

*Everyman*  
after 1485

English Literature (I), week 7

# *Everyman*<sup>1</sup> after 1485

- ☞ Place of *Everyman* in English Literature
- ☞ Classical Age (500BC-500AD)/Renaissance/The Early Half of the 20th Century
- ☞ Language
- ☞ The Birth of English Drama: 12th/13th Century/ Play Cycle

<sup>1</sup> Greenblatt, Stephen, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2006.

# Medieval Drama

- ➡ 1. Presentation: cycle
- ➡ 2. Types
  - ➡ a. Mystery Play (about Bible)
  - ➡ b. Morality Play (allegory)
  - ➡ c. Miracle Play (about saints)

# *The Second Shepherds' Play*

- ☞ A Mystery Play (13th/14th Century)
- ☞ Plot: A Parody of Nativity
- ☞ Characters: Coll, Gib, Daw, Mak, Gill, Angel, Mary
- ☞ Divine Grace & Social Criticism/anachronism

## The Shepherds' Complaint, Coll's against Taxes and Landlords, Lines 1-6

- ➡ COLL Lord, what these weathers are cold,
- ➡ And I am ill happed [badly covered];
- ➡ I am nearhand dold [numb],
- ➡ So long have I napped;
- ➡ My legs they fold
- ➡ My fingers are chapped.

## Lines 18-25

- ➡ No wonder, as it stands
- ➡ If we be poor,
- ➡ For the tilth of our lands
- ➡ Lies fallow as the floor
- ➡     As ye ken.
- ➡ Fortaxed, and rammed,
- ➡ We are made hand-tamed
- ➡     With these gentry-men.

## Gib the Henpecked, Lines 92- 104

- ☞ But as far as I ken,
- ☞ Or yet as I go,
- ☞ We sely [hapless] wedmen
- ☞ Dree [suffer] mickle [much] woe;
- ☞ We have sorrow then and then—
- ☞ It falls oft so.
- ☞ Sely [silly] Cople, our hen,

☞ Both to and fro

☞ She cackles;

☞ But begin she to croak,

☞ To groan or to cluck,

☞ Woe is him is our cock,

☞ For he is in the shackles.



## Daw's Complaint against Overbearing Masters, Lines 183-88

- ☞ Was never sin Noah's flood
- ☞ Such floods seen,
- ☞ Winds and rains so rude
- ☞ And storms so keen:
- ☞ Some stammered, some stood
- ☞ In doubt, as I ween.

## Lines 222-34

- ➔ DAW Such servant as I,
- ➔ That sweats and swinks [toil],
- ➔ Eats our bread full dry,
- ➔ And that me forthinks [angers]
- ➔ We are oft wet and weary
- ➔ When master-men winks [sleep],
- ➔ Yet comes full lately
- ➔ Both dinners and drinks.

- ➡ Both dinners and drinks.
- ➡ But nately [profitably]
- ➡ Both our dame and our sire,
- ➡ When we have run in the mire,
- ➡ They can nip at our hire,
- ➡ And pay us full lately.

## Mak's Entrance, Lines 283-90

- ☞ COLL Who is that pipes so poor?
- ☞ MAK [aside] Would God ye wist how I foor [fared]!
- ☞ [aloud] Lo, a man that walks on the moor
- ☞ And has not all his will.
- ☞ GIB Mak, where has thou gane? Tell us tiding.
- ☞ DAW Is he come? Then ilkane
- ☞ Take heed to his thing.

# Mak in the Night, Lines 387-94

- ☞ Now were time for a man
- ☞ That lacks what he wold [wants]
- ☞ To stalk privily than [then]
- ☞ Unto a fold [sheepfold],
- ☞ And nimbly to work than,
- ☞ And be not too bold,
- ☞ For he might abuy [pay for] the bargan [bargain]
- ☞ At the ending.

## Mak Recites a Spell, Lines 399-404

- ☞ But about you a circill,
- ☞ As round as a moon,
- ☞ To [until] I have done that I will,
- ☞ Till that it be noon,
- ☞ That ye lie stone-still
- ☞ To [until] that I have done

## Mak steals a sheep, Lines 421-24

- ➡ A fat sheep, I dare say!
- ➡ A good fleece, dare I lay [bet]!
- ➡ Eft-quit [repay] when I may,
- ➡ But this will I borrow.

# Mak and Gill's Trick, Lines 477-87

- ☞ GILL A good bourd [trick] have I spied,
- ☞ Sin thou can none.
- ☞ Here shall we him hide
- ☞ To they be gone,
- ☞ In my cradle. Abide!
- ☞ Let me alone,
- ☞ And I shall lie beside
- ☞ In childbed and groan



- ☞ MAK Thou red [get ready],
- ☞ And I shall say thou was light [delivered]
- ☞ Of a knave-child this night.

# The Shepherds' Discovery of the Loss, Lines 646-51

- ➡ DAW Ah, Coll, good more.
- ➡ Why sleeps thou not?
- ➡ COLL Alas, that ever I was born!
- ➡ We have a foul blot:
- ➡ A fat wether have we lorn.
- ➡ DAW Marry, God's forbot!

## The Shepherds at Mak's House (Comic), Lines 763-75

- ➡ GILL Out, thieves, from my barn [child]!
- ➡ Nigh him not thore!
- ➡ MAK Wist ye how she had farn,
- ➡ Your hearts would be sore.
- ➡ You do wrong, I you warn,
- ➡ That thus comes before
- ➡ To a Woman that has farn—
- ➡ But I say no more.

- 👉 GILL Ah, my middill!
- 👉 I pray to God so mild,
- 👉 If ever I you beguiled,
- 👉 That I eat this child
- 👉 That lies in this cradill.

## Discovery, Lines 832-44

- ☞ DAW The child it will not grief,
- ☞ That little day-starn,
- ☞ Mak, with your leaf,
- ☞ Let me give your barn
- ☞ But sixpence.
- ☞ MAK Nay, do way! He sleeps.
- ☞ DAW Methinks he peeps [...].

- ☞ DAW Give me leave him to kiss,
- ☞ And lift up the clout [cover],
- ☞ *[lifts the cover]*
- ☞ What the devil is this?
- ☞ He has a long snout! [...].
- ☞ [They toss MAK in a blanket.]

# An Angel Appears, Lines 919-24

- ➡ ANGEL Rise, herdmen hend [gracious]
- ➡ For now is he born
- ➡ That shall take fro the fiend
- ➡ That Adam had lorn
- ➡ That warlock [devil] to shend [destroy],
- ➡ This night is he born.

## Bethlehem, Lines 1049-61

- ☞ DAW Hail, darling dear,
- ☞ Full of Godhead!
- ☞ I pray thee be near
- ☞ When that I have need.
- ☞ Hail, sweet is thy cheer
- ☞ My heart would bleed
- ☞ To see thee sit here
- ☞ In so poor weed,



- ➡ With no pennies.
- ➡ Hail, put forth thy dall [hand]
- ➡ I bring thee but a ball:
- ➡ Have and play thee withal,
- ➡ And go to the tennis.

# *Everyman*

- ☞ Structure of the Search: Inward & Outward
- ☞ Allegory
- ☞ Language (15th Century)
- ☞ Theme: Betrayal, Disappointment, Seven Deadly Sins
- ☞ Outline of Everyman's Search

Everyman → Fellowship → Kindred, Cousin → Goods

Everyman meets Good

Deeds → Knowledge → Beauty, Discretion, Strength,  
Five-Wits → Priesthood

👉 Everyman, illustrations

## Beginning with a Messenger, Lines 1-21

MESSENGER I pray you all give your audience,

And hear this matter with reverence,

By figure a moral play.

The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,

>>>Next

That of our lives and ending shows

How transitory we be all day.

The matter is wonder precious,

But the intent of it is more gracious

>>>Next

And sweet to bear away.

The story saith: Man, in the beginning

Look well, and take good heed to the ending,

Be you never so gay.

>>Next

## The Urgency of Repentance, Lines 1-21

You think sin in the beginning full sweet,  
Which in the end causeth the soul to weep,  
When the body lieth in clay.

Here shall you see how fellowship and jollity,  
Both strength, pleasure, and beauty,

>>>Next

Will fade from thee as flower in May.

For ye shall hear how our Heaven-King

Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning.

Give audience and hear what he doth say.



## God's and Everyman's Attitudes, Lines 22-36

GOD I perceive, here in my majesty,

How that all creatures be to me unkind,

Living without dread in wordly prosperity.

Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,

>>>Next

Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God.

In worldly riches is all their mind:

They fear not of my righteousness the sharp rod:

My law that I showed when I for them died

>>Next

They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red.

---

And now I see the people do clean forsake me.

They use the seven deadly sins damnable,

# The Seven Deadly Sins (for the Roman Catholic Church) & the Seven Virtues

Lust	Chastity
Gluttony	Temperance
Greed	Charity
Sloth	Diligence
Wrath	Patience
Envy	Kindness
Pride	Humility

*Everyman*  
Question 1.

☞ If you are the director, what would the costumes of characters playing Gluttony, Greed, and Envy be like?

## God Asks for Reckoning, Lines 45-48

Therefore I will, in all the haste,

Have a reckoning of every man's person.

For, and I leave the people thus alone

In their life and wicked tempests,

Verily they will become much worse than beasts;

## The Forsaking Theme, 52-59

I hoped well that every man

In my glory should make his mansion,

And thereto I had them all elect.

But now I see, like traitors deject,

>>Next

They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,

Nor yet for their being that I them have lent.

I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,

And few there be that asketh it heartily.



God Sends Death, Lines 64-71

DEATH Almighty God, I am here at your will,

Your commandment to fulfill.

GOD Go thou to Everyman,

And show him, in my name,

>>Next

A pilgrimage he must on him take,  
Which he in no wise may escape;  
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning  
Without delay or any tarrying.

*Everyman*  
Question 2.

☞ That God wants everyman to bring along a reckoning seems baffling. Do you agree or not? Why?

Death Calls Everyman, Lines 85-102

Everyman, stand still! Wither art thou going

Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker forgeet?

EVERYMAN Why askest thou?

DEATH Yea, sir, I will show you:

>>>Next

In great haste I am sent to thee

From God out of his majesty.

EVERYMAN What! Sent to me?

DEATH Yea, certainly.

>>>Next

Though thou have forgot him here,

He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,

As, ere we depart, thou shalt know.

EVERYMAN What desireth God of me?

>>Next

DEATH That shall I show thee:

A reckoning he will needs have

Without any longer respite.

EVERYMAN To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave

Thus blind matter troubleth my wit.

The Sudden Coming of Death, Lines 131-37

EVERYMAN Alas, shall I have no longer respite?

I may say Death giveth no warning.

To think on thee it maketh my heart sick,

For all unready is my book of reckoning.

>>Next



But twelve year and I might have a biding,  
My counting-book I would make so clear  
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.

Fellowship Says that he Will not Forsake Everyman,  
Lines 205-33

Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow!

FELLOWSHIP Everyman, good morrow, by this day!

Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?

If anything be amiss, I pray thee me say,

>>Next

That I may help to remedy.

EVERYMAN Yea, good Fellowship, yea:

I am in great jeopardy.

FELLOWSHIP My true friend, show to me your mind.

>>Next

I will not forsake thee to my life's end

In the way of good company.

EVERYMAN That was well spoken, and livingly!

FELLOWSHIP Sir, I must needs know your heaviness.

>>Next

I have pity to see you in any distress.

If any have you wronged, ye shall revenged be,

Though I on the ground be slain for thee,

Though that I know before that I should die.

---

>>Next

And so ye shall evermore.

For, in faith, and thou go to hell, I will not  
forsake thee by the way.

## Fellowship Forsakes Everyman, Lines 270-98

EVERYMAN Ye promised otherwise, pardie.

FELLOWSHIP I wot well I said so, truly.

And yet, if thou wilt eat and drink and make good cheer,

Or haunt to women the lusty company,

>>Next

I would not forsake you while the day is clear,

Trust me verily!

---

EVERYMAN Whither away, Fellowship? Will thou  
forsake me?

FELLOWSHIP Yea, by my fay! To god I betake thee.



Cousin and Everyman, Lines 338-57

EVERYMAN Of all my works I must show

How I have lived and my days spent;

Also of ill deeds that I have used

In my time sith life was me lent,

>>Next

And of all virtues that I have refused.

Therefore I pray you go thither with me

To help me make mine account, for saint charity.

COUSIN What, to go thither? Is that the matter?

>>Next

Nay, Everyman, I had leifer fast bread and water

All this five year and more!

EVERYMAN Also, that ever I was bore!

For now shall I never be merry

>>Next

If that you forsake me.

**KINDRED** Ah, sir, what? Ye be a merry man:

Take good heart to you and make no moan.

But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,

>>Next

As for me, ye shall go alone.

EVERYMAN My Cousin, will you not with me go?

COUSIN No, by Our Lady! I have the cramp in my toe:

## The Forsaking Theme, Lines 369-72

EVERYMAN How should I be merry or glad?

For fair promises men to me make,

But when I have most need they me forsake.

I am deceived. That maketh me sad.

Goods and Everyman, Lines 391-98

EVERYMAN I will speak to him in this distress.

Where art thou, my Goods and riches?

GOODS [*within*] Who calleth me? Everyman? What, hast  
thou haste?

I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,

>>Next

And in chests I am locked so fast—

Also sacked in bags—thou mayst see with thine eye

I cannot stir, in packs low where I lie.



## Goods Forsakes Everyman, Lines 403-21

EVERYMAN And all my life I have had joy and pleasure  
in thee:

Therefore I pray thee go with me,

For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty

My reckoning help to clean and purity.

>>Next

For it is said ever among

That money maketh all right that is wrong.

GOODS Nay, Everyman, I sing another song:

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>>Next

Thou shouldest fare much the worse for me;  
For because on me thou did set thy mind,  
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,

---

>>Next

But if thou had me loved moderately during,

As to the poor to give part of me

Then shouldest thou not in his dolor be

Everyman's Complaint, Lines 451-53

EVERYMAN O false Good, cursed thou be,

Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me

And caught me in thy snare!

*Everyman*

Question 3.

➡ After Everyman's  
disappointment with Goods, he  
begins his self-introspection.  
What has self-introspection to  
do with salvation?

From Search Outward to Search Inward, Lines 480-95

I think that I shall never speed

Till that I go to my Good Deed.

But alas, she is so weak

That she can neither go nor speak.

>>Next

Yet will I venture on her now.

My good Deeds, where be you?

GOOD DEEDS [*speaking from the ground*]

Here I lie, cold in the ground:

>>Next



Thy sins hath me sore bound

That I cannot stear.

---

And you do by me, that journey with you will I take.

*Everyman*

Question 4.

☞ Predictably, Good Deeds will go with Everyman. However, why is Good Deeds a she and not a he?

Good Deeds and Knowledge, Lines 516-521

EVERYMAN Good Deeds, your counsel I pray you give me.

GOOD DEEDS That shall I do verily,

Though that on my feet I may not go:

I have a sister that shall with you also,

Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide

To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.

*Everyman*

Question 5.

☞ What is Knowledge Good  
Deeds's sister? Can you explain?

Knowledge and the Saving of Everyman, Lines 535-536

KNOWLEDGE Now go we together lovingly  
To Confession, that cleansing river.

Knowledge and the Attributes, Lines 665-668

KNOWLEDGE You must call them all together,

And they will be here incontinent.

EVERYMAN My friends, come hither and be present,

Discretion, Strength, my Five-Wits, and Beauty!

*Everyman*

Question 6.

☞ Can you give a reason why  
Beauty can lead Everyman to  
salvation?

Priesthood and Everyman, Lines 705-710

KNOWLEDGE Everyman, hearken what I say:

Go to Priesthood, I you advise,

And receive of him, in any wise,

The holy sacrament and ointment together;

Then shortly see ye turn again hither:

We will all abide you here.



Five-Wits and Everyman, Lines 731-737

FIVE-WITS Everyman, that is the best that ye can do:

God will you to salvation bring.

For priesthood exceedeth all other thing:

To us Holy Scripture they do teach,

>>Next

And converteth man from sin, heaven to reach:

God hath to them more power given

Than to any angel that is in heaven.

With five words he may concecrate

## About Sinful Priests, Lines 758-767

Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad:

Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard;

And some haunteth women's company

With unclean life, as lusts of lechery.

These be with sin made blind.

>>Next

FIVE-WITS I trust to God no such may we find.

Therefore let us priesthood honor,

And follow their doctrine for our souls' succor.

We be their sheep and their shepherds be

By whom we all be kept in surety.

*Everyman*

Question 7.

👉 Knowledge's accusation against priests resonates with Chaucer's in *The Canterbury Tales* and can shed light on the medieval church. Still, why does Five-Wits defend the church?

## Beauty Forsakes Everyman, Lines 791-802

For into this cave must I creep

And turn to earth, and there to sleep.

BEAUTY What, into this grave, alas?

EVERYMAN Yea, there shall ye consume, more and lass.

>>Next

BEAUTY And what, should I smother here?

---

I take my tape in my lap and am gone.

EVERYMAN What, Beauty, whither will ye?

BEAUTY Peace, I am deaf—I look not behind me,

## Knowledge Forsakes Everyman, Lines 854-859

EVERYMAN Gramercy, Good Deeds! Now may I true  
friends see.

They have forsaken me every one—

I loved them better than my Good Deeds alone.

Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

KNOWLEDGE Yea, Everyman, when ye to Death shall go,

But not yet, for no manner of danger.



Salvation, Lines 893-895

ANGEL [*within*] Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu!

Here above thou shalt go

Because of thy singular virtue.

*Everyman*  
Question 8.

☞ Why does *Everyman* ends with salvation rather than damnation?