## WRAP-UP Part 4 — *Chaucer's English*

At first glance, Middle English might look like a foreign language. But it's not as hard to figure out as you might think. In fact, it can be like deciphering a code. Take this example from Geoffrey Chaucer's *"The Miller's Tale."*

> Hym thynketh verraily that he may see
> Noees flood come walwynge as the see
> To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.

Look at the first line. The first word *hym* is obviously him, right? *Thynketh* must be thinketh. However, thinketh is an outdated word, so let's change it to the past tense of think, which is thought. Next we have the word *verraily.* Today it is spelled verily, and it's just a fancy way of saying in truth or truly. And now all you have left is the end of the sentence, *that he may see.* No explanation needed there!

Now put it all together. *Him thought, in truth, that he may see.*
Now clean it up a bit. *He thought, truly, that he could see.*

**Translate the following passage and rewrite it in modern English on the lines below. We provide some hints in the column to the right.**

**1.** Hym thynketh verraily that he may see
   <u>He thought, truly, that he could see</u>

**2.** Noees flood come walwynge as the see
   _____

**3.** To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.
   _____

**4.** He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory cheere;
   _____

**5.** He siketh with ful many a sory swogh;
   _____

**6.** He gooth and geteth hym a knedyng-trogh,
   _____

**7.** And after that a tubbe and a kymelyn,
   _____

**8.** And pryvely he sente hem to his in,
   _____

**9.** And heng hem in the roof in pryvetee.
   _____

### How To Decode Unfamiliar Words
- Consider alternate spellings.
- Say the word or phrase aloud. What does it sound like?
- Look for a familiar root word.
- Use context clues. What word would make sense in the phrase or sentence?

### HINTS
**2.** *Noe* is a name. Sound it out, consider an alternate spelling, and use context to figure out who it is. b) sound it out: *walwynge*
**5.** *sough*—groan or sob
**6.** *knedyng*—trogh-kneading-trough; a large trough for kneading dough
**7.** *kymelyn*—a tub used to brew beer.
**8.** *hem*—them