A piece of aged, yellowed paper with a feather and a quill pen on the left side. The paper has a rough, torn edge and is set against a dark green background. The feather is brown and orange, and the quill pen is blue and green.

The Canterbury Tales  
By: Geoffrey Chaucer

# The Prologue

- Adverbial clause, tells when
- In spring, raining to end the drought of March, water brings life to plants/flowers, wind blows on the new shoots, birds are singing, near the middle of April
- People going on pilgrimages to see remnants of saints, going toward Canterbury in hopes that Becket will cure them when they are sick
- 29 pilgrims, staying at The Tabard Inn
- Why is it significant that it is springtime?
  - time for renewal, and rebirth



# the knight

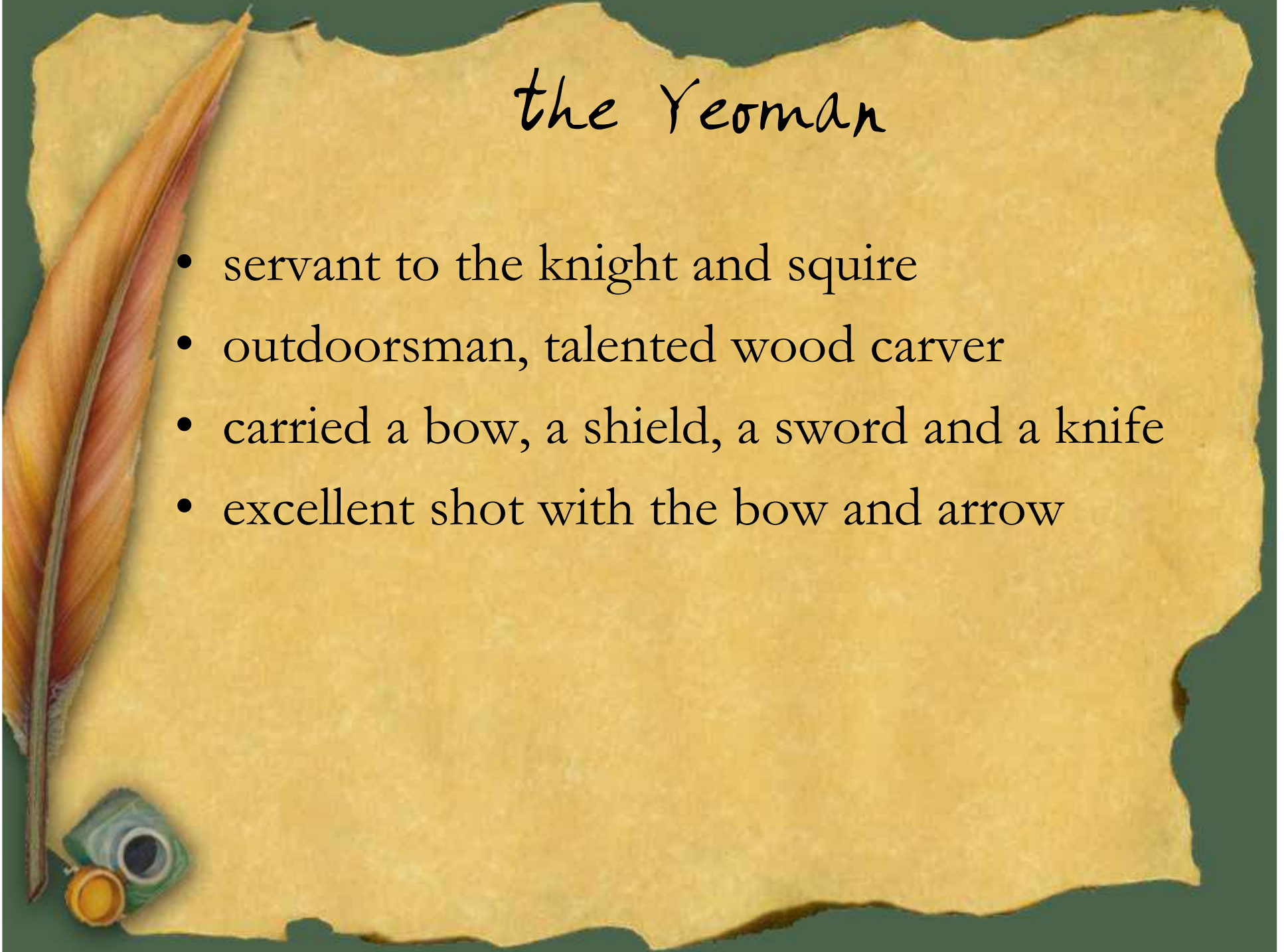
- genteel man who loved truth, freedom, chivalry and honor, a truly distinguished man
- battled Christians and non-Christians, (Crusades), his fighting spanned 40 years over three groups of people, over 15 battles
- always victorious, plain and honest
- going to thank the saints for preserving his life through his battles
- MOST prominent and respected character of the tales

# *the Squire*

- the knight's son, about 20 years old
- ladies' man, handsome (curly hair, strong and agile), singing, playing the flute
- light-hearted, pleasant, talented
- a fine horseman, knows how to joust, dance, write and draw
- (staying out all night)

# *the Yeoman*

- servant to the knight and squire
- outdoorsman, talented wood carver
- carried a bow, a shield, a sword and a knife
- excellent shot with the bow and arrow

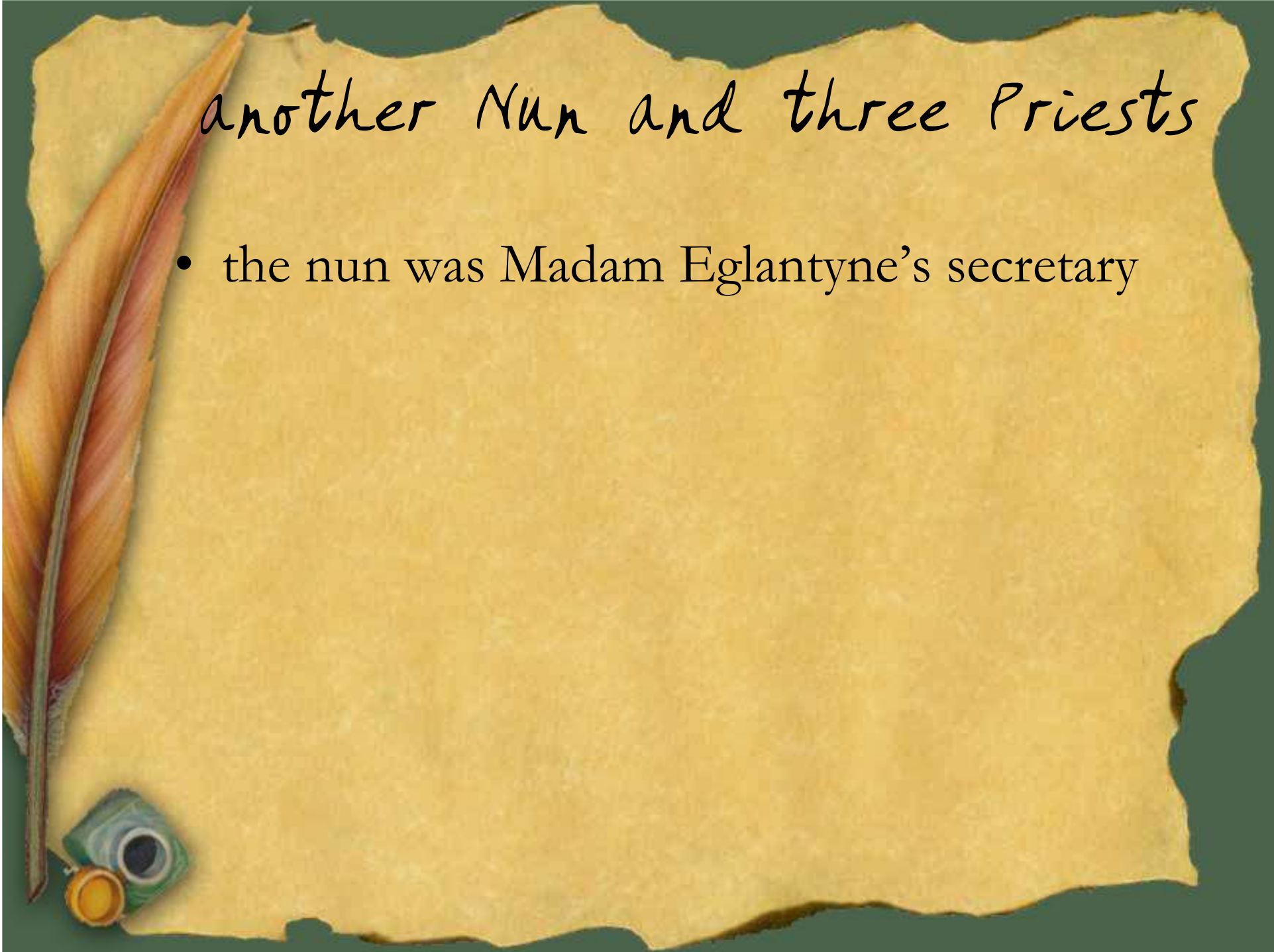






## a Nun (Madam Eglantyne)

- or Prioress, spoke French (but very poorly), eats in a refined manner
- Swore constantly “By St. Loy!” a saint known for not swearing
- very concerned with outward appearances
- she had 3 dogs with her, seemed to care more for the animals around her than humans
- physically – big forehead, sign of intelligence
- coral trinket and rosary (coral trinket fight worldly temptations)
- *Amor vincit omnia* – “Love conquers all”



*another Nun and three Priests*

- the nun was Madam Eglantyne's secretary

## the Monk

- loved hunting, fine foods and had several good hunting dogs that he was very proud of
- dressed in fine clothes, some even trimmed in fur
- rather fat, very jolly, and bald headed
- favorite food was roasted swan
- he tended to ignore the rules of the monastery, everything he does is a violation of his monastic vows



## a Friar (Hubert)

- jolly, merry, very festive but notoriously evil and cunning
- married off girls after he had gotten them into trouble
- he charged people to hear their confessions, the more you paid the more “repentant you were”
- white neck = loose or immoral person
- He knew all the taverns, innkeepers and barmaids (not the sick and needy)
- He even begged off of poor widows who had next to nothing
- dressed with expensive fabrics
- overweight

## a Merchant

- He convinces everyone that he was an expert in finance (his secret – he was horribly in debt)
- solemn, serious, intelligent and cunning
- He sets up a safety patrol at the English Channel, safety for tradesmen
- excellent fellow



## *an Oxford cleric*

- very thin (almost under fed), threadbare clothing
- but has 20 books with him (a small fortune)
- Hasn't sought secular employment yet, still studying
- He did not talk often, but when he did it was with great dignity and moral virtue





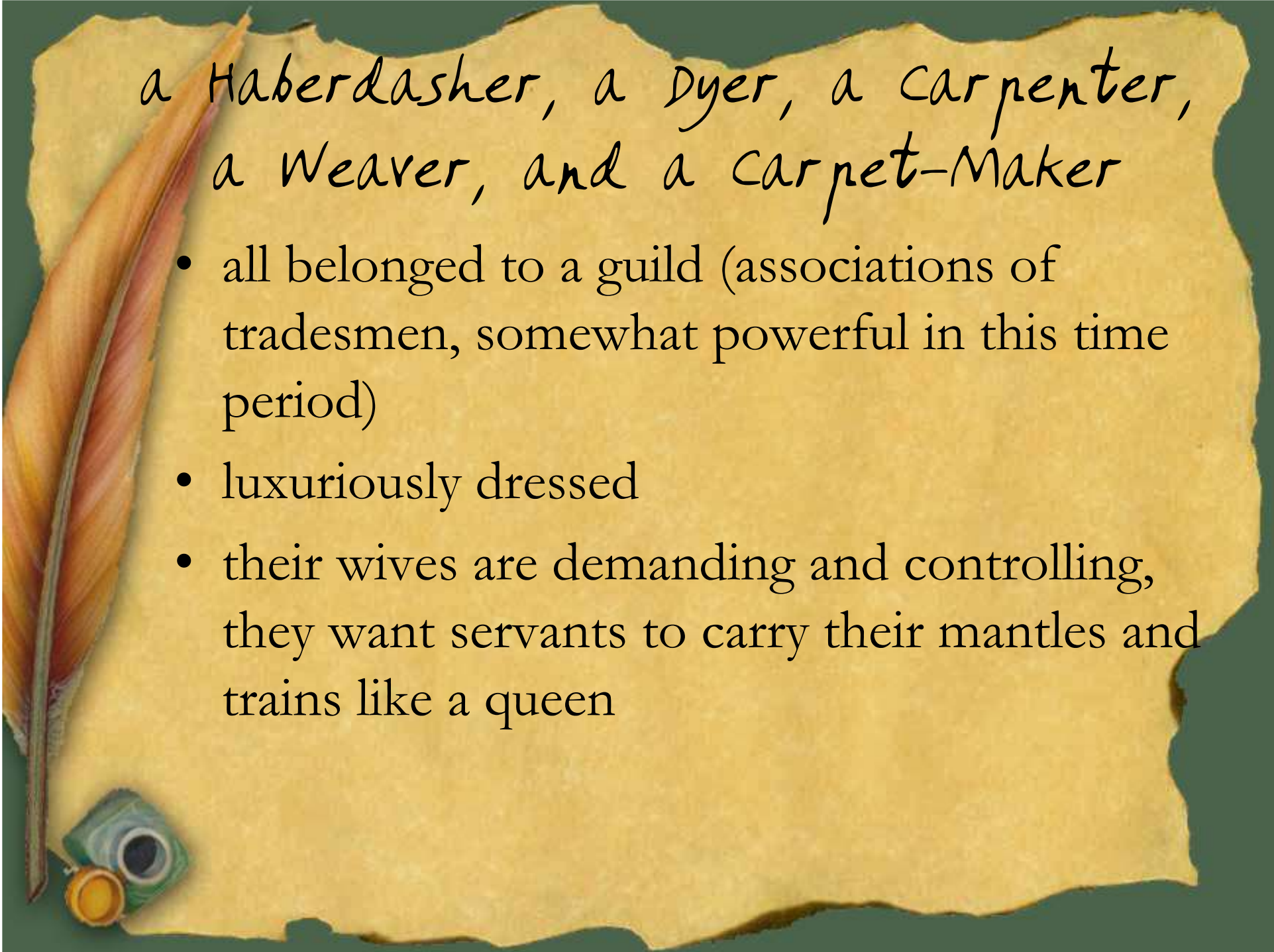
## *a Serjeant at the Law*

- “Serjeant” means that he had to practice law with distinction for at least 16 years
- he knew every law that ever existed, every judgment, every case, every crime
- occasionally appointed by the king to serve as the judge on cases
- “parti-colored coat,” sign of affluence, silk was expensive (imported from the East and had to be tailored)

## a Franklin

- wealthy landowner, but not of noble birth
- “Epicurus’ son” = pleasure was his priority
- entertained in a very lavish manner
- “purse of silk” = wealth
- acted as Sheriff, checking and auditing each person’s property





a Haberdasher, a Dyer, a Carpenter,  
a Weaver, and a Carpet-Maker

- all belonged to a guild (associations of tradesmen, somewhat powerful in this time period)
- luxuriously dressed
- their wives are demanding and controlling, they want servants to carry their mantles and trains like a queen



## a Cook

- servant to the Haberdasher, Dyer, Carpenter, Weaver, and Carpet-maker
- excellent cook!!! no one can cook like him
- open sore on knee though, can that make his food unappetizing?

## *a Skipper*

- from Dartmouth, known for its piracy and for the brutality of its sailors
- couldn't ride his horse, looked awkward on it
- stole wine while in Bordeaux
- ignored his conscience, immoral, well-tanned, rough
- bad guy – kills all prisoners
- had a bad temper

## a Doctor

- used astronomy and astrology, used his patient's horoscope for information on how to treat them
- considered a perfectly practicing physician
- in league with the druggist – worked with the pharmacist to make more money off of people
- familiar with medical authorities and their works
- not excessive in his own life, very healthy
- not religious, materialistic
- made a lot of money working during the Plague



# Wife of Bath

- somewhat deaf, gap-teeth, large hips hidden by her clothing
- wanted front row in church and to be first at any offering
- wore a heavy (10 lbs) head dress, red stockings, and new shoes
- no occupation, considered marriage her occupation
- went on other famous pilgrimages – Jerusalem, Rome, Boulogne, Compostella, and Cologne
- knew the remedy to “love’s mischances”

# the Parson

- very poor but rich in holy thoughts
- his principle was to live the perfect life first and then teach by example
- he cared for his parishioners, nothing could keep him from going to check on them
- moral and humble
- he truly watched over his own congregation
- wanted everyone he met to go to heaven
- (with all the bad examples Chaucer has presented) the Parson is the ideal Christian parish priest



# *the Plowman*

- ideal Christian man
- followed the two greatest commandments, love god and love your neighbor as yourself
- god-fearing man who helps others
- the Parson's brother
- promptly paid his tithes



# *the Miller*

- big and brawny man who could wrestle anyone
- red beard, hairy wart on his nose, hair in his ears, black nostrils
- thief and cheat, would cheat people with the amount of grain that they brought in
- loved playing the bagpipes

# *the Manciple*

- a steward for a dormitory of law students (30 in all)
- in charge of buying food for the lawyers, very frugal and shrewd
- most times outwitted the lawyers and ended up with money in his own pocket

## *the Reeve*

- thin, legs were lean, bad temper
- hair cut short and close = sign of servility
- manager of a large estate, able and efficient so he gained a large fortune for his lord (and himself), kept a close account of everything
- the serfs on his lord's manor are afraid of him
- still brought his lord gifts of goods to earn thanks (to suck up to him)



# *the Summoner*

- a man paid to summon sinners to come to trial
- red complexion, boils and lesions all over his face (nothing could cure them)
- gets drunk and only speaks in Latin
- children afraid of him
- could be bribed very easily

## *the Pardoner*

- sold pardons and indulgences to those charged with sins
- loud high-pitched voice, long flaxen hair, had no beard (and would never have a beard), effeminate characteristics
- knew how to sing and preach to people to frighten them to buy the relics
- made a lot of money selling his fake relics