THE PARDONER'S TALE
BY GEOFFREY CHAUCER
First of all, what is a Pardoner?

A pardoner was a person who had a license to sell pardons for sins committed. Basically, if you wanted your sins to be forgiven, you would give the pardoner a certain amount of money, and he would "take away" your sins.
Genre—category a story or script falls into (i.e. thriller, horror)

- The genre of this tale is a Sermon.

- Sermons are exhortations (encouragements) to abandon vice (moral weakness) and turn to being virtuous (morally excellent)
The Pardoner’s Tale...a Sermon?

There are a few reasons why this tale is classified as a Sermon

1.) The story begins with the Pardoner preaching about sins like gluttony (eating excessive amount of food) and avarice. (an intense need for wealth)

2.) The actually tale itself is about what happens when you commit sins like avarice.
Theme, Tone, and Moral

- **Theme** - Avoiding sin and the consequences of sinning

- **Tone** - Hypocritical

- **Moral** - When you commit a sin, like greed, it will usually be the death of you. Also, if you go looking for Death, you will find him.

- Chaucer’s Attitude - The Pardoner will eventually reveal his sinful side. There are a few hints in the prologue about how the Pardoner isn’t as pure as he seems to be. (i.e. at the end of the prologue, it says that the Pardoner will get the money and food that he wants whether he has to take it from a poor widow or a poor page)
What kind of guy is this Pardoner?

The Pardoner isn’t exactly noble, but he is well respected. A lot of people believe that he never does anything wrong. It is almost like the Pardoner tells the tale to make up for all the bad things he did and does. The character is telling the story like he was giving a sermon in church. He wants to teach people not to be sinful and do things like gamble, be greedy or drink and eat in gross amounts.
Chaucer said that the Pardoner is always preaching about staying away from avarice, which is an overwhelming desire for wealth. But towards the end of the prologue, Chaucer reveals that the Pardoner said that no matter what, he will get “money, wool, cheese, and wheat” whether he has to take money from a poor widow or page, or a person who has no kids because of famine. Every town he visits, he says that he will have a “wench”, which is a young woman. And by “have” he means...well you know what he means. And no matter what, the pardonner will not get a job, because he doesn’t want to work his poor, fragile hands. He will preach and beg in sundry (different) lands until he gets the money and goods he needs. At the end of the prologue, the Pardoner says that even though he is a “vicious man” (someone who will inflict pain or suffering), he can still tell a “moral tale.”