NOTES for Chaucer’s PILGRIMS

(w/line numbers)

**KNIGHT (43-80)**

-- Moral person--guilty of NONE of 7 deadly sins

--no physical characteristics described; stained tunic

--“most distinuished man,” noble, followed chivalry, truth, honor, generosity, courtesy (direct characterization), wise, modest

--just back from the Crusades, 15 battles and won, honored & respected by men of high power as he sat at their tables (indirect characterization shows his loyalty and bravery), never a mean word comes from his mouth (shows kindness)

--job= knight --> fights for the king--> part of feudal class

--7 DEADLY SINS 🡪 NONE

--Narrator/Chaucer approves

-- Why going to Canterbury? (inferred from selection)--> probably prayer, thanking God from being alive, ask forgiveness for having had to kill people in battles

**SQUIRE (81-102)**

--Knight’s son and servant

--Soldier (cadet) and lover

--Job= knight in training, feudal class

--LOOKS -->curly hair, about 20 years old, avg. height (indirect char), tunic embroidered w/red & white flowers (man enough to pull off wearing flowers!--indirect)

--agile and strong (direct char)

--talents--->singing, playing flute, riding horse, writing songs & poems, jousting, dancing, drawing, writing (all indirect--> shows he is rich, educated, a real “Renaissance” man--one who know how to do many things well

--spends most of the night making love and sleeping very little, ladies’ man

7 Deadly Sins--LUST (all night and not married)

--SLOTH (fluting all day--supposed to be spending more time with knightly duties)

-- VANITY (flashy dress, too good to practice more

--Narrator/Chaucer approves of many of Renaissance ways, but not with immoral lust, vanity, and sloth

--Why going to Canterbury? Probably out of duty, following father, looking for women?

**YEOMAN (103-121)**

--Knight’s and Squire’s servant (job), feudal systems’ lowest class

--LOOKS--> green coat & hood (like Robin Hood), green baldric, bow and arrows, brace on arm to protect fm bow, head shaped like nut, face brown (tan from being outdoors), shield, sword, and long dagger (dirk), hunting horn all at side, buckler (small shield) in well kept up condition – says he’s “a proper forester, I guess” (because he LOOKS like one but that ISN’T his job = SLOTH) The “I guess” turns this phrase into SATIRE.

--wears silver medal of St. Christopher (patron saint of travel) on chest

7 DEADLY SINS: VANITY (“chooses to ride,” acting above his class, can

also be ENVY as he is envious of upper class);

SLOTH (see above)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? possibly to serve his masters, to spend time outside, maybe to pray (St. Christopher medal may suggest religious)

**THE PRIORESS (NUN) (122-166)**

--Madam Eglantyne, nun= church class

--VERY into MANNERS, doesn’t curse but utters “St Loy”, saint known for perfect manners, sings through her nose (uppity) (indirect char), eats daintily, wipes lip so no grease spots

--speaks in “inferior” French she learned from convent (indirect char), tries to be COURTLY (much like Lady Pertelote from “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale”!) “counterfeits a courtly kind of grace”

--pleasant & friendly, tender-hearted (direct characterization)

--dignified, sympathetic, charitable (cries if sees a mouse in trap, feeds little dogs, cries if one dies or someone hits w/stick (indirect to show kindness, but nun should be as concerned about PEOPLE even more than animals!

--LOOKS--> elegant nose, gray eyes, small red mouth (wears make up), wide forehead (all indirect char, shows her beauty), not “undergrown,” meaning not skinny (probably understatement for “fat”= GLUTTONY)

--wore jewelry (bracelet, rosary, golden brooch (pin) engraved w/Latin saying “Love conquers all” (shows interest in love, tho she should not be = LUST)

--IMMORAL--7 DEADLY SINS--> VANITY (all into manners and her looks)

AVARICE (material possessions)

ENVY (jealous of those at court--French is language of the court people/ruling class)

--Why going to Canterbury? Possibly just because it’s her job, for the adventure or to be seen, probably not for sincere prayer (she is hypocritical)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

**MONK (169 -211)**

--church class, a PRELATE (high ranking clergyman) supposed to be praying and caring for poor, etc.

--loves hunting, riding, owns stable of thoroughbred horses and many greyhounds (indirect char, shows he is wealthy)

-- one can hear his horse’s bridle bells from distance (showing off)

--ignored code of regulations for monastic life, believed that hunters could be holy and that a monk could be valuable even if uncloistered, did not believe that he had to read the Bible or other religious books (rationalizing his worldly desires); “noble ecclesiast” = SATIRE

--LOOKS--> cloak edged in fur (wealth), fastened w/golden lover’s knot pin, bald & shiny head, fat, good-natured, “personable” = direct characterization

--liked to eat, swan best

--7 DEADLY SINS--> --> SLOTH (hunting and doing only fun stuff that he wants to do rather that his JOB of monk!)

AVARICE--greedy, hoarding material possessions

GLUTTONY--fat, loves to eat

VANITY—thinks he is too good to study and do what all other monks

must do, shows off by making his horses be known by bells

ENVY – envies upper class for luxury and spare time

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? for the adventure, to hunt, to enjoy the outdoors, to pretend he is doing his job for church , definitely not for sincere religious reasons

**FRIAR (212 – 279)**

--Hubert, church class, a Limiter (friar licensed to beg & preach in a certain area), qualified to hear confessions

--a wanton (jolly man), happy; (wanton today means indecent and undisciplined)

--“fixed up” many marriages, giving each woman what he could afford (suggestive of his helping marriage by sleeping with woman), “intimate” with his parishoners

--would give lighter penance (punishment or way of making amends for sin) to those who could pay him or give him gifts, if can’t cry to show real contrition, he’d just take more money from those sinners

--had gifts of pins, pocketknives to give to girls

--could sing and plays the hurdy-gurdy (a stringed, instrument incorporating a wooden wheel rotated by a simple shaft connected to a hand crank)

--LOOKS--> white neck, strong, thick

--spent most of his time in taverns (knew all taverns, barmaids, etc.), did not spend time with lepers, sick or poor people, believed it “not fitting with the dignity of his position” to deal with “scum”

--also spent time among rich people where he could make more money

--very good at begging, could even get the poor to give their last bit of money

--good at settling negotiations (for money)

--pretended a lisp (thinks girls like it and thinks it makes his English sound better)

--7 DEADLY SINS--> AVARICE (love of money)

LUST (wanting women, suggestions of intimacy w/them)

VANITY (thinks he’s too good to associate w/certain people)

GLUTTONY (drinking at taverns)

SLOTH – (not doing his job such as helping sick and poor)

ENVY – (dresses above his class)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? For job, to make money, or find women, definitely not for sincere religious reasons (hypocrite)

**MERCHANT (280 – 294)**

--city class

--LOOKS--> (all INDIRECT for what he LOOKS like) forking beard, motley (multicolored) clothes, wears Flemish beaver hat (indirect char, shows wealth)

--rides horse

--liked to talk of self and all his business deals (boorish); “excellent fellow” = SATIRE

--so good a merchant that no one knew he was in debt

--big into administration, loans, bargains, and negotiations

--7 DEADLY SINS--> --> VANITY (not honest about himself, puts on a front, talks about himself a lot, and brags about business deals)

AVARICE (into money)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? Probably for more business deals, personal gain

**OXFORD CLERIC (295 – 318)**

--city class (middle)

--longtime student of Oxford University (what we’d call a career student)

--horse skinny

--LOOKS--skinny, hollow look, serious, ragged clothes,

--did not want job w/ church nor worldy employment (had no job)

--wanted only to read, study, delve into philosophy

--survived by money friends gave him, did not repay them with money, but prayed for them, and thanking them for his learning

--very quiet, spoke only when necessary, but when he spoke, he was formal and very educated, with “a tone of moral virtue,” and “lofty in theme” (INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION for his ACTIONS)

--enjoyed learning and would teach when asked

--7 DEADLY SINS--> --> SLOTH (does not have or want employment, does

only what he enjoys, forgets to feed horse and self!)

VANITY (speaks w/tone of moral virtue

and lofty theme)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves (does not live a balanced life)

--Why going to Canterbury? for the learning experience, pray for friends and for more of their help supporting him ?

**SERJEANT AT THE LAW (SERGEANT OF THE LAW) (319 – 340)**

--lawyer, judge, city class

--”a man to reverence or so he seemed” = SATIRE

--wise sayings

--famous, well known

--”all was fee simple” – all right or all wrong, no gray areas

--very accurate with deeds, cases, none could be questions

--not as busy as he seemed to be

--very smart (knew every judgment, case, crime, law on record); “wise” = DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

--wore homely (ugly) multicolored coat, silk belt (colors and material of silk shows wealth)

--7 DEADLY SINS --> AVARICE (all about the money, only takes cases that would do him good, makes him money or fame)

VANITY (pretending to be busy even when not, showing off his knowledge)

SLOTH ( not working as much as he could)

Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? to learn more, to get clients, for personal gain, for show, not for any real religious reason

**FRANKLIN (341 – 370)**

--city class, justice of the peace (sheriff) and justice (judge), represented county in parliament (government)

--LOOKS--> white beard, reddish complexion (cheerful personality; certain wines affect people by making their cheeks ruddy)

-- good natured; gracious, truthful, hospitable (ALL 3 DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--LOVED food (wine, good food, etc.), called “Epicures’ very son” (Greek philosopher) because he was a pleasure seeker; “sensual delight” may refer to LUST (ALL NDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--compared to St. Julian (patron saint of hospitality) because he opened his home to everyone in the county, would share his food. Maybe out of VANITY (showing off what he has)

--house never lacked for good meats, wines, different courses of food, etc.

--dagger and purse of silk (wealth) hung at his belt

--7 DEADLY SINS---> GLUTTONY (LOVED to eat and drink)

VANITY

LUST

WRATH (“Woe to the cook…” who did not cook a food

correctly)

Narrator/Chaucer disapproves.

--Why going to Canterbury? maybe to discover new kinds of food, or food sellers, (personal gain), sheriff’s job?, no mention of religion

**GUILDSMEN (371-388)** (haberdasher, dyer, carpenter, weaver, carpet-maker)

Haberdasher = vendor/dealer of men’s clothing

--city class, tradesmen, dressed showing wealth

--hopes, aspirations and plans for higher positions

--wives extremely proud of them because the more respect their husbands gained, the more the wives got

--7 DEADLY SINS--> AVARICE--(material possessions, wealth, power)

VANITY (into how they looked and wives especially proud too)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? Probably for business deals or part of ambition to be more successful in community

**COOK (289 – 298)**

--city class, works for the Guildsmen

--lots of food that he cooks, boils, bakes, roast, seethe, fry (all cooking terms are clues to his character); could tell London ale by its flavor

--NASTY RUNNING SORE on his knee (pus draining)--only physical description

--blanchmange (a “white food” made with chicken, milk, sugar and almonds)

--with blanchemange statement right after sore description, implies that at least some of whiteness could be pus (YUCK!)

--wouldn’t really want to eat his food even though it could be really good

--7 DEADLY SINS--> SLOTH (lazy at hygiene),

VANITY (very proud of his experience/work)

GLUTTONY (probably heavy, “London ale”)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? Personal gain (?), maybe to pray for the healing of his sore

**SKIPPER (399 – 420)**

--city class, captain of a barge named *The Maudelayne*

--didn’t ride a horse well (didn’t have “land legs,” more comfortable at sea)

--LOOKS--> woolen gown to his knee, dagger on lanyard hung from neck down under arm, tanned skin

--stole wine from traders after they went to sleep

--when sank an enemy vessel, he sent men “home,” made them walk the plank (Pirate imagery)

--good at “reckoning the tides, currents,” reading the moons, harbors, etc.” (ALL INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION because it tells what he DOES, his actions)

--cautious about taking his boat out = good boat boss

--7 DEADLY SINS--> AVARICE (stole wine from traders and did not pay for it)

GLUTTONY (“many a draft of wine” he stole and drank)

WRATH (out of anger or revenge made enemies walk the

plank)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably for the adventure, or for prospective clients

**DOCTOR (PHYSICIAN) (421 – 454)**

--city class

--knew all about medicine and surgery (based on astronomy, horoscope--astrology, and humours)

--would treat and prescribe based on patient’s wealth, more money, more expensive illness and drug

--had a “tribe” of apothecaries ready with the medicine (implying a business relationship where both benefited from sickness of patients)

--both doctor and apothecary made money off each other’s “guile,” (deception, sly dealings) (INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--well-versed (educated) in medieval medical authorities

-- intelligent (DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--LOOKS--> not fat nor skinny, blood red garments lined w/lace

--moderate diet, did not read Bible very much

--kept his gold, loved his gold (stingy)

--7 DEADLY SINS--> AVARICE (material wealth, taking advantage of people

for money, stinginess)

VANITY ( dresses flamboyantly and is proud of self)

SLOTH ( reads the Bible very little – if had read more of it,

could read books such as Leviticus that teaches

hygiene and cooking procedures; doesn’t use his

intelligence to treat patients)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably to make deals, find patients, not for religious reasons

**WIFE OF BATH (455 – 486)**

--city class, from the town of Bath, a weaver of fine cloth and kerchiefs

--somewhat deaf (DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--got angry if someone stepped in front of her to go down the aisle at church to make an offering or to pray (WRATH)

--LOOKS--wearing expensive red hose, and beautiful kerchief on head

(cares more about looks and status than in spirituality), shoes new, broad hat; face bold, handsome, gap between her teeth, large hips

--had had 5 husbands (all had married her in church) and many lovers in her youth, gave love advice, potions for “love’s mischances” (pregnancies – she knows the herbs, potions to cause a miscarriage)

--knew many dances and loved to talk (gregarious)

--had been to Jerusalem 3 times and was a world traveler

---“worthy woman” = SATIRE

--7 DEADLY SINS--> LUST (all the lovers outside of marriage, love experiences

gap in teeth)

AVARICE (worldly possessions; her size also shows wealth

or having an overabundance of food)

WRATH (angry at church when someone gets in front of her)

GLUTTONY (wide hips suggests fatness)

VANITY (proud of her status, job, past, etc.)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably for the adventure, maybe to get a new husband (#6)

**PARSON (487 – 538)**

--church class

--holy-minded man, poor in money, but rich in holiness

--knew Christ’s gospel and preached it, taught it, but lived it first

--good natured, persistent in work, patient (direct char)

--hated to ask for offerings from his congregation, would rather give what little he had (money and possessions) to his poor parishioners (INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--visited even his faraway parishiners regularly even in bad weather or personal distress

--compared to a shepherd who takes good care of his sheep

--sets a good example for his congregation

--holy, virtuous, (BOTH DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION) never looking down on any sinner, never too proud to talk to anyone

--kindly and discreet in his teachings and dealings, but would be firm when someone was stubbornly refusing to listen to or believe in God

--”Christ and his 12 Apostles” and their teachings he taught, but followed it first

--7 DEADLY SINS--> NONE

--Narrator/Chaucer approves

--Why going to Canterbury? PRAYER, probably for his congregation, not for himself or worship

**PLOWMAN (539 – 555)**

--feudal system’s lowest class (peasant); can also be considered lowest middle class if not connected to castle

--brother of Parson

--farmer who carted dung into fields (fertilizer) (ACTION = INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--good man who was also a believer, lived a Christian life, helped neighbors whenever there was a need, “honest worker, good and true” = DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

--Loved God first, then neighbor, then self

--paid tithes in full to church

--lived in peace and charity

--7 DEADLY SINS--> NONE

--Why going to Canterbury? probably to pray or worship

--Narrator/Chaucer approves

**MILLER (561 – 584)**

--city class, milled grain into flour

-- LOOKS --> weighs 224 pounds, stout, big in muscles too, red beard and hair, big black nostrils, wart w/red hairs sticking out of it on end of nose; sword at his side

--wrestled, could tear door off hinges (strong), or run & break it with his head, was a buffoon

--“mouth like a furnace” (filthy mouth, told dirty stories and cursed) = INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

--stole from his customers by putting his thumb on the scales as he weighed their grain and charging more

--played bagpipes (w/his red hair, this suggests he is Irish or Scottish) as the pilgrimage went out of town

--7 DEADLY SINS--> GLUTTONY (fat, drinking)

LUST (suggested by his dirty stories)

AVARICE (deceiving people to make more money for self)

VANITY (extra proud of his strength—can break down doors

with his head; proud of his stealing

WRATH (fighting and cursing)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably for the adventure

**MANCIPLE (585 – 604)**

--city class, a buyer of food (caterer) for a society of lawyers (they entrusted him with their money for food)

--good at making deals, frugal (DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION) , never impulsive with purchases, watched market, made deals and kept the profits for himself rather than saving money for his employers

--debt-free, lived on what he had

--illiterate, but outsmarted the lawyers, “wipe their eye” (embezzling from them) = INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION

-- “others might follow his example” = SATIRE

--7 DEADLY SINS --> AVARICE (stealing money)

VANITY (proud of the fact that he has outsmarted

people more educated than he is)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably to find deals/bargains

**REEVE (605 – 640)**

--feudal system, works for the lord of the manor/castle as bookkeeper

--old and choleric (mean tempered) (BOTH DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION)

--LOOKS --> wore a bluish overcoat; OLD, skinny (legs like sticks, had no calf muscles), beard cut short to skin, short hair at ear w/that bald priest cut on top (ALL INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION) (reminds me of Mr. Burns from The Simpsons)

--kept lord’s storeroom neat and precise, auditors could find no mistakes in books, good at judging from weather how much produce should be raised on land

--had all of lord’s animals under his command

--knew if someone were trying to cheat the lord or dodge a payment (he has his own experiences to draw on), knew their tricks because he’d been cheating the lord all these years (embezzling money from the books, taking some off the top)

--people who worked under him were afraid of him

--lived in nice house

--would take some of the money he stole and buy his master gifts (similar to Selena’s manager a few years back)

--knew carpentry (hobby)

--7 DEADLY SINS--> AVARICE (embezzling)

WRATH--(anger, feared like the plaque)

VANITY--(proud of his well kept records and of the

fact he’s never been caught stealing – we know because he still has his hand)

SLOTH (rusty blade)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably for self gain

**SUMMONER (641 – 688)**

--church class, summons people who have committed crimes to church court

--LOOKS--> red faced, full of carbuncles (pus filled boils), narrow eyes, black scabby brows (picking sores ? -- probably dandruff), thin beard

--children afraid of him

--no ointment, powder, or medicine could cure his face

--loved to eat garlic and onions (breath stinks)

--loved to drink strong wine until he got drunk, would talk in Latin when drunk, but did not understand the words (just mimicked like a parrot)

--took bribes of wine from sinners, would forget about the summons and let them keep a concubine (INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION); “scoundrel,” “liar” = DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION; “kind” = SATIRE

--also took money to overlook the sin and not summon the people to church court

--would blackmail people into paying money to them because he knew their secrets, could get them excommunicated (kicked out of church)

--7 DEADLY SINS--> SLOTH (lazy at hygiene; not doing his job, such as not

learning Latin)

AVARICE (love of money)

GLUTTONY (loved to eat and drink)

LUST (w/Pardoner – “he and a gentle Pardoner rode

together,” “birds of a feather flock together”)

VANITY (shows off his few phrases of Latin that he

knows when he is drunk)

--Narrator/Chaucer disapproves

--Why going to Canterbury? probably to seek healing of his carbuncles; maybe because it is part of his job, maybe to find out sins of others

**PARDONER (689 – 734)**

--church class, rode with the Summoner, were “birds of a feather,” had similar attitudes and things in common

--he & summoner sing together (Summoner deep voiced, Pardoner high voice)

--LOOKS --> long, thin, yellow hair, hanging down limply (greasy), looked like rat tails, small cap on head, bulging eyeballs, holy relic sewn on cap, could not grow facial hair, wore pigs knuckle bones in a jar around his neck,

--wallet filled full of Pardons from Rome, carried a cross of metal with stones inset

--voice like a goat (high pitched)

--”I judge he were a gelding or a mare” (castrated male horse or female horse, implying that he is homosexual, along with the Summoner)

--Sold fake relics to people (pieces of the Virgin Mary’s veil, St. Peter’s sail, etc), lied to people and made fun of them for believing him

-- best song at church was offeratory because he knew he’d be preaching afterwards and be collecting money

--7 Deadly Sins--> LUST (homosexuality)

AVARICE (love of money)

VANITY (proud of his ability to trick people)

SLOTH (not want to preach or do “an honest day’s work”)

WRATH (deals with people w/threats and damnation” after

telling his story, he gets really angry with Host

for not allowing him to sell his fake relics)

GLUTTONY (would rather have wine than Christ or the poor

and suffering)

--Why going to Canterbury? probably to sell relics, or just for money, not for spiritual reasons (he’s a hypocrite)

(In the movie A Knight’s Tale, Chaucer tells the Summoner “I was naked for a day; You’ll be naked for eternity.” He plans to expose “every pimple, every scar” to show how evil and corrupt he and the Pardoner are.

Reading past line 734 gives information that I’ve given as notes. Information about the Host (767-856) is also given in background notes.

Do remind of different classes of people (ruling class, lower class, middle class, merchants, church class, but no royalty.