  
 Youre prophete seyde that He with yrn wande  
 Alle His enemyes schulde bothe bete and bynde.  
 In swiche sufferaunce me thinkith He was blynde."
- "Youre motif, sir," seyde the noble qween,  
 "Hath grete colour, but yet I voyde it thus:  
 As I have lerned in booke that I have seen,  
 Oure Lord Crist, oure Savyour Jesus,  
 List for to feyten with the devel for us  
 And ovrycome him in swech kende as he toke.  
 For the synne of Adam, if we wil loke,
- "Must been redressed oonly be mankynde,  
 And because there were amongis men non able —  
 For in all erde myth He than non fynde  
 Man so clene, so parfyth, so profitable  
 As Adam was whil that He was stable  
 In blessed paradyse or he dede offens —  
 Therfor oure Lord with His fleshly presens
- "Toke this jornay and deyed on a tre,  
 That evene as synne in the tre was doo,  
 Rith so on the tre deth suffered He.  
 It was convenient He shuld fyte so:  
 In the tre was joy bore and in the tre woo;  
 Woo be Sathan, joy be oure Lorde Jhesu —  
 Out of that tre a blyssyd frute grewe!"
- Have overcome*  
*have*  
*fight*
- iron rod*
- He was foolish to suffer so*
- proposition*  
*seems plausible; refute*
- Desired to fight*  
*nature*
- valuable*
- before*
- expedition*
- appropriate*

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- 1975 Ther stood up than with ful bold face  
 A grete clerke thei callyd Alfragan —  
 He thought to have worship in that place.  
 His apposayle rith thus he began:  
 “Youre Jhesu Crist, He is both God and man,  
 gain honor  
 examination
- 1980 As ye sey, lady, but ley that osyde  
 As for a space — lete that matere abyde.
- “Ye Cristen put evyr in youre posiciooun  
 That there be namoo goddes but on.  
 But if youre owne booke come to revolucion,  
 hold  
 no more than one god  
 is examined
- 1985 I trow oo God shal not be found there alone.  
 I red in a Crysten prophete not long agone —  
 I wot not veryly yet what ye him calle —  
 Thus spekth he that ye be goddes alle.  
 you are all gods
- “Whom mente he here in this pluralité  
 1990 But God whech ye singulere confesse?  
 Betwix these too is no neutralité,  
 But be thei more goddis or be thei lesse,  
 Youre owne bokes of hem bere witnesse  
 That many be there and moo than on —  
 These two views cannot be reconciled
- 1995 Lete se what wey that ye will now gon.  
 which position you will adopt
- “Ye put to us here a grete God of hevene  
 Whech hath a Son ye sey hith Jhesu,  
 And in youre bokes fynd we full evene  
 Of anothir god both juste and trewe —  
 2000 Thei calle him Baal; I trow ye him knewe.  
 Thre hundred prophetis onto his servyse  
 Were endewid there, full sad men and wyse.  
 committed
- “How may ye sey thanne that God is but on?  
 How may ye forbarre oure opynyon?  
 2005 If that youre God be regnand thus alone,  
 Why speke youre bokes of swech divyson?  
 Whi may not Jupiter make his conjunction  
 there is only one God  
 reject  
 ruling

Book 4

	With Juno, his wiff, sith there be goddis fele? <sup>1</sup> Youre resones, lady, avayle not a rake stele."	are not worth a rake-handle
2010	"Ye must conceyve, sere," seyd the mayde, "That oure Scripture in his mysty speche Hath many figures, if thei be assayde. Oure Lord God is sumtyme callyd a leche, Sumtyme a justise and full of wreche, Sumtyme a fader all ful of love. Swech sundry predicates in him wil prove	<i>understand</i> <i>its veiled</i> <i>examined</i> <i>doctor</i> <i>wrath</i> <i>designations</i>
2015	"The sundry effectis that in Him be. Wherfor I telle you, ser, if ye wil here, Of oure feyth a ful grete verit�.	<i>capacities</i>
2020	Ye may considre now and ye wil lere, Goddes are there non ne nevyr more were But on alone, Whech made erde and hevene, Hayle, reyne, wynd, thundir, and levene.	<i>Hail, rain; lightning</i>
2025	"And be nature is He God regnyng thus alone, But yet of His godnes He hath to him chose Certeyn personys to dwelle in His wone; Thoo calleth He goddes, as I suppose. This that I sey now is no fals glose But folowith of the texte, if ye take hede, For there that ye now on this wise gan rede	<i>generosity</i> <i>live with Him</i>  <i>commentary</i> <i>derives from the text (Scripture)</i> <i>in this manner</i>
2030	"I sey ye be goddis,' there folowith thus, 'And sones of Him that syttith hyest.' This is a grete distinction, ser, amongis us Of nature and adopcion, whech is the best: Adopcion we sey is but as a gest, For he is chose in rith be fre will; But naturall regnyng hath a hier skyll,	<i>Between</i> <i>like being a guest</i>  <i>greater entitlement</i>

<sup>1</sup> Lines 2007–08: *Since there are so many gods [referred to in Christian books], why cannot Jupiter and Juno, his wife, be counted among them?*

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- “For who so regnyth naturaly in ony place,  
 He may not be put oute but he have wrong,  
 2040 And he that chosyn is, he comth in be grace. without being wronged  
invited  
 Myn answere wil I bregge and make not longe,  
 For catch now this conceyt and in youre wit it fong:  
 That naturaly God regneth al alone  
 Whech of His goodnesse hath called to His trone curtail  
examine
- 2045 “Certeyn folkis rith of His good grace,  
 Whech goddis we calle because thei have blys: are in heaven  
 Thus ar thei with Him evyr and se His face,  
 Regne ther in joy whech may nevyr mysse — fail  
 There are thei tretyd rith as childrn His.
- 2050 This is the entent of that auctorité.  
 Another thing eft alegge ye you further allege
- “Of Baal, that god, and of his servauntis alle  
 But no thing to purpos is that ye conclude. your conclusion has no merit  
 Oure Scripture rehersith thei dede him so calle  
 2055 Thoo same prophetis of his similitude. likeness  
 Rede bettir that booke of thoo dyvynouris rude,  
 For there shal ye fynd that thei dampned were  
 For her fals beleve all that were there.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Chapter 32**

- 2060 The maystir avisyd him and than cryed loude,  
 “This mayde wil evyr lede us, seres, we are caut  
 In oure artes, be we nevyr so proude.  
 A newe maystresse, sekirly, have we laut;  
 All oure lernyng as now avaylith naut. got  
 Therfor I sey, as for me, I geve it up —  
 2065 This lady hath drunke of a hier cupp

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 2056–58: *Read that book (Scripture) more attentively and you will see that those ignorant prophets were damned for their false beliefs, every last one of them*

Book 4

- “Of prevyer secretes than evyr we coud fynd:  
 Sche passyth Plato, she passeth philosophie,  
 Sche spekith of Him that autour is of kynd.  
 That she seyth, I wote wele, is no lye;  
 2070 Wherfor of hert enterly thus I crye,  
 I can nomore — I wil turne to hir feyth  
 And leve myn elde, what any man seyth.
- more profound
- “Ye shul do so eke, be my consent,  
 For o God I knowlech and non but Him alone,  
 2075 Thow I seyd nougnt, evyr have I so ment.  
 Lete us submytt us therfore to His trone:  
 I am converted; I sey for my persone  
 I schall nevyr berke ageyn that deyté.  
 In this matere, seres, what sey ye?”
- in my opinion  
 acknowledge  
*I always believed this*
- 2080 Thei cryed alle comoursly with oo voys  
 That thei consent to his conclusyoun.  
 O God confess thei, whech thei calle Noys;  
 What he comandeth, of nede it must be don.  
 But yett her conceytes wyll thei uttyr soon  
 2085 Of othir thinges longyng to this crede.  
 To telle the rumore, I trow it is no nede,
- (see note)*
- Greek: nous/noos mind  
 necessarily
- report the talk
- Whech in the puple is encresyd this tyde.  
 “Alas!” thei sey, “What lyffe hafe thei ledde,  
 Oure grete clerkis whech are know so wyde.  
 2090 It were as good thei had loy in bedde,  
 Whan thei teche thing whech must be fledde,  
 Whych thing is holde but for a vanyté!”  
 The lordes eke there aftyr her degré
- among; resonates at this time
- Dysputed this mater and beet it up and down:  
 2095 “No Godd but on?” thei seyd, “What is than Saturn?”
- Eche to othir ful pryyly thus dede rowan:  
 “Fro these maumentys goode is that we turn,  
 Lete us despynce hem and with oure fete hem spurn,  
 For this falshede have we folowyd to longe.”
- beat
- whisper
- 2100 This was the noyse than there hem amonge.
- feet
- feet

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- The emperour lokyth, but I trow he is wrothe:  
 “Fy on feynt harlotys that thus rendyth oure lawe!” *weak knaves; destroy*  
 Thus seyd he than, he thowt his lyffe full lothe *hateful*  
 That any mayden clerkys schul thus drawe, *convince*  
 2105 That sche schuld be wyser in hir sawe; *speech*  
 This grevyth him sore, but yet in his grevauns *talk*  
 Stod up a clerke whych with his dalyauns
- Seyd he wold prove be reson naturale  
 That mech thing towchyd was full ontrewē: *matter touched upon*  
 2110 “O persone eterne and eke mortale:  
 This doctrine,” he seyd, “was come on thee newe.” *recently*  
 But the same resones that othir dyd sewe *arguments that others put forth*  
 Rehersyth myn auctour, as he doth ful ofte.  
 I suffyr thoo levys to lye stylly ful softe. *I will skip over those pages*
- 2115 Lete othir men here hem that love nugacyoun, *trifling*  
 For othir many materes mote com on hande. *be treated*  
 I wyll rehers fyrst the grete disputacyoun *debate*  
 In whych that this lady feythfully gan stande  
 With mayster Aryot, thorowoute that lande  
 2120 Most famose man noySED in that tyme. *by reputation*  
 Of this matere wyll we now ryme.

### **Chapter 33**

- Thys Ariot was chose be comoun asent  
 To dyspute with hir, to loke, if that he may,  
 Dystroy hir feyth and all hir fundament. *the foundation [of her faith]*  
 2125 On him hafe thei put now all this affray. *contest*  
 Now schal be sene who schal have the day:  
 If he be convycte, thei wyll yelde hem alle;  
 If he be victoure, than wyll the revers falle,  
 For victores be thei than be his conquest.  
 2130 He stod up full solemnly, with sobyr chere,  
 Commandyng the lady as him thowt best.  
 Than seyd he to hir in this manere:  
 “Many thingys hafe be rehersyd here.

Book 4

- I herd all and yet I held my pees.  
 2135 But now is this matere thus sett douteles.
- “It is put in us too all this thing to trete,  
 Oure Lord Godd send us good spedē:  
 If so befall that I, with argumentis grete  
 Or ellys with auctoryté, that I may yow leede  
 2140 From all your feyth and fro your fekyll crede,  
 Than have we wun, and if that ye lede me,  
 Than have we do, for victoure thou are ye.”
- His fyrst questyoun, as I undyrstande,  
 Was of too natures whech we in Cryst rede,  
 2145 Whech matere before have be in hande,  
 And for that cause me thinkyth it no nede  
 With swēch prolixité oure book ferther to lede.  
 Turne and rede, ye that wyll it renewe.  
 Another matere this phylosophre gan pursewe:
- 2150 Of Crystys Incarnacyoun, how that it myght be,  
 And how He in Bethlem thus born was.  
 Eke all this matere, as thinkith me,  
 Aforn in his werk this man dede it tras.  
 Wherfore fro all these thus schortly I pas,  
 2155 Supposyng that this same prolixité  
 Wolde make men wery of redyng to be.
- Yete another mater touchid he to the mayde:  
 Of oure Ladies clennes in hir concepcion.  
 He had ful grete merveyyle, as he seyde,  
 2160 Sith the synne of Adam in his progression  
 Was gove to mannys flesshe as possession,  
 How myth she have clennes and maydenhed  
 Whan she cam of that corrupt seede?
- The mayde answerd rith thus to his tale:  
 2165 “Thing that is foule oure Lord may make clene;  
 He is very medecyn ageyn all oure bale.  
 His wondirful werkis are hard forto sene,
- It is now up to us to settle everything  
 luck*
- false belief*
- Then we are through*
- understand to be  
 we have covered before*
- review*
- my author covered before*
- make people tired of reading*
- understand*

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2170 But be ensaumples we may prove, I wene,  
That this conjunction of mayde and of man  
Withoute ony synne this Lord thus began.

“Fro the seed first of all mankynde,  
It was so corrupt, He preservyd this mayd —  
It had ellis ful mech be ageyn kynde  
But if hir soule had be arayde  
2175 With vertues grete and no thing afayd  
With no vyce of synne or velonye.  
Thus dede this Lord that sittith thus hye.

“Ferthermore, whan He cam to that harbourage,  
His comyng was lich the sune schynyngh bryth; *dwelling (Mary's body)*  
2180 Lich to the glas I lykne that maydenes cage: *womb*  
The sune schynyth theron with bemes lyght  
And thorow it goth, as we se in syght,  
Yet is the glas persed in noo manere. *pierced*  
So ferde that Lord whan He cam down here.

2185 “Thus was she clene in hir concepcion,  
Thus hath she receyvyd the Godhed of blys,  
Yet was she clenner in His carnacion, *conception*  
Of whech clennes shall she not mys. *lose*  
This must ye beleve, sere, if ye wil be His.  
2190 Than shul ye know that ye nevyr knewe;  
In my behestis ye found me nevyr untrewe.” *promises*

**Chapter 34**

Another qwestion mevyd this man that tyme, *raised*  
Repying sore ageyn hir declaracion.  
It is ful hard swech thingis forto ryme,  
2195 To uttir pleynly in langage of oure nacion,  
Swech straunge doutes that long to the Incarnacion. *mysteries; pertain to*  
But that myn auctour toke swech thing on hand, *since; undertook*  
And yete his langage unneth I undirstande, *barely*

Book 4

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                           |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2200 | Wherfor with othir auctouris I enforce him thus,<br>Whech spoke more pregnantly as in this matere,<br>For ageyn the byrth of oure Lorde Jesus<br>And His concepcion argued thoo this sere:<br>“Youre oppynyon sett ye all in mere,”<br>Thus seyd this man onto this lady mylde,<br>“For ye rehers who that God and childe                   | <i>fortify<br/>clearly</i>                                                |
| 2205 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>you bungle hopelessly</i>                                              |
| 2210 | “Both togedir, coupled in oo persone,<br>Was youre Jesu, and eke ye thus confesse<br>That this myracle dede He not alone,<br>But it was do be all thre, I gesse.<br>This is youre feyth, to this ye you professe,<br>That be the Fader, the Goost, and eke the Sune<br>Wrought was thus this Incarnacion.                                   | <i>acknowledge</i>                                                        |
| 2215 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>the Incarnation was effected</i>                                       |
| 2220 | “Whi shall we not than of youre wordis conclude<br>That Fader and Sun and Holy Gost in fere,<br>Sith that Thei be all of o similitude,<br>That ech of Hem flesshe and blood tooke here.<br>Thre sundry men than are Thei, withouten dwere,<br>And eke o God — how acordith this tale?<br>All a wrong me thinkith wryhith the male,          | <i>together<br/>one likeness</i>                                          |
| 2225 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <i>how can this make sense?<br/>things turn out (lit., the bag turns)</i> |
| 2230 | “For ye sey eke that but on was incarnat,<br>On and no mo, and that was Jhesu youre Lorde.<br>Therto the Fader put ye in that astate<br>That He did this. <sup>1</sup> How may this acorde?<br>Sith that He wrount this of youre owne record,<br>Than was He joyned on that same werke —<br>That it thus folowyth perceyveth every clerke.” | <i>incarnated<br/>condition<br/>did; by your own account</i>              |
| 2235 | This motif preysid the qween with the best.<br>Sche seyd onto him, “Sere, ye lacke nothing<br>That longith of vertu to youre soules rest<br>But feyth alone. I pray that hevyn kyng                                                                                                                                                         | <i>highly</i>                                                             |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 2222–23: Moreover, you say that He (the Father) did this (the Incarnation)

*The Life of Saint Katherine*

That He may touch you with sum pryy merkyng  
That ye may knowe whech is the very truth,  
But if He did it were ellis grete reuth.

*Unless He did; pity*

- 2235    “As mech as Nature may, she hath you taught —  
She coude no farder in hir wey procede;  
But the wisdam of God, that may naught  
Because of Nature, lerne this as youre crede.  
Yete as I can I will you mekely lede  
Onto oure scole and telle of this matere  
2240    The exposicion, if ye will it lere.
- “Thus seyn oure bokes: To the Faderes astate  
Longith powere, whech we belebyn alle,  
And to the Sone longith thus a parte  
Whech we callen wisdam. The worlde round as a balle  
2245    And hevyn eke also whech may not falle  
Were made in Him. To the Gost longith goodnes.  
This is oure scole withouten more or lesse.
- “Than folowith thus that the Fader all thing  
Made in His wisdam; it was ful convenient  
2250    That be that same grete reformyng  
Of all mankynde, whech with synne was shent,  
Shuld be redressyd. Lo, this is Her entent.  
That provyth be feyth and be demostracion  
That most to the Sone perteynyth the Incarnacion
- 2255    “As in praktyke, but the sond and the provydens  
As the menes of mercy whech were there doo,  
Tho longen to the Trynyté<sup>1</sup> — o God in existens,  
Thre in persones, we discryve Hem soo.  
Example, sire, may we put thertoo,

*condition*

*appropriate*

*ruined*

*plan*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 2253–57: *It is shown by faith and logic / That the Son was responsible for implementing the Incarnation, / But the grace and providence that conveyed mercy through the Incarnation, / Those were attributable to the Trinity as a whole*

## Book 4

- 2260 As putten oure clerkys in her bokes wysse,  
Whech were wretyn with ful good avysse.
- “Davyd, he seyd, whan he thristid sore  
He desyred sore to drynke of that well  
Whech stood in Bethlem where he was bore.
- 2265 He sent thre prynces, soth for to telle,  
Thorow all the hoost of Philestis so felle.  
Thei browth this water with parell to the kyng —  
On of hem in a basnet bare this thing.
- “All had thei labour egal, as I wene,  
2270 And yet on bare the vessell and no moo.  
This same figure oure clerks thus remene:  
That thowe the Fader and the Goost both too  
Wrought this thing and ordeyn it shuld be soo,  
Yete was the bordeyn in oure Lorde alone,  
2275 Jhesu, I mene, the Sone the secund persone.”

*Philistines; cruel  
at great risk  
vessel*

*interpret  
burden on*

### Chapter 35

- Aftir this had thei ful grete comunicacion  
Of the synne of Adam and of the serpente,  
Enterfered with spechis, but dilatacion  
As me thinkith, longith noth to lyffe presente —
- 2280 It occupieth ny all the Newe Testament,  
That myth it here if that hem list.  
Wherfor myn entent I wold that ye wist:
- I love no long tale, evyr hangyng in on,  
2285 Wherfor as of this boke I wil make an ende  
Right in this chapter; me thinkith it long agone  
Sithen I began this boke for to bende  
Onto youre eres and onto youre mende.  
Knowith weel first that this noble qwene  
Hath concluded these maystires thus bedene,
- Whoever wishes can hear about it
- long discussion
- Full of speeches; amplification  
is not relevant to this life*
- dragging on  
Therefore
- direct  
mind
- overcome
- 2290 And in speciall Ariot, for that he coud replye  
It avaylith as nouth — his witte is but bost.
- vanity*

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- |      |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                     |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
|      | He standith amasid and nothing hardy<br>To spekyn o worde; thus can the good Goost<br>Gadir to Him all this wisse hoost                            | <i>no longer daring</i><br><i>i.e., Holy Spirit</i> |
| 2295 | And maykyn hem to trowe as the mayden taught,<br>For all her philosophye thus are thei caught.                                                     | <i>their</i>                                        |
|      | For aftir thei had spokyn of the filiacion<br>Of Cryst oure Lord, wheyther there were too or on,<br>And eke the Holy Gost with His procession,     |                                                     |
| 2300 | Wher that this fayled, answere was non. <sup>1</sup><br>This same Ariott stod stille as a stone,<br>For the Holy Trinité she provyde him be kynde, | <i>nature</i>                                       |
|      | He coud fro the resones no wey fynde.                                                                                                              |                                                     |
|      | Onto his felaws thus full lowd he seyd,<br>“We have gon wrong evyr into this day.                                                                  |                                                     |
| 2305 | Blissid be God and this holy mayde<br>That to us have tauth a trew way.<br>Sey ye as ye leke, I can not sey nay,                                   | <i>until</i>                                        |
|      | For o God I beleve, whech is in blys.                                                                                                              |                                                     |
| 2310 | I leve on Jhesu eke, whech His Son is,                                                                                                             | <i>heaven</i>                                       |
|      | “And I leve on the Gost, knyte of Hem too.<br>I leve that this Jhesu deyed for my sake;                                                            | <i>joined with</i>                                  |
|      | Thus were oure synnes be Him clensid soo.<br>Onto His handis my soule I betake,                                                                    |                                                     |
| 2315 | Prayng Him hertily that fro the fendas blake<br>He now defend me, that I not dampned be:<br>This is my crede, felawis, what sey ye?”               | <i>commit</i><br><i>creed</i>                       |
|      | Thei answerd all that thei had now found<br>Thing thei had south all her lyve dayes.                                                               | <i>sought</i>                                       |
| 2320 | This will thei kepyn as a trew ground,<br>For thei had walkid many perlous weyes,                                                                  | <i>hold as truth</i>                                |

<sup>1</sup> Lines 2297–2300: *There was nothing to do after they failed to perturb her when they spoke of the descent of Christ, whether there were two or one [persons in the flesh], and of the emanation of the Holy Spirit*

Book 4

- With veyne argumentis jangelyng evyr as jayyes. *bickering like jays*  
 Now will thei levyn it and to Crist turne;  
 With Aristotill nen Ovide will thei nomore sojorn, *nor*
- 2325 But put hem in the mercy of oure Lord Jhesu,  
 Prayng this mayde that sche be mene *intercede*  
 To purchas pardon of her feyth untrewe *their*  
 That thei so long shuld it susteyne.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thei fellen on knees, these clerkys all bedene,
- 2330 Crying long, with ful grete devocion,  
 “O Jhesu Crist, for Thi swete passion,
- “Have mercy upon us, forgefe us oure trespass.  
 Deme us not, Lorde, aftir oure mysdede. *Judge*  
 As Thu art petous, graunt us of Thi grace,  
 Of Thi protection have we ful grete nede.
- 2335 We wil don oure diligens for to lern Youre crede,  
 To maynten it and susteyne with all oure myth —  
 There shall nevyr man bryngen us in othir plyght.” *merciful*  
*apply ourselves*  
*condition (religion)*
- Thus are thei convertid; this counsell is i-doo.  
 2340 Oure boke is at an ende, a new we will begynne.  
 It is ful convenient that we shuld do soo.  
 God and Seynt Kateryn, kepe us oute of synne  
 And send us the hey weyes hevyn blys to wynne,  
 Wher we may dwellyn and lokyn on that face *means to earn heaven*  
 2345 Whech gladith all men that ben in that place. *i.e., Christ's face*  
*delights*

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 2327–28: *For having supported so long their false religion*

## ***Book 5***

### ***[The martyrdom of the philosophers and of Katherine]***

#### **Prologue**

Now is come oure leyser and oure space  
In whech we may — aftir oure grete labour  
Of other materis, now we have grace —  
Turne ageyn and tast the swete savour

5      Of this clene virgine, of this wele savoured flour,  
Whech with fyve braunchis grewe thus here in erde:  
The first, the secund, the thrid, and the ferde

*branches*

Have ye perseyyvd if ye have red alle;  
Now shall the fyft be schewid unto youre syght,  
10     For now me lyst this lady a rose to calle,  
Of fyve braunches full preciously i-dyth.  
The rede coloure that shon in hir so bryght,  
That was hir martirdam. The fyve leves grene  
Betokne hir lyffe, thus distinchte, I wene,

15     In dyvers bokes, like as we have dyvysyd  
Beforn this tyme; and now this is the last.  
These fyve leves, rith thus are thei sysyd  
That on the stalke thei cleven wondir fast;  
The reed floures kepe thei fro the blast  
20     Or thei hemselfe thus lateth hem abrode,  
And aftir that thei make here than abode

*as we have set out*

*arranged*

*cling*

*protect; wind*

*wide open*

25     Even undir the same swete floures —  
Betokynyng that hir liffe was sprede  
With martirdam and with scharp schoures  
Whech for Crist both suffered and dede,  
For in divers bokes, as I have oftyn rede,

*afflictions*

Book 5

Martirdam hath a suffereyn dignyté  
Above all vertues whech that gostly bee.

*sovereign*

Thus grew this rose oute of the thorny brere  
30 Whan that this martir of hethen was bore.  
I will declare yete, if ye will here,  
Why that these leves clevyn so sore:  
Thre of hem are berdyd and noo more,  
And too stand nakyd withouten dagge or berde —  
35 Thus are thei wont to growen in oure yerde.

*briar*

*fuzzy*

*points hanging down; fuzz*

These fyve leves, as I seyd wolate,  
Betokenes these bokes whech we haven in hand:  
Too of hem expresse the tyme and the date  
In which this lady, as I undirstande,  
40 Leved as hethen and so dede al hir land.  
Therfor are thei naked in her kynde,  
Expressyng thus this ladies levyng blynde.

*lately*

Blynd I calle hir whill she was in that lyffe,  
Knew not Criste baptem, ne had non take,  
45 Of hevynly thinges litil inquisitiffe —  
Hir elde oppynyones had she noth forsake.  
Fro this blyndnes Crist made hir awake  
In oure third boke, rith as we seyd before —  
It nedith not as now it rehers nomore.

*curiosity*

50 The othir thre with berdis are so i-growe  
That leves of vertu men may hem calle.  
To all the world opynly thus it is knowe  
That she hath grace whech may not falle.  
So are hir leves endewyd and evyr shall:  
55 Evyr are thei grene and evyr more shall bee,  
Regnyng with Cryst in very felicityté.

*so fuzzy*

And in hir honour now I will procede  
To myn fyfte boke, in whech I will speke  
Of hir martirdam, so as the story will lede —  
60 How God the quelys for His cause dede breke

*wheels*

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

And on the puple took full grete wreke.  
Thus shall it be translate now new fro Lateyn,  
To the worship of God and of Seynt Kateryn.

*vengeance*  
*newly*

### **Chapter 1**

- Whan these clerkys had made thus her compleynt  
65 Of all her error and wrong credulyté,  
The emperoures hert for sorow gan to feynt,  
For now is none that dare speke but he —  
In all these materis convicte is this mené.  
70 Wherfor with angry chere and wordys full dispitous  
Thus seyd he to hem as he stode in that hous:
- “Fy on youre scole! We had ful grete trost  
Ye schuld a made wele all that was amysse.  
All oure expens, all oure consayle is loste!  
Ye have reved me of this worldly blys —  
75 Noth worldly but gostly, for I seyd amysse —  
It is gostly joye and longith to oure feyth.  
Here ye noth now what that the puple seyth?
- “Thei seyn a maydyn hath convicte in this place  
Fyfty clerkis in this world non lych.  
80 Thei sey thei wollyn the same feyth purchace —  
Thus sey thei all, the pore and the rych.  
Wold God ye had be byryed in a dych  
Whan ye cam heder, for now all is lost:  
Labour and connyng, rydyng and mechil coost.
- 85 “Lete now youre prudens make yow a new corage,  
That ye lese noth youre cunnyng and youre fame —  
Thinke what I hyth you, worchep and wage;  
Lyft up youre hertis, men, for very shame!  
Beth noth aferd, for than ye lesen youre name.  
90 Speke to this woman, with reson bere hir down,  
Than are ye worthy in scyens to bere the crowne.
- lamentation*  
*company*  
*contemptuous*  
*have remedied*  
*purpose*  
*robbed*  
*misspoke*  
*unmatched*  
*travel*  
*renew your spirits*  
*promise you*  
*reputation*

Book 5

“Ye stand all hertles. Wher is youre cunnyng goo  
 That been astoyned with nature femynyne?  
 Be holy Saturne, I wold a supposed soo  
 95 That on of you myth a ben for swech nyne.<sup>1</sup>  
 Ye faren as ye were bound with lyne:  
 What answeare will ye gevyn of youre conyng,  
 Whech that at nede avaylith nothing?”  
 in need

Chapter 2

100 The grettest of hem and leder eke,  
 The same Ariot of whech I spake before,  
 Onto the emperor thus he gan to speke:  
 “Onto thi courte come we, lesse and more,  
 Thi goddes servyse to gefe and restore,  
 And, as I wene, of all the est syde  
 105 Of all this world to seke fer and wyde

leader also

“Shuldist noth fynd swech a pykyd cumpany  
 In gramer, rethoricke, and thoo artes alle,  
 But speciall in naturall philosophie  
 Are we endewid. But to sciens whech thei calle  
 110 Theologie, to that coud we not falle  
 Till that this lady bryngyth us to induction —  
 Evyr blyssyd be she for hir good instruction!

distinguished

“What manere man that wolde or this tyme  
 Dispute with us be reson and auctorité,  
 115 His demonstracyouns cowde us neyther trappe ne lyme,  
 But he was caute for all his sotelté.  
 He pased not fro us withoute a velonye —  
 This was oure usage ryght than for victorye,  
 So loved we these wordes of veynglorye.

ensnare

“Now it is turned, oure fortune and oure chaunce,  
 Oure appetyte eke — I wote nevyr how it is went.

humiliation

desire

<sup>1</sup> Lines 94–95: *I would have thought / That one of you could handle nine of her*

## *The Life of Saint Katherine*

- This mayden makyth that we falle in traunce;  
Oure conyng now, it semyth that it is spent.  
Sche spekyth of Godd whech that was hangen and rent  
125 And gostly spech hath sche browte to place;  
Naturall scyens hath in this matere no space.

“Therfore can we as in this solemnyté  
Speke ryght nowte, but resones make sche grete.  
Hir prechyg paseth all oure carnalyté,  
For whan I fyrst thus mystly herd hir trete  
In my body my bowelles sore gune bete,  
For very rebuke that I hir langage  
Cowde not conceyve. Wherfore, syre, alle your wage

135     “Alle your rewards whech ye profyrd us,  
We refusen; youre goddes and youre lawe  
We renunce for the love of oure Lorde Jhesus.  
Schew ye summe resone pleynly that we may knawē  
If that your goddes with her rowe pawē  
Have othir evidens that ye can preve this tyde,  
140     For in this errorre we wyll no lengere abyde.

“Cryst, Goddes Sone, that with His blyssyd passyoun  
Bowt all mankynde, here we now confesse.  
Onto His mercy ryght with goode devocyoun  
We now commend us, the more and eke the lesse.  
Slee and flee, brenne and put in dystresse,  
Other feyth schall thu nevyr plant  
Into oure hert, for nothing now we want

150     “But of baptyme, this holy sacrament.  
          God, as He bowte us, on us have mercye.”  
Thus seyden his felawys all with oon entent,  
“There is no Godd but He that sytthy on hye;  
On all these maumentys evyre sey we ‘fye!’  
We schuld dey rathere than we schuld forsake  
The Crysten feyth whech we have now take.”

*lecture allegorically*

*shame*

*their rough hands  
demonstrate*

### *Redeemed; acknowledge*

Book 5

## Chapter 3

- |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                         |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 155 | Now wax the emperour ny wode and oute of mynde:<br>His eyne rolled as thei wold fall oute.<br>"Fy on yow," he seyd, "charles unkynde!"<br>Now is oure feyth for yow more in doute<br>Than evyr it was to hem that stonden aboute!"                      | crazy<br>churls<br>thanks to you                        |
| 160 | He thoo comaundyd in ful hasty wyse:<br>"I wyll her deth that ye thus devyse.                                                                                                                                                                           | ordered [his henchmen]<br>their                         |
|     | "A fyre I wyll that ye hastely make,<br>Ryght in the myddes of the grete cetee —<br>Spare no wode for holy Saturn sake.                                                                                                                                 | middle                                                  |
| 165 | Spede yow fast these renegatys that ye see,<br>Frye hem in her grece, for be that deyté<br>Of swete Apollo, I schall not ete ne drynk<br>Tyll that I se hem bothe brened and stynke.                                                                    | those renegades (the philosophers)<br>deity<br>stinking |
| 170 | "Put in rosyn, pych, and othir gere;<br>Spare no coste, for in this do ye servyse<br>Onto oure goddys, withouten any fere.<br>Thus schul thei dey that oure goddis despycé.<br>I schall be there myself as justyse<br>And see these I wele don in dede. | rosin; pitch; material<br>doubt                         |
| 175 | Whan ye have don ye schall have ryght goode mede.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | reward                                                  |
|     | "I wyll ye bynde hem bothe fote and hande,<br>Drawe hem forthe as dogges unto the place.<br>Youre ropes loke thei be myghty and youre bande —<br>Spare neythir body, heedys, nyn her face.                                                              | commend you<br>shackles<br>nor                          |
| 180 | God gefe hem all swech a sorye grace<br>That thus forsake oure goddys that be eterne!<br>Loke none of hem skape yow in non hryn.                                                                                                                        | them escape; hiding place                               |
| 185 | "Thei schal be brent dede, ryght as I have seyde,<br>Brent into askes — thei gete no remedye.<br>Lete hem crye now on this wylfull mayde<br>Whech hath browte hem into that heresye!<br>I wyll noo wordes as now multyplye:                             | call upon<br>I will say no more                         |

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Goo now forth in hast and do youre dede;  
Whan it is done, treuly schall ye have your mede."

### **Chapter 4**

- 190 Thus are thei draw with grete vylony  
Onto her dome — thei wrestyll not ageyn.  
Men myght se there many a wepyng eye,  
But for fere no man dare now seyn.  
Glad are these meny alle of very peyn.  
195 The mayster of hem thus he cryed that tyme:  
"To God be it that for no synne ne cryme  
"Be we appechyd but only for trew feyth.  
Therfor, felawys, in Cryst youreselfe comfort.  
Whatevyr this tyraunt doth or seyth,  
200 Thank oure Lorde, for we are in His port  
Whech that ledyth us to that blyssyd comfort,  
Where all seyntys are gadered togedyr be grace  
In an hevynly, joyful, blessed place.  
"Oure Lorde hath called us fro oure olde erroure  
205 Onto this ende: thank we Him therfore  
Whech onto the beuté of His meroure  
Wold of His goodness newly us restore.  
In this world, as for me, I wyll no more  
But that we schuld ben baptizied or we deye;  
210 Than were we redy for to walke that goode weye.  
"For that same baptem is an holy werke:  
It causeth grace and feyth and eke endewyth;  
Betwyx God and man it is a very merke  
That whosoevyr Crystes steppes sewyth  
215 All his levynge sothely he renewyth,  
Whan that he waschyth in this watyr his synne.  
Oure Lorde Himselfe was wasched therinne  
"Ryght for this cause: that no man shulde dysdye  
To use the same whech that this Lorde used.
- their judgment; against [it]*  
*speak*  
*charged with*  
*haven*  
*image*  
*wish nothing else  
before*  
*bestows [them]*  
*follows*  
*living*

*Book 5*

- 220 Of my conceyte I wyll no more now feyne,  
For in this matere ofte tyme hafe I musede.  
Many yere this sacrament I refusede;  
That I repent now, and evyr I schall it rewe,  
That I so long leved a lyffe untrewe. *dissemble*
- 225 “Werfore my care now is this onlye:  
That sythe we schall and nedys must deye,  
Of all oure synnes mercy for to crye,  
And all oure defautes undyr fote to ley,  
To treden hem down. Than savely may we sey  
230 That we are purged and of all made clene —  
Thus must we beleven, felawys, all bedene.” *one and all*

**Chapter 5**

- And onto the mayden he turned him with his voys:  
“Lady,” he seyd, “for God that sytth above  
And for the passyoun that Cryst had on crosse,  
235 Prey for us to Him that is thi love;  
Thu seyst full welle we may no lengere schove  
Oure lyvynge dayes, for thei are nye at ende;  
Prey that He wyll His mercy sende *prolong*
- “Onto His servauntys and spare hem at this tyme.  
240 Suffyr us eke that we may waschyd be  
With holy baptem, that we may the bettyr clyme  
To that place of grete felicité;  
And if this prayere plese not Him, but He  
Wyll allgatys that we schall wante this thinge, *nevertheless*  
245 We wolde desyre than of this blyssyd kinge
- “He wold with us make dispensacyoun,  
For all this may He; He is omnipotent.  
He lovyth all men, He lovyth every nacyoun  
Egaly, ye sey, this is oure fundament. *make an exception for us*
- 250 If He dyspence with us of this sacrament,  
Than for wanting may we bere no blame, *exempts us from*  
Than schall oure deth be tyl us but game.” *We cannot be blamed for lacking it*

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- Than seyd the mayd untyll hem all in fere:  
“Fere ye ryght nowght, thow ye want this thing.  
255 So as I can now wyll I yow lere.  
Thoo men that for love of Cryst oure kinge,  
Whech wante of baptem, that holy waschynge,  
Thei schall to blys, for aungellys schall hem carye —  
The fendes powere no thinge may hem tarye. *hinder*
- 260 “In stede of baptem servyth His passyoun:  
Not only blode whech that He for hem dyd blede  
But all othir deth whech with devocyon  
Thus thei suffred unto hem grete mede.  
Leve ye wel this doctrine trostly as your crede,  
265 The grete peyne the whech is dempte to yow *decreed for you*  
In stede of baptem schal be as now.
- “God may with fyre purgen mannys synne,  
With watyr eke as Him lyst demene; *as He chooses*  
Summe men are baptyzed, heven for to wynne,  
270 With that watyr whech in the fonte is sene. *seen*  
Summe are purgede with her blode, I wene —  
Thei deyn as marteres, this is oure degré.  
Summe are baptyzed, eke, as leve we —
- “Thys calle oure clerkys baptem of the Goste —  
275 In Goddys mercy, and deyen oute of synne  
Ryght in her feyth that stedfastly troste.  
Therfore ye knytes of Cryste new begune,  
To cleym youre herytage that ye were therinne  
Beth not aferde, but suffre the peyn mekely —  
280 Than are ye baptized, trost me now trewly.”

**Chapter 6**

- Whan that thei weren of this holy mayde  
Thus comforted, the offyceres comen anoon:  
Thei bondyn her handys, ryght as I seyde;  
Thei leden hem forth, fast as thei may goon,  
285 Onto a strete whech was pathed with ston.

Book 5

Well is him that may a fagott bere  
To brene the clerkys! The emperor was there,

Sett in a stage, for he wold see the ende.  
The fyre is made, blockes are leyd on hepe,  
290 Fagottes gan thei amonge the clogges bende.  
There is not ellys but fech, renne, and lepe;  
Blow now fast — the foweres shuld not slepe.  
Thei bynde her fete, thei throw hem in the fere,  
But thei are glad and full mery of chere,

*logs; in a heap*  
*logs spread*

*flames*

*i.e., the philosophers*

295 Thankyng God that all thing made of nowte  
That thei may dey for swech a Lordes sake.  
Thei pray to Him ryght as He hem bowte  
Her soules tyll Him now that He wold take.  
What schuld I now lengere this tale make?  
300 Thus are thei dede, her sowles onto blysse,  
Eke tyll her bodyes oure blyssed Lorde grauntyd thyss:

Skyn ne flesch was non of hem brente,  
Ne hede, ne clothe, ne heere of berde ne of heede.  
Thei lay there dede with browes fayre bente,  
305 With fayre face colourde bothe whyght and reede,  
For lyk as the fyre makyth the rusty leede  
Bryth and schene, so makyth the fyre this mené —  
Whoso knew hem before myth ken hem and see.

*lead*

*company*

*recognize*

310 In her peynes, men seyd, thei cryed thus:  
“Blyssyd be God that we nevyr knew ere,  
Blyssyd be Cryst! Honourde be oure Lorde Jhesu!  
For of this tormente have we now no fere.”  
This was a scole merelows for to lere:  
That thei in torment myrth and joy schuld make.  
315 Onto God only her sowles gan thei take;

Thus deyed this mené in Novembyre the thirtene day.  
Aftyr her deth thei semed not to a be dede:  
As slepyng men in fayre colourde thei lay,  
In handys, body, legges, eke, and heede,

*have been dead*

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- 320 With coloure fresch, lovely, and also reede.  
This see the purle and mervelyd wondyr sore;  
God thei preysyd for than and evyr more,  
  
For be this miracle converted was that day  
Meche folke to Cryst, and for devucion  
325 Bothe of the clerkys and eke of the may, *maiden*  
Thei token the bodyes with solempne orison  
And biried hem there in dyvers mansion,  
Trostynge to spedre bettir for her cause. *estates*  
Thus endyth her martirdam rith in this clause. *to prosper by having them*

### **Chapter 7**

- 330 Thoo sey the emperour: “There is non othir botte *remedy* (*i.e.*, *way to deal with*)  
Onto this mayden whech is so stedfast  
But fayre wordes, whech draw womanhoode  
And makith hem often othir thingis to tast  
Than thei shulde do if thei wold be chast.”
- 335 Therfor this mayden rith thus thoo he glosyth: *flatters*  
“Kateryne,” he seyth, “there is no man suppositth —  
  
“Nothe ye youreselue — that I wold but goode *As you know*  
Onto youre persone. But this grete distresse  
To which I putte you, spelling yet as no bloode,  
340 Was forto chast you fro that sekenes *drive you from*  
Whech that ye have caute of fonned holynes, *foolish*  
And left the rytes that oure elderes before  
Receyvyd and honouryd as for sovereyn lore.
- “This was the cause why that I distressyd you soo.  
345 But love have I onto you sekyrlly  
As to the best of alle, save on and no moo.  
And why I do soo, if ye will wete why,  
Youre beuté it causith, youre cunnyng eke; and I  
Love you so wele that, if ye lyke to consent,  
350 And thurifye to Jupiter that is omnipotent *offer incense*

Book 5

- “Ye shall have honour — no woman shall be you lich.  
 O swete virgyne, enclyne youre love to me!  
 O fayre visage of bewté now most rych,  
 O woman most worthy of imperiall degré,  
 355 O very merveyle, parfyth felicité,  
 Wold god ye knownen what care I have for yow  
 And what beheest I have made in myn avowe.
- “Why wold ye despycé oure goddis immortal?  
 Why wold ye calle hem so venemous a name?  
 360 Why seyd ye that thei are develes infernal?  
 Why slander ye so her endewed fame?  
 For this blasfeme, iwis, ye are to blame:  
 ‘Deceyvoures of the puple,’ as ye seyde.  
 Chaunge youre langage, ye noble goodly mayde!
- 365 “Chaunge betyme, for though thei suffir longe,  
 At the last thei smyten and taken hey venjaunce. *strike*  
 Tendir youre thought, speke no more wronge:  
 Thus shall ye best her yre swage. *their wrath assuage*  
 Take youre offeryng yet, in schort langage, *to be brief*  
 370 And plesith hem so thei may be youre frendes,  
 And sey nevyr more that thei be fendes.
- “If ye wil don as I you now counsayle,  
 This shall ye have: next aftir the qween  
 Shall ye be to us, withouten fayle;  
 375 To youre comaundment all men shall bene  
 Obeyng, but whom that ye will susteyne  
 He shal be favoured with all myth and mayne, *in every way possible*  
 And whom that ye hate, compendiously to sayne, *briefly*
- “That man shall levyn in full gret distresse.  
 380 Comforth youreselvے, dispice not good counsayle,  
 Makith not youre frendis to levyn in hevynesse,  
 Lete myn wordis sinken in youre entrayle:  
 Fle swech that may not avayle.  
 Withinne my kyngdam may ye have this ryght:  
 385 What that ye will shal be fulfyllyd as tyth. *tithe (see note)*

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- “If that ye will exilen ony man,  
That man shall goo — there shall no good him save.  
More plesaunce to you graunt I ne can  
But suffir youre will all that ye will have.
- 390 For this decré shall I nevyr more wave:  
Whom that ye list of grace for to avaunce,  
In joyfull dayes that same man may daunce.
- “Betwix the qween and you shal be non distaunce  
But only this: because of oure spousayle *marriage*  
395 Sche must of me have more dewe plesaunce —  
The love betwix us, I trow, shall nevyr fayle;  
But to you shall long both lawe and counsayle  
Thorow all oure reme to governe at youre wille: *realm*  
Rith as ye bydde all men shall fulfylle.
- 400 “Yeté shall I make in the market place *Furthermore*  
A solempne ymage lich an empresse.  
As man of craft will counterfete youre face  
It shal be made. Ilke man, more and lesse, *Each*  
405 Shall honour that with ful grete besynesse,  
Whan thei comen forby shul fallen on knes anon.  
This ymage shall not only be made of stone,
- “But of clene metall, gylt full bryght and shene. *shiny*  
Whoso comyth forby with sufficient evidens  
Shall knownen full wele that sche was a qwene  
410 Whos ymage stante there, and that in grete offens  
Shall he falle that doth noo reverens  
To that ymage. And whoo flee ther too,  
What maner offens that evyr he hath doo,
- “Shal be forgeve at the reverens of yow, mayde.  
415 Thus may ye be deyfyed, if ye will it take.” *deified*  
Swech maner wordis untill hir he sayde:  
He wold a tempill all of marbell make,  
Of ful grete cost rith for hir sake,  
Wenyng evyr with swech feynyd plesauns *Believing*  
420 To bryng this mayde oute of hir good perseverauns.

Chapter 8

- Sche lowe a lytill whan sche had herd all this,  
 And than she spake with mery countenaunce:  
 “Full happy am I,” she seyd, “unto blys,  
 Whan that the emperor will me thus avaunce
- 425 To rerен a ymage of so grete plesaunce  
 In worship of me and of so grete pryse.  
 Summe men wolde seyn that I were nyse
- laughed  
 cheerful  
 promote  
 raise  
 foolish*
- “If I refused it, for of gold it schal be  
 If I comaunde, but yet at the lest
- 430 Of sylvere he wyl it make and of swech quantyté  
 The chaungours schul stryve and be in no rest  
 To bregyn so mech tresoure oute of the nest  
 To make a memoryall of Kateryne the mayde!”  
 Swech manere wordes at that tyme sche sayde:
- money changers*
- 435 “And thow this ymage be made of marbyll grey,  
 Suffysyth it that to my laude eterne  
 Every man schall come be the wey  
 Where that schal be sett in a herne,  
 On bothe knes him must fall yerne
- 440 And do his omage, elles must him deye.  
 What manere wordes hope ye thei shall seye?
- even if  
 praise  
 corner  
 eagerly  
 expect*
- ““Heyl ymage, made ryght in memoryall  
 Of a lady full wyse and ful of prudent;  
 Heyle statue that art now as eternall;  
 Heyl sygne, made ryght to this entent —
- 445 The grete beawté of Kateryne to present!  
 Wyll not this be full grete plesaunce  
 Tyl hem that loven this worldly lusty daunce?
- “But this wold I knowyn or we this thinge make:  
 450 Of what matere schall my legges be?  
 What manere werkman that dare undyrtake  
 To make hem to meve and walke in her degré?  
 My handys, eke, I wolde wete how that he
- go*

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455     Shuld make to fele and of what matere —  
Or we goo ferther this wold I lere.

“The eyne eke whech this ymage schall have,  
If thei schul loke ryght as I do in dede,  
Where is that werkman that swech thinges can grave?  
He were wel worthy to have ful grete mede!  
460     I leve nevyr that this werk shuld well spedē.  
Thys matere thus sotely to congelle,  
There is no werkman in erthe that can it fulfylle.

*in person*

465     “A tunge, eke, if he shuld it make  
Onto this ymage to speke and to crye:  
Where is he that dare this undirtake?  
If he do thus, he werkith a grete maystry,  
But for this cause that there is no man so slye.  
Therfor I conclude thus, in a shorte sentens:  
Whan ye have wared youre witte and youre expens

*marvel*  
*clever*

*worn out*

470     “To make this ymage, it shal be unsensible,  
Stond lyke a stone, and byrdes that flyes ther abowth —  
As I suppose it shal be right possible  
Ther shall comyn sumtyme a full grete rowth —  
Here unclene dunge shall thei there put oute  
475     And lete it falle rith on the ymage face.  
Loo, swech a guerdon I may now purchace

*flock*

*reward*

480     “That men shuld dredyn and foules shuld defyle!  
But whan deth hath shake on us his blast,  
And that oure mynd be passed a lytyl whyle,  
I am aferd this werke shall not last —  
Wherfor to make it me thinkyth but a wast.  
To trosten in fame and in veynglory  
It is but feynyng a fekyl flatery.

*memory*

485     “And thou thei make it as fayre as thei can,  
Yette shall dogges defylen it every day.  
For thow it honoured be of every man,  
The small childeryn that come by the way

*Book 5*

Shul sumtyme make there ful fowle aray.  
Shall I for this leve my God forevr  
490 And fro His frenchip my sowle now deseuyr

“To worchep develes that standen in tempil here,  
Kepte as beres? Do way! It shall not be —  
There shall no joy ne peyne me nevyr stere  
To leeve my Lorde, to leeve my felicité,  
495 To renne in apostasie. Fye! It will not be!  
Lette be youre labour, sere, let be youre promysse;  
Thei shall not maken me nevyr to do amysse.

“What, shuld my lyffebettir ben in ese  
For swech a statue? What shuld it profyfth  
500 Onto my soule — me thinkith it coude not plesse  
No good man, for thow it were to the syth  
Ful delectable, with coloures schynyngr bryth,  
Onto oure dayes it shuld non encres,  
Onto oure sekenes it shuld non reles,

505 “Onto oure lyffe it shuld be no myrth,  
Onto oure deth it shuld non comforth be.  
None avayle to end ne to byrthe:  
To what part longith it of felicité?  
If it mowte kepe my flesh in swech degré  
510 It shuld not rote, I shuld it nevyr weyven,  
But as profitable I wold it than receyven.

“I have a promysse made of a gretter Lorde,  
Of gretter fame than I will now expresse,  
And made aforen persones of recorde  
515 In whech is graunted, truly withoute gesse,  
A memorial of parfyth stabilnesse,  
As ye shall knowe, many that here be.  
Leveth youre besynes as now onto me —

Labour no more to wynne me to youre parte.  
It shall not be, I wil be as I am,  
520 It will not avayle youre sotilté ne youre arte —

*bears*

*be more comfortable*

*increase*

*reject*

*witnesses*

*preoccupation with*

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He is my spouse whech is both God and man;  
I am His mayde. I wil do that I can  
To haven His love; He is my swetnesse,  
525 He is my joy, He is my gentilnesse.”

**Chapter 9**

- Thoo chaunged the emperor both word and chere,  
And to the mayden he seyd as I rehers:  
“The benynglyer that we treten you here,  
As me semeth, the more ye revers.  
530 This shall ye have, shortly in a vers,  
Deth or joy whech you levest:  
If ye will leve in solas and in rest,  
“Than shal ye now with hey devocion  
Thurifye to that magesté  
535 Of grete Appollo. His exaltacion —  
As ye knowe wele, for it is no secré —  
Redressith this word with hete whech that he  
Spredyth upon iche mayde. Obey therto!  
There is no choys; this thing must nedis be doo.
- 540 “Fayre spech avaylith noth to you in no wyse.  
I wold wele with solas a led youre gentilnesse,  
But at my promysse ye sett lytill prysse —  
Ye schal repent it sothly, as I gesse.  
There is the fyre: dispose you to holynesse,  
545 Do it with good will; ye schal the soner purchace  
Pardon of synne and encres of grace.
- “If ye do noth, in schort tyme ye shal be dede,  
Rith in example of the puple that is here:  
Her hertis arne hangyng hevy as leed;  
550 A man may perseyyen rith be her chere  
It may not passen lyghtly, swech matere —  
It must be punchid, rith for fere of othir.  
He shuld be dede thou he were my brothir.”
- more benignly*  
*oppose [me]*
- prefer*
- Offer incense*  
*worship*
- Repays; world; heat*
- have directed*
- as an example for*  
*their*
- punished; other (i.e., imitation)*

Chapter 10

“Peyne is welcome to me,” seyd she than,  
555 And deth, eke, I wil it noth forsake,  
For thou ye smyth, fle, sle, or banne,  
It skyllith me rith noth for my Lordis sake  
Swech myschevys for His love to take.  
He toke for me mych more wrechydnes  
560 Whill He lyved her in this worldly wyldernes.

*though; smite, flay; banish  
It makes no difference  
afflictions*

“Poverté He suffered than full buxumly  
Whan that He myth an had riches at His will;  
The same myschef yete suffered nevyr I,  
But if it com, I will obey thertyll.  
565 Ageyn blasfemewrs stod that Lord ful styl,  
Gevyng exaumpil til us of paciens:  
Why shull His servauntis maken ony resistens

*humbly  
have had  
accept it*

“Whan the wykyd purposyd to don hem wrong?  
For His cause, His feyth, or His love  
570 I am now redy, be it short or long,  
To suffer despite, peyne, and reprove.  
I wote wele it will falle to myn behove  
Whan I am gone: the more I suffyr here,  
The more joy shal I haven elleswhere.

*contempt  
credit*

575 “He offered himself to the Fader of blys  
An host ful clene, undefyled with synne,  
And I wil offyr my body, for it is His,  
Onto His plesauns whech I wold wynne.  
Loke ye youreselue whan ye will begynne,  
580 For I am redy in body and in goost:  
Sle or flee, fry or ellis roste.

*flay*

“There shall come tyme thu shalt repent full sore  
Of cruel domes whech thu usest here.  
Of thi power settest thu ful gret store,  
585 Whech shal rew thee ful sore aftir thi bere.  
Crystes servauntis hast thu brent in fere —

*judgments; imposed*

*aggrieve; bier (i.e., after your death)*

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In tyme comyng therfor thou shal be schent  
Whan that thou with fendes in helle shal be brent.

*ruined*

590     “The more thu thretyst, the more glad am I  
The moo peynes thu applyest to me,  
The more my joyes encres sekyrly.  
I go not alone whan that I part fro ye,  
For whan I dey many of thi mené  
Of thin howsold shal follow me ful sone.  
595     Of Cryst my Lord have I askyd that boone,

*certainly*

“That of thi meny rith a full grete parte  
Shul trow in Him and levyn her ydolatry

*renounce*

Wayte aboue with all thin sotyll arte —  
Thu shal fynd that I make no lye

600 Her soules fro peyn frely thus shul flye  
Streyte to hevyn, and thu shalt brenne in helle.  
This thing is trew that I ye now telle.”

## Chapter 11

Than was the emperour ny wode for ire.

*nearly crazy*

He comaund his men that stodyn hem abowte

*thin*

He chase men that were of body ful stouth

*choose: strong*

Till hem he sevd right thus without douth:

*naked as when she was born*

I trow she shal songe of hir alone ha wakyd!

610 "Bete hir wele, rith for hir blasfeme  
To feryn hem that trostyn in hir doctryne.  
Lete hir no more spekyn of that Bethleme,  
Ne of Galile shal she no more dyvyne.  
I trow that peyne shal hir rather enclyne  
615 Onto oure wille than may oure plesauns.  
Do ye youre dever, thou that she falle in trauns!"

scare

The tormentoures have taken hir on syde,  
Made hir naked backe and armes therto.

*Book 5*

- With eyrend wandes, as fast as thei may glyde,  
620 Thei beten hir body; the blode cam fast hir froo.  
Whan thei were wery, than don fresh men moo:  
Thus is she betyn for hir spouses love.  
Sche trostith on comforth that comyth fro above. *iron*
- These weren hir wordes: “Lord send me paciens,  
625 Make me strong to suffir this penauns.  
If that I have ronne in Thi offens  
Lete it be purged be this same grevauns.  
Thankyng be evyr unto Thi puruyauns,  
Lord, maker of man and best.  
630 Of Thi servauntis, I that am the leest, *offended You*
- “Thanke Thee more for this same betyng  
Than for the welthes that Thu sent me befor,  
For wele wote I that this tormentyng,  
It is to me as a grete tresowre.  
635 Farewel the werd now forevyr more:  
Stele and robbe the goodes that I have;  
I care noth now neythir for toure ne cave.” *riches*
- The tyraunt aske among this byttir peyne,  
640 Whan all was blode and the beters wery were all:  
“What sey ye mayden? Will ye yete susteyne  
Youre elde heresye in whech ye be falle?  
If ye will mercy of oure goddes calle,  
Ye shall it have, and ellys new game — *or else another round of punishment*  
Or that ye goo, I trow ye shal be tame.” *amid*
- 645 Sche answerd thus: “Sere, know this wele:  
That I am strenger in body and in goost  
Than evyr I was to sufferne every dele  
Al maner turment, wheyther thu wolt fry or roost.  
But thu, my schamful dog ful of boost,  
650 Do what thu wilt, for I shall stronger be  
In my sufferauns than thu in thi cruenta.”

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- “Bethink thee wele, on ilke maner syde,  
 Whom thu may fle or bryng on dawe *put to death*  
 The Crysten puple that knownen is so wyde,  
 655 Whech do no wrong but kepyn a ful trew lawe.  
 I shall dey and passen this worldes wawe, *woe*  
 Folow my Lorde and dwelle with Him in blys,  
 Wher that no thing is thout ne do amys. *thought or done*
- “Ther schall I dwelle in joye and in solas  
 660 Whan thu thiself schalt be in horrybyll peyne.  
 Thou schalt than desyre, but thu schalt have no grace;  
 Thou schalt be bounden with that wofull cheyn *chain*  
 Of obstynacy; thu schalte repente and seyn,  
 ‘Allas that evyr I wrowth swech torment  
 665 Onto youre heavenly blyssyd covent!’ *assembly*
- “Thus schalt thou wayle qwan thu sest us in blysse, *when*  
 And thu in sorowe withouten remedye,  
 Lyeng in peynes whech shul nevyr mysse,  
 This shalt thou knowe uphaf hastily. *perhaps*  
 670 Therfore fulfylle now of ire thi malencolly,  
 And I shall suffyr for the love of God of heven.” *madness*  
 Thus seyd the lady with a ful bold steven. *voice*

**Chapter 12**

- The emperour comaunded onto his servauntis anon,  
 “Ye take this mayd and into prison hir lede.  
 675 I will ye put hir in the depe cave of ston,  
 No man so hardy in no maner hir to fede.  
 I will,” he seyth, “that this be done in dede:  
 All these fourty dayes whech that I shall ryde,  
 Lete hir no mete have to slake therwith hir pryde. *diminish*
- 680 “Geve hir no drynke, ne lete hir no drynke have.  
 Whoso otherwyse do ageyn my comaundment —  
 So holy Jubiter mote my soule save —  
 Whan I come home, sone shall he be brent!  
 I will that ye fulfylle all myn entent

Book 5

- 685 Even streytly, withoute delacion: *delay*  
 No man so hardy of no maner nacion
- “Bere hir mete or drynke or eny lyght.”  
 This cruell maundment and this same degré  
 Made the emperor thus ageyn the law o ryght
- 690 And is redyn forth with his mené  
 Up into the lond for cause whech that he  
 Had for to don as potestates have. *To do what potentates (rulers) have to do*  
 And thus is this mayde left alone in cave,
- Withouten ony comfort or ony solas.  
 695 But Cryst hath noth forgetyn His wyfpe  
 All these fourty dayes, of His good grace,  
 He wolde noth levyn hir like a caytiffe. *wretch*  
 He sent down His servauntis fro the hows of lyffe —  
 His aungelis I mene — to comforth this mayde.  
 700 Swech maner wordes thoo til hir seyd thei:
- “Oure Lord comaund that ye shuld be glade —  
 Suffir this desese with sobir paciens. *discomfort*  
 Mete shal ye have — ye nevyr swech had; *Food*  
 Lith hath He sent yow with oure presens. *Light*
- 705 The emperor for youre cause renneth in offens  
 Whech he shall sumetyme ful sore repent.”  
 Thus was she comforted in hir torment
- With lyght of heven and with hevenly mete,  
 With presens of aungelis. For thei that hir kepte,  
 710 Thei myth here the noyse, how thei hir trete. *how [the angels] treated her*  
 Thei myth sene lyght as it gan strepe  
 Thorow the slarrys — thei myth not slepe. *crept*  
 So have thei merveyle of all this thing,  
 But rith noth told thei onto the kyng. *cracks*
- 715 But to othir folke in the courte there  
 Sprong this word there, how that this mayde  
 Was kept fro lyth, in ful grete fere,  
 And fro mete eke, as I ere sayde,

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And how the jayloures were so afrayde  
720 Of certeyn lyght at the dongon dore:  
This word in the courte goth aboute sore.

**Chapter 13**

The tydens are come onto the qwenes ere  
Of the cruel sentens and of the lith eke,  
How that the mayden without ony fere  
725 Had answerd the clerkys in the tothir weke,  
And how that the mayden with wordes meke  
Had turned hem to Cryst, and how thei were brent,  
And she for that cause in prison is ny shent.

The emperor was absent, as I seyd before,  
730 Forth unto the lond redyn in hast.  
Thei tolde the qween that he comaunderd sore  
That she neythir mete ne drynke shuld tast,  
But for pure hungryr she must dey and wast —  
These last wordes seyd he on the heth:  
735 “No man gefe hir mete ne drynke ne lyght in peyn of deth.”

This meved the qwen of very womanly peté  
To have compassion of these peynes alle  
Whech that this lady, be very cruelté  
740 Of the kyng, had suffered. Thus is she falle,  
The qwen, all in stody walkyng in the halle,  
Thinkyng besyly upon this mayde,  
And til hirself pryyly thus she sayde:

“These Cristen folke, thei do no man wrong:  
Alle that thei bye trewly therfor thei pay;  
745 Onto her God thei syngyn ful goodly song  
New and new, as men seyn, every day;  
Wastfull are thei noth in no maner of ray;  
In glotenyn ne drunkchip wil thei nevyr be —  
This same lyffe full wele it plesith me.

*pity*

*rapt in thought*

*not; clothing*

Book 5

- 750    "And on of hem had I ben or nowe,  
       Had not oure lawe forfend us that scole.  
       If it were sene that I to hem drowe,  
       Men schuld seyn that I were a fole.  
       It myth turne me eke to mekyl dole  
 755    If that my lorde myth this changyng knowe.  
       But yete in my herte there begynnyth to growe  
       "A grete desyre for to sene this mayde.  
       Allas, how shall I fulfylle myn entent?"  
       Thus be hirselfe the lady thought and sayde.  
 760    But in this stody even as she went  
       Happyd to come, as thow God had him sent,  
       A noble knyth, a wysman in all thing,  
       Pryvy of counsayle ryght speciall with the kyng,  
       Governowre of knytes, leder of hem alle,  
 765    A very fadyr to yong folke that shuld lere —  
       Porphery the storyes rith thus thei him calle.  
       Onto the qween he kneled with ful sad chere.  
       "I am glad," she seyd, "Porphery, that ye be here.  
       Ye ben a man that may mych avayle.  
 770    To you now I will tellen my pryvy counsayle.  
       "I am so trobilled newly with Crysten lawe  
       I can noth slepe, I may neythir ete ne drynke.  
       Every day, or it begynnyth to daw,  
       And eke all nyght, on this matere I thynke —  
 775    I trow I am ful ny my lyves brynde,  
       But I have conforte ryght thus." Thoo sche sayde,  
       "Goode Porphyry, me muste nedes se yon mayde.  
       "Orden ye the meene ryght as ye can —  
       Gefe the gaylere gold and sylvyr enowe;  
 780    Ordeyn so that ye and I may than  
       Speke this ladye. To Godd I make a vowe,  
       Loke my lorde neyvr so wrothe and rowe,  
       I must nedes speke hir or I schal be dede,  
       For in this matere myn hert is hevy as lede."
- I would have been  
forbidden  
was attracted to them*
- conversion*
- accomplish*
- dawn*
- Then*
- Arrange a means  
jailer*

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- 785 Porphyry seyde, “Madame, it schal be do:  
I schal parforme this thing, trost in me.  
In swech degré the dorys schal be ondoo  
There schall no man be pryyv but we thre —  
That is to seyn, the gaylere, I, and ye. *jailer*
- 790 Drede yow noth, ye schal have your entent.  
With this matere have I sore be torment:
- “Me thinkyth grete wrong that this lady suffereth here  
So horribly beten, kept fro mete and drynke,  
And she no harme doth in no manere.
- 795 Ful often tyme she made me on hir to thynke  
Sithin I hir herde the noble argumentis clynke *resound*  
With the clerkys, whan she convycte hem alle.  
Therfor, madame, falle what so befall,
- “We wil se hir, and with good leysyre,  
800 And speke with hir this same nyte folowyng.  
Grete giftis shall I geve to the gaylere  
To kepe counsayle and speke of this nothing. *jailer*  
Goo ye to chaumbir and whan I geve warnyng  
Comyth forth alone and lete youre women slepe —
- 805 Loke ye be redy whan I shall you clepe.” *call*

**Chapter 14**

- Thus be consent the qwen and Porphyry,  
Whan all men slepyn to prison are thei goo  
Alle alone, rith seyth oure story.  
Whan thei comen there, thei too and no moo,
- 810 So grete lith in prison sey thei thoo *light*  
That thei fallen down withouten spech or breth —  
Thei hopyd nevyr to a ben so ny her deth, *expected; near their*
- For that brytnes was lych a lythnyng  
Whech thei sey than, so wondyrfull and bryght  
815 Her wytt is goo, and down in stameryng  
Are thei falle for fere of that syght.  
There was a savour, also, with the lyght;

*Book 5*

Thei felt nevyre swech, the story seyth, certeyne,  
For with that savour her comfort cam ageyn.

*courage*

- 820 Tho spake the mayden swech wordes to hem:  
“Ryse up syster, ryse up brothir in fere.  
Cryst that was bore in the cité of Bethleem,  
He hath callyd yow onto His servyse here.  
Be glad and mery, be of ryght goode chere;  
825 Oure Lord hath chose yow newly to His grace —  
For that cause He sent yow to this place.”

Thei behelden the mayde at that tyde,  
How that sche sate on knes full mekely.  
Many aungell sey thei on every syde,  
830 With swete gummes anoyntyng hir softly;  
Evyr as thei touchede with handys by and by  
The flesch was helyd, the skyn closed ageyn,  
With mech more beauté, sothely for to seyn,

*saw*

*[medicinal] gums*  
*again and again*

- 835 Than evyr it was whyle that it was hole.  
Thus can oure Lorde redresse all dolour  
Whech men suffre, be it in hede or soole.  
He can in lesse tyme than in halfe a houre  
Hele oure sores, comfort oure laboure.  
These folk there hadden a blysfull syght,  
840 Ful of conforte, ful of hevynly delyte.

*whole*

*i.e., foot*

- 845 There satte besyde eke sundry ful elde men  
Gevyng conforte ontyll hir hevynesse.  
There were in cumpanye no mo than nyn or ten —  
Of her noumbre have I no sekynnesse —  
Thei were sent thedyr, sothely as I gesse,  
Because this woman was withoute solace,  
Hir to comfort with summe hevynly grace.

- 850 On of hem helde in his hande a crown  
Fayre and reall — we can it not dyscryve —  
Ryght fro his hande Kateryne toke it down.  
Onto the qwen thus she seyd belyve:

*One of them*

*directly*

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“This crown, systir, with these braunches fyve  
Shall ye haven and weryn upon youre heed  
As for asay; but aftir, whan ye be dede,

*To try on*

- 855    “Than shall ye have it for reward evyrlestyng.”  
      Onto the old men tho turned that mayde  
      Whil she helde the crowne, in the settynge,  
      Thus tyl hem with meke voys she sayd:  
      “For these personys to my Lord I prayd  
860    Thei shul be writyn in the boke of lyffe.  
      Therfor, seres, as I, Crystes wyffe,

“Graunted be patent, so wil I that ye wryth  
These too names in that boke forevyr.  
Clense her synnes, make so that hevy with  
865    Fro my Lord nomore hem deseuyre.  
I pray to God that now mote thei falle nevyre  
Aftir the tyme that thei reseyvyn the feyth.”  
On of the eldest ageyn onto hir seyth:

*evil being (i.e., the devil)  
separate*

*said to her again*

- 870    “O preciouuse spouse of God that sytthy above,  
      O gemme reall schynyst in chastyté,  
      Whatevyr thu aske of Cryst that is thi love,  
      It cannot fayle, so precious to you is He.  
      Onto thi persone, therfore, trost thu to me:  
      This lady shall preve onto grete perfeccion,  
875    This knyte shall have eke swech progression

*attain  
knight*

“In virtuous lyffe that thorow his gode counsayle  
Too hundred and moo fro her fals beleve  
Shall turne to Cryst and ful sore for her synne wayle  
Her fals feyth whech thei cannot preve.”  
880    Thus have these folke of Kateryne take her leve,  
      Walkyng to chaumbyr with hertis suspens,  
      Kepyng this matere alle cloos in sylens.

*their*

*anxious hearts*

Chapter 15

- This mayden is kepte in prison evyr stylle  
With swech comforth as ye have herdyn here.
- 885 Of mannys comforth hath she neythir lettir ne bylle — *missive*  
No man dare doo it, swech is now her fere. *fear*  
Fourty dayes full thus was she kepyd there  
Withouten mete, but in all these dayes *food*  
Of heavenly mete had she swete assayes. *samples*
- 890 For He that fedde Danyel the prophete in the lake *lion's den*  
And caryede Abacuc so ferre oute of Jude *Habakkuk; Judea*  
To bryng him vytayle, that same Lord myth make  
That in prison this mayden thus fedde shuld be.  
In storyes that I rede, in dyvers too or thre,
- 895 A fayre dowe fro heven brouth hir mete — *dove*  
Wheythir bodily or goostly it is hard for to trete, *determine*
- For, as Austen seyth, that same seede  
Whech oure faderes receyvyd in wyldernes,  
Whech served hem than in stede of brede —
- 900 This very doctir seyth in sothfastnes —  
That possybyll it is swech seedes more or lesse  
Shuld be noryshyd in the eyyere be supposicion, *air; placement*  
In the lowere part whech hath despcion,
- 905 Sumwhat to the erde acordyng in nature:  
This is his sentens, whoso wil it rede,  
In his boke whech tretyth in Scripture.  
I trow this same was don here in dede:  
The Holy Gost this goodly mayden gan fede
- 910 With heavenly thyng whech had erdly kynd:  
Thus wene I, but I wil no man bynd, *commit himself*
- But if he will for to levyn my tale. *believe*  
She was fedde — that have we of treuth.  
If God had left hir in so byttyr bale  
Withouten comforth it had ben grete reuth.
- 915 In that pryson she lyved withouten sleuth *pity*  
*weariness*

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Alle fourty dayes, but in the last of alle  
As she in prayyer ful besyly gan calle

Onto Cryst, she saw an hevenly syth:  
Oure Lord Himselfe to pryson is com down,  
With many aungellys shynyng wondir bryth,  
With many maydenes of ful grete renoun —  
For very joy Kateryne fell in swown.  
Oure Lord comforth hir with ful goodly chere:  
“Dowtir, lokyth up whom ye se here.

925     “Know youre makere for whom alle this dysese  
Ye have suffered. Take it evyr in pacyens —  
The more ye suffyr, the more ye Me plesse.  
Kepe youre constans, drede no worldly offens,  
Thinke ‘not long,’ leve noth with herte suspens.     *constancy*  
930     I am with yow, I shall you nevyr forsake.  
Many an hert ful redy shul ye make

935     “Onto My servyse or ye part fro this lyffe;  
Grete nombre of puple shall ye returne —  
Many a husband, mayd, widow, and wyffe  
Fro her maumentrye shall ye hem returne,  
Onto My feyth ledyn hem to sojorne.”     *rest*  
Whan this was do oure Lord went up to hevyne  
With grete brythnes as it were a levyne.     *beam of light*

940     She lokyd aftir tyll she sey no more,  
Returnyth to prayyer, as evyr was hir usage,  
It was to hir a ful grete tresore  
That Jhesu lyst to make that pylgrymage.  
Hir hertly sorow so for to swage     *heartfelt*  
With His presens, blyssyd evyr He be,  
945     And be this mayden comend to Him be we.

**Chapter 16**

Whan his causes arne brouth fully to the ende  
With that he rode forth — Maxens now I mene —

Book 5

- He is comyn home. Anon he gan to send  
 For hir be sex knytys, rith as I wene. *six knights*  
 950 If thei be fals, sone it shall be sene,  
 Thei that kepte hir; it shall hem ovirthynke  
 If it be provyd thei goven hir mete or drynke! *regret*
- Alle the cyté is gaderyd to sene this syth,  
 A grete puple; summe for cruelnes,  
 955 Summe are there that han ful grete despyth  
 At the emperor for his wykkydnes —  
 Thei thinke this lady is put to grete distresse  
 For no cause only but for gode.  
 The emperor seyd with ful sturdy mood, *furious words*
- 960 “Bryng forth this woman, bryng forth this concionatrix! *conjurer*  
 Bryng forth this scolde or a wycche; no man may turne hir herte!  
 In hir errorre is sche made so fyx  
 That fro it no man may make hir sterte. *go*  
 But if it she do, ful sore shall she smerte.”
- 965 Thus is she brouth before his presens.  
 He supposed veryly that for hir abstinens
- She had be pynyd even to deth. *afflicted*  
 Now lokyth she fresch with colour.  
 For very angyr his hert ny it sleth, *slays*  
 970 For she is fayrere than she was that hour  
 Whan he comaunde to ledyn hir to that tour.  
 “Traytoures,” he seyd, “ye shal dey ilke one  
 But ye telle me in this place anon
- “Who hath fedde ageyn oure comaundment  
 975 This froward caytyff that no man may evyr lede! *perverse wretch*  
 I swere be Jubiter, which is omnipotent,  
 It shal be wist who that dede this dede.  
 There shall no man for no maner mede  
 Do this thing whech we forfend soo.” *forbade*  
 980 He dede hem bynd with eyryn be too and too. *iron*

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- Than the mayden to excusen hem alle  
 Seyd to the kyng swech maner wordes certeyn:  
 "Thu art a lord, an emperor men thee calle;  
 Thu art ordeynyd all treuth to susteyn.  
 Thei that don ageyn thi lawe or seyn,  
 Hem shuld thu ponyshe, but innocentes non:  
 If thu dost, thu dost ageyn thi trone,

"For these men whech had kepyng of me  
 Brout me neythir mete ne drynke, thu undirstand.  
 I was susteyned all in anothir degré  
 Be my Lord whech is alle weldand, *almighty*  
 For be His messangeres sent He me to hand  
 Alle my sustenauns — no dore myth hem lette,  
 To spere hem out thu canst not gette. *hinder them  
lock; achieve*

"Therfore these innocentis, do hem no torment;  
 Thei be not worthi, sere kyng, I sey thee whi: *tell you why*  
 Be holy aungellis my Lord me mete sent —  
 Non erdly creature was thereto pryvy —  
 For hungryr He wold not suffyr me to dey.  
 He is my love, I am His forever;  
 Joy ne sorow shall us not desever."

## Chapter 17

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                       |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|      | Tho these wordes the tyraunt with dobylnesse<br>Answerd ful fayre, that thei that stodyn abouth<br>Shuld not suppose in him swech cruelnes —                                      | Then                                                  |
| 1005 | The sturdy hert in him whech was so stouth<br>Was hid with langage as venyn in a clouth;<br>Ful fayre wordes at that tyme he sayde:<br>“I am for yow ful sory, most goodly mayde. | <i>fierce; furious<br/>poison in disguise (cloth)</i> |
|      | “Ye born a kynges dowtir, of kyng and of qwene,<br>Cosyn to lordes many that servyn me:                                                                                           | [were] born                                           |
| 1010 | The best born woman of this cuntré ye bene,<br>Thus are ye namyd, and all this with sotylté<br>Of certeyn wytchis — cursyd evyr thei be —                                         | <i>sorcerers</i>                                      |

Book 5



## Chapter 18

- The mayde answerd to the emperor ageyn:  
"Thou that my lyffe be ful swete to me  
Yet had I never with a swerd be slain  
1040 Than that my lyffe in ony maner degré  
Shuld offend the blyssyd majesté  
Of my Lord God. I sey thee, Cryst is my lyffe  
And grete encres, thow I dey on a knyffe,  
"So that I dey in charyté and for His sake.  
1045 Therfore, thow deth come to me this houre.

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- For His lufe ful mekely I wyll it take;  
 I schall nevyr with myght ne with laboure  
 Gruch ageyn my Lorde, my savyoure. *Complain against*  
 Deth schall avaunce me with gret emolument.
- 1050 Deth is a chaungoure: fro this lyffe present *one who causes change*
- “To bettyr he ledyth us. This is oure beleve:  
 Oure dedely bodyes whech are coruptible,  
 Whan that he comyth, he bryngeth hem to this preve,  
 That thei schall rest and rote as seyth oure byble.
- 1055 Aftyr that restyng, yet it is possible  
 Onto oure Lorde the bodyes to rere ageyn *raise*  
 In fayrrer forme than evyr thei were seyn.
- “Therfore, thu teraunt with thi feyned langage,  
 Do what thu wylt: put me to torment,  
 1060 Brenne me with brondys, thin yre for to swage.  
 I wold offyr to Cryst whech is omnipotent  
 Summe plesaunt offeryng, summe delectable present;  
 Kyin and calveryn or schepes I all forsake — *Cows; calves*  
 Myn owe body to offeryng wyll I take.
- 1065 “But for I may not leffully do it myselfe *i.e., commit suicide*  
 As make this offeryng, therfore thi cruelté  
 Schall bydde thi servauntys eythere ten or twelfe  
 With veniable hert to make a hende of me. *vengeful; end*
- 1070 Too Him that was offered in Calveryn on a tre,  
 To Him I offyr my flesch, my blode, and my felle. *skin*  
 But for thi cruelnes, yet eft I thee telle,
- “Thou schalt ful sore hereaftyr this thing repent  
 Not oonly in helle, whech thu schal be inne,  
 But here in erde schal thu fayle thin entent:
- 1075 For thi dedys, whech are full of synne,  
 God schall rere a lorde the whech schall wynne  
 Alle thi londes fro thee and make the pore, *raise*  
 Take awey thi worchepe and thi tresoore.

Book 5

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                  |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1080 | “Yet schal he slee thee as thu art worthy:<br>That wykkyd heede he schall make of smyte,<br>Thi blode shall be offered than full solemply<br>Onto thi goddys ryght for despyte.<br>Loke my wordys that thu note and wryte:<br>This man that shall brynge thee thus a dawe<br>Schal be a lorde of the Crysten lawe.     | <i>have chopped off</i><br><i>put you to death</i>               |
| 1085 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                  |
| 1090 | “Yet may thu skape all this grete myschauns<br>If thu wyll turn ye and aske God mercy<br>Of thi wykedenes, if thu have repentauns<br>And forsake the maumentys whech stand on hye!”<br>These are the wordes whech that this ladye<br>Seyd at that tyme this man to convert,<br>But all hir wordes sett he not at hert. |                                                                  |
| 1095 | Tho semeth it wele this lady for holynesse<br>Was so avaunsed whyll sche was lyvande<br>That God made hir as a prophetesse<br>To tell thinges that were aftyr comaunde,<br>For this same deth, as I undyrstande,<br>Had this same Maxence as sche seyd, trewly.<br>For in storyes I am well avySED that I              | <i>coming</i>                                                    |
| 1100 | Have red of him that he went to Rome<br>To fyght with oon whech had governauns<br>Of all that cyté, and oonly onto his dome<br>Stode all that cuntré with all her pusauns,<br>Bothe Ytayle and Almayne, Ynglond, Spayn, and Frauns —                                                                                   | <i>under his sole rule</i><br><i>puissance</i><br><i>Germany</i> |
| 1105 | Constantyn he hyght, whech thoo baptyzed was<br>Of Seynt Sylvestere be a ful specyall grace.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                  |
| 1110 | This same Constantyne discoumfetyd in batayle<br>This forseyd Maxence, for all his pompe and pryde,<br>As this lady in prophecye whech myght not fayle<br>Had seyd before — the fame was bore full wyde<br>And merkyd full wele, the day and eke the tyde,                                                             | <i>defeated</i>                                                  |

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Of sundry men whech aftyrwarde full wele knewe  
All that sche seyd was full stable and trewe.<sup>1</sup>

### **Chapter 19**

But whan these wordes were seyd of this mayde,  
1115 He cryed lowde to the puple abowte,  
So was he with hir wordes afayde.  
What he shall do now is he fall in dowte.  
Swech was his crye: “Fy on swech a rowte  
That schall thus suffyr a woman here defame  
1120 Oure hye goddys, her servyse, and her name!

*crowd*

“How long schall we this whych thus susteyne?  
How long schall we suffyr this cursidenes?  
To all good leveres it schuld be very peyne  
To here a woman with swech sturdynesse  
1125 Ageyn all men, the more and eke the lesse,  
Thus evermore crye — ley on hondys, for schame —  
Ye stand as men me thinkyth were lame!”

*witch; tolerate*

*true believers*  
*audacity*

*seize her*

Thus cryed this tyraunt with full lowde noys,  
Thus berkyd this dogg ageyn that hevynly name,  
1130 Ageyn Jhesu that was hangyd on croys.  
His men abowte him thus gan he to blame:  
“Com forthe anon; loke ye tak this dame,  
Bete hir and rende hir with yrn and plumbys of lede —  
Leve not youre labour tyll that sche be dede!”

1135 Sche was bete now than befor his face  
So dispytously that schame it was to see,  
For many a man that stode thoo in that place  
Myght not loke on hir for reuthe and pytee.  
The tyraunt wold nevyr sey, “Now leve ye,”

*pitilessly*

---

<sup>1</sup> Lines 1110–13: *the report [of her prediction] was widely circulated, / And various men who carefully noted the day and time (i.e., the details of her prediction) / Afterwards knew that / Everything she said was reliable and true*

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- 1140 But evyr he cryed, “of hir make an hende,  
For if sche lyve oure puple wyll sche schende!”

*end*

**Chapter 20**

- Thus is sche bounde and led forth in the town.  
The puple that folowyde on hir thus gun crye:  
“O noble mayde, why wyl ye not fall down  
1145 Onto the emperor and of him aske mercy?  
We are full sory that youre fayre body  
Is so rent, youre skyn is all to tore;  
But ye aske mercy, ye are lost for evyrmore.

- “What woman are ye that so despysse your age,  
1150 Youre body, your beuté, that ye set at nought?  
Ye may have worchepe, ye may be set in stage  
Ryght as a goddesse — where on is youre thowte?  
And all the world for beuté schulde be bowte:  
Here myght thei fynde it; thei nede no ferther seke.  
1155 Syth ye be wyse, syth ye be holde so meke,

*platform*

*are held to be*

- “Why wyll ye not obey onto the kynge?  
Bettyr it is to bowe than vylensly to be dede.  
In youre bokes I trow ye lerned this thinge:  
The grete dygnyté may ye not down trede;  
1160 It longyth to yow to obey onto your heede.  
Syth it is ryght, why will ye not it doo?  
We wolde do thus if ye councelled us soo.

*cruelly*

- “Ye lese the flour of youre virgynyté,  
Ye lese that Godd plenteuously in yow sette,  
1165 Ye lese your herytage, ye lese youre degré,  
All for a worde whech that is youre dette!  
Ovysolenly think we that youre hert is sett  
Whan that no counseyle may yow lede ne rayle,  
Most specyalys whan it is your avayle.”

*what*

*obligation*  
*Too singularly*  
*constrain*

- 1170 Swech wordes spake the puple there abowte:  
“Remembre yow, mayde, what ye schall now lese

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- All for youre hert, for it is so stowte.  
 Feynyth summe plesauns, syth ye may not chese —  
 Both body and bonys with betyng wyll ye lese;  
 1175 Onys mercy may avoyde all this. *lose*  
*At any time*  
 Thys is oure consell — it may yow bryng to blys.
- “Youre whyght skyn that schyneth as the sune,  
 Ye wyll schende it and make it pale and wan,  
 For very betyng it wyl be all dunne;  
 1180 Youre blode reall whech now that no man *destroy*  
*royal*  
 In these dayes remembyr no hyer can,  
 This wyll ye spylle ryght upon the grounde.  
 Youre counsell in this is neythir sane ne sounde!”

**Chapter 21**

- “O wykkyd counsell,” seyd the mayde ageyn,  
 1185 “Goo to your werkys and think no more on me. *about your business*  
 Fy on beuté that wyll with wynde and reyn  
 Be steyned ful sone; my fayrnesse whech that ye  
 Compleyn so sore, thow that I lyve, pardé,  
 1190 And fall in age, yet wyll it than apeyre. *Lament*  
*deteriorate*  
 Than for my flesch fall ye not in dyspeyre,
- “But trost ye this as for a sekynnesse:  
 All youre bodyes, be thei nevyr so bryght,  
 Shall dey and roote in her wretchydnes,  
 For this same deth longyth onto us of ryght,  
 1195 Condemned for synne be the provydens and the syght  
 Of God, oure Lord. What, shall we than so wayle  
 For febyll beuté that so sone will qwayle? *rot*  
*decline*
- “Every man must thus as of necessité  
 Deye and rote but of the speciall grace  
 1200 Be graunted to summe of that deyté — *deity*  
 For summe with clennes be that there purchace  
 Swech dispensacion that in what maner place  
 They be leyd, thei shall nevyr roote,  
 1205 Flesshe ne senowis, veynes, shete ne coote: *rot*  
*sinews; shroud; garments*

Book 5

- 1205 “This specialté is to hem graunted here  
 That kepe her bodyes fro all unclennes  
 Of lust and fylth and fro that love unclere  
 Whech thei calle lechery — no love, I gesse,  
 I calle it rather a wyld rage of wodnesse. *impure*
- 1210 But now to purpos: thei that kepe hem clene,  
 Thei have this pardon graunted, as I wene. *to the point*
- “And if my Lord, my love, wil graunt me  
 That aftir my deth my flessh shall not roote,  
 Than am I more bound onto His deité  
 1215 Than evyr I was and this I Him behoote:  
 There shall nevyr man make me so to doote  
 That I shall leve His love or His plesauns.  
 Therfore, ye puple, leve this observauns, *promise  
be so foolish  
ritual*
- “Folowith no lenger, goth home to youre-werke;  
 1220 Wepe noth for me but for youreselue ye wayle.  
 I shall dey bodily, but because I have the merke  
 Of Crystis baptem, I shall scape that grete asayle  
 Of all the fendys whech with grete travayle  
 Are ful besy oure soules for to gete  
 1225 Onto her prison, where thei shall hem bete.
- “This shall I escape and eft ryse ageyn  
 In fayrer forme than evyr ye sey in me —  
 I beleve and trost this thing as for certeyn.  
 Therfor, seres, for youreselue wepe ye,  
 1230 For youre error, that ye in derkenes be;  
 For if ye deye in this same error,  
 Youre reryng ageyn shall cause you grete dolour.” *resurrection*
- Many of hem that here hir thus speke *hear*  
 Were converted to Cryst oure savyoure.
- 1235 Ful pryyly her maumentis dede thei breke  
 Whech that thei had in ful grete honour,  
 Withdraw hem fro synne and wayled her error,  
 And pryyly, sole hevy as ony leed,  
 For naturall fere that thei shuld noth be dede.

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**Chapter 22**

- 1240 Ther was a man in Alysaunder at that tyme,  
Meyer and leder of alle the puple there  
Undyr the emperour, puncher of all cryme,  
Of whom the cyté had full mechill fere.  
Venemhous in angyr was he as ony bere; Mayor  
punisher  
1245 Dispitous, veniabill, without discrecyon:  
Cursates thei called him thorowoute the town. bear
- He sey the emperour in angyr and woodnes  
And, of pure malice, sette him more on fere:  
“O emperour,” he seyd, “thi wisdam, as I gesse,  
1250 Shuld make thee ashamyd of this matere here,  
That o wench shuld bryng thee thus in dwere —  
Thu standyst stoyned as thou thu were bounde.  
Lystyn my counsayle therfor now a stounde: aflame
- “This mayde Kateryne sey yett no torment  
1255 Whech shuld fese hir to make afraied. attack  
Therfor, sir, I telle you myn entent:  
We shall make a thing so horrifyly arayed  
It shal be dred or it be fully asayde.  
Lete hir se onys this thing that I shall devyse —  
1260 She shall leve sone than, I trow, all this gyse. behavior
- “Comaund werkmen for to obey to me:  
I shall be maystir, thei shall do her werke,  
For I have conceyved now a new cruelté —  
Ful sekyrly therof have I take my merke. made measurements  
1265 In this matere both controllere and clerke accountant  
Will I be and no man but myselfe.  
Werkmen will I have with me ten or twelve.
- “This have I dyvysed in my besy thoght:  
Foure grete qweles thus schul we make, wheels  
1270 Swech maner wise shall thei be wrought  
What maner thing that evyr thei take  
Anon in pecys thei shul it rende and shake

*Book 5*

With her sharpnes whech thei shul have,  
For all the spokes that com fro the nave

*hub*

- 1275 "Shul have nayles sharp as a knyffe  
I-fasted to the sercles round all abowth.  
There is no man now that beryth lyffe,  
Be his herte nevyr so styffe and stowth,  
And he be onys ine he com not oute  
1280 Or he be deed and alle to pecys drawe,  
Rith be experiens this thing shall we knawe.

*perimeters*

- "Sharp sawes shull thei have sumwhat crokyd,  
Nayled onto the qwelys on the utter syde.  
In swech maner forme thus shul thei be hokyd:  
1285 Ech of hem be othir ful sotilly shall glyde;  
Summe shall com upward with her cours wide,  
Summe shall go downward, and thus shall thei rend  
All thing betwix hem and therof make an ende.

*wheels; outside*

- "Therfor lete these qweles be mad in hast.  
1290 Sett the mayd right be hem whan that thei goo —  
Sche shal be afraied or sche hem tast.  
There is no man lyvyngh hath sey swech whelys moo!  
This same devyse shall plese youre lordchip soo,"  
Seyd this Cursates. "Ye shull cun me thanke.  
1295 Yondyr will we make hem right on the banke."

*frightened before; experiences  
seen*

- The emperor comaundered, and that in hasty wyse,  
These qweles shuld be made and that anon  
Rith as Cursates thus gan devyse.  
Thei are called forth, both Robyn and Jon,  
1300 Carpenteres and smythes, as fast as thei may gon.  
Thei hewe and thei blewe ful sore, levyth me:  
The qweles must be redy withinne dayes thre.

**Chapter 23**

Now is it com that same third day.  
The qweles are redy, sette as thei shall be;

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- 1305 She is brought forth, Kateryne, this same may,  
 Right betwix hem sett now is she.  
 Too qweles goo downward, as we seyd, pardé,  
 And too rend upward; there is non that it seyth  
 But for fere he gruggeth with his teth. *gnashes his teeth*
- 1310 O nobil mayd, how shall thu scape this thing?  
 This irous emperour, he is noth thi frend;  
 The meyhir is cruel in his ymagenyng,  
 For he hath stodyed with all hert and mend  
 Thi virginal body to distroy and shend. *wrathful*
- 1315 There is no comforth but fro the court above:  
 He wil not fayle thee, Jhesu that is thi love.
- Thus is she sett and lykly to be rent.  
 With all her labour the servauntis dresse her gere: *gear*  
 Thei tary sumwhat because that hir entent
- 1320 Thei wene to chaunge rith for very fere. *expect*  
 Hir yne and handis ful mekely gan she rere *eyes; raise*  
 Up onto heven — swech was hir oryson:  
 “Lord God,” she seyd, “that made sunne and mon,
- “Lord that art allmyty in majesté,  
 1325 Thu can all thing and may fulfylle in dede; *know and can do [everything]*  
 Lord that nevyr hydyst Thi grete pyté  
 Fro thoo folke that cryne onto Thee at nede,  
 O Lord of lordes, my prayer Thu may spedē.  
 I pray Thee, Lord, with ful besy entent,  
 1330 That Thu distroy this horribyll new torment —
- “Make Thi thundir descend now with Thi levene: *lightning*  
 Brenne it, breke it, thys tyme I me thus pray.  
 Schewe Thy power, open now Thy hevyn  
 That men may know Thi lordchip at this day.
- 1335 It is full esy to Thee make here swech afray *for You to; attack*  
 And to the puple it is full mervelous.  
 Good blyssyd Lord that art so graciowus,

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- 1340 "Thys aske I not for oure fere of deth  
But for Thi puple that stand here abowte.  
Me thinkyth, Lorde, her langage myn herte sleth,  
That thei with tungys and wordys prowde and stowte  
Schuld blaspheme Thi name and put in dowte  
Thi trewe feyth. This is, Lorde, my cause,  
To schryve me schortly to Thee in a clause:  
1345 "That thei shuld trust Thi myght and Thi powere  
And honour Thi name and be converted eke,  
Be turned fro maumentis whch thei worchep here,  
The Lord Godd only for to seke.  
This pray I Thee with hert lowe and meke:  
1350 Graunt me this as Thu art omnipotent —  
Suffyr not Thi seruauntes with maumentys be circumvent."  
furious  
goal  
confess; sentence

## Chapter 24

- |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                       |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      | Whan that this lady had endyd hir orysoun,<br>Anon a angell was sent down fro hevene —<br>With wynde and thundyr thoo cam he down.                                                                                                       |                                                                       |
| 1355 | There cam with him eke an horryble levene.<br>The hour of the day thei sey it was but sevene,<br>But or eyte he with wynde and fere<br>Brekē all this qwelys — thei fley here and there,                                                 | <i>lightning</i><br><i>eight; fire</i><br><i>wheels; flew</i>         |
|      | Thei spryng abowte be pecys in the place.                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                       |
| 1360 | Summe man hathe harme on legges and on knees,<br>Summe are hurt on handys and on face<br>There fley fere ful wondyrly with the trees.<br>Mech of the puple have take there her fees:<br>Thei that blasphemyd oure Godd with cruell hert, | <i>flay many; spokes</i><br><i>got what was coming to them</i>        |
| 1365 | Fro this venjauns thei may not lyghtly stert.                                                                                                                                                                                            | <i>go</i>                                                             |
|      | The lady sate stille, for she felt no grevauns,<br>Makynghir prayer with grete devocion.<br>Thus can oure Lord for His make purvyauens,<br>Thus can He shape hem her savacion.                                                           |                                                                       |
| 1370 | Thus dede He sumtyme in the Calde nacyon                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <i>i.e., followers; provision</i><br><i>ordain</i><br><i>Chaldean</i> |

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- Whan that His servauntis in the ovene were sette  
 Wher that the fere of his myth was lette, *fire was deprived of its power*
- For thei in the ovene were no thing brent,  
 But thei about it, thei toke the harme. *the bystanders*
- 1375 This lady is lych hem in this myracle present:  
 The fyre fley abouthir and in hir barme *bosom*  
 It restyd oftyme, but she was not warme,  
 Ne hurt, ne harmed in no maner degré,  
 Yet was this fere so horrible that he
- 1380 Brent the qweles and throw hem aboute,  
 Brent men, eke, and thoo were not fewe —  
 Foure thousand seyth oure story, withouten doute,  
 Were dede with the blast, leyd all on rowe,  
 Of hethen caytyves, schrew rith be schrewe. *wretches; villain*
- 1385 Heraudes noumbred hem for thei coud best.  
 The lady sate stylle in hir holy nest,
- Kneland devoutly in sobyr prayere.  
 The aungell and fere both thei toke her wey *companion; departed*  
 To place thei cam fro; men myth hem here
- 1390 Both in her comyng and goyng, thei sey.  
 Mech folke for fere were in poynt to dey,  
 Save that the comforth of this swete may  
 Lyft hem ageyn fro that affray.
- This is the ende of this costfull werke: *expensive*  
 1395 Who are now woo but hethen men there? *sad*  
 Who are now mery? Who gune her fruntes merke *foreheads*  
 But Crysten folke whech hath scapyd this fere? *fire*  
 Summe men for venjauns may not go ne stere: *i.e., are crippled or dead*  
 Thus o syde is in joye, the othir in sorow and care;  
 1400 Of swech maner venjauns lete every man beware.

**Chapter 25**

Now is the emperour oute of mesure wood,  
 For all fayleth and fallith that shuld now stand.

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- For very angyr he rent habyte and hooде.  
 “Saturne,” he seyd, “whi take ye not on hand  
 1405 Youre owne cause? For, as I undirstand,  
 This venjauns is repugnyng to youre deité.  
 Wher is now youre myth? Wher is now he,  
 “Jubiter youre sone, that hath the governauns  
 Ovyr these Ciclopes, smythis I mene,  
 1410 Whech with her thundir make the erde to dauns  
 So it is aferd of tho strokes kene?  
 But ye defend you, youre offeryng wil be lene!  
 Ryse up, ye goddes, and suffir not this wrong!  
 1415 Me thinkith ye abyde wondirly long.”
- Cyclopes*
- In all this care the qween that stod above,  
 Hey in a toure for to behold this syght,  
 Whech on that tyme had bore the love  
 Full pryyly in hert of God almyth,  
 Now will she pleynly ryth before his syth  
 1420 Uttir hir hert, falle therof what falle.  
 She is now com down, and hir servauntis alle,  
 To presens of hir lord. Thus than she sayd,  
 “Thu wretchid husband, what hast thu i-doo?  
 Why tormentist thu so wrongly this goodly mayde?  
 1425 Ageyn the grete God whi wrestyllist thu soo?  
 What wodnes makith thee with care and woo  
 To pursew Goddis servauntis with peyne and deth?  
 O cruell best, whan thu shalt yeld thi breth,  
 “Whedir wilt thou send thi wretchid goost?  
 1430 Thou fytyst ageyn the prycke that shall thu fynd,  
 For whan thu art hyest and in pryd moost,  
 Oure Lord God ful sore shall thee bynd.  
 Turne thi bestialté to mannes mynd!  
 1435 Know the powere of thi God above  
 Whech werkith so wondirly for hem that Him love!
- lean*
- come what may*
- madness*
- attack*  
*most proud*
- i.e., be rational*

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- “The grete myty Godde of Crysten men —  
 Se what He dede this ilke same day:  
 With a thundir clap, of thi lordes ten  
 Smet He to the deth — thu thiselv it say —
- 1440      Foure thousand of thi comonys in her aray,  
 Thei ly yondyr dede. Who shall hem reyse?  
 If Appollo do it I will him than preyse.
- “He that with a stroke may swech thing make,  
 He is a lord; know Him for thi kyng.
- 1445      Thi fals maumentrye I rede thee forsake.  
 Turne thee to that Lord that mad all thing:  
 The synnes that we dede whil we were yng  
 He will forgeve us if we mercy crave —
- “Aske mercy of Him and thu shall it have!”
- 1450      Whan the tyraunt herd what the qwen sayde,  
 “Woman,” sayd he, “wote ye what ye say?  
 I am full sekyr ye spoke with the mayde  
 Whan I was oute this othir day.  
 Avyse you sumwhat or that ye asay
- 1455      The oribile peynes whech that ye shul have.  
 Youre frendes ne youre kynrod shall you not save,
- “For, be that hy majesté of the goddes alle,  
 And be that provydens of Jubiter the kyng,  
 But ye fro this fonnednes and that in hast falle,
- 1460      Dame, ye shall have as foule endyng  
 As evyr had woman, eythire eld or yng,  
 In youre dayes. Therfor, avyse you weel,  
 For thow youre God hath brokyn oure wheell
- “Be witchcraft or be nygromancy,  
 1465      Trost me in this: we shall ordeyn a mene  
 For to distroy youre fals tretchery.  
 What, art thu now, dame, led on that rene?
- 1470      Thi witte counte not to a bene worth  
 Whan thu forsakist the goddes protection  
 And, as a fole, takyst the Crysten illusyon.”
- saw  
*your subjects*  
*resurrect*
- advise
- young
- lest; experience
- foolishness
- by that rein  
*amounts; bean*

Chapter 26

- Thus in his angyr and in his grete ire,  
 He byddyth his mynystris to take the qwen.  
 With sotil launces made of yrne wyre  
 Thei schul rend hir tetys ryth anon bedene.
- 1475 In his presens thei shall do it, for he will it sene —  
 Long sorow he will that his wiffe shall have.  
 “Lete se,” he seyth, “if Cryst shall hir now save!”
- Aftir this is done he will thei hir take,  
 Lede hir to the felde there traytouris alle
- 1480 Have as thei deserve, teye hir to a stake,  
 Smyte of hir heede and let it down falle,  
 Let it lye there — hungry doggys it schalle  
 Ete and devoure in despyte of Jhesu.  
 As the tyraunt badd, his men dede pursew:
- 1485 Thei pullyd hir tetys in ful horrible wyse  
 Ryght from hir breste — pyté it was to se  
 The blode in the veynes with the mylke ryse.  
 All rent and ragged, all blody was sche,  
 Yet onto Kateryne sche fel down on kne,
- 1490 Prayng ful dolfully, and evyn thus sche sayde:  
 “O Crysten pelere, o most holy mayde,
- “Pray now for me onto thi Lorde above,  
 That this peyn whych I suffyr here  
 Only for His worchep, His feyth, and His love,
- 1495 May be to my sowle a suffycyaut chere  
 Whan I schal come to that blys full clere  
 Whech thu behyght me not long agoo.  
 Pray eke for me that I may kepe alsoo
- “The same good purpos whech I am inne,  
 That this peyn horrible make me not reneye
- 1500 This holy lyffe to turn ageyn to synne.  
 I am sore aferde my flesch, or that I deye,  
 For very drede the contrarye of this shulde seye.
- teats; immediately*
- Let [it be] seen*
- where*
- pillar*
- accomplishment*
- promised*
- renounce*

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- 1505 Wherfore, lady, all this lyghte in thee: *alights upon you*  
 Pray thu to Godd that He may kepe me.”
- The mayde seyd onto the qween ageyn,  
 “O blessed lady that hast forsake all thing,  
 Crowne and joye, schortly for to seyn,  
 And wonne the lufe therfore of oure kynge,  
 1510 Cryst I mene, make now no stakeryng *have no doubt (staggering)*  
 As in this matere, for He shall make thee stronge  
 For Whos lufe thu sufferest now this wrong.
- “Suffyr hertly all this grete dyssesse: *discomfort*  
 It schal not lest but a lytyll space. *last*
- 1515 Cryst youre Lorde herwith shall ye plese,  
 Whech hath graunted of His specyall grace  
 That this same day shall ye se His face.  
 A meruelous chaunge, lady, shall it be  
 Whan ye com before the Trynyté:
- 1520 “For temporal londe ye shul have hevenly blys,  
 For erdly husbond youre spouse shal be He  
 That may amend all thing that is amysse —  
 A Lord that dwellith evyr in felicité,  
 A Lord that hath nevyr non adversité.
- 1525 Thus shul ye chaunge, lady, onto the best.  
 I shal not long be absent fro that nest.”
- Thus is she comforted, this noble Crysten qwene,  
 Thus is she stabylyd mytyly in oure feyth. *supported mightily*  
 Thus is she led, with knytys as I wene;
- 1530 And evyr the emperor onto his men seyth  
 Ful bostous wordes, strokes eke he leyth *arrogant*  
 Upon her backes that thei shuld make a ende  
 Of this woman, for hir tetys now thei rend,
- 1535 As I seyd ere, and aftir that grete peyne  
 With sharpe swerd hir hede of thei smyth. *off*  
 Oure Lord Godde strengthid hir to susteyne  
 With grete pacyens all this same unryth. *injustice*

*Book 5*

- Thus is she passed; hir soule is to that lyth *light*  
Whech was endles, rith as we beleve!
- 1540 The thre and twenty day of Novembyr, rith at eve,  
  
And on a Wednysday, was this martyrdam  
Thus consummat. Hir body whan it was dede  
Was left styll, in despyte of Crystyndam, *out of scorn for*  
Lying there full white and eke full rede,  
  
1545 No man so hardy to wynd it in cloth or lede, *wrap; lead*  
Thus had the emperour of his cruelté.  
That she lay thus mech folke thouth ptyé. *thought*

**Chapter 27**

- Now is the nyth com and onto her rest  
Is every man go that was abydyng there.
- 1550 Porphery thouth it was honest  
And eke medfull this body for to rere, *meritorious; lift up*  
Eke to the byryng devoutly it to bere.  
Therfor called he certeyn knythis onto him,  
And whan the weder was ful derke and dym, *weather*
- 1555 Rith in the wyntir aboute seynt Kateryne day, *i.e., November 25*  
He cam to the body with full holy entent.  
Evene in hir lyvand, rith as she lay,  
With full swete and costful onyment  
He baumed hir body and forth with it went, *anointed*
- 1560 With prayer wepyng and full besy cure;  
Thus thei led it to the sepulture.
- The next day is there grete questyon:  
Who beryed the qwen? Who was so hardy  
To falle in grevous transgression  
1565 To remeve or bery this same body?  
Only of suspencion certeyn folke openly  
Were arrestyd be the offyceres ther,  
And Porphiry ful boldly withouten fere

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- 1570 Aperyd to the emperour and thus he sayd:  
 “Sith thou art a lord and justyce shuld kepe,  
 Whi hast thou tormentyd this holy mayde?  
 Thin owne wyves hede of dede thou swepe —  
 Grete cause hast thou sore for to wepe!  
 These innocentis, eke, this is thin entent,  
 1575 Withouten cause now to torment.
- did you smite off*
- “Chese of thin ire, cese of thi wrong;  
 Leve thi besynes in inquisition.  
 I telle thee pleynly, thow thu me hong,  
 I am that man whech with devocion  
 1580 Byried thi wiffe; me thout it no treson  
 But full acordand onto nature  
 To bryng that body onto sepulture.
- Chase*
- “Wher hast thou seyn swech cruelnes?  
 Yete to thevys and robouriſ whan thei are dede  
 1585 Her frendis have leve of the law, I gesse,  
 To wynd hem in clothis, in bord of lede,  
 To solace her neyboris with drynke or brede.  
 All this is turnyd ageyn discretion,  
 Ageyn kynd eke ageyn religion!
- permission*  
*coffin*
- “Wher lerid thou evyr that bestis shuld ete  
 Bodyes of men, of all creatures best?  
 Thus oure auctoures wryth and thus thei trete:  
 It is neythir worshipfull ne eke honest  
 Onto mankynd to foule his own nest.  
 1595 Sere emperour, I confesse here this dede have I do —  
 Punch not these innocentis, but lete hem goo!”
- sound judgment*  
*Punish*

**Chapter 28**

- These wordes of Porphirie thei aren a wounde  
 Onto Maxens hert, for he made a cry,  
 Whan he had sorowed a lytyll stounde,  
 1600 So grete and so loude the halle whech was hye  
 Sounded with the noyse; the very malencoly
- while*

Book 5

- Made him so wood he wist not what he sayd, *mad*  
 But sone aftir swech wordes he up brayd: *roared*
- “O me, most wretchid of all men that lyve,  
 Wherto brought Nature me to lyffe?  
 Whi wold she to me swech astate gyve *prosperity*  
 Whan she thus wretchedly hath take my wyffe?  
 Had she suffered me with sharp knyffe  
 Be stykyd in my cradyll she had do the best. *stabbed*  
 1610 Now am I reved of all my dewe rest, *deprived*
- “For Porphery here, of whom I most trost,  
 Porphirie here, the best frend I have,  
 My Porphirie, my knyth, thus is he lost,  
 So deceyved of witchcraft that he begynnyth rave.
- 1615 Evene as the spokys rest in her nave, *spokes [of a wheel] rest in their hub*  
 So in his brest stood all my comforth;  
 To swech anothir frend can I nevyr resorte.
- “He deceyvyd my wyffe, but she is dede,  
 He hath deceyved himself, that grevyth me most.
- 1620 My hert it waxith hevy as the lede,  
 So am I acomered with thoutis in my goost. *assailed*  
 Allas, my Porphirye, I durst a made a boost, *would have sworn*  
 Thow all my kyngdam had me forsake,  
 Fals to my crown no man shuld thee make.
- 1625 “Yete thou have do this grete despite —  
 Deceyvyd my wyffe but deceyvyd thiselv —  
 Yete of thi treson thou shall have respite:  
 Ten dayes I graunt thee or ellis twelve.  
 Leve this Crysten cumpany, forsake that elve *elf*
- 1630 Jhesu of Nazareth — He dede nevyr man good.  
 He is cause of spylling of mech gentil bloode.
- “If thou wilt leve this new cursyd scole,  
 Thu shall have grace, thu shalt not dey.  
 So wyse a man now made a fole,  
 1635 Who caused him thus sone to reneye *renounce*

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The holy religion, the eld trew wey  
Whech that oure faderes kept withoute mynd?  
Allas, man, allas — thi reson is ful blynd!”

**Chapter 29**

- Right with this langage the emperor dede calle  
1640 All knytes of the court be on and be on. *one by one*  
He examyned himselfe that tyme hem all,  
How that thei thoutht this matere shuld goon.  
Ful dolfully to hem he made his mone:  
“Beholdith,” he seyth, “how my Porphyrye  
1645 All sodenly is i-falle onto this mysery.
- “I hope it is to you but ignorauns  
If that ye favoure him in his dede,  
But be ye ware of that grete venjauns  
Whech that may falle withouten drede  
1650 On swech renegatis that othir men lede  
Fro her trew lawes. How will ye answere?”  
Alle seyd thei thus that stoden there:
- “Be it knowe to thee now, ser emperor,  
That God and Lord whech this same man  
1655 Honourith at this tyme, Jhesu oure savyoure,  
This same God, with all that we may or can,  
Will we serve, curse thu or banne,  
Endith thou and smyth with tormentis straunge —  
Leve this wele: thu shall us nevyr chaunge. *Believe*
- 1660 “Fere of deth or love of lyffe swete  
May nevyr depart oure hertly love  
Fro Jhesu Cryst, the trewest prophete  
That evyr was sent fro heven above.  
What peynes are applyed than shall thu prove  
1665 That alle oure hertis are sette in one, *i.e., we are of one mind*  
In this same feyth, as stabill as the ston.”

Book 5

- The emperour comaund in hasty wyse  
Thei shuld be led onto her passion,  
For of swech renegates he wil be justese  
1670 To venge the wrong which that was don  
Upon the goddes, the sunne and the mone.  
Thus are thei ledde forth to her ende,  
Save Porphirye alone now thei have no frend,
- For he to comforthe hem with full myty feyth  
1675 Onto the emperour presyd where he stoode.  
Swech maner wordis at that tyme he seyth:  
“Men will wene that thu be ny wood  
To sle this puple sodenly in her bloode  
And lete me scape whech stered hem all.  
1680 For perell, I counsell, whech that may falle
- “Onto thee and eke onto thi londe,  
Evene with the membris take now the hede!”  
Thus sayd this man, as I undirstond,  
To comfort hem thus or thei be dede.  
1685 Because thei were of vysage hevy as leed  
He was adrede ful sore that thei schuld fayle  
If thei withoute him had go to this batayle.
- Therfore, evyn aftyr his holy hertys desyre  
1690 Is he now servyd: bounde and forthe eke leed.  
Thei were not brent as heretykys in fyre,  
But in her martyrdam thus were thei spedē: *hastened*  
Too hundred were there, of whech not on flede,  
Her hedy the emperour bad thei shuld of smyte.  
This was her ende, schortly to endyte.
- 1695 The bodyes were left that doggys shuld hem ete,  
For very despyte ryght of Crysten feyth —  
On of the auctoures whech this legend trete  
In very sothenesse thus wrythy and seyth.  
The day of her deth eke ful fayre he leyth  
1700 Of Novembre moneth, the foure and twenty day, eke  
The fyfte day of that same weke.

**Chapter 30**

- The next day folowyng, he clepyth this mayde  
Before his tribunal; now is she present.  
With ful sotyll langage onto hir he sayde  
1705 Alle this male corage and his evyll entent: *wicked heart*  
“Thow thu be gylty,” he seyd, “of this torment  
Of Porphyrye, of my wyffe, and my knytes alle —  
(Fer fro her feyth thu made hem to falle,
- “With sorcery and myschauns thu hast turned hem; *wrongdoing*  
1710 Thei coude nevyr resort onto her modyr wytte. *common sense*  
Thei dede more for thee than for fadyr or eem. *uncle*  
I cowde nevyr perceyve the knottys that ye knyte,  
But deede are thei alle and we repent not yyt.) —  
Mayden, thu may lyve, if thu hafe grace,  
1715 Notwythstondyng thi treson and thi trespace.
- “Wherfore I counsell now onto thi foudenesse: *foolishness*  
Forsake thi magyke, wepe sore, and wayle  
That evyr thu were so bolde in folehardynesse  
To geve the qwene or Porphyrye swech evyl counsayle.  
1720 Fro thin eyne lete the watyr now thi chekys rayle, *flow down*  
Fle thi deth now, for thow thu dede this gylt —  
That is to sey, thu art cause of blode that is spylt —
- “Yet may thu amend it with devocyoun,  
To make an offeryng to the holy Saturne.  
1725 We all wyll folow thee ryght in processyoun, *right behind you*  
So that thu wylt to this counsayle turn.  
Allas, woman, how long wylt thu sojorne  
In this grete cursydhed, oute of all resoun? *accursed state*  
Yet wyl I forgeve the all thin elde tresoun.
- 1730 “Thu schal have, mayden, al thoo behestis alle  
Whech I promysed thee to bryng to astate.  
Tary no lengere for perell that may falle:  
Chese the bettyr or ellys sey chek-maate.  
But if thu offyf, we too are at debate, *we two are at odds*

Book 5

1735 For thu schalt deye and that in ful hasty wyse.  
Thi deth anon on this maner I wyll devyse:

“I wyll make smyght of thi heed with a blade  
Scherpe on bothe sydes whech may not fayle —

He waraunt it, the smythe that it made,

*guarantees*

1740 That it was sewyre at ilke maner asayle,  
Were it flesch, were it bone or mayle,  
It schuld it kerve. Therfore, mayd, consent,  
And of thin errour, I counsell thee, repent.”

*mail*

**Chapter 31**

The mayde answerde than with full meke voys:

1745 “Evyr hafe I seyd that I am redy to deye  
For His love whech was hang on croys.  
This day schal be, schortly for to seye,  
A gret spectacle to the worldylys eye,  
To se a qween forsake londe and halle,  
1750 So sodeynly to deth for to falle.

“Sume men ween we Crysten, whan we dey,  
Sume men wene the fall is reprovable,  
Sume men ween the fall is myserye.

*reprehensible*

1755 We lese thing to us that is ful supportable —  
I sey we lese thyng that is deceyvable,  
I sey we lese a lyvynge ful of stryffe  
And wyne a regyon whech is the lond of lyffe.

*tolerable*

“For grete sekenes, there schall we have helth;  
For wepyng teres, we shall have lawhyng joye;  
1760 That place haboundeth evyr more in welth,  
That place in sikir hath nevyr no noye,  
It is more sikir than evyr was the toure of Troye  
Fro schot and treson; therfor thedir I glyde.  
Whan I shall dey, Cryst shal be my gyde.

*In exchange for*

*laughing*

*abounds*

*harm*

*tower*

1765 “Wherfore I wil no lenger now thee drawe  
With veyne termes: do as thu hast thought.

*lead*

*intended*

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- I despice thi goddis, thi offeryng, and thi lawe;  
 Alle thi maumentis eke I sett at nought.  
 To Him I goo that hath me ful dere bought;  
 1770 To Him I will, I covett to se His face.  
 The angellis song whech is in that place,
- “If thou myth here it, astoyned shuld thu be.  
 Thou hast no grace swech mysteries to approche.  
 Farewele my frendys, farwele all my mené,  
 1775 Farewele my castels that stand hye on roche!  
 A new drynke my love will me abroche  
 Aftir my blood be spylt here on the ground.  
 Farewele the world that is shape so round!
- “I shall folow the Lombe that washid with His blode  
 1780 Oure blody synnes, wretchid and unkynd,  
 I folow the Lombe whech is full meke and good,  
 Whos steppes folow virgines withouten mynd.  
 Come of, tyraunt, sle and do thi kynd:  
 I abyde not elles but deth and goo to lyffe;  
 1785 I drede no fere, water, swerde, ne knyffe!”
- With these wordes sentens was gove anon:  
 She shal be dede, as was devysyd before.  
 Forth is she drawe. Men and women ilkon  
 Folow on fast and folow on wondir sore,  
 1790 Wepyng and cryeng evyr more and more:  
 “O holy mayde, whi wilt thu thus wretchidly  
 Take thi deth and with sweche velony?”
- Sche seyd ageyn, “Moderes and maydenys alle,  
 Wepe not for me, lette noth my passion,  
 1795 Leve youre wordes with whech ye on me calle;  
 For if nature enclyne you to consolacion,  
 To have mercy on myschefe and desolacion,  
 Wepe ye than rith for youre owne synne  
 Whech ye have haunted, in which ye be inne.

*companions*  
*cliff*  
*tap (as a keg)*

*Lamb*

*innumerable*  
*off: i.e., do your worst*

*replied*  
*hinder*

*committed*

*Book 5*

- 1800 "Wepe for youre errorr whech shall you bryng  
 Onto brennyng fyre where youre goddes dwelle.  
 Thow that youre prestis rede to you and syng  
 Of the goddes holynesse and mech thing you telle,  
 I sewir you this that thei ben in helle  
*assure*  
 1805 And evyr withoute ende in that place shal be;  
 But if ye amend you, eke so shall ye."

**Chapter 32**

- Aftir this is sayd, she is come to the place  
 Where she shall dey, and of the man thoo  
 Whech shuld hir smyth she prayed space  
 1810 For to have, or she fro this world goo,  
 That she may sey wordes on or too  
 In pryvy meditacion onto God above,  
 Which is hir makere, hir Lord, and hir love.

- The man graunted and sche kneled down  
 1815 With eyene and handes lift up to hevene.  
 On swech sentens sche made hir oryson:  
 "O myty God whos name for to nevene  
 Is ful marvelous, makere of planetes sevene,  
 Helth of hem all that trostyn in Thi mercy,  
 1820 Hope of all virgines that to Thi helpe cry,

- "O Jhesu, most swettest, whech hast nonbred me  
 Rith into Thi college among Thi maydenes all,  
 Do with Thi servauntis aftir Thi benygnyté.  
 Spred me with Thi mercy; lete me nevyr falle  
 1825 Into my enmy handis. Lord, to Thee I calle.  
 Do me this mercy for Thi hey name:  
 That what maner man, the rith or the lame,  
*numbered assembly*  
*i.e., not lame*

- "Whech hath my passion in remembrauns,  
 Eythir in his deth or ellis in sekenes,  
 1830 Or in his persecusion or eyther grevauns,  
 If he with devocion and hertyly besynes  
 Aske ony relees, Lord, of Thi worthynes  
*or else*  
*diligence*

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- Graunt him his bone, Lord, for my sake, *request*  
 As I now my deth for Thi love take.
- 1835 “And all thoo that my passion have in memorye,  
 Pestilens ne deth mote hem nevyr greve,  
 Hungyr and sores and othir myserye,  
 And all evyll eyres, on morow or on eve,  
 Suffyr hem not to have, but rathere hem geve
- 1840 Abundauns in hervest and ethir temporate; *air*  
 Let not her londys abyde desolate
- “But graunt hem plenté of her greynes alle. *grains*  
 Because thei love me, Thu schalt hem love.  
 Behold, Lorde, for Thi cause I mote now falle
- 1845 Down into deth. Take to Thi behove *Use; benefit*  
 Thing that this bochere may not hale ne schove:  
 Tak Thu my sowle, no man may but Thou.  
 O Jhesu Cryst, my sowle I comende now
- Onto Thi handys; I pray Thee Thu it take.  
 1850 Lett Thin aungellis whech that se Thi face  
 Come down fro hevyn for Thi maydenes sake,  
 Suffyr hem to come now onto this place,  
 To lede my soule, Lorde, onto Thi grace,  
 Onto that feleschepe whech Thu me behyght *promised*
- 1855 Among Thi seyntys that schyne with Thee full bryght.”

**Chapter 33**

- Sche had scarise made hir conclusyoun *scarcely*  
 Of this prayere but anon sodenlye  
 Fro the hevene thei herd thoo a sownde soun, *loud sound*  
 A swete voys, and thus it gan to crye:  
 1860 “Myn owne spowse, My wyffe and mayde holy,  
 Come now to Me, come now onto thi rest,  
 For in My fey whole hast labored as best.
- “The blyssed gate of hevyn is now ope:  
 It is made redy to thee that mansyoun, *for you; dwelling place*

Book 5

- 1865 For thi feyth, thi charyté, and thi hope,  
 Schall thu have my specyall benysoun. *blessing*  
 There abyde the persones of thi nacyoun  
 For to reteyne thee to that eternyté,  
 Where thu schalt joye before the Trintyté. *serve*
- 1870 "Maydenes are redy to bryng thee thi crowne,  
 Aungellis are redy ordeynde thi sowle eke to lede.  
 As for a tyme cast of thi fleschly gowne ---  
 Thu schall receyve it in anothyr stede. *off*  
 Come forthe in hast; lok thu have no drede
- 1875 Of thi petycyons, for I graunt hem alle:  
 What manere man that on thee wyll calle
- "Or worship with hert thi holy passion,  
 What maner myscheffe whech he be inne,  
 I will relese it, and all transgression
- 1880 Of her defautes or of her eld synne,  
 If thei will leve it and new lyffe begynne,  
 For thi sake I will forgeve hem all,  
 Conferme hem eke nomore aftir to falle."

**Chapter 34**

- 1885 The mayde leyd forth hir necke fayre and qwyte,  
 And thus she sayd onto the smyter thoo: *white*  
 "I am called to fest now of God almyth:  
 Doo thu thin office, the tyraunt bad thee soo,  
 Fulfile his comaundment, and than may thu goo  
 Without daunger, stand eke in his grace;  
 I pray to God forgeve thee thi trespace." *i.e., executioner then*
- The man was glad to do the comaundment  
 Of his lord; wherfor, with besy corage  
 He applyed holly all his entent  
 Sumwhat to spare this yong tendir age,  
 1895 For with a stroke that was ful wode and rage *violent and passionate*  
 Hir hede he parted from hir body there.  
 Too grete myracles anon men myth lere.

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- On was in tokyne of virginall clennesse: *One*  
 In stede of blood, mylke ran at hir necke,  
 1900 Whech of hir purité that tyme bare wytnesse.  
 Ther myth non othir thing ren at that becke  
 Than swech as was befor in the secke —  
 I mene thus to put you oute of doute:  
 Swech thing as was in hir, swech thing ran oute.
- 1905 It ran so plenteuously, it wattered all the grounde  
 That lay aboute hir. O most meruelous welle:  
 Here is the hede, the mylke aboute all rounde.  
 What shulde I more of this myracle telle?  
 Save Mari alone, of maydenhode she hath the belle — *i.e., ranks first*  
 1910 That witnessith wele this present vision  
 Whech may no wey be called illusion.
- Anothir myracle eke was seyn at yye:  
 Aungellis aperyng in full meruelous aray.  
 Bodys lich men, wynges had thei to flye,  
 1915 Thei cam down ful sodenly, auctouris say,  
 Thei toke the body and sone bore it awey  
 Onto the mount where Moyses the lawe toke — *i.e., Mount Sinai*  
 Of this myracle rith thus seyth oure boke.
- 1920 The hill in whech God gave the wretyn lawe  
 Onto the Jewes, ledyth to that perfection  
 Of Crystis Gospell and of His vertuous sawe,  
 In whech we fynd full swete instruction,  
 Poule in his bokes maketh swech induction — *teachings*  
 1925 He seyth it longith to Jerusalem as in servage,  
 With all his childirn here in pylgrymage. *servitude*
- Than sith that this hill is as it were gyde  
 Onto that mownt whech that stant in blysse,  
 It is full good to us that we full hastily ryde  
 Aftir this mayde that she may us wisse *show*  
 1930 A stedfaste lore for to amend oure mysse. *sins*  
 So shall she be in manere of a figure  
 To bryng us to hevyn aftir oure sepulture.

## Book 5

- This mount, thei sey, stand in Arabie;  
It is fro Alisaunder of lond ful gret distauns.
- 1935 In twenty dayes, if that I shuld not lye,  
Myn auctour seyth, thow man had puruyauns  
And gydys good and eke gret pusauns  
Full scarsly shuld he laboured in theis dayes —  
There leve but fewe that hath mad asayes.
- 1940 This passion was, as oure story seyth,  
On a Fryday, rith for this entent:  
That syth she fauth so strongly for oure feyth,  
Men wene therfor it was convenient  
That this same day whech oure Jhesu went
- 1945 Oute of this world, that same day his mayde  
Shuld dey for Him; thus oure auctour sayde.
- The grete myracles whech be at hir grave  
Are ny onknow, rith for grete distauns  
Betwix that and us, but this knowlech we have:
- 1950 That oyle it rennyth evyr in habundauns,  
With wheche oyle of sores alle grevauns  
Whech men suffyr, it wil be helyd anon.  
Summe men say that if thei bere a ston
- 1955 Of that same grave, whedir that thei it bere  
It will swete evyr that same holy licour;  
Thus sey the pylgrymes that have be ther.  
This sey oure bokes whech be made in honour  
Of this swete mayde, of this vertuous flour:
- 1960 It longhit to floures swech licoures to swete.  
I herd men eke of othir myracles trete,
- Of lampis hangyng before hir sepulture,  
Fylt with that oyle whech brenne a mannys lyve  
And of her lyth nevyr make forfeiture  
Thou thei brenne yeres ten and fyve.
- 1965 In this matere pleynly I will me schryve:  
I may wele leve that swech merveyles ther be,  
But for because I have non auctorité,
- transportation  
guides; stamina*
- have attempted it*
- fought*
- oil  
injury*
- From; wherever  
sweat*
- sweat*
- for a lifetime*
- explain myself*

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- I dare not write here her declaracion  
Lest that I poyson all my forseyd werke;  
1970 Lest that eke men of myn own nacion  
Shuld ymagen that I, which am a clerke,  
Mith of svech thingis take a wrong merke.  
Wherfor I comytte all this thing in fere  
Onto disscussion of hem that shull it here,
- be misguided  
together
- 1975 For I will determyne no conclusion  
As in this matere. But fully I beleve  
That whoso myth se that solempne stacion,  
He shuld know thing to which we cannot preve.  
Of this matere thus I take my leve.
- 1980 God, oure Lord, for His hye mercy  
Graunt us hevene aftyr this mysery.
- holy place*

Per Capgrave.

*By*

## Notes

### Prologue

- 8       *Thou ledyst the daunce.* According to the OED, “to lead the dance” is a figurative expression meaning “to take the lead in any course of action” (dance, 6a). However, the rejoicing of the saints in heaven is often represented as a dance. See, for example, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Staley (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), p. 60, line 1150, and p. 62, lines 1199–1200.
- 16–43     *alle the privileges . . . / . . . thi loveris alle.* Following Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda aurea*, Capgrave presents Katherine as a sort of omnibus saint, who has obtained all the favors God has granted his other saints, including John the Evangelist (Jesus visited his deathbed), Nicholas of Myra (oil flowed from his grave), the Apostle Paul (blood mixed with milk ran from his severed throat), Margaret of Antioch (God promised to honor requests made in her name), and Clement of Alexandria (angels adorned his grave). That Margaret, Clement, Paul, and Nicholas are mentioned is not accidental, for these are the saints with whom Katherine is most frequently paired in medieval iconography. For a translation of Jacobus de Voragine’s Katherine legend, which was the most widely known life of that virgin martyr in the late Middle Ages, see *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 2.334–41.
- 59       *all that scharp whele.* An allusion to the emperor Maxentius’ attempt to mangle Katherine with a torture instrument consisting of revolving spiked wheels. See 5.1240–1400.
- 62       *Ryth for straungenesse of his derk langage.* This story of how Katherine’s *Life* must be transcribed from an illegible source bears a striking resemblance to the story of the genesis of Margery Kempe’s *Book*.
- 78–112     *a revelacyoun / . . . God ofte sythe.* The priest’s vision is a humorous reenactment of Ezekiel 2:8–3:3, in which a heavenly messenger commands the prophet to eat a scroll. Unlike Capgrave’s priest, Ezekiel does as he is told without protest. A

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nearly identical incident occurs in Revelation 10:8–10; John, like Ezekiel, immediately swallows the scroll.

- 101      *clospe ne hook*. The covers of medieval manuscripts were often equipped with clasps and hooks.
- 119–26    *Amylion fytz Amarak . . . / . . . ye schall more clere*. Capgrave places Amilion's discovery of the MS in the 1360s, during the reign of Peter I of Cyprus and the papacy of Urban V.
- 143      *all the sevene artes*. Defined by Martianus Capella in the fifth century, the Seven Liberal Arts was an educational curriculum consisting of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and the *quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy). Capgrave details Katherine's pursuit of this curriculum in 1.302–99. For more on the subject, see David L. Wagner, ed., *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).
- 150      *be* is repeated in MS.
- 163–68    *Byschop in Alysaunder . . . / . . . syng and rede*. Capgrave is identifying Athanasius with the fourth-century theologian and bishop of Alexandria who, according to longstanding tradition, originally composed Katherine's passion. *Mech adversyté* (line 165) refers to Athanasius' struggle to discredit the views of the Alexandrian priest Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ. Because Arianism was favored by emperors at the time, Athanasius was repeatedly forced into exile. Apparently eager to anticipate all questions, Capgrave admits he does not know whether Katherine's biographer also wrote the so-called "Athanasian Creed," which was recited during *prime*, one of the eight liturgical hours that structured communal worship in medieval religious houses.
- 198      *A hundred yere aftyr*. Capgrave is attributing Arrek's Latin translation to the late fifth century (somewhat more than a century after Athanasius' death in 373).
- 236–38    *that hevynly reyne / That Apollo bare abowte . . . / . . . mannes soule*. Apollos was a learned Alexandrian convert (Acts 18:24–28) whom Paul commends for "watering," or nourishing, the newly sown Christian community at Corinth (1 Corinthians 3:5–9).

## Notes to Book 1

### Book 1

- 53–54 *Oute of the harde thorn brymbyl-tree / Growyth the fresch rose.* “The rose springs from the brier” was a common expression at the time. It was often used to describe saints born of pagan parents. See B. J. Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial Phrases from English Writings Mainly Before 1500* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), R206.
- 71 *keye.* Citing Capgrave’s usage, the OED (“key,” 5) reads, “a place which from the strategic advantages of its position gives its possessor control over the passage into or from a certain district, territory, inland sea, etc.”
- 79–81 *hir freedomys . . . grete repayre.* Freedoms were the rights and privileges granted to a city. Capgrave is saying that Amalek prospered because it was a good place to conduct business.
- 100–05 *Seynt Mark . . . for to beleve.* Eusebius reports Mark’s missionary work in Egypt in Book 2 of his *Ecclesiastical History*.
- 107–18 *Rede Philo . . . I trow not he may.* Philo (20 BC–AD 50) was a Jewish exegete who influenced the Alexandrine school of theology. In his *De vita contemplativa* (*On the Contemplative Life*), to which Capgrave is probably alluding, Philo describes a large community of contemplative men and women who settled outside Alexandria and who had some of the earmarks of Christian hermits. Eusebius claims these contemplatives were Mark’s Christian converts (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.16–17) — a view that was widely accepted during the Middle Ages. Regardless of whether Philo’s ascetics were Christian, Christian monasticism is generally held to have originated in Egypt, when, during the fourth century, men like Katherine’s teacher Adrian retreated to the desert to devote themselves to God and wage war against demons through their asceticism. See the prototypical life of St. Anthony, composed by Katherine’s putative biographer Athanasius.
- 127–33 *on Pathenus . . . called Stromatum.* Pantaenus is the first known head of what would become, under his successors Clement of Alexandria (author of the *Stromateis*, or *Miscellaneous Studies*) and Origen, an influential school of theology.

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- 134–47 *Thys same Alysaundre . . . mote thei spedē.* This passage explains why Katherine is known simply as Queen of Alexandria, though her realm encompasses many other cities and lands.
- 180 *fothȳr.* According to the OED, “used for an enormous quantity, a ‘cart-load’ of money” (fother, 1c).
- 182–89 *Zacharye and Elysabete stode . . . in this degré.* Capgrave is following the conventional practice of certifying Katherine’s holiness by pointing out that her life conforms to familiar Biblical patterns. His allusion is to Luke 1:5–25, 57–59.
- 201 *rose oute of thorne.* See note to lines 1.53–54.
- 213–15 *For of that penaunce . . . ful holy men.* Christ’s mother, Mary, was held to have escaped the normal agonies of childbirth because she was untainted by original sin.
- 221 *Sarcynrye.* By Capgrave’s day, this and other terms referring to the Muslim faith had come to signify heathendom generally.
- 227–36 *This chyld for to hylle . . . Thus is it kept.* Capgrave’s attention to the baby Katherine’s nurture reflects a widespread interest in childhood during the fifteenth century, when guides on child rearing and stories about children proliferated. For a discussion of the fifteenth century’s “fascination with childhood,” see Barbara A. Hanawalt, “Narratives of a Nurturing Culture: Parents and Neighbors in Medieval England,” in “*Of Good and Ill Repute*”: *Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 158–77 (quote on p. 161); and Seth Lerer, “Reading Like a Child: Advisory Aesthetics and Scribal Revision in the *Canterbury Tales*,” in *Chaucer and His Readers: Imagining the Author in Late-Medieval England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 85–116. The contents of one of the MSS containing Capgrave’s *Life of Saint Katherine*, British Library MS Arundel 168, evince a particular concern with the education of children. This manuscript includes an alphabet poem, a translation of Benedict Burgh’s *Distichs of Cato*, and two other virgin martyr legends that emphasize the saint’s relationship to her parents: William Paris’ “Christine” and an anonymous verse life of St. Dorothy. Capgrave evinces his particular interest in nurture in his prose life of St. Augustine, which devotes considerable attention to Monica’s troubles raising her unruly son.

### Notes to Book 1

- 246 ff. *Thus provyd this princesse.* Though more attention was being devoted to women's education in Capgrave's England, the rigorous liberal arts training described below would not have been available to actual women, who were barred from attending such institutions of higher learning as universities. For useful discussions of the education of women in late medieval England, see Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989), pp. 153–75; and Caroline M. Barron, "The Education and Training of Girls in Fifteenth-Century London," in *Courts, Counties, and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 139–53. For a discussion of St. Katherine as a possible model for medieval English girls, see Lewis, "Model Girls?: Virgin-Martyrs and the Training of Young Women in Late Medieval England."
- 264 *as I seyd ere.* See Prol., line 144.
- 270–73 *hir play . . . was hir wylle.* The saint's aversion to entertainment is a ubiquitous hagiographical convention.
- 337–64 *The kyng dyd make there for hir alone . . . in hir stody thoo.* These lines explain why Katherine is so astounded when the hermit Adrian appears in her study in 3.401–06.
- 379 *tawt.* MS: *tawter*
- 393 *astronomye.* "Astronomy" was in the Middle Ages more like what we would call astrology. The two disciplines were not distinguished in Capgrave's day.
- 402–27 *All the grete clerkys . . . / . . . that there wore.* This encounter foreshadows Katherine's debate with the fifty philosophers in Book 4. The pitting of a young woman's intelligence against the craft of clerks occurs also within romance tradition. Compare John Gower's "Tale of the Three Questions," *Confessio Amantis* 1.3067–3402 and the Tale of Apollonius of Tyre, 8.271–2008. See note to lines 633–35 below. For more on the broader tradition of "disputing women," see Helen Solterer, *The Master and Minerva: Disputing Women in French Medieval Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
- 441–42 *He is logged there with lordys of his kyne / Whech deyd withouten feyth.* Medieval theologians generally took a dim view of the fate of a pagan like Costus, who, though a good man, lived after the birth of Christ and, hence, could

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at least in theory have become a Christian. Gordon Whatley provides a useful survey of medieval views of righteous pagans in “Heathens and Saints: *St. Erkenwald* in its Legendary Context,” *Speculum* 61 (1986), 330–63.

- 494 *Famagost.* Capgrave is translating the city’s name as “The fame of Costus,” where “Costus” is written with a *G* instead of a *C*.
- 518 *no man wyst why.* Meliades may be trying to pre-empt an organized opposition to her daughter’s ascension. To judge from the laments following Costus’ death, many citizens of the realm cannot imagine Katherine as their new monarch (1.454–57).
- 526 ff. *for the kynrode of hir.* Technically speaking, the antecedent of “hir” is “the qween” (line 512), Katherine’s mother. Hence, it is tempting to see in Capgrave’s attention to Meliades’s genealogy the same deliberate “focus on women as progenitors of the sacred” that is evident in fifteenth-century representations of the Holy Kinship. See Pamela Sheingorn, “Appropriating the Holy Kinship: Gender and Family History,” in *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society*, ed. Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), pp. 169–98 (quote on p. 173). Yet Capgrave’s subsequent account of “the kynrode of hir” ends with Costus (line 681)! This inconsistency raises a number of questions: Did Capgrave intend “hir” to mean Katherine all along? Did he merely forget that he had originally intended to rehearse Meliades’s genealogy? Does his inconsistency register the same anxieties about issues of family and gender that Sheingorn finds in representations of the Holy Kinship?
- 619–21 *Antiochus . . . Jewes yet him banne.* Antiochus’ atrocities and ultimate punishment are recorded in 2 Maccabees 4.7–10.9.
- 633–35 *In Appollony of Tyre ye may rede the storye . . . problemes evyn.* To avoid losing his daughter/lover, Seleucus devised a riddle for prospective suitors. The man who solved it would win the daughter; those who failed to solve it were executed. For a popular Middle English version of the romance, see Book 8 of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*.
- 663 *Fortune.* See note to lines 1.868–75.

### Notes to Book 1

- 686–93 *In this recknyng . . . ordre and degré.* A different version of Katherine's genealogy is given in the popular prose *Lyf of Seynt Katerine*, which shows Katherine's relation through her father to the emperors of Rome. See *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, ed. Henry Hucks Gibbs (London: Nichols, 1884), or "The Life of St. Katherine," trans. Winstead, in *Chaste Passions*.
- 701–04 *I answere hereto as do Seynt Jerome . . . that was His wylle.* See Jerome's Commentary on Matthew (under Matthew 1:1–17).
- 734 *and in halle.* Not in MS.
- 755 *Save summe spoke of love.* Earthly love is not to anyone's "bebove" (line 756) in a saint's legend.
- 763 *puttyng at the ston.* A competition to see who could throw a given stone the farthest. Compare "putting the shot" in modern track and field competitions.
- 788 *wit.* MS: *wyght*.
- 804–12 *So was Cornelius . . . thus seye these clerkys.* The story of Cornelius is told in Acts 10.
- 839–40 *He may . . . / Make goddes of men.* Katherine explains this point in her debate with the philosophers. See 4.2025–32 and my note to line 2032.
- 868–75 *thu blynd Fortune . . . art thou unstable.* Fortune was conventionally represented as a lady turning a great wheel set with people (kings, bishops, nobles, etc.), some happily ascending, others losing their crowns as they tumble down. Following Book 2 of Boethius' influential *Consolation of Philosophy* (AD 524), Christian moralists used Lady Fortune and her wheel to reflect upon the inevitable transience of all earthly pleasures. For a discussion of this theme in fifteenth-century England, see Rosemary Horrox, Introduction, *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes*, pp. 6–10.
- 901 *To sette the standard the wengys on the syde.* A standard is a pole used to display a military emblem. In this case, the sculpted figure of a bird is presumably mounted on the standard and turned so that the enemy can easily see its wings spread. A loose translation would be "And flaunt your battle emblem in the enemy's face."

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- 931–50 *that ye wyll have mercye . . . hertys hayle!* It might seem that the lords are addressing Meliades in language more appropriate to a courtly lady than to a queen mother. However, rhetoric used in letters addressed to social superiors is suffused with the language of love, as Diane Watt notes in “‘No Writing for Writing’s Sake’: The Language of Service and Household Rhetoric in the Letters of the Paston Women,” in *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, ed. Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethaus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 126–29.
- 976–77 *To lyve alone in stody, it was nevyr seyn / That ony lady ony tyme dyd so.* Though I know of no English examples, a number of Italian women chose to forgo marriage in favor of a life devoted to scholarship. See Margaret L. King, “Book-Lined Cells: Women and Humanism in the Early Italian Renaissance,” *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, ed. Patricia H. Labalme (New York: New York University Press, 1980), pp. 66–90. Many medieval Englishwomen would, however, have appreciated Katherine’s reluctance to give up the freedom that a single woman enjoyed. Records from the 1377 poll tax indicate that at least 30% of adult women in England had never been married. See Maryanne Kowaleski, “Singlewomen in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: The Demographic Perspective,” in *Singlewomen in the European Past, 1250–1800*, ed. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 46. Moreover, evidence suggests that when working conditions were good for women, they delayed marriage. See P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire, c. 1300–1520* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 360–61.

### **Book 2**

- 11 *found.* MS: *foud.*
- 14 *Sche knowyth not yet the rode.* A crucifixion pun: *rode* means both way and cross.
- 24 *us.* Not in MS.
- 36 *othyr.* MS: *odyr.*
- 55–66 *For thus it menyth . . . and thi love.* Capgrave is adapting the etymology of Katherine’s name provided in Jacobus de Voragine’s *Legenda aurea*.

*Notes to Book 2*

- 250      *It is more sykyr a bryd in youre fyste.* The first known record of the popular proverb, “A bird in hand is worth two in the bush.” See Whiting, *Proverbs*, B301. The speaker continues with two more proverbs, “The gray hors whyl his gras growyth / May sterfe for hunger” (lines 253–54; compare *Proverbs*, G437) and “The sore may swelle long or the herbe / Is growe or rype” (lines 256–57; compare *Proverbs*, S504).
- 260      *now.* Deleted in MS.
- 267–71    *To se the boweles cut oute of his wombe . . . be foure and be fyve.* Reference to the method of executing traitors by hanging, drawing, and quartering.
- 276      *se men flete and also se hem synk.* Probable allusion to a judicial ordeal (the “cold-water ordeal”), dating from c. 800, wherein the accused was cast into water; sinking indicated innocence, floating guilt. See Henry Charles Lea, *The Ordeal* (1866; rpt. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), pp. 72–88.
- 307      *And yet of this punchyng oft he knew ryght nowt.* In other words, Costus did not personally supervise each and every execution.
- of.* Repeated in MS.
- 470      *you.* Not in MS.
- 476      *I wepe so sore I may no lengere ryme!* Here and elsewhere (for example, 3.1251, 4.1666), Capgrave’s characters betray an almost Brechtian consciousness that their stories are unfolding in rhyme royal stanzas.
- 510–23    *Nabugodonoser . . . Goddys grace.* Daniel’s dealings with Nebuchadnezzar are recounted in Daniel 1–4. According to Daniel 6, Darius (not Nebuchadnezzar) threw Daniel to the lions.
- 510–67    Capgrave is establishing Katherine’s propensity towards conversion: her knowledge of and respect for Scripture (Genesis, Daniel), her desire to know more about Daniel’s god, and her purely perfunctory reverence for her own pagan gods (lines 564–67). Katherine’s study of Scripture, however, might have made her a problematic example for fifteenth-century lay readers.

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- 580      *Ovyde seyde.* Capgrave is paraphrasing views in the introduction to the *Remedium Amoris*.
- 582      *medecyn comyth ovyr late.* Proverbial: Whiting, *Proverbs*, M484.
- 735–42    *Valerye . . . in this forsayd werke.* The *Dissuasio Valerii ad Ruffinum philosophum ne uxorem ducat* was a popular misogynous tract written by Walter Map in the late twelfth century.
- 786      *that astate I trede all undyr fote.* Capgrave may be alluding to popular representations of Katherine of Alexandria trampling the emperor Maxentius. See Introduction, p. 2.
- 825      *Aristoteles Elenkes.* Aristotle's *De sophisticis elenchis* (*On Sophistical Refutations*) was a standard textbook for late-medieval students of dialectic. Aristotle dissects the various rhetorical tricks employed by sophists, whom he defines as people who wish to *appear* wise without actually being so. In so doing he provides a veritable treasure trove of rhetorical fallacies, which Katherine accuses her opponent of using.
- 883      *ye.* MS: *eye*.
- 909      *othir that have abyden long.* Capgrave evokes the stories of various lovers (Troilus, for example, or Dido) whose initial resistance to love resulted in a tragic romance.
- 958–59    *mo wyse hedes . . . the bettir is it.* Proverbial. See Whiting, *Proverbs*, H227.
- 961–93    *qwy / That o man above many shall have governing . . . cuntré abowte.* The view that kingship results from the voluntary submission of free people to another's authority (*pactum subjectionis*) is found in the work of various late-medieval political theorists, including Marsilius of Padua (*Defensor pacis*, especially 1.8–9), Duns Scotus (*Ordinatio* 4.15.2), and Nicholas of Cusa (*Concordantia*, especially 2.21–41, 3.4). The idea goes back to Greek and Roman times, for example, Cicero's *De officiis* (especially 2.21–41) and Aristotle's *Politics* (especially 3.14). For general discussions of consent theories and related matters, see Jeannine Quillet, "Community, Counsel and Representation," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350–c. 1450*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 520–72; and Anthony

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Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 136–85.

- 994      *thei*. Not in MS.
- 1106      *whil*. Rawlinson reads *wyll*, a careless scribal error. I have emended for sense according to Arundel.
- 1116      *grype ne take*. The lord is literally saying that no one can overcome Katherine's arguments, but, since the overall debate concerns Katherine's marriage, we may infer a sexual innuendo.
- 1124      *To Gorgalus tyme*. See 1.568 ff. for Capgrave's account of Gorgalus, king of Syria, and his descendants.
- 1154      *as wyse*. Repeated in MS.
- 1159      *he*. Not in MS.
- 1167–68    *ten or twelve / Schuld geve exaumple rathere than schall oone*. John Gower expresses the same opinion in his discussion of government in the *Confessio Amantis* (Prologue, lines 157–58).
- 1191–92    *syth ye sey that I am now so wys, / Than have I o thing*. See line 1148.
- 1204      *in<sub>2</sub>*. Not in MS.
- 1231      *Athenes, of wysdam it beryth the key*. Athens was the home of such renowned philosophers as Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. In Chaucer's Knight's Tale, when Theseus is said to be "lord and governour" of Athens (I [A] 861), the implication is that he is wise, a man renowned for "his wysdom and his chivalrie" (line 865).
- 1247 ff.    *lych a griff am I*. The Apostle Paul develops and explores this simile in Romans 11:13–24.
- 1286      *Mynerve*. Minerva, Roman goddess of wisdom.

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- 1304      *Babel*. See 1.533–95. Alexandria was founded by the sultan Babel, who named the city Babylon after himself. When Alexander the Great conquered Babylon, he renamed it Alexandria.
- 1354      *The Fyrst Mevere*. See Aristotle, *Natural Science*, Book 8, and *Metaphysics*, Book 12.
- 1371      *do*. Not in MS.
- 1467      *we<sub>2</sub>*. Not in MS.

### **Book 3**

- 6           *is*. Not in MS.
- 36           *onto, to* not in MS.
- 45           *was* MS: *wall*.
- 52–53      *Athanas, of whom . . . / We spoke befor*. Prol., lines 127–69, 1.260–73.
- 88           *Were thei growen, were thei bare or balled*. In other words, no distinction was made between the various orders of religious — those that required a tonsure, those that allowed members to be hairy or go bare-headed, etc.
- 114 ff.      *He saw a syght*. To have a saint approached by a divine commission that directs him to go to an intimidating pagan to convert that person is not uncommon in medieval literature. Compare Ananias' fear of approaching Saul in *The Conversion of Paul*.
- 142 ff.      *Gramercy madame!* The humor of this scene, in which one of God's chosen people is completely oblivious of whom he is speaking with, is strongly reminiscent of the humor of mystery plays. For example, in the Towneley Noah play, after God has descended from heaven, conveyed his displeasure with humanity, announced his intention of flooding the earth, and instructed Noah to build an ark, the patriarch burbles: “A benedicite! What art thou that thus / Tellys afore that shall be? Thou art full mervelus! / Tell me, for charite thi name so

### Notes to Book 3

gracius.” *The Towneley Plays*, ed. George England, EETS e.s. 71 (London: Oxford University Press, 1897), p. 28, lines 63–65.

- 175     *Yet hath sche of me knowyng nevyr a deele.* See below lines 470–78 for Capgrave’s careful distinction between having God in one’s heart and being aware of God.
- 178     *Grete Babell.* Compare 1.534–41, where Capgrave notes that Alexandria had been called “Babilon *the lasse*”! (line 540).
- 208–09     *sche schall love bettyr the hayre / Than any reynes.* Though *reynes* refers to a fine cloth made in Rennes, Brittany, the Virgin may be making an off-color pun, for *reynes* can also mean “the male generative organ” (MED, *reine* 2b). Such a pun would not be too surprising in this narrative, whose saints are hardly naives. Later in this book (lines 1104–05), the Virgin will make sure that Adrian is temporarily blinded before Katherine is stripped for her baptism. And Katherine herself insists that, though she may be a virgin, she knows a thing or two about sex (lines 637–44).
- 212     *Sevyn Scyens.* The Seven Liberal Arts (see note to Prol., line 143).
- 327     *Lollard.* An English heretic whose views derived from the teachings of the Oxford theologian John Wyclif.
- 369     *Poule seyth this best.* 1 Corinthians 1:26–29. This is one of two instances in which Capgrave invites his readers to consult Scripture (the other is 4.2279–81) — a radical invitation for the 1440s in a work addressed to a popular audience. Fearing the spread of Lollardy, the Church had taken strict measures to curtail lay access to the Bible.
- 401–06     *Sche lokyd on him and was astoyned sore . . . wondyr fast.* Capgrave takes pains to detail Katherine’s security measures in 1.337–64.
- 413     *All heyll, madame!* Adrian echoes the angel Gabriel’s greeting to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation. Capgrave elaborates the analogy between Gabriel’s visit to Mary and Adrian’s visit to Katherine in lines 465–76.
- 470–76     *Ryght as Gabriell . . . we wyll take hede.* For a useful discussion of patristic and medieval views of the Annunciation, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary Through the*

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*Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 81–94.

- 524 ff. *sche is modyr and also clene virgyne.* Adrian is referring to a central tenet of Marian theology, namely, the perpetual virginity of Mary. Like many late medieval writers, Capgrave insists on Mary's singularity as a virgin mother, but he also does everything possible to humanize her by portraying her as a sensitive and affectionate mother-in-law. His emphasis on Mary in the legend is consistent with the intense devotion to the Virgin that marked late medieval piety. Also typical is his depiction of Christ as a fully humanized suitor.
- 553 *Eleyn the fayre lady of Grees.* Helen, famous beauty and wife of the Greek king Menelaus, whose abduction by Paris precipitated the Trojan War.
- 611 *in pytte.* A depression in the body, perhaps a dimple or the hollow of the neck.
- 635 *And yet sche is a mayden at asay and sale.* According to a popular tradition derived from the apocryphal *Infancy Gospel of James* (c. 150), a midwife tested Mary's virginity after she had given birth to Christ. An East Anglian dramatization of the incident that is roughly contemporaneous with Capgrave's legend can be found in the Nativity play of the N-Town Cycle. See *The N-Town Play*, ed. Stephen Spector, EETS s.s. 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 152–63.
- 644 *he.* Not in MS.
- 694–707 *How may ye couple . . . offendyth phylosophye!* Katherine's objection to a Christ "coupled of contraries too" (line 702) anticipates a point one of the philosophers will raise with her in 4.1703–05.
- 724 *That ye were bounden sumetyme with a bonde.* Capgrave refers to the practice of swaddling infants, that is, binding their limbs with narrow strips of cloth so that they cannot move freely.
- 730 *onto. on* not in MS.
- 766 *The Fyrst Mevere.* See note to 2.1354.

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- 799–804 *Of the men of Sodom aboute Lothis hous . . . thei schull not see.* The blinding of the Sodomites is recounted in Genesis 19:11.
- 826 *That be the aungell led Abacuc to the lake.* In verses 33–39 of *Bel and the Dragon*, an addition to the Book of Daniel composed in the second century BC (appearing among the Apocrypha in the Revised Standard Version and as Daniel 14 in the Vulgate Bible), an angel intercepts the prophet Habakkuk as he is bringing food to workers in the field, telling him to take the meal to Daniel, who has been cast into a lions' den in Babylon. When Habakkuk protests that he does not know any such place, the angel carries him there and back by the hair.
- 856 *Ye hafe set your trost hyere than myselve.* Katherine's surpassing of her spiritual teacher echoes her surpassing of her secular teachers in 1.414–19.
- 874–75 *as David fro the schepe / . . . if we take kepe.* See 1 Samuel 16:11–13. Samuel summoned Jesse's youngest son, David, from his job herding sheep and anointed him King of Israel.
- 887 *dun.* MS: *downe.*
- 919 *We can not speke it.* Capgrave is repeating a commonplace of mystical literature, namely, that people who have a direct experience of the godhead cannot describe their experiences (and hence Capgrave cannot relay them).
- 927–29 *Seynt Poule hymselfe . . . in that secree.* For Paul's comments on his heavenly vision, see 2 Corinthians 12:1–7.
- 933 *holy crisme.* Sacramental liquid consisting of a mixture of oil and balsam.
- 949 *Wolcome of clennesse very swete rose.* On the odor of Christ that signifies purity, “an odor that leads to life,” see 2 Corinthians 2:14–16. Compare Tiburce in Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale who, in the presence of St. Cecile, smells the scent of lilies and roses: “The sweete smel that in myn herte I finde / Hath chaunged me al in another kynde” (VIII [G] 251–52). The red rose is affiliated with martyrdom and here may anticipate the conclusion to Capgrave's saint's life. It is also traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary, the heavenly rose in eternal bloom, because her body is not destroyed by death.

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- 967–68    *certen tokenes thei bere . . . another bare.* Martyrs were typically associated with emblems recalling their passions. For example, Agatha, who had her breasts torn off, usually bears a platter with a breast, while Lawrence, who was roasted, carries a grill. When Katherine joins the assembly of martyrs, she will be carrying a wheel. In some late medieval paintings, these emblems are embroidered on the saints' garments.
- 993–1001    *Hir body . . . se His face.* Katherine cannot approach Christ or see his face because she has not yet been cleansed from sin through baptism, as Christ reminds his mother in lines 1032–49. Mary forthwith translates Christ's theological explanation of the sacrament into language that Katherine would surely understand: "It is a goodely usage . . . / Who schal be weddyd onto duke or kynge / Befor hir weddyng to hafe a bathynge" (lines 1069–71).
- 1025    *a.* Not in MS.
- 1053    *A prest hafe ye redy.* Christ's insistence that Adrian perform both the baptism and marriage ceremonies affirms the clergy's prerogative to dispense sacraments and mediate between God and human beings — a role that was hotly contested by the Lollards.
- 1226–31    *My modyr wyll here. . . . Consent ye Kateryne?* Christ's emphasis on Katherine's free choice ratifies a position the Church had taken since the twelfth century, namely, that a valid marriage required the consent of the parties being married and not just their parents. Ideally, as in this case, the parents and children would agree. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and John T. Noonan, "Power to Choose," *Viator* 4 (1973), 419–34.
- 1232    *wilt.* Not in MS.
- 1251    *schortly to ryme.* See note to 2.476.
- 1258    *Befor hem all schal ye go in the daunce.* See note to Prol., line 8.
- 1272    *Whan Thu commendyd Jon me untoo.* John 19:26–27.

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- 1286 *calcedony*. For a discussion of the properties of this stone, see *English Medieval Lapidaries*, ed. Joan Evans and Mary S. Serjeantson, EETS o.s. 190 (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 29–30, 49, 75.
- 1301 *Sponsus amat sponsam*. A chant sung at the liturgical office of Matins on the feast of Saint Katherine.
- 1307–08 *This chyrch must folow . . . / The chyrch above in all that it may*. Seen from a somewhat different angle, Capgrave's *chyrch above* is following — or at least endorsing — *this [earthly] cherch . . . in all that it may*. Witness the emphasis on individual consent in marriage and on the sacraments of baptism and marriage.
- 1316 *fere*. MS: *dere*.
- 1332 *Eyt dayes*. The eighth day is associated with the Resurrection, and hence with a new life and a new beginning, as Jacobus de Voragine explains in the *Golden Legend* 1: 216–17.
- 1343 *think 'not longe.'* The allusion is to John 16:16–22, the “little while” of pain before bliss in Christ. See also 5.1514 where Katherine reassures the queen that the torture will last but “a lytyll space.”
- 1390–1421 *Oure Lord Godd is of swech a kynde . . . ye wel, madame*. Adrian is explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, that three distinct persons make up one God. For a discussion of this complex dogma, see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100–600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 172–225.
- 1428 *Swech langage in synfull tunge is but brok*. Capgrave seems to be endorsing the orthodox view that the vernacular is a poor medium for expounding doctrine. For a discussion of the clergy's disparagement of the vernacular, particularly for religious exhortation, see Nicholas Watson, “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel's Constitutions of 1409,” *Speculum* 70 (1995), 822–64. See also Rita Copeland, “Why Women Can't Read: Medieval Hermeneutics, Statutory Law, and the Lollard Heresy Trials,” in *Representing Women: Law, Literature, and Feminism*, ed. Susan Sage Heinzelman and Zipporah Batshaw Wiseman (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 253–86. By Book 4, Capgrave's scruples about expounding theology in English seem to have vanished.

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### **Book 4**

- 1 ff. *These erdely dwellers . . . Are lykened to the bees.* Virgil's comparison of human society to a bee-hive in *Georgics* 4.3 was frequently quoted by medieval political theorists and well known in Capgrave's day.
- 23 MS: *For that thei here thowte they have delectacyoun.* I am accepting the reading of MS Arundel 396, which makes more sense.
- 78–148 *In the tyme of Costus . . . in Rome al alone.* Capgrave's rather garbled account of events during the late third century — which will not be found in standard history books — can be summarized as follows: Maximinus Galerius, Maximian, and Diocletian were co-rulers of the Roman empire. After Maximian and Diocletian resigned, Maximinus appointed three sub-emperors: Maximinus to rule the East; Severus to rule Lombardy, Tuscany, and Germany; and Constantine to rule Britain. Maximinus Galerius was killed in battle and the Romans chose his sub-emperor Maximinus' son Maxentius (Katherine's nemesis) to be the new Roman emperor. Unhappy with this arrangement, Maximinus set out for Rome but died en route. Equally unhappy, Severus waged war against Maxentius but was eventually killed by his own soldiers. Maxentius remained emperor of Rome until his excesses and iniquities drove the Roman people to rebellion.
- 119 *Salisbury playn.* Location of Stonehenge, legendary burial place of King Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon; Arthur's successor, Constantine; and 450 Breton nobles killed by the Saxons in the fifth century.
- 290 *with gunnes and wyth myne.* "Gunne" refers to a machine used to cast missiles during a siege. A "myne" was a tunnel dug to undermine a fortification.
- 310 *used.* Not in MS.
- 381 *There was no matens seyd, servyse, ne pryme.* Capgrave is referring to the liturgical offices that were recited daily in religious houses.
- 389 *some.* Not in MS.
- 395–96 *Saturne . . . With his sekyll in hand.* Saturn was conventionally represented with a sickle because, after settling in Italy (see below, lines 638–40), he taught the Italians how to reap grain with that tool.

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- 406 *I owe him non, for maumentrye I despysē.* A playful jab at contemporary lovers, who, in the parlance of romances and love lyrics, were still Cupid's servants.
- 468 *All tho myshappys whech were seyd before.* An allusion to the dire predictions made by Katherine's lords during the Marriage Parliament of Book 2.
- 478–79 *now is the hour / Whech sche behestyd.* See 3.1478–87.
- 551 *With mace.* In this context, “mace” refers to a rod of office.
- 586 *With bath of picth and beverych of lede.* Methods of torture.
- 633 *Rede in your boke.* A possible allusion to the *Hierā Anagraphe* (c. 300 B.C.) of Euhemerus of Sicily, which proposed that the gods were men who were only after their deaths reputed to be divine. Augustine of Hippo refers to Euhemerism at several points in his *City of God*. Most of Katherine's assaults on Maxentius's religion — the scandalous behavior of the gods, their outrageous rituals, and so forth — appear to have derived from the first seven books of the *City of God*. For a fifteenth-century discussion of Euhemerism, see *The Assembly of Gods*, lines 1707–08.
- 636 *telle.* MS: *telles*.
- 676 *woundis fyve.* A reference to the five wounds the crucified Christ received on his hands, feet, and side.
- 752 *ye.* Not in MS.
- 876–89 *He hite hir . . . / . . . now take.* Maxentius iterates and elaborates on these promises in 5.372–420. His promises and Katherine's response constitute one of the most memorable scenes in most versions of Katherine's passion.
- 1063 *Why.* Crossed out in MS.
- 1125 *chese.* Not in MS.
- 1143 *in prison.* Not in MS.

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- 1163 *And as Thu graunted Thin apostles here.* Matt. 10:17–20, Mark 13:9–11, Luke 12:11, 21:12–15.
- 1185 *As Thu graunted Ester to plese hir Assuere.* Esther 4–5 relates that, in an attempt to save the Jews from destruction, Esther risked death by approaching her husband, King Ahasuerus, unsummoned in the inner court of his palace.
- 1195 *voutes sevene.* Capgrave may be thinking of images in popular prayer books, or Books of Hours, which often represent martyrs standing in multi-vaulted prison cells.
- 1233–34 *a trew messagere / And as no feyned spyryte.* Demons were notorious for impersonating angels on their visits to imprisoned saints, as in the legend of the virgin martyr Juliana.
- 1268 *he.* Not in MS.
- 1271 *new Ulix.* Representations of Ulysses as a crafty, scurrilous deceiver with a golden tongue (in the tradition of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*) were common in the Middle Ages.
- 1344 *Phylystyoun.* Philistion was a physician identified with the Sicilian school of medicine founded by Empedocles in the fifth century BC.
- 1371 *philosophye.* MS: *philophye.*
- 1499–1512 *thei be but figures / Represyntyng othir manere thing . . . schuld go therby.* This scholar is using the same arguments that the Church used to defend images and statues of Christ and the saints from Lollard claims that venerating such representations amounted to idol-worship. For a popular statement of this orthodox Catholic argument, see Thomas Hoccleve's 1415 "Address to Sir John Oldcastle," in *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, EETS e.s. 61, 72–73 (London: Oxford University Press, 1892, 1925), vol. I, p. 21, lines 409–24. It is perhaps not surprising that Katherine does not refute this argument but rather changes the subject.
- 1534 *Vulcane was cruell and yet was he cokholde.* For a pithy account of how "cruell" Vulcan took vengeance on his wife, Venus, and her lover, Mars, see Book 4 of

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Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This topic is a favorite among medieval vernacular writers.

- 1587–88 These lines are reversed in the MS with a mark that they should be read in the order in which I have placed them.
- 1592 *The Kyng of Thebes a book had hir sent.* Augustine criticizes the allegorization of the Roman Pantheon in his *City of God*, primarily in Books 6–7. He attributes that allegorization to Marcus Terentius Varro, whose work on theology (*The Antiquities*) is unfortunately lost. I thank Chris Manion for suggesting Varro as the author of Katherine's book.
- 1667 ff. In her instruction of the unenlightened through the figure of the Trinity, Katherine alludes to a common doctrinal practice. Compare St. Cecile's instruction of Tiburce in Chaucer's Second Nun's Tale (VIII [G] 333–41). The length and complexity of her exposition, however, is unprecedented in any Middle English saint's life.
- 1674 *creature.* MS: *creatour.*
- 1723–25 *He that reysyde Lazare fro the grave . . . He that Petyr in the see dyd save.* See, respectively, John 11 and Matthew 14.
- 1724 *four dayes.* Both MSS Rawl. poet. 118 and Arundel 168 read that Lazarus lay in the grave for “fourti [Ar. Fourty] dayes.” I have emended “fourti” to “four,” an emendation supported by MSS Arundel 396 and Arundel 20 as well as by John 11:39.
- 1729–31 *He that so mervelously onto heven gan glyde . . . mervayles.* Mark 16:19.
- 1748 *leke.* MS: *loke.*
- 1752–57 *Sybille . . . nevyr sey nay.* Capgrave is quoting the so-called Tiburtine Sibyl, whose pronouncement is quoted, among other places, in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan, 2.170. For a discussion of the medieval Sibylline tradition, see Bernard McGinn, “*Teste David cum Sibylla*: The Significance of the Sibylline Tradition in the Middle Ages,” in *Women of the Medieval World*, ed. Julius Kirshner and Suzanne F. Wemple (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 7–35.

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- 1844 *Be armes, bones, and be blode.* The emperor, ironically, is swearing by Christ.
- 1871 *marred.* MS: *marreth.*
- 1882 *thousandis fyve.* The allusion is to the feeding of 5,000 in John 6:1–14.
- 1951–52 *Youre prophete seyde . . . / bete and bynde.* Psalms 2:9.
- 1972 *In the tre was joy bore and in the tre woo.* An allusion to Christ’s cross (redemption) and to the Tree of Knowledge (the fall).
- 1975 MS has a chapter heading indicated at this line.
- 1986–88 *I red in a Crysten prophete . . . that ye be goddes alle.* Psalms 82:6. The Old Testament was considered an integral part of the Christian tradition, its prophets and scholars deemed fundamentally Christian thinkers.
- 2000 *Baal.* References to Baal, a Phoenician god worshipped by wayward Israelites, occur frequently in the Old Testament. The “thre hundred prophetis” spoken of in lines 2001–02 may allude to 1 Kings 18:19 and 18:22, which mention 450 (not 300) prophets devoted to Baal.
- 2024–50 *And be nature is He God . . . that auctorité.* Jaroslav Pelikan explains the distinction made by various medieval theologians between Jesus, who was God’s natural son, and the saints or faithful (called “gods” in Psalms 82:6), who were God’s adopted sons, in *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600–1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 55–56.
- 2032 *And sones of Him that syttith hyest.* Katherine is supplying the portion of Psalms 82:6 that the pagan scholar omitted in his allusion (line 1988).
- 2055–57 *Thoo same prophetis . . . thei dampned were.* 1 Kings 18:40 relates that, after winning a contest with the prophets of Baal, the prophet Elijah rounded up his 450 rivals and killed every one of them.
- 2080 *comoursly.* This word is not attested in the MED, though three of the four *Katherine* MSS give that reading. Horstmann emended it to “concoursly,” but the MED cites only the noun “concours,” meaning an agreement or a flocking/crowding together. MS Arundel 20 reads “anon.”

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- 2082 *Noys.* Bernardus Silvestris develops this concept at length in his *Cosmographia*.
- 2158–77 *Of oure ladies clennes in hir concepcion / . . . sittith thus hye.* In answering Ariot's objection, Katherine affirms the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, namely, that Mary was miraculously conceived without the "original sin" that Adam and Eve passed on to their descendants. That teaching was highly controversial during the later Middle Ages (in part for the reason Ariot puts forward — how could a woman whose parents had inherited original sin be sinless herself?). Mary's Immaculate Conception was endorsed by the 1439 Council of Basle, though the legitimacy of the Council was later contested.
- 2179–84 *His comyng was lich the sune schynnyng bryth . . . cam down here.* This simile was commonly employed by both poets and theologians to describe Mary's conception of Jesus. See Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 44; and Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 146. For an example of the simile in Middle English devotional lyrics, see "Marye, mayde mylde and fre," in *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, ed. Karen Saupe (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), p. 165, lines 73–76.
- 2194–96 *It is ful hard swech thingis forto ryme . . . to the Incarnacion.* Capgrave may be needling conservative clerics who declared that doctrine should not be discussed in the vernacular. He concedes that it is hard to discuss matters like the Incarnation "in langage of oure nacion" (line 2195) — all the more so when one is trying to rhyme — but instead of curtailing his treatment of those topics, he embellishes his putative source with "othir auctouris" (line 2199). See the note to 3.1428.
- 2235 *coude.* Not in MS.
- 2262–68 *Davyd . . . whan he thristid sore . . . bare this thing.* 1 Chronicles 11:15–19.
- 2278 *dilatacion.* MS Rawl. poet. 118 reads "delectacion"; the other MSS read "dilatacion."
- 2281 *That myth it here if that hem list.* This reading is significantly different from the readings of Arundel 398 ("That men myght plod in hir, if that hem lyst") and Arundel 20 ("that men myght plode in hyre yff that hyme lyste,") which suggest

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(rather daringly) that readers consult Scripture for themselves. Arundel 168 reads “That men myght plede in here, if that hym list.”

- 2341 *It is ful convenient that we shuld do soo.* The scribe of MS Arundel 20 apparently disagreed that this would be an appropriate place to end Book 4, for he finishes narrating the philosophers’ martyrdom before beginning Book 5.

## **Book 5**

- 6 *fyve braunchis.* Five is a number traditionally associated with Mary, with her five joys and five sorrows. Lydgate composes *The Lyfe of our Lady* in five books. Chaucer’s poem on Mary in the Prologue to the Prioress’ Tale is in five stanzas. Capgrave seems to be linking Katherine’s life structurally to that of her Lady; n.b. his linking her to a red rose of five branches and five leaves in lines 10ff., the rose being a primary feature of Marian iconography. See Saupe, ed., *Middle English Marian Lyrics*, for numerous examples of the analogies. Five is also associated with the Passion — with the five wounds of Christ and with the five pains of the Passion. (For the latter, see Jacobus de Voragine, *Golden Legend* 1.203–06.) The significance of five is perhaps most fully elaborated in Middle English literature in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*’s description of the five-sided star Gawain sports on his shield and the system of five fives it represents: five fingers, five senses, five joys of the Virgin, five wounds of Christ, and five virtues.
- 23 *Betokynyng.* MS: *Betokynyth.* This emendation is supported by Arundel 168 and 396.
- 62 *Thus shall it be translate now new fro Lateyn.* As Capgrave explained in his prologue (lines 57–60), the English priest whose work he had been transcribing died before he had completed his translation.
- 65 *credulyté.* MS: *crudelyte.* MSS Arundel 20 and 396 support this emendation.
- 69 *Wherfor.* I have changed MS Rawl. poet. 118’s “for” to “wherfor,” a reading supported by the other three MSS.
- 146 *nevyr plant.* MS: *into oure hert plant.*
- 165 *these.* MS: *that.* Emendation supported by the other MSS.

### Notes to Book 5

- 209–80 *that we schuld ben baptizied or we deye . . . trost me now trewly.* The philosophers are expressing an eminently orthodox view — that baptism is necessary for salvation. Given current controversies surrounding the sacraments, however, it is surprising that Katherine should draw attention to *baptem of the Goste* (line 274) as an acceptable alternative to baptism by water or blood. For a discussion of baptism's place in sacramental controversies, see Sarah Beckwith, "Sacrum Signum: Sacramentality and Dissent in York's Theatre of Corpus Christi," in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 270–71. For a discussion of spiritual baptism, see *Summa Theologiae* III.68.2, wherein Thomas Aquinas says that people do not need to be actually physically baptized to be saved if they intended to be baptized and died before such a rite could be performed (he makes particular reference to martyrs).
- 275–76 These lines are reversed in the MS with a mark that they should be read in the order in which I have placed them.
- 339 *putte you.* Not in MS.
- 342 *rytes.* MS: *riches.* The emendation is supported by the other three MSS.
- 346 *save on and no moo.* Maxentius is referring to his wife. See below, lines 373–74, 393–96.
- 385 *fulfyllyd as tyth.* Tithes were the one-tenth portion of one's goods that a person owed to the Church during the Middle Ages. Maxentius is thus saying that he will take Katherine's wishes as seriously as he takes his religious obligations.
- 394 *oure.* MS: *youre.* This emendation accords with the reading of all the other MSS.
- 422 *she.* MS: *che.*
- 535–37 *Appollo . . . Redressith this word with hete.* Maxentius refers to Apollo's capacity as sun god.
- 543 *schal.* MS: *schon.*
- 547 *schort tyme.* MS: *ryght.*

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- 576 *An.* MS: *And.* Emendation supported by the other MSS.
- 647 *I.* Not in MS.
- 707 *torment.* MS: *tornament.* The emendation follows the other three MSS.
- 710–11 These lines are reversed in the MS with a mark that they should be read in the order in which I have placed them.
- 785 *seyde.* Not in MS.
- 817 *a savour.* See note to 3.949.
- 852 *braunches fyve.* Capgrave echoes a theme he developed at length in the prologue to Book 5. For the significance of the number five, see the note to 5.6.
- 857 *Whil she helde.* MS: *Wille she elde.* The emendation accords with the reading of the other three manuscripts.
- 887 *Fourty dayes.* Katherine's days in prison correspond to Christ's days of temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4 and Luke 4). Compare Chaucer's allusion to Christ's feeding of the Egyptian Mary in the desert (*CT* II [B<sup>1</sup>] 498–501). See Paul M. Clogan, "The Narrative Style of the Man of Law's Tale," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 8 (1977), 217–33.
- 890–92 *For He that fedde Danyel . . . Lord myth make.* See note to 3.826 above.
- 891 *Abacuc.* MS: *abouth.*
- 893 *fedde.* Not in MS.
- 897–906 *as Austen seyth . . . In his boke whech tretyth in Scripture.* See Augustine's *Exposition on the Psalms*, Ps 95:11–12, on verse 9, where he discusses the feeding of manna to the Israelites in the desert (Ex. 16:13–35).
- 929 *Thinke 'not long.'* See note to 3.1343.
- 935 In the MS this line follows line 942 with a marker that it should be positioned as I have here.

*Notes to Book 5*

- 1006      *hid.* Not in MS.
- 1052–57    *Oure dedely bodyes . . . In fayrrer forme.* For medieval views of bodily resurrection, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- 1105–06    *Constantyn . . . baptyzed was / Of Seynt Sylvestere.* See Jacobus de Voragine's account in *The Golden Legend*, 1.279. The tale is also told in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* 2.3187–3496.
- 1133      *plumbys of lede.* Weights at the end of a whip.
- 1153      *world.* MS: *worde.*
- 1160      *It longyth to yow to obey onto your heede.* On the analogy between society and the body, with the king as head, see Anthony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250–1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 14–18.
- 1198–99    *Every man must . . . Deye and rote but of the speciall grace.* A corpse's preservation was taken as an indication of sanctity.
- 1299      *both Robyn and Jon.* Generic names, roughly equivalent to "Tom, Dick, and Harry."
- 1370–74    *Thus dede He sumtyme in the Calde nacyon . . . thei toke the harm.* See Daniel 3, where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego survive the fiery furnace.
- 1395      *woo.* MS: *who.*
- 1433      *mannes.* MS: *moony.*
- 1474      *rend hir tetys.* The tearing off a woman's breasts is typical of the sexualized torture in virgin martyr legends; it occurs in the legends of Agatha, Barbara, Christine, and many others.
- 1480–81    *teye hir to a stake, / Smyte of hir heede.* This is the method of execution Margery Kempe desires in *Book 43.677–81*: "Hyr thowt sche wold a be slain for Goddys lofe, but dred for the poyn of deth, and therfor sche ymagyned hyrself the most

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soft deth, as hir thowt, for dred of inpacyens, that was to be bowndyn hyr hed and hir fet to a stokke and hir hed to be smet of wyth a scharp ex for Goddys lofe."

- 1572      *dede.* MS: *yede.*
- 1593–94    *It is neythir worshipfull ne eke honest / Onto mankynd to foule his own nest.*  
Proverbial: Whiting, *Proverbs*, B306.
- 1594      *foule.* MS: *fowlow.*
- 1697      *On of the auctoures.* The Vulgate *Vita* reads: "consummata itaque est horum passio mense Nouembrio die uicesima quarta, feria quinta." Ed. S. R. T. O. d'Ardenne and E. J. Dobson, *Seinte Katerine*, EETS s.s. 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 199.
- 1699      *of.* MS: *aftyr.*
- 1704–05    These lines are reversed in the MS with a mark that they should be read in the order in which I have placed them.
- 1714      *Mayden.* MS: *May.*
- 1762      *the toure of Troye.* Treason ultimately allowed the Greeks to capture Troy and win the Trojan war.
- 1779–82    *I shall folow the lombe . . . wihouten mynd.* Revelation 21–22.
- 1873      *Thu schall receyve it in anothyr stede.* Christ is alluding to the resurrection of the body after death. See note to lines 1052–67 above.
- 1923      *Poule in his bokes maketh swech induction.* See Galatians 4:22–31.
- 1939      *There leve but fewe that hath mad asayes.* One devotee of St. Katherine who made this journey (1480–83) was Felix Fabri, a Dominican friar from Ulm, Germany. His account of the trip has been translated by Aubrey Stewart, *The Wanderings of Felix Fabri*, 2 vols. (1887–97; rpt., New York: AMS Press, 1971). Felix's devotion to Katherine's reliquies is the point of departure for Sheri Holman's provocative novel, *A Stolen Tongue* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997). For another fifteenth-century pilgrim's account of his visit to Katherine's shrine,

### *Notes to Book 5*

see Pero Trafur, *Travels and Adventures, 1435–1439*, trans. and ed. Malcolm Letts (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1926).

- 1950      *That oyle*. As Capgrave explained in his prologue (lines 26–27), curative oil flows from Katherine’s tomb — a sign of God’s special favor.
- 1965 ff.    *In this matere pleynly I will me schryve*. Capgrave’s concerns about his perceived credibility and the authenticity of miracles are unusual for a saint’s life. Perhaps not surprisingly, the scribe of British Library MS Arundel 20 replaced the final four stanzas of the poem with a more conventional invocation of Katherine’s blessing on himself and his readers. The same scribe did other things to “tidy up” Capgrave’s text: he omitted the unusually long and complex prologue and ended Book 4 with the execution of the philosophers rather than in the middle of the philosophers episode.



## *Glossary*

<b>a</b> <i>have</i>	<b>convenient</b> <i>appropriate</i>
<b>acorde</b> <i>agree</i>	<b>convicte</b> <i>overcome</i>
<b>aftir</b> <i>according to</i>	<b>cuntré</b> <i>country</i>
<b>Alisaundre</b> <i>Alexandria; Alexander</i>	
<b>and</b> <i>if</i>	<b>dauns</b> <i>dance</i>
<b>anon</b> <i>immediately</i>	<b>ded(e)</b> <i>did; dead</i>
<b>aray</b> <i>company, clothing, circumstances</i>	<b>degré</b> <i>rank, manner</i>
<b>asay</b> <i>test</i>	<b>delve</b> <i>dig, study</i>
<b>astoyned</b> <i>astonished</i>	<b>desese</b> <i>discomfort</i>
<b>Athanas</b> <i>Athanasius</i>	<b>dole</b> <i>grief</i>
<b>avise</b> <i>consider</i>	<b>dome</b> <i>judgment</i>
<b>avisement</b> <i>deliberation</i>	<b>dredē</b> <i>doubt; fear</i>
<b>bale</b> <i>suffering</i>	<b>dresse</b> <i>apply (oneself), prepare</i>
<b>ban(ne)</b> <i>curse</i>	<b>dwere</b> <i>doubt; dissension, trouble</i>
<b>baptem(e)</b> <i>baptism</i>	
<b>bare</b> <i>bore</i>	<b>e(e)m</b> <i>uncle</i>
<b>be</b> <i>by</i>	<b>eke</b> <i>also</i>
<b>bedene</b> <i>together</i>	<b>elles/is</b> <i>else, otherwise</i>
<b>behestis</b> <i>promises</i>	<b>enow(e)</b> <i>enough</i>
<b>blinne</b> <i>cease</i>	<b>ermyte</b> <i>hermit</i>
<b>bone</b> <i>request</i>	<b>even(e)</b> <i>exactly, just</i>
<b>bost</b> <i>boast</i>	<b>eyne</b> <i>eyes</i>
<b>brenne</b> <i>burn</i>	
<b>brent</b> <i>burned</i>	<b>fayn</b> <i>eager(ly), glad(ly)</i>
<b>brith</b> <i>bright</i>	<b>fele</b> <i>many; feel</i>
<b>but</b> <i>unless, except</i>	<b>fell(e)</b> <i>skin</i>
<b>chere</b> <i>appearance, disposition</i>	<b>felle</b> <i>fierce, cruel</i>
<b>Cipré</b> <i>Cyprus</i>	<b>fer</b> <i>far</i>
<b>cité</b> <i>city</i>	<b>fere</b> <i>fire; fear; company, in fere, together</i>
<b>clennes(se)</b> <i>purity</i>	<b>fith</b> <i>fight</i>
<b>clepe</b> <i>call</i>	<b>for</b> <i>since, because</i>
<b>conceyte</b> <i>idea, thought</i>	<b>fotherē</b> <i>a great amount</i>
	<b>fre</b> <i>free; noble; generous</i>

## Glossary

**ful** *very; full*

**gan** *did, went, began*

**gesse** *guess*

**gide** *guide*

**go(o)st** *spirit*

**gove(n)** *given*

**gramercy** *mercy!*

**hast** *haste*

**hem** *them*

**her** *their*

**herde** *earth*

**hevy** *unhappy*

**hir** *her*

**hith** *be called*

**hope** *expect; expectation*

**hye** *high*

**hyere** *salary*

**hyght** *was called*

**ilk(e)** *each; same; very*

**iwis** *indeed, certainly*

**knyth** *knight*

**kyn(rod)** *family*

**lede** *lead*

**lees** *lies*

**lere** *learn; teach*

**lese** *lose*

**let(e)** *let, allow, cause; prevent, hinder*

**leve** *leave, abandon; permit; believe; live*

**levene** *lightning*

**ley** *lain*

**lich** *as, like*

**list** *wish, desire*

**lith** *light*

**loke** *look*

**long** *belong, be appropriate, pertain*

**lore** *teaching, lesson*

**loy** *lain*

**lyvande** *living (people)*

**make** *mate*

**maumentis** *idols*

**maumentrie** *idolatry*

**may** *maiden*

**mech** *much*

**mede** *reward*

**meke** *meek*

**mende** *mind*

**mené** *mean; means; retinue*

**mete** *food*

**mith** *might*

**mo(o)** *more*

**mone** *moon; cry, complaint*

**mote** *must*

**motif** *proposition*

**munke** *monk*

**myty** *mighty*

**nowt(e)** *nothing*

**ny(e)** *nearly*

**nyth** *night*

**o(o), on** *one*

**of** *of; off*

**onys** *once*

**or** *before*

**owte** *anything*

**pardé** *By God!*

**party** *partly*

**pe(e)s** *peace*

**Pers** *Persia*

**peyn(e)** *pain*

**plat** *flat*

## Glossary

<b>prees</b> <i>crowd</i>	<b>stoyned</b> <i>astonished</i>
<b>presens</b> <i>presence</i>	<b>straunge</b> <i>uncommon; foreign</i>
<b>preve</b> <i>prove; proof</i>	<b>Surré, Surry</b> <i>Syria</i>
<b>pryvy</b> <i>private, secret, special</i>	<b>swage</b> <i>assuage</i>
<b>punch</b> <i>punish</i>	<b>swech</b> <i>such</i>
<b>puple</b> <i>people</i>	<b>swow</b> <i>swoon</i>
<b>qweles</b> <i>wheels</i>	<b>synne</b> <i>sin</i>
<b>real(le)</b> <i>royal</i>	<b>tast</b> <i>taste; test; experience</i>
<b>rede</b> <i>read</i>	<b>terme</b> <i>argument, reason</i>
<b>renne</b> <i>run</i>	<b>tetis</b> <i>teats</i>
<b>rere</b> <i>raise</i>	<b>tho(o)</b> <i>then; those</i>
<b>reuth</b> <i>pity</i>	<b>thorow</b> <i>through</i>
<b>rith</b> <i>just, exactly; right</i>	<b>thouth</b> <i>thought</i>
<b>rote</b> <i>rot; root</i>	<b>thow</b> <i>though</i>
<b>row(e)</b> <i>order, row; rough</i>	<b>thowt(e)</b> <i>thought</i>
<b>sad</b> <i>somber, serious</i>	<b>tide</b> <i>time</i>
<b>sciens</b> <i>learning; discipline</i>	<b>to(o)</b> <i>two</i>
<b>se(e)</b> <i>see; sea</i>	<b>towe</b> <i>tough</i>
<b>secré</b> <i>mystery; inner recess</i>	<b>trow(e)</b> <i>believe</i>
<b>seke</b> <i>seek; sick</i>	<b>usage</b> <i>custom</i>
<b>sentens</b> <i>substance, content; reason</i>	<b>venjauns</b> <i>vengeance</i>
<b>ser(e)</b> <i>sir</i>	<b>wage</b> <i>reward; wages</i>
<b>sex</b> <i>six</i>	<b>wan</b> <i>won, conquered; pale</i>
<b>sey</b> <i>say; saw</i>	<b>want</b> <i>lack; need</i>
<b>sith</b> <i>since</i>	<b>wene</b> <i>suppose, think</i>
<b>sle</b> <i>slay</i>	<b>were</b> <i>war; worse, worst</i>
<b>sobtill</b> <i>subtle</i>	<b>wers</b> <i>worse</i>
<b>soft(e)</b> <i>quiet, gentle, slow</i>	<b>wete</b> <i>know</i>
<b>sole</b> <i>alone</i>	<b>wise</b> <i>way, manner</i>
<b>sone</b> <i>soon</i>	<b>wist</b> <i>knew; known</i>
<b>sore</b> <i>intensely, eagerly, greatly, very</i>	<b>with</b> <i>person</i>
<b>soth</b> <i>truth; true</i>	<b>wode, wood</b> <i>mad, crazy</i>
<b>space</b> <i>time, while</i>	<b>worcheb, -chip</b> <i>honor</i>
<b>spille</b> <i>abandon, ruin</i>	<b>wordly</b> <i>worldly</i>
<b>stede</b> <i>place</i>	<b>wot(e)</b> <i>know</i>
<b>sterve</b> <i>die, perish</i>	

## *Glossary*

**wroth(e)** *angry*

**wrout(e)** *did; done*

**ying** *young*

**yye** *eyes*