

Notes

- Setting: Oxford, in a carpenter's house.
- Carpenter: Wealthy, naive, super jealous of young wife, Alison.
- Alison: Young, 18, attractive, much desired.
- Nicholas: Clever student, lodger, fancies Alison, astrology geek.
- Nicholas flirts: Makes his move, tells Alison, "I'll spill for secret love."
- Absalom: Church clerk, fancied Alison, fails to impress, keeps trying.
- Nicholas' flood plan: Tricks carpenter about a coming flood, setups escape tubs.
- Absalom tries to kiss Alison, ends up kissing her backside.
- Hot poker revenge: Absalom burns Nicholas' butt in retaliation.
- Carpenter panics: Thinks real flood's coming, cuts tubs, falls hard.
- Neighbors gather, truth comes out, carpenter humiliated.
- Nicholas plays sick: Hides all day to plan with Alison.
- Gossip spreads: Carpenter looks foolish, town mocks him.
- Alison avoids real trouble, denies everything.
- Absalom swears off love after embarrassing himself.
- Nicholas' pain: Gets burned but escapes major consequences.
- Everyone laughs but the carpenter, who's made a laughingstock.

Group 2 – The Miller's Tale

1. Context and Characterization of the Miller

- The fact that Miller interrupts to tell his story right after the noble knight's morally laced one. However, he should have waited for the monk based on his social status (establishes his characterization).
- What does this tell us about Miller, and what does it have to say about his ideas of his social place and position in the 1300s? As is said in the tale, the Miller is a big fellow with red hair and a pug nose, complete with a wart on top, all of which combine to give a good impression of what must be a pretty imposing figure of a man—relatively short on sobriety and stature. That is a picture of the kind of domineering figure, and one imagines at times overbearing, of which he must have seemed. A miller would have been a man of low social status who practiced a necessary but not a noble or honorable occupation. His power of stealing the Monk's turn to narrate, however, testifies of a social setup way more complicated than one wherein the thumb of traditional rank could be broken by braying individualism and size when drunk.

2. Comparisons and Themes in the Miller's Tale

- Some of the other tales have lurid moments in them, such as when Alison hails Absalom's manly way of collecting church offerings or when Nicholas receives a kiss from Absalom at her window. These kinds of details reflect that Miller was not a respectful teller of tales. The bawdy hilarity of the tale continues when Nicholas gives the overly ridiculous warning of an impending apocalypse from flooding. By his rudeness, another carpenter, the Reeve, is derided, and Miller shows that he cares not who is offended by his insensitivity. The arrangement of these separate tellings of the tale in this manner makes evident the distinct emphasis on different values within society: the idealized view of love and honor of the Knight juxtaposed with the earthy antics of the Miller and his deceits. This framing highlights this thematic contrast between their stories and locates each tale within the teller's point of view.

3. Humor and Satire

- The humor in Miller's tale is primarily satirical to the inopportunities of the carpenter and the disdainful smugness of those considered to be of a higher or more refined intellect or spirit. The bawdy jokes and trickery that Nicholas and Alison use are actually aimed at some aspects of society, which comes to a head in being indicative of the foolishness and hypocrisy of such a societal role as the naive carpenter.

4. Medieval Marriages

- Does the tale comment on medieval marriage practices it critique them, or what does it highlight about it? The relation of the carpenter with Alison is illustrative, by and large, of the binding nature that medieval marriages had on the females without them playing any governing role. This grave undertone of the tale serves as a critique of such relations since, anyhow, it is pretty clear that such discord and unhappiness would result from such marriages, instead, a marriage must be based on free and mutual consent as well as compatibility.

5. Violence and Moral Lessons

- The tale is more than anything a very stern teacher of the painful consequences that befell Nicholas after his trickery and deceit. This implies that moral transgressions, such as deception for personal gain, are likely to be met with consequences on a scale matching the magnitude of the offense, in some rough form of poetic justice within the story.