

Having studied Chaucer's dream visions—*The House of Fame* and *The Parliament of Fowls*—I thought it would be fun to have one of my own. The complete and unexpurgated explanation of the Thopas story can be found in my second book—*Pilgrim Chaucer: Center Stage*.

CHAUCER'S (WICKED AND FILTHY) POETIC LICENSE

I told myself I would begin work on an article about Chaucer's Sir Thopas as soon as I got home. But, of course, first I had to hang the picture I'd bought, a large print of my favorite portrait of the poet, a real find. In it, he is surrounded by a colorful courtly audience as he reads to them. I'd reserved a space right above my desk for this prize. When it was nicely in place, I was too hungry to start to work so I reheated some leftovers for a quick supper. Then, before I settled down to the task, I couldn't resist admiring the lively illustration once again.

A crowd of splendidly garbed individuals mills about as Chaucer entertains from a little pulpit. His eyes are grey—grey as glass, he would say—his hair the color of saffron, his garment the color of straw. I asked aloud, "And what kind of shoes are you wearing?" Then, losing patience with myself, I scolded, "Enough frittering time away. Let's get to work!"

The Thopas story stirs up questions. Details often seem pointless. Here's just one example: the battle between Sir Thopas and his enemy is anticipated with dread—but it never comes to pass!

I set out some volumes of Chaucer criticism to peruse and several editions of the story so as to review a variety of footnotes. I also selected a number of segments of the Middle English Dictionary for reference. All was in readiness on my desktop; I no longer had an excuse to find an excuse. I

sat down with new resolve, but it was late in the evening by then. The sun had set long ago. In a short time, my efforts at reading and note-taking turned to dozing. There was no sense in trying to continue.

I put the dozen or so books aside, placing a marker at each page I'd been examining. I'd sleep awhile on my cot. Perhaps things would be clearer after a nap. Then I turned on a nightlight by the desk in case I wakened with a sudden inspiration.

The light had been a good idea because I'd been asleep only a short time when a question suddenly tumbled into my head. Answers to the right questions would provide the material for my article. I left the cot, sat down at my desk, turned on the desk lamp, picked up a dozen or so index cards and began to write. On each card I recorded a problematic word or phrase; then, out of habit, I *had* to make sure they were all right side up and their edges neat and even.

When they were all in order, I spent a moment considering what I'd written while my eyes focused on the new picture. Eyes can play tricks when you're tired—or when a room is not well-lighted. Something seemed to be amiss in the picture, but I wasn't quite sure what. I didn't have a chance to figure it out because that's when it happened.

I was about to place the index cards on top of the stack of books, but that space was already occupied! A small person was sitting there, his legs dangling down along the spines of the books. The pointed toes of his soft leather shoes almost touched the top of my desk.

The medieval word *popet* came to mind—a perfect description of this neat little person, a bit plump in the middle, and apparently very much at ease. I was startled, but not frightened at this odd development. For some reason it seemed rather ordinary. He looked at me with a twinkle in his eyes

gray as glass, and then slid down from atop the books. He straightened his straw-colored tunic, and stood facing me, arms akimbo, as he said, **“Good morwe, good womman!”**

“Hello!” I responded. “Or maybe I should say ‘Welcom!’”

“I am comen for to help you with youre werke.”

“That’s very kind of you. Would you like some tea or coffee before we start—a thimble might do the trick—and maybe some cookies?”

“I knowe not this ‘tea’ nor ‘coffee’ nor ‘cookies.’ And what sort of thymbyl is it that myghte do a trikke?”

“Oh, my goodness. That’s just a friendly offer of refreshment.”

“I am nat yet wery. What need is there for to be refreshed?”

“You don’t understand. I wanted to bring you something to eat or drink.”

“But I am heere for werke. Do yow preferre to waste tyme in idilnesse?”

“You’re not very kind,” I pouted.

“I ne comen here kyndenesse for to speke.” He began to pace about the desktop, looking at things and touching them.

“This lyght is wondirfull. A lampe withouten a flambe!” he said, bending over to peer up at the bulb.

“Thy magyk penne, I sawe, needeth not ynke.” And, stroking the writing pad, he marveled, **“So muche parchemyn and papir ful fyne for wrytyng sawe I never.”**

Finally, gesturing toward the stack of books, he said, **“And so many bookes there be! Yet with all these wondres for to use, you delay.”**

He shook his head impatiently. **“Come! Hasteth you; no lenger tarie. I wol seye you truthe and that pleynly.”**

“Of course. Certainly. I only needed a few minutes to adjust my thinking. Your presence is such a surprise.”

“Taak no more tyme for ‘adjust’ or ‘supprise.’ We muste diligent be. I wol answeere fyve questiouns. After whiche I kan sey ye namoore.”

“How fortunate that I have already written down some words to question. They came to me shortly before you arrived.”

“Verrailly, a trewe gifte of Fortune.” He winked and continued, **“I wolde sitte here with youre dayeseye floures.”**

He chose to sit on my unopened box of tissues with daisies printed on it. As he brushed the dust from the top of the box, he sneezed.

“God bless you!”

“Why so?”

“You sneezed.”

“‘Sneezed’? Ah, *fnessed!* I thank it thee for thy blessynge.” He sat himself down on the box, crossed his legs at the ankles, folded his hands in his lap and said, **“Y-nough chaterynge. Now lat us bigynne.”**

I picked up my note cards and would have spent a few minutes rearranging them. But seeing Chaucer purse his lips, I figured it was best to simply ask the question that had first occurred to me.

“Why did he, I mean *you*, make your own story of Thopas so boring, so dull? Is it because it would be unexpected, sort of a joke on yourself?”

With eyes wide he asked, **“Why wolde thou finde the storie dulle?”**

“Because Thopas gallops here and gallops there and the rhythm is so monotonous.”

“Monotonous?”

“It goes on and on, always the same.”

“The storie goth on and on, but for-sooth *galopen* never dyd I say!

Thopas *prikked* here and *prikked* there.”

“But prick and gallop merely say the same thing,” I interrupted.

“Thou thynkest it so?” His browed furrowed. **“The Reeve telleth of a clerk who maad merie with a milleres wyf, when he priketh her harde and depe. What thinken yow the clerk and the milleres wyf doth?”**

For the moment I was speechless.

“Doth hys storie maken yow laughe?”

“Of course. I might blush a little but I can’t help but laugh.”

“If the clerk maketh yow laugh thenne why so not Thopas? Do you not tell tales of prikke and prounce abedde?”

“Certainly,” I said, but I felt rather self-conscious.

“Then doth my storie of Thopas brynge no cheere bycause he pricketh on the grass instede?”

I could hardly stifle a laugh, as I said, “No, it’s certainly not the grass, but I see him *riding a horse* on that grass because *prick* means *gallop*.”

“This men calle a word with two visages, two faces. *Prikke* speketh in two diverse weyes. Kan you not undirstonde bothe at onys?”

“Well, yes I can, but the dictionary—that’s our great book that tells about all our words—it says the word *prick*, when it refers to . . . uh . . . *sex* can only be found in books written—if you’ll pardon me—books written after you died.”

He frowned as he asked, **“Does your worde-booke know the wordis we dyd *speke*? Wordes must be herde seyde afore they ben y-writen in bookes.”**

“That has to be true, but . . . Wait a minute! *You* used the word *prikked*! Let’s check that line in the Reeve’s Tale,” I said as I opened an edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. “Now I’m more confused. The note

explains that *pricketh* means *stabs* or *pierces!*”

Apparently not at all surprised at the definition, he asked, **“If the two doth merrie maken whenne he perced hir, kan you telle the name of the clerkes wepen?”**

I felt my face flush. I quickly closed the book and said, “It’s time to change the subject! Let’s get back to Thopas. We haven’t talked about the monotonous rhythm many writers object to. Some called it ‘jog-trot,’ like bouncing up and down in the saddle while riding a horse.”

Jumping to his feet immediately, he exclaimed, **“That been it! Verily, men see it, yet undirstondeth nat.”** He smacked the top of the tissue box with his fist. **“Ridyng of horses for long hath tolde of the desire of lecherie. So seyde the prophete Jeremie and Aristotle, also.”**

“That long ago?” I questioned in surprise.

“So it is that wanton yonge men been called ful coltyssh. And the storie of the *Rose* seys *chevalerie* of our fader and moder giveth eche persone lyfe.

“That *chevalerie* must signify *horsemanship*.”

“Do ye not also maken comparisoun bitwene the conjunccioun of man with womman and hors ridyng?”

“Well, we do talk of ‘being in the saddle’ when we don’t want to say, you know,” I stammered, “*copulation*. But then you are telling me that, when Thopas pricks over and over, he is really having his way with women? My goodness, this is a very naughty story!”

“Yes.”

“Yes?”

“Yes,” he repeated with a sharp nod of his head and an elvish grin.

“Neveremore wil ye fyndeth Thopas *dulle*. Now, what seye youre

seconde questioun?”

I turned the first card face down and quickly read the next one to myself. It looked worthwhile so I said, “You tell the Thopas story in two parts. At the end of the first part you say, ‘If you wish anymore of it,/ To tell it will I fonde.’ That last word is no longer used in English, but footnotes say it means you’ll *strive*, or *try* to continue. You make it sound like you lack self-confidence, like you’re not sure you can make up more of the story. Are you poking fun at yourself—are you joking?”

Frowning, he shook his head. **“Rede youre worde-boke. Fonde moore thanne one face hath. It muste ben undirstode entierly or part of my trewe intente ben not sene.”**

“I’m sorry. I didn’t realize the word had another meaning. I’ll look in the word-book—the dictionary.” I reached for the *F* section of the Middle English Dictionary and turned to the verb *fonden*. As I read the first entry, I was the one whose head was shaking. “This talks about temptation! One definition says ‘to tempt to evil.’ That’s very serious, and confusing again.”

“No, it ne sholde be. Confusioun been not ther except you make hyt so.”

“That’s not fair. How can I help being confused? I’ve always believed you said nothing more than you’d *try*. Now I have to adjust my thinking again, like getting used to your being here.”

He paid no attention to my discomfort, but went right on. **“Yow did seye the tale is noughti. Temptacioun to syn in imytacioun of Thopas makes it so. Fonde wol pretende to maken seryous my storie of this yonge felow.”**

“OK. I guess I’m adjusted. So the line says, with one face, ‘If you want more, I—that means *you*—will try to go on.’ And the second face says,

‘If you want more, I’ll tempt you to sin.’ My goodness. That surprises me again. That’s terrible!”

“Why terribil? Until now you dyd laughe. The storie ne chaunged. If more of it gooth the same weye, wol yow continue to laughe?”

“Yes, I’m quite sure I will, but . . .”

“The synnes bitwene man and womman—the whiche fornicacioun is—maken a merie tale. Who doth ne laugh at a cokolde? Wol any folk seye ‘make namoore of thy storye’?”

“Of course not, but you make it clear that you’re telling of committing sins! Aren’t you going to have to go to confession or something for giving such a bad example?”

Obviously exasperated, he said, **“Foolishe woman! Thinkynge aboute an examynacioun of conscience for me helpeth nought with the story! Or be this thy thridde questioun?”**

“Heavens no! That just popped into my head. I shouldn’t have been so personal. I *am* sorry.” He had really flustered me. I had to be more careful, to keep my thoughts on track.

“Be not so many tymes sorry. You muste bettir to oure purpose kepe. Thinken on Thopas. Lat *me* considere whethir I must be shriven.”

“That’s right. It’s your business. I shouldn’t even have mentioned it.”

“I for-give it thee. I be no lengere anoyed.”

I could see a little smile as he went on.

“Remembre that wordes with two visages two partes do play. Ther standeth innocence, but sinfulnessse also been lurkyng, smirkyng.”

“So the answer to my second question is that you’ll *fonde* in one way to try, to strive to continue the story. And you also will jokingly *fonde*, that

is, cause temptation for your audience.”

“Yis, for-sothe. Ther is namoore to seye. Ynough of this. Axe youre nexte questioun.”

I picked up the cards again. There were five left with words to ask about. I'd have to be selective because he would help me with only three of them. I set aside asking why “Sir Elephant” was the name of the enemy. He had to be very large, that's all. What else could the name intend? That would be almost a given.

The next card said *glood*. That word surely needed interpretation. “OK. Let's look at the second part of the story. Thopas is astride his horse again, you say, and he “glood” as sparks out of a brand, a torch. *Glood* can mean he glided, that's a smooth, continuous movement. Or it can speak of glowing, like an ember, or being inflamed with emotion. And the detail about sparks coming from the torch is completely baffling. Why do you use words so unsuitable to show the action of a horse?”

He frowned but was silent as he paced back and forth between the tissue box and the stack of books. What strange behavior, I thought. Then, appearing angry, he whirled around to face me.

“I am come for to helpe, but how shal I helpen whan thow no memorie hath? A litel while ago you knew this storie nis not of an hors. Now you ask agayn aboute an hors! Oure tyme togeder wasted is.”

I felt crushed.

He stared at me for a moment and added, **“I ne sholde answeere that. The tale telleth not of an hors with four legges. Now do you remembre?”**

Suddenly I got the picture. My face turned red. I could feel my cheeks flush. “Good heavens,” I sputtered, “that's just plain embarrassing!”

“Yes, but dulnesse absente is.” He began to chuckle. **“Suche**

**ribawdrie brynges mirthe and jolitee also. The worde verily been
cousyn to the accioun—but ne was not of hors.”**

My hands were over my ears. “Please, don’t say any more!”

“**Now thou doth comprehende,**” he said, then doubled over laughing.

Even with my ears covered I could hear his hearty laughter. I needed to change the subject to regain my composure. That’s when an important possibility occurred to me. I asked, “Can it be that the question about your baffling words doesn’t count because I actually figured it out for myself?”

“**Thou didest, verily,**” he said, now in control of his amusement. “**I wol graunt this favour oonly if you ne thinken more of horses.**”

“Oh, I promise!” I fanned myself with the cards I held in my hand. What good fortune, I thought. I still had three questions to go. I drew an *X* through *glood*, turned it over, and resolved to be careful—to think first.

The top card contained only the word *jane*. That was bound to get us onto another subject, I told myself. “Here is a question about a line near the beginning of the tale. It says something ‘cost many a jane.’ Without the footnote, that makes no sense. I can’t help wonder how readers deciphered the word before footnotes were included. Chances are they just skimmed over the line and then forgot about it. Anyway, the note says a *jane* is a small coin from Genoa and worth half an English penny. Why would you use the name of a foreign coin when *pence*, a one-syllable *English* word, would do as well or better? You couldn’t have chosen *jane* only for a rhyme. It would have been so easy to find a word to rhyme with *pence*.”

“**Have done with muttring and musyng!**” he chided. “**What be the actual questioun?**” he said, sounding rather out of patience.

“Certainly,” I responded curtly, feeling rather impatient myself. “My

question is: Why did you call the coin a jane?”

“I kan no bettre seye thanne Jane bycause thatt was the name of a particuler sort of womman of lowe degree. Redest thou of wommen of the stewes, of brothels?”

My mind raced through other medieval lit I’d studied—poems and plays of the 1300s and 1400s. “You must mean Jane would be like Janette, Jonet, Jennet, or Joan, easy women in plays and poetry, women that men took advantage of. It seems you enjoy words with two faces! To say ‘it *cost* many a jane’ could refer to spending money, but it could also describe a woman’s—a Jane’s—personal loss of some kind,” I said. My new ease of comprehension made me enthusiastic. But after a bit of sudden insight I cried, “*STOP!* Don’t go any deeper into your explanation or I’m sure I’ll be flustered again.”

He laughed loudly as he said, **“Thenne qwikly a-nothir questioun seye.”**

I snatched up the next card. “Hmmm. This one is about the ending, but it takes us back to our first thoughts.”

Chaucer looked surprised. He got to his feet, folded his arms across his chest, took a couple of steps toward me, and waited.

“I’m referring to the interruption, the fact that the Host won’t let you finish the *Tale of Thopas*. People think he finds the story tiresome, dull. I’ve read so many opinions that say this story is silly, foolish, not worth continuing. A Modern English version published a while ago even describes it as “drivel.”

Now it was *his* face that turned red as he scowled. He stamped his foot. With arms straight down at his sides, he clenched his fists, looking ready to do battle. **“Thou thinkest my wordes ben lyke to dribil? to**

slober?”

“No, no, I don’t think so *now*. After all my blushing and laughing, I see the words and actions differently.”

He seemed not to be upset with *me*, but with “drivel,” so I continued. “When the Host cries halt in the middle of a line, it’s so unexpected that it must have been planned to attract attention. The words he uses have to be very important, don’t they? Aren’t they?”

“The Host juggeth this tale ne proper is. His juggement doth reule.”

“Yes, it is clear that the Host refuses to listen to more boasting about spicy escapades, but his words are confusing. Some say he stops your story because he’s out of patience—because he finds the tale is a foolish waste of time.”

“A waste of tyme? Thopas pricketh thurgh forest and feeld, serched for an magyk elf-queene for to be his lover, and meeteth a giaunt with three heddes. You find suche a tale dulle?”

“No, not when you say it that way!”

“Thenne where the foolisshe and wastefulle is?”

“It’s the Host’s use of *lewednesse* and *drasty* that causes the problem. You cavort through the first part. You announce the second part will be more of the same. Then, not many lines later, the Host breaks into the middle of a sentence to say, ‘your lewednesse makes me weary./ My ears ache from your drasty speech’ and he compares it to a turd.”

“These wordes maken you thynke Thopas drery is?”

“Notes to the lines create a problem when they tell us *lewednesse* could refer to being foolish or having a lack of education, and *drasty* speech is simply worthless.”

“Fy, allas! If their seconde menynghe loste is. Be there no remembraunce of what an othere olde face dide signyfye?”

“Two faces again? So we’re looking for another double meaning.”

He began pacing back and forth, shaking his head, his hands clasped behind his back.

I scanned the *L* section of the dictionary for an alternate definition of *lewed*. He stopped to listen as I read. “It says here that ‘lewed’ can also mean vulgar, evil, lascivious, wicked, or wanton, as *lewd* does today. Oh, my, that takes us in a whole different direction from *foolish* or *poorly educated!*”

“And, verily, *wikked* the seconde visage of the word is.”

“That explains *lewed*, but *drasty* is more puzzling. My dictionary says that when the Host talks of drasty speech in *Thopas*, he could be saying that the writing is ignorant or inartistic. I don’t see how being inartistic is like a turd.”

“What meneth ‘inartistic’?”

“It means the story is not well written; you don’t show an appreciation of art.”

His forehead crinkled, and he rolled his eyes. **“For-why spekest thou of art? Knowest thou DRAST? Drast and turd are the same! Suche bryngeth forth no thoghtes of art!”**

I had turned to the *D* section for *drasty*. On the previous page I saw the noun *drast*. After reviewing that definition, I blurted, “Good heavens, *drast* is a way of saying fecal matter! That certainly is filthy. No wonder drasty speech compares to a turd.”

“I telleth thee, they ben the same.”

“Of course the Host understands the double meanings and puts a stop

to the flaunting of Thopas' promiscuous adventures. And, as you say, the words he uses must be cousin to the action of the story. Come to think of it, it seems to me that you can only understand *lewed* and *drasty* as a complaint about dullness if you're oblivious to the wicked and filthy possibilities of pricking and horse riding."

Suddenly I had a great idea. "Up until now, *foolish* and *worthless* have been the accepted intention of the Host's words. But here is our chance to promote a *new* opinion. From now on we will insist he means *wicked* and *filthy!*"

"In deede, from hennes foreward, forsoothe!" He skipped and pranced around the desktop.

What an amusing fellow! When I started to laugh, he stopped his frolicking, hands on his knees now, and laughed along with me.

"We will tell the whole world!" I shouted.

Then we both cheered.

When our rejoicing had run its course, I picked up the remaining cards and said, "Let's go on to the next question." That's when I saw that five cards had already been turned over. For just an instant I panicked. I thought I'd used up all the questions! The panic left me when I saw *glood* was among them. It didn't count! I took a deep breath and explained, "We were having so much fun that I forgot to keep track. The final number has snuck up on me."

"Sniken?" he asked, as his fingers moved across the tissue box like a little critter creeping.

"That's good. Yes, *snuck* is like that."

"Now nombre fyve? Knowe that I must soone taak my leve."

"Yes, I know. Please, give me some time to collect my thoughts about

the cards that are left.” I began muttering to myself as usual.

He appeared to listen attentively.

“I could ask about why the enemy threatens the horse instead of Sir Thopas. ‘I’ll slay thy steed,’ he says.” Under my breath I added, “Did you make a mistake? Why wouldn’t you have him threaten *Thopas* instead?”

I hadn’t said it officially, not out loud, but Chaucer shook his head, rolled his eyes and appeared ready to reply. At that very moment the answer came to me. I held up my hand. “Wait. Wait. Don’t say anything. That one doesn’t count because I already know: You’re not really talking about a horse!”

He folded his hands in his lap and looked as if he were resigned to wait.

After another minute or so, I heaved a deep sigh. Holding one remaining card, I said, “OK. I’m ready. Here is my very last question.”

His eyebrows raised in anticipation. **“Be thatt questioun fyve for certein?”**

“Yes, it is. You were well acquainted with Flanders. That must have been one of your first destinations when you visited the Continent as a young soldier in King Edward’s army. What I want to know is: Why did you say Thopas began life in Flanders at *Poperyng*? I’ve worked hard trying to figure out why you chose Poperyng, but no matter what I tried, it turned out to be a wild-goose chase.”

“You did chace a wilde goos? For-why?” he asked, wide-eyed.

“No. I’m saying I couldn’t find the answer no matter what idea I pursued. I considered the location of the town, the dominant business of the area, and historic events in the city. Nothing gave me a satisfactory answer. I even thought you might have chosen it just as a funny-sounding name.”

He interrupted my flow of chatter to say, **“Whan that you have fynished talking *aboute* thy questioun, it may hap that yow wil allowe me the answeere to telle thee.”**

Feeling quite ridiculous at being so preoccupied with my own thoughts, I motioned to him to go ahead.

“In my youthe I dide serve in the kinges armee when to Flaundres I came,” he began. He cocked his head to one side and smiled wistfully. **“Neer Calais the towne of Poperyng was. Many a jape had we aboute that name. Many young men learned there of prickying.”**

“You joked about the name? I don’t see the humor,” I complained.

“Eche mente the othere. Poperen and pricken be the same. Both telle of ridyng in the sadel, and you know I ne speke of horses.”

“Ah, yes. Thopas came to life at ‘riding a horse.’ And the story is *not* about actual horses, but about having his way with women!” I tried to be nonchalant about the subject, but it wasn’t easy. “Your story goes on to specify ‘at Poperyng *in the place*.’ Does that mean a particular region, a favorite spot?”

He chuckled wickedly and said, **“Surely you knowe what place. Now may you blussh ones more.”**

Yes, I knew. With an embarrassed reflex, my hand covered my mouth as I gasped in recognition of “the place.” So much for nonchalance.

Now our time together was over. He had kept his promise. He’d given me five answers. I felt grateful, but suddenly a little sad.

He walked slowly to the center of the desktop, bowed toward me and said, **“I may no lenger here abyde. You have your answeres. Ended is oure revel. Goode nyght and farewel.”**

The room went dark.

Next thing I knew the sun, from the nearby window, was shining in my eyes. It was morning! I'd planned a "short" nap. So much for plans. I'd have to get my act together today, for sure. I got up from the cot and went to the desk.

There were my index cards from the night before. I seated myself and picked up the cards that were turned face down. I smiled as I saluted the image of Chaucer. And, in the bright rays of the sun, I could have sworn Geoffrey winked at me! Just then, a snatch of a dream surfaced. He had laughed, and so had I! Strange. And why did I feel my cheeks flush?

Looking at the first card, I read *prykynge*. My mind added, "in the saddle." There, again, was the impression of his laughing. With each card, more and more dream fragments of revelation and revelry came to mind.

Prikyng is galloping or spurring a horse, but it also speaks—as it still does today—of sexual activity.

Fonde is to strive, but it's also to cause temptation.

Jane is the name of a coin, but it's a woman's name as well.

Another card said *glood* but the word had been crossed out. I knew it didn't count because I got the picture before I asked the question: A four-legged horse doesn't glide.

Lewed means dull, and *drasty* means worthless, but, at the same time, the two words are saying *wicked* and *filthy*. That's the key to the story. With all the preceding spiciness, *lewed* and *drasty* had to be more of the same. They, no doubt, pointed to obscenity.

The last card said *Poperyng*; the dictionary was open to *poperen*. *Poperyng*, I realized, could pass for a verb form. As I checked the definition, the end of the dream became clear. "Oh, my gosh," I said aloud. *Poperyng* meant the same thing as *prikyng*. It's riding a horse! We're back in the

saddle again. And Chaucer actually says Thopas came to life “at poperyng,” at being in the saddle.

I determined to take the sexy stuff in my stride as I grabbed a tablet and wrote as fast as I could. I filled sheet after sheet with words, actions and images I recalled. Confusing, and seemingly inappropriate words sported their second definition—their second face. Lines made sense now as double entendre. And the second sense dealt with the sensual every time.

In the excitement of the moment, I shouted, “We’ll insist on ‘wicked and filthy’ from now on,” and I knew it echoed the dream. I laughed, and wondered if my neighbors were shocked by my outlandish declaration.

With the details captured on paper, it felt safe to make breakfast. As soon as I finished, I’d pour another cup of coffee, boot up my computer, and transcribe all those racy recollections. It’ll be my contribution to “wicked and filthy from now on.”

END