**The Squire’s Prologue**

1 Squire, come nearer, if your will it be,

2 And speak to us of love; for certainly

3 You know thereof as much as any man.

4 Nay, sir, said he, but I'll do what I can

5 With hearty will; for I will not rebel

6 Against your wishes, but a tale will tell.

7 Hold me excused if I say aught amiss,

8 My aim is good, and lo, my tale is this.

**The Squire’s Tale**

1 At Sarai, in the land of Tartary,

2 There dwelt a king who warred on Russia, he,

3 Whereby there died full many a doughty man.

4 This noble king was known as Cambinskan,

5 Who in his time was of so great renown

6 That there was nowhere in the wide world known

7 So excellent a lord in everything;

8 He lacked in naught belonging to a king.

9 As for the faith to which he had been born,

10 He kept its law to which he had been sworn;

11 And therewith he was hardy, rich, and wise,

12 And merciful and just in all men's eyes,

13 True to his word, benign and honourable,

14 And in his heart like any center stable;

15 Young, fresh, and strong, in warfare ambitious

16 As any bachelor knight of all his house.

17 Of handsome person, he was fortunate,

18 And kept always so well his royal state

19 That there was nowhere such another man.

20 This noble king, this Tartar Cambinskan

21 Had got two sons on Elpheta, his wife,

22 Of whom the elder's name was Algarsyf,

23 And that same second son was Cambalo.

24 A daughter had this worthy king, also,

25 Who was the youngest, and called Canace.

26 But to describe to you all her beauty,

27 It lies not in my tongue nor my knowing;

28 I dare not undertake so high a thing.

29 My English is quite insufficient for

30 What must require a finished orator

31 Who knew the colours needful to that art

32 If he were to describe her every part.

33 I am none such, I must speak as I can.

34 And so befell that, when this Cambinskan

35 Had twenty winters worn his diadem,

36 As he was wont from year to year, I deem,

37 He let the feast of his nativity

38 Be cried throughout all Sarai, his city,

39 The last Idus of March, as 'twas that year.

40 Phoebus the sun right festive was, and clear;

41 For he was near his exaltation grown

42 In face of Mars, and in his mansion known

43 In Aries, the choleric hot sign.

44 Right pleasant was the weather, and benign,

45 For which the wild birds in the sun's gold sheen,

46 What of the season and the springing green,

47 Full loudly sang their love and their affection;

48 It seemed that they had got themselves protection

49 Against the sword of winter keen and cold.

50 This Cambinskan, of whom I have you told,

51 High in the palace, mounted on his throne

52 With crown and royal vestments sat alone,

53 And held his feast, so splendid and so rich

54 That in this world its like was not, of which,

55 If I should tell you all of the array,

56 Then would it occupy a summer's day.

57 Besides, it needs not here that I apprise

58 Of every course the order of service.

59 I will not tell you of their each strange sauce,

60 Nor of their swans, nor of their heronshaws.

61 Moreover, in that land, as tell knights old,

62 There are some foods which they for dainties hold.

63 Of which in this land the esteem is small;

64 There is no man that can report them all.

65 I will not so delay you, for it's prime,

66 And all the fruit of this were loss of time;

67 Unto my first theme I will have recourse.

68 And so befell that, after the third course,

69 While this great king sat in his state that day,

70 Hearing his minstrels on their instruments play

71 Before him at the board, deliciously,

72 In at the hall door, and all suddenly,

73 There came a knight upon a steed of brass,

74 Holding in hand a mirror broad of glass.

75 Upon his thumb he had a golden ring,

76 And by his side a naked sword hanging;

77 And up he rode right to the highest board.

78 In all the hall there was not spoken word

79 For marvel of this knight; him to behold,

80 They stared and stretched and craned, both young and old.

81 This stranger knight, who came thus suddenly,

82 Armed at all points, except his head, richly,

83 Saluted king and queen and those lords all,

84 In order of rank, as they sat there in hall,

85 Showing such humble courtesy to each

86 In manner of behaviour and in speech,

87 That Gawain, with his old-time courtesy,

88 Though he were come again from Faery,

89 Could not have bettered him in any word.

90 And after this, before the king's high board,

91 He with a manly voice said his message,

92 After the form in use in his language,

93 Without mistake in syllable or letter;

94 And, that his tale should seem to all the better,

95 According to his language was his cheer,

96 As men teach art of speech both there and here;

97 Albeit that I cannot ape his style,

98 Nor can I climb across so high a stile,

99 Yet sky I this, as to his broad intent,

100 To this amounts the whole of what he meant,

101 If so be that I have it yet in mind.

102 He said: The king of Araby and Ind,

103 My liege-lord, on this great and festive day

104 Salutes you as he now best can and may,

105 And sends to you, in honour of your feast,

106 By me, that am prepared for your behest,

107 This steed of brass, that easily and well

108 Can, in one natural day ('tis truth I tell),

109 That is to say, in four and twenty hours,

110 Where'er you please, in drought or else in showers,

111 Bear you in body unto every place

112 To which your heart wills that you go apace,

113 Without least hurt to you, through foul or fair;

114 Or, if you please to fly as high in air

115 As does an eagle when he wills to soar,

116 This self-same steed will bear you evermore

117 Without least harm, till you have gained your quest,

118 Although you sleep upon his back, or rest;

119 And he'll return, by twisting of a pin.

120 He that made this could make full many a gin;

121 He waited, watching many a constellation

122 Before he did contrive this operation;

123 And he knew many a magic seal and band.

124 This mirror, too, which I have in my hand,

125 Has power such that in it men may see

126 When there shall happen any adversity

127 Unto your realm, and to yourself also;

128 And openly who is your friend or foe.

129 More than all this, if any lady bright

130 Has set her heart on any kind of wight,

131 If he be false she shall his treason see,

132 His newer love and all his subtlety

133 So openly that nothing can he hide.

134 Wherefore, upon this pleasant summertide,

135 This mirror and this ring, which you may see,

136 He has sent to my Lady Canace,

137 Your most surpassing daughter, who is here.

138 The virtue of the ring, if you will hear,

139 Is this: that if she pleases it to wear

140 Upon her thumb, or in her purse to bear,

141 There is no bird that flies beneath the heaven

142 But she shall understand his language, even

143 To know his meaning openly and plain,

144 And answer him in his own words again.

145 And every herb that grows upon a root

146 She shall know, too, and whom 'twill heal, to boot,

147 Although his wounds be never so deep and wide.

148 This naked sword that's hanging by my side

149 Such virtue has that any man you smite,

150 Right through his armour will it carve and bite,

151 Were it as thick as is a branching oak;

152 And that man who is wounded by its stroke

153 Shall never be whole until you please, of grace,

154 To strike him with the flat in that same place

155 Where he is hurt; which is to say, 'tis plain,

156 That you may with the flat sword blade again

157 Strike him upon the wound and it will close;

158 This is the truth, I seek not to impose,

159 For it shall fail not while it's in your hold.

160 And when this knight had thus his message told,

161 He rode out of the hall and did alight.

162 His steed, which shone as sun does, and as bright,

163 Stood in the courtyard, still as any stone.

164 This knight was to a chamber led anon,

165 And was unarmed, and there at meat sat down.

166 The gifts were brought and royally were shown.

167 That is to say, the sword and glass of power,

168 And borne anon into the donjon tower

169 By certain officers detailed thereto;

170 The ring to Canace was borne also

171 With ceremony, where she sat at table.

172 But certainly, it is no lie or fable,

173 The horse of brass could no way be removed;

174 It stood as it were glued to ground. 'Twas proved

175 There was no man could lead it out or drive

176 With any windlass that he might contrive.

177 And why? Because they hadn't craft to heave it.

178 And therefore in that place they had to leave it

179 Until the knight had taught them the manner

180 Of moving it, as you'll hereafter hear.

181 Great was the press of people to and fro

182 Swarming to see this horse that stood there so;

183 For it so high was, and so broad and long,

184 So well proportioned as to be most strong,

185 Just as it were a steed of Lombardy;

186 Therewith as horselike and as quick of eye

187 As if a gentle Apulian courser 'twere.

188 For truly, from his tail unto his ear

189 Nature nor art could better nor amend

190 In any wise, as people did contend.

191 But evermore their greatest wonder was,

192 How it could go, being made all of brass;

193 It was of Faery, as to people seemed.

194 And divers folk diversely of it deemed;

195 So many heads, so many wits, one sees.

196 They buzzed and murmured like a swarm of bees,

197 And played about it with their fantasy,

198 Recalling what they'd learned from poetry;

199 Like Pegasus it was that mounted high,

200 That horse which had great wings and so could fly;

201 Or else it was the horse of Greek Sinon

202 Who brought Troy to destruction, years agone.

203 As men in these old histories may read.

204 My heart, said one, is evermore in dread;

205 I think some men-at-arms are hid therein

206 Who have in mind this capital to win.

207 It were right well that of such things we know.

208 Another whispered to his fellow, low,

209 And said: He lies, for it is rather like

210 Some conjured up appearance of magic,

211 Which jugglers practise at these banquets great.

212 Of sundry doubts like these they all did treat,

213 As vulgar people chatter commonly

214 Of all things that are made more cunningly

215 Than they San in their ignorance comprehend;

216 They gladly judge they're made for some base end.

217 And some much wondered on the mirror's power,

218 That had been borne up to the donjon tower,

219 And how men in it such strange things could see.

220 Another answered, saying it might be

221 Quite natural, by angles oddly spaced

222 And sly reflections thus within it placed,

223 And said, at Rome was such a one, men know.

224 They spoke of Alhazen and Vitello

225 And Aristotle, who wrote, in their lives,

226 On mirrors strange and on perspectives,

227 As all they know who've read their published word.

228 And other folk did wonder on the sword

229 That had the power to pierce through anything;

230 And so they spoke of Telephus the king,

231 And of Achilles with his magic spear,

232 Wherewith he healed and hurt too, 'twould appear,

233 Even as a man might do with this new sword

234 Of which, but now, I've told and you have heard.

235 They spoke of tempering metal sundry wise,

236 And medicines therewith, which men devise,

237 And. how and when such steel should hardened be;

238 Which, nevertheless, is all unknown to me.

239 Then spoke they of fair Canace's gold ring,

240 And all men said that such a wondrous thing

241 They'd ne'er heard of as being in ring-craft done,

242 Except that Moses and King Solomon

243 Had each a name for cunning in such art.

244 Thus spoke the people and then drew apart,

245 But notwithstanding, some said that it was

246 Wondrous to make fern-ashes into glass,

247 Since glass is nothing like the ash of fern;

248 But since long since of this thing men did learn,

249 Therefore they ceased their gabble and their wonder,

250 As sorely wonder some on cause of thunder,

251 Of ebb, of flood, of gossamer, of mist,

252 And each thing, till they know what cause exist.

253 Thus did they chatter and judge and thus surmise

254 Until the king did from the board arise.

255 Phoebus had left the angle meridional,

256 And yet ascending was that beast royal,

257 The noble Lion, with his Aldiran,

258 When that this Tartar king, this Cambinskan

259 Rose from his board where he had sat full high.

260 Before him went the sounding minstrelsy,

261 Into a room hung with rich ornaments,

262 Wherein they sounded divers instruments

263 Till it was like a heavenly thing to hear.

264 And now danced merry Venus' children dear,

265 For in the Fish their lady sat on high

266 And looked upon them with a friendly eye.

267 This noble king sat high upon his throne.

268 And this strange knight was brought to him anon,

269 And then to dance he went with Canace.

270 Here was such revel and such jollity

271 As no dull man is able to surmise;

272 He must have known and served love's high emprise,

273 And be a festive man as fresh as May

274 Who could for you describe such an array.

275 Who could tell you the figures of the dances,

276 So odd and strange and the blithe countenances,

277 The subtle glances and dissimulation

278 For fear of jealous persons' observation?

279 No man but Launcelot, and he is dead!

280 I therefore pass the joyous life they led

281 And saw no more, but in this jolliness

282 I leave them till to supper all did press.

283 The steward bade them serve the spices, aye,

284 And the rich wine through all this melody.

285 The ushers and the squires got them gone;

286 The spices and the wine were come anon.

287 They ate and drank, and when this had an end,

288 Unto the temple, as was right, did wend.

289 The service done, they supped while yet 'twas day.

290 What needs it that I tell all their array?

291 Each man knows well that at a kingly feast

292 There's plenty for the greatest and the least,

293 And dainties more than are in my knowing.

294 Then, after supper, went this noble king

295 To see the horse of brass, with all the rout

296 Of lords and ladies thronging him about.

297 Such wondering was there on this horse of brass

298 That, since the siege of Troy did overpass,

299 When once a horse seemed marvellous to men.

300 Was there such wondering as happened then.

301 But finally the king asked of this knight

302 The virtue of this courser, and the might,

303 And prayed him tell the means of governance.

304 This horse anon began to trip and dance

305 When this strange knight laid hand upon the rein

306 And said: Sire, there's no more I need explain

307 Than, when you wish to journey anywhere,

308 You must but twirl a peg within his ear,

309 Which I will show you when alone with you.

310 You must direct him to what place also,

311 Or to what country you may please to ride.

312 And when you come to where you would abide,

313 Bid him descend, and twirl another pin,

314 For therein lies the secret of the gin,

315 And he will then descend and do your will;

316 And there he'll stand, obedient and still.

317 Though all the world the contrary had sworn,

318 He shall not thence be drawn nor thence be borne.

319 Or, if you wish to bid him thence be gone,

320 Twirl but this pin and he'll depart anon

321 And vanish utterly from all men's sight,

322 And then return to you, by day or night,

323 When you shall please to call him back again

324 In such a fashion as I will explain

325 When we two are alone, and that full soon.

326 Ride when you choose, there's no more to be done.

327 Instructed when the king was by that knight,

328 And when he'd stablished in his mind aright

329 The method and the form of all this thing,

330 Then glad and blithe this noble doughty king

331 Repaired unto his revels as before.

332 The bridle to the donjon tower they bore,

333 And placed among his jewels rich and dear.

334 How I know not, the horse did disappear

335 Out of their sight; you get no more of me.

336 But thus I leave, in joy and jollity,

337 This Cambinskan with all his lords feasting

338 Well nigh until the day began to spring.

339 Explicit prima pars.

340 Sequitur pars secunda.

341 The nurse of good digestion, natural sleep,

342 Caused them to nod, and bade them they take keep

343 That labour and much drinking must have rest;

344 And with a gaping mouth all these he pressed,

345 And said that it was time they laid them down,

346 For blood was in the ascendant, as was shown,

347 And nature's friend, the blood, must honoured be.

348 They thanked him, gaping all, by two, by three,

349 And every one began to go to rest,

350 As sleep them bade; they took it for the best.

351 But here their dreams shall not by me be said;

352 The fumes of wine had filled each person's head,

353 Which cause senseless dreams at any time.

354 They slept next morning till the hour of prime,

355 That is, the others, but not Canace;

356 She was right temperate, as women be.

357 For of her father had she taken leave,

358 To go to rest, soon after it was eve;

359 For neither pale nor languid would she be,

360 Nor wear a weary look for men to see;

361 But slept her first deep sleep and then awoke.

362 For so much joy upon her heart there broke

363 When she looked on the mirror and the ring

364 That twenty times she flushed, and sleep did bring-

365 So strong an impress had the mirror made-

366 A vision of it to the slumbering maid.

367 Wherefore, ere up the sun began to glide,

368 She called her mistress, sleeping there beside,

369 And said to her that she was pleased to rise.

370 Old women like this governess are wise,

371 Or often so, and she replied anon,

372 And said: My lady, where will you be gone

373 Thus early? For the folk are all at rest.

374 I will, said she, arise, for I've no zest

375 For longer sleep, and I will walk about.

376 Her mistress called of women a great rout,

377 And they rose up, a dozen more or less,

378 And up rose lovely Canace to dress,

379 As ruddy and bright as is the warm young sun

380 That in the Ram now four degrees has run;

381 He was no higher when she all ready was;

382 And forth she sauntered at an easy pace,

383 Arrayed according to the season sweet,

384 Lightly, to play and walk on maiden feet;

385 With five or six girls of her company

386 All down an alley, through the park, went she.

387 The morning mists that rose from the damp earth

388 Reddened the sun and broadened it in girth;

389 Nevertheless it was so fair a sight

390 That it made all their hearts dance for delight,

391 What of the season and the fair morning,

392 And all the myriad birds that she heard sing;

393 For when she heard, she knew well what they meant,

394 Just by their songs, and learned all their intent.

395 The point of every story, why it's told,

396 If it's delayed till interest grow cold

397 In those who have, perchance, heard it before,

398 The savour passes from it more and more,

399 For fulsomeness of its prolixity.

400 And for this reason, as it seems to me,

401 I should to my tale's major point descend

402 And make of these girls' walking a swift end.

403 Amidst a dry, dead tree, as white as chalk,

404 As Canace was playing in her walk,

405 There sat a falcon overhead full high,

406 That in a pitiful voice began to cry,

407 rill all the wood resounded mournfully.

408 For she had beaten herself so pitiably

409 With both her wings that the red glistening blood

410 Ran down the tree trunk whereupon she stood.

411 And ever in one same way she cried and shrieked,

412 And with her beak her body she so pricked

413 That there's no tiger, nor a cruel beast

414 That dwells in open wood or deep forest,

415 Would not have wept, if ever weep he could,

416 For pity of her, she shrieked alway so loud.

417 For never yet has been a man alive-

418 If but description I could well contrive-

419 That heard of such a falcon for fairness,

420 As well of plumage as of nobleness

421 Of shape, and all that reckoned up might be.

422 A falcon peregrine she was, and she

423 Seemed from a foreign land; and as she stood

424 She fainted now and then for loss of blood,

425 Till almost she had fallen from the tree.

426 This king's fair daughter, Princess Canace,

427 Who on her finger bore the magic ring

428 Whereby she understood well everything

429 That any bird might in his language say,

430 And in such language could reply straightway,

431 She understood well what this falcon said,

432 And of her pity well-nigh was she dead.

433 So to the tree she went right hastily,

434 And on this falcon looked she pitifully,

435 And held her lap up wide, for she knew now

436 The falcon must come falling from the bough

437 When next it swooned away from loss of blood.

438 A long while waiting there the princess stood,

439 Till at the last she spoke, in her voice clear,

440 Unto the hawk, as you'll hereafter hear.

441 What is the cause, if it be one to tell,

442 That you are in this furious pain of hell?

443 Said Canace unto this hawk above.

444 Is this for sorrow of death or loss of love?

445 For, as I think, these are the causes two

446 That torture gentle heart with greatest woe;

447 Of other ills there is no need to speak,

448 Because such harm upon yourself you wreak;

449 Which proves right well that either love or dread

450 Must be the reason for your cruel deed,

451 Since I can see no one that gives you chase.

452 For love of God, come, do yourself some grace,

453 Or say what thing may help; for west nor east

454 Have I before now seen a bird or beast

455 That ever treated self so wretchedly.

456 You slay me with your sorrow, verily,

457 Such great compassion in my heart has grown.

458 For God's dear love, come from the dry tree down;

459 And, as I am a monarch's daughter true,

460 If I but verily the real cause knew

461 Of your distress, if it lay in my might,

462 I would make you amends before the night,

463 As truly help me God of human kind!

464 And even now will I look out and find

465 Some herbs to heal your hurts with, speedily.

466 Then shrieked this falcon the more piteously

467 Than ever, and to ground fell down anon,

468 And lay there, swooning, deathlike as a stone,

469 Till Canace within her lap did take

470 And hold the bird till she began to wake.

471 And when from out her fainting fit she made,

472 All in her own hawk's language thus she said:

473 That pity wells up soon in gentle heart,

474 Feeling its likeness in all pains that smart,

475 Is proved, and day by day, as men may see,

476 As well by deeds as by authority;

477 For gentle heart can spy out gentleness.

478 I see well that you have on my distress

479 Compassion, my fair Princess Canace,

480 Of truly womanly benignity

481 That nature in your character has set.

482 Not that I hope much good therefrom to get,

483 But to obey the word of your heart free,

484 And so that others may be warned by me,

485 As by the whelp instructed is the lion,

486 Just for that cause and reason shall I fly on,

487 While yet I have the leisure and the space,

488 The story of my wrongs to you I'll trace.

489 And ever, while the one her sorrow said,

490 The other wept, as she to water'd fled,

491 Until the falcon bade her to be still;

492 And with a sigh, right thus she said her will.

493 Where I was born (alas, that cruel day!)

494 And fostered on a rock of marble grey

495 So tenderly that nothing troubled me,

496 I knew not what it was, adversity,

497 Till I could soar on high under the sky.

498 There dwelt a handsome tercelet there, hard by,

499 Who seemed the dwell of every nobleness;

500 Though he was full of treason and falseness,

501 It was so hidden under humble bearing,

502 And under hues of truth which he was wearing,

503 And under kindness, never used in vain,

504 That no one could have dreamed that he could feign,

505 So deeply ingrained were his colours dyed.

506 But just as serpent under flower will hide

507 Until he sees the time has come to bite,

508 Just so this god of love, this hypocrite

509 With false humility for ever served

510 And seemed a wooer who the rites observed

511 That so become the gentleness of love.

512 As of a tomb the fairness is above,

513 While under is the corpse, such as you know,

514 So was this hypocrite, cold and hot also;

515 And in this wise he served his foul intent

516 That (save the Fiend) no one knew what he meant,

517 Till he so long had wept and had complained,

518 And many a year his service to me feigned,

519 That my poor heart, a pitiful sacrifice,

520 All ignorant of his supreme malice,

521 Fearing he'd die, as it then seemed to me,

522 Because of his great oaths and surety,

523 Granted him love, on this condition known,

524 That evermore my honour and renown

525 Were saved, both private fame and fame overt;

526 That is to say, that, after his desert

527 I gave him all my heart and all my thought-

528 God knows, and he, that more I gave him naught-

529 And took his heart in change for mine, for aye.

530 But true it is, and has been many a day,

531 A true man and a thief think not at one.

532 And when he saw the thing so far was gone

533 That I had fully granted him my love,

534 In such a way as I've explained above,

535 And given him my faithful heart, as free

536 As he swore he had given his to me,

537 Anon this tiger, full of doubleness,

538 Fell on his knees, devout in humbleness,

539 With so high reverence, and, by his face,

540 So like a lover in his gentle grace,

541 So ravished, as it seemed, for very joy,

542 That never Jason nor Paris of Troy-

543 Jason? Nay, truly, nor another man

544 Since Lamech lived, who was the first began

545 To love two women (those that write have sworn),

546 Not ever, since the primal man was born,

547 Could any man, by twenty-thousandth part,

548 Enact the tricks of this deceiver's art;

549 Nor were he worthy to unlace his shoe,

550 Where double-dealing or deceit were due,

551 Nor could so thank a person as he me!

552 His manner was most heavenly to see,

553 For any woman, were she ever so wise;

554 So painted he, and combed, at point-device,

555 His manner, all in all, and every word.

556 And so much by his bearing was I stirred

557 And for the truth I thought was in his heart,

558 That, if aught troubled him and made him smart,

559 Though ever so little bit, and I knew this,

560 It seemed to me I felt death's cruel kiss.

561 And briefly, so far all these matters went,

562 My will became his own will's instrument;

563 That is to say, my will obeyed his will

564 In everything in reason, good or ill,

565 Keeping within the bounds of honour ever.

566 Never had I a thing so dear- ah, never!-

567 As him, God knows! nor ever shall anew.

568 This lasted longer than a year or two

569 While I supposed of him no thing but good.

570 But finally, thus at the last it stood,

571 That Fortune did decree that he must win

572 Out of that place, that home, that I was in.

573 Whether I felt woe, there's no question, none;

574 I can't describe my feelings, no, not one;

575 But one thing dare I tell, and that boldly,

576 I came to know the pain of death thereby;

577 Such grief I felt for him, none might believe.

578 So on a day of me he took his leave,

579 So sorrowfully, too, I thought truly

580 That he felt even as deep a woe as I,

581 When I had heard him speak and saw his hue.

582 Nevertheless, I thought he was so true,

583 And that to me he would come back again

584 Within a little while, let me explain;

585 And 'twas quite reasonable that he must go

586 For honour's sake, for oft it happens so,

587 That I made virtue of necessity,

588 And took it well, because it had to be.

589 A look of cheer I felt not I put on,

590 And took his hand, I swear it by Saint John.

591 And said to him: 'Behold, I'm yours in all;

592 Be you to me as I have been, and shall.'

593 What he replied it needs not I rehearse,

594 Who can say better than he, who can do worse?

595 When he had well said, all his good was done.

596 'It well behooves him take a lengthy spoon

597 Who eats with devils,' so I've heard folk say.

598 So at the last he must be on his way,

599 And forth he flew to where it pleased him best

600 When it became his purpose he should rest,

601 I think he must have had this text in mind,

602 That 'Everything, returning to its kind,

603 Gladdens itself'; thus men say, as I guess;

604 Men love, and naturally, newfangledness,

605 As do these birds that men in cages feed.

606 For though you night and day take of them heed,

607 And fairly strew their cage as soft as silk,

608 And give them sugar, honey, bread, and milk,

609 Yet on the instant when the door is up,

610 They with their feet will spurn their feeding cup,

611 And to the wood will fly and worms will eat;

612 So are they all newfangled of their meat,

613 And love all novelties of their own kind;

614 Nor nobleness of blood may ever bind.

615 So fared this tercelet, oh, alas the day!

616 Though he was gently born, and fresh and gay,

617 And handsome, and well-mannered, aye and free,

618 He saw a kite fly, and it proved a she,

619 And suddenly he loved this she-kite so

620 That all his love for me did quickly go,

621 And all his truth turned falsehood in this wise;

622 Thus has this kite my love in her service,

623 And I am love-lorn without remedy.

624 And with that word the hawk began to cry,

625 And after, swooned on Canace's fair arm.

626 Great was the sorrow for the falcon's harm

627 That Canace and all her women made;

628 They knew not how they might this falcon aid.

629 But Canace home bore her in her lap,

630 And softly her in poultices did wrap

631 Where she with her own beak had hurt herself.

632 Now Canace dug herbs more rich than pelf

633 Out of the ground, and made up ointments new

634 Of precious herbs, all beautiful of hue,

635 Wherewith to heal this hawk; from day to night

636 She nursed her carefully with all her might.

637 And by her bed's head she contrived a mew

638 And lined the cage with velvets all of blue,

639 Symbol of truth that is in women seen.

640 And all without, the mew was painted green,

641 And there were painted all these treacherous fowls

642 As are these titmice, tercelets, and these owls,

643 While for despite were painted there beside

644 Magpies, that they might cry at them and chide.

645 Thus leave I Canace her hawk keeping,

646 I will no more, just now, speak of her ring,

647 Till I come back with purpose to explain

648 How this poor falcon got her love again

649 Repentant, as the story tells to us,

650 By mediation of that Cambalus,

651 The king's son, of whom I've already told.

652 But henceforth I a straightened course will hold

653 Great battles and adventures to relate,

654 Whereof were never heard such marvels great.

655 First will I tell you of King Cambinskan

656 Who won so many a town and many a man;

657 And after will I speak of Algarsyf,

658 How he won Theodora for his wife,

659 For whom full oft in peril great he was,

660 Had he been helped not by the steed of brass;

661 And after that I'll speak of Cambalo,

662 Who in the lists fought with the brothers two

663 For Canace, before he could her win.

664 And where I left off, I'll again begin.

665 Explicit secunda pars.

666 Incipit pars tercia.

667 Apollo in his chariot whirled so high

668 That in the God Mercurius' house, the sly--