Unit 2
Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*: Knowledge Organiser

Characters

1. **Harry Bailey**: the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales*.
2. **The Knight**: the teller of this tale; of high social rank.
3. **Theseus**: the Duke of Athens.
4. **Hippolyta**: Theseus' wife.
5. **Palamon**: a Theban knight who loves Emily.
6. **Arcita**: a Theban knight who loves Emily.
7. **Emily**: the youngest sister of Hippolyta.

Contextual Knowledge

1. *The Canterbury Tales* is an epic poem written by Geoffrey Chaucer, which follows a religious journey called a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral.
2. Geoffrey Chaucer lived in the Middle Ages (14th C).
3. Chaucer was the first person to write literature in the English language. He was influenced by Eastern Sufi writers such as Rumi.
4. Society is usually broken down into classes within a hierarchy,
5. The chivalric code valued bravery, loyalty, honour and respect.
6. The chivalric code said that disputes between knights should be resolved through a fight with agreed-upon rules called a duel.
7. The Code of Courtly Love was the love/admiration of a knight for a woman of noble heritage, prizing her above loyalty, vows, friendship, and the chivalric code.
8. A society where men hold more control than women is called a patriarchal society.

Key Vocabulary

1. **Prologue**: an introduction to a piece of literature
2. **Metaphor**: a phrase that compares a literal concept to an imagined one.
3. **Tenor**: the literal thing the writer is trying to describe.
4. **Vehicle**: the imaginative idea that the tenor is compared to.
5. **Ground**: the things the tenor and vehicle have in common.
6. **Frame narrative**: a structural device where a story is used to present (or frame) other stories within it.
7. **Literal**: what actually happens or what something actually is.
8. **Social hierarchy**: the way in which a society is organised from the most to the least important people.
9. **Status**: a person's place within the hierarchy.
10. **Patriarchy**: a society where men hold more power than women.
11. **Anguish**: severe mental or physical pain / suffering.
12. **Distress**: extreme anxiety, sorrow or pain.
13. **Banish**: to send someone away as punishment.
14. **Rivalry**: competition between two people for the same object or prize.
16. **Pretentious:** trying to impress by making yourself seem more important than you are.
17. **Pilgrimage:** a religious journey.

Plot Summary

1. The General Prologue lays out the frame narrative: each pilgrim will tell a tale whilst they journey to Canterbury, in order to pass the time.
2. The Knight's Tale is set in Ancient Greece. After a battle, Theseus captures two injured knights, Palamon and Arcita, taking them back to Athens as his prisoners and locking them together in a tower.
3. Both Palamon and Arcita see Emily from the window of their tower. They both fall madly in love with her. They argue over who loved her first and feel conflicted over their loyalty to one another and their love for Emily.
4. Theseus releases Arcita but banishes him from Athens. Being away from Emily causes him such suffering that he physically changes shape! He returns to Athens disguised as Philostrate, working as a servant to Emily.
5. Palamon escapes the tower and overhears Arcita confessing his disguise. They fight, and are discovered by Theseus, who arranges a tournament to settle their rivalry once and for all. The winner will get to marry Emily.
6. Palamon prays to Venus to make Emily his wife. Emily prays to Diana to remain unmarried, or, at the very least, to be married to the one who truly loves her. Arcita prays to Mars for victory.
7. During the tournament, Palamon is injured, and Arcita is declared the winner.
8. The gods intervene. Saturn, siding with Venus (and so Palamon), makes Arcita fall off his horse to his death.
9. As he dies, Arcita tells Emily to marry Palamon, as he truly loves her.
10. Arcita is given a heroic burial, and Palamon marries Emily.

Unit 2 - Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*: Engagement Tasks

Quiz Questions

1. Which word means to send someone away as punishment?
2. Give an example of an Eastern Sufi writer who influenced Chaucer.
3. What is the name of the Duke of Athens?
4. Palamon and Arcita both fall in love with whom?
5. Who is the narrator of *The Canterbury Tales*?
6. Which word describes extreme anxiety, sorrow or pain?
7. Who does Theseus banish from Athens?
8. The Knight is on a religious journey to Canterbury called a what?
9. According to the chivalric code, how should knights settle disputes?
10. Which god makes Arcita fall off his horse to his death?
11. Which god does Emily pray to?
12. Which term describes an introduction to a piece of literature?
13. Who escapes from the Theseus' tower?
14. Which word describes a person's place within the hierarchy?
15. Who marries Emily at the end of the story?

Fill in the blanks

The C_____ Tales is an epic poem written by G_____ C_____. The poem follows a group of p_____ as they travel to Canterbury Cathedral on a p_____. As they travel, the narrator, Harry B_____, decides that they will each tell a tale to pass the time, and so *The Canterbury Tales* acts as a f_____ n_____ for all of the individual tales. The first tale is told by the Knight, who is of high s_____ standing but is not p_____.

The Knight's Tale is set in A_____ G_____, and tells the story of A_____ and P_____, who are both taken prisoner by T_____, Duke of A_____. Whilst imprisoned, the two k_____ both fall in love with E_____. To resolve their r_____, Theseus arranges a tournament, with the winner getting to m_____ Emily. Although A_____ wins the tournament, S_____ intervenes, making him Artcita fall off his horse to his death. In the end, P_____ marries Emily.

Match the vocabulary to the correct definition

Metaphor	the imaginative idea that the tenor is compared to.
Tenor	where a story is used to present (or frame) other stories within it.
Vehicle	what actually happens or what something actually is.
Ground	a society where men hold more power than women.
Frame narrative	a phrase that compares a literal concept to an imagined one.
Literal	severe mental or physical pain / suffering.
Social hierarchy	the things the tenor and vehicle have in common.
Patriarchy	competition between two people for the same object or prize.
Anguish	the literal thing the writer is trying to describe.
Rivalry	the organisation of society from the most to the least important.

Place the following events in chronological order according to plot

1. Saturn makes Arcita fall off his horse.
2. Emily prays to Diana.
3. Theseus releases Arcita, banishing him from Athens.
4. Arcita prays to Mars.
5. Harry Bailey tells the pilgrims that they will each tell a tale.
6. Arcita tells Emily to marry Palamon.
7. Palamon escapes the tower.
8. Theseus takes Arcita and Palamon as his prisoners.
9. Palamon is injured at the tournament.
10. Emily and Palamon marry.
11. Theseus catches Arcita and Palamon fighting over Emily.
12. Palamon prays to Venus.
13. Arcita is given a heroic burial.
14. Arcita returns to Athens disguised as Philostrate.
15. Theseus locks Arcita and Palamon in a tower.