

- 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
- Ironical 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 shal yourself wel red.”
- They distort the old man’s presentation and story
 - “false thief” -- presenting him as thief of life
 - “thou art his spye” -- ignored the old man’s story
- Offers him “this croked wey” -- mixture of literal and symbolic