○ Rhyming “famine” and “vine” emphasises the starvation of some people
○ “licour of the vine” -- luxurious, showing off his wealth
● Surprisingly or ironically, he knows a lot about wine
○ “Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede / And namely fro the white wyn of Lepe / That is to selle in Fisshstrete or in Chepe" -- impressive knowledge of the wine from these places
○ However, as a church official he should not have this knowledge
○ demonstrates his own gluttonous lifestyle
● Repeats that he will “assoille by [his] heigh power” but in fact does not have power to absolve sins
● Ironic that he preaches against the “sinne of avarice”
○ demonstrates avarice himself, but his tale is so effective in putting people off sinning

Death -- the old man

● Mysterious -- “al forwrapped” was his face
● The rioters - arrogant and disrespectful
○ “Why livestow so longe in so greet age?” -- insulting tone
○ “carl" -- insult; then again “olde cherl”
● Earth is presented as his mother
○ “my moodres gate” -- Mother Earth gave birth to him. Calling out for nurturing
○ “Leeve mooder, leet me in!” -- line 445
● Alternative view of Death:
○ “she wol nat do that grace" -- favour, holy overtones. Feminine personification “she”
● The old man accuses the rioters of rude behaviour
○ rhymes “curteisye” and “vileynye” -- stark contrast of the higher and lower classes; politeness and rudeness.
○ He is respectful -- “sires”; whereas they insult him -- “olde cherl”
○ Addresses them as “ye” and “yourself,” whereas they choose an informal “thou”
● Well-read -- refers to the Bible, “In Hooly Writ ye may yourself wel red”
● They distort the old man’s presentation of the story
○ “false theef" -- presenting him as thief of life
○ “thou art his espye" -- ignored the old man’s story
● Offers them “this croked wey" -- mixture of literal and symbolic