

The friars tale

1. Adjective
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One day, the summoner was traveling to issue a summons to an old widow, when he met a yeoman on the way, dressed in a Adjective jacket. The summoner claimed to be a bailiff, knowing that his actual profession was so detested. The yeoman offered hospitality to the summoner. The two travelled together, and the summoner asked where the yeoman lived, intending to later rob him of the gold and silver he claimed to possess. The summoner asks the yeoman how he makes money at his job, and the yeoman admits that he lives by extortion and theft; and the summoner admits that he does the same.

The two reveal to each other their villainy, until the yeoman finally declares that he is a fiend whose dwelling is in hell. The summoner asks the yeoman (the devil) why he has a human shape, and he replies that he assumes one whenever on earth. The summoner asks him why he is on earth, receiving the reply that sometimes devils are God's instruments. The devil claims that the summoner will meet him again someday and have better evidence of hell than Dante or Virgil. The summoner suggests that the two continue on their way and go about their business, each taking their share.

On their travels they found a carter whose wagon, loaded with hay, was stuck in the mud. "The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!" cursed the carter, and the summoner, taking the carter literally, implored the devil to take all of the carter's belongings. The devil comments that, although that is what he is literally saying, that is not what the carter means: "the carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte another". On the devil's encouragement, the carter

prays to God, and, lo and behold, the horses pull the wagon from the mud.

The summoner suggests that they visit the widow he was originally visiting. On arriving, the summoner gives her a notice to appear before the archdeacon on the penalty of excommunication, but she claims that she is sick and cannot travel there. She asks if she can pay the summoner to represent her to the archdeacon, and he demands twelve pence, a sum that she thinks is too great, for, she claims, she is guiltless of sin. The summoner then demands her new pan from her, claiming that he paid her fine for making her husband a cuckold (an accusation which she expressly denies). She curses the summoner, saying that she gives his body to the devil. The devil hears this and tells the summoner that he shall be in hell tonight. Upon these words, the summoner and the devil disappeared into hell, the realm where summoners truly belong.