

**Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c 1400)**  
from **General Prologue**

When April's gentle rains have pierced the drought      1  
Of March right to the root, and bathed each sprout  
... On pilgrimage then folks desire to start. 12

...There with us was a KNIGHT, a worthy man  
Who, from the very first time he began  
To ride about, loved honor, chivalry,      45  
The spirit of giving, truth and courtesy.  
He was a valiant warrior for his lord;  
No man had ridden farther with the sword  
Through Christendom and lands of heathen creeds,  
And always he was praised for worthy deeds.  
He helped win Alexandria in the East,  
And often sat at table's head to feast  
With knights of all the nations when in Prussia.  
In Lithuania as well as Russia  
No other noble Christian fought so well.      55  
When Algaciras in Granada fell,  
When Ayas and Attalia were won,  
This Knight was there. Hard riding he had done  
At Benmarin. Along the Great Sea coast  
He'd made his strikes with many a noble host.      60  
His mortal battles numbered then fifteen,  
And for our faith he'd fought at **Tramissene**      62  
Three tournaments and always killed his foe.

**Christopher Marlowe**  
***Tamburlaine the Great* (1592)**  
**Act III, Scene IV**

*TAMBURLAINE: Well said, Theridamas! speak in that mood;  
For WILL and SHALL best fitteth Tamburlaine,  
Whose smiling stars give him assured hope  
Of martial triumph ere he meet his foes.  
I that am term'd the scourge and wrath of God,  
The only fear and terror of the world,  
Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge  
Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves,  
Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains,  
And feeding them with thin and slender fare;  
That naked row about the Terrene sea,  
And, when they chance to rest or breathe a space,  
Are punish'd with bastones so grievously  
That they lie panting on the galleys' side,  
And strive for life at every stroke they give.  
These are the cruel pirates of Argier,  
That damned train, the scum of Africa,  
Inhabited with stragglng runagates,  
That make quick havoc of the Christian blood:*

**PROSPERO:** Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.

**ARIEL:** Sir, in Argier.

**PROSPERO:** O, was she so? ... This damn'd witch Sycorax,  
For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible  
To enter human hearing, from Argier,  
Thou know'st, was banish'd: for one thing she did  
They would not take her life. Is not this true? (*The Tempest* Act I, scene II).

**William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1588)**

**Act II, scene III** *Enter AARON, with a bag of gold*

**AARON:** He that had wit would think that I had none,  
To bury so much gold under a tree,  
And never after to inherit it.  
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly  
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,  
Which, cunningly effected, will beget  
A very excellent piece of villany:  
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest  
... **TAMORA:** Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!  
...**BASSIANUS:** Believe me, queen, your swarth Cimmerian  
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,  
Spotted, detested, and abominable.  
Why are you sequester'd from all your train,  
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed.  
And wander'd hither to an obscure plot,  
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,  
If foul desire had not conducted you?  
(Cimmerian: very dark and gloomy. One of a mythical people described by Homer as inhabiting a land of perpetual darkness).

**Act V, scene III**

**LUCIUS**

Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,  
This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil;  
Let him receive no sustenance, fetter him  
Till he be brought unto the empress' face,  
For testimony of her foul proceedings:

**AARON**

Some devil whisper curses in mine ear,  
And prompt me, that my tongue may utter forth  
The venomous malice of my swelling heart!

**MARCUS ANDRONICUS:** Now is my turn to speak. Behold this child:

Of this was Tamora delivered;  
The issue of an irreligious Moor,  
Chief architect and plotter of these woes:  
The villain is alive in Titus' house,  
And as he is, to witness this is true.  
Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge  
These wrongs, unspeakable, past patience,  
Or more than any living man could bear.

**Shakespeare's**  
*Othello, The Moor of Venice*  
**Act I, scene I**

**RODERIGO**

What a full fortune does the **thicklips** owe  
If he can carry't thus!

...to BRABANTIO DESDEMONA's father: Your heart is burst, you have lost half  
your soul;

Even now, now, very now, an old **black ram**  
Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;  
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,  
Or else the **devil** will make a grandsire of you:  
Arise, I say.

...you'll  
have your daughter covered with a **Barbary horse**;  
you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have  
coursers for cousins and gennets for germans.

**RODERIGO:**

To the gross clasps of a **lascivious Moor**—

**Act I, scene III**

**DUKE OF VENICE**

**Valiant** Othello, we must straight employ you  
Against the **general enemy Ottoman**.

**DESDEMONA**

My noble father,  
I do perceive here a divided duty:  
To you I am bound for life and education;  
My life and education both do learn me  
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;  
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,  
And so much duty as my mother show'd  
To you, preferring you before her father,  
So much I challenge that I may profess  
Due to **the Moor my lord**.

**DUKE OF VENICE**

*To BRABANTIO*

And, noble signior,  
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,  
Your son-in-law is **far more fair than black**.

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606)

Act I Scene i

Alexandria. A room in CLEOPATRA's palace *Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO*

**PHILO:**

Nay, but this dotage of our general's  
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,  
That o'er the files and musters of the war  
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,  
The office and devotion of their view  
Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,  
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst  
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,  
And is become the bellows and the fan  
To cool a **gipsy's lust**.

*Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train, with Eunuchs fanning her*

Look, where they come:

Take but good note, and you shall see in him.

The triple pillar of the world transform'd

Into a **strumpet's** fool: behold and see.

Act I Scene ii

MARK ANTONY :

... These strong **Egyptian fetters** I must break,  
Or lose myself in dotage.

...I must from this **enchanting queen** break off:

Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,

My idleness doth hatch.

Act I Scene v

The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm  
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,  
Or murmuring 'Where's **my serpent** of old Nile?'  
For so he calls me

**ACT III SCENE XI**

**MARK ANTONY**

O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See,  
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes  
By looking back what I have left behind  
'Stroy'd in **dishonour**.

**CLEOPATRA**

O my lord, my lord,  
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought  
You would have follow'd.

**MARK ANTONY**

Egypt, thou knew'st too well  
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,  
And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit  
**Thy full supremacy** thou knew'st, and that  
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods  
Command me.