

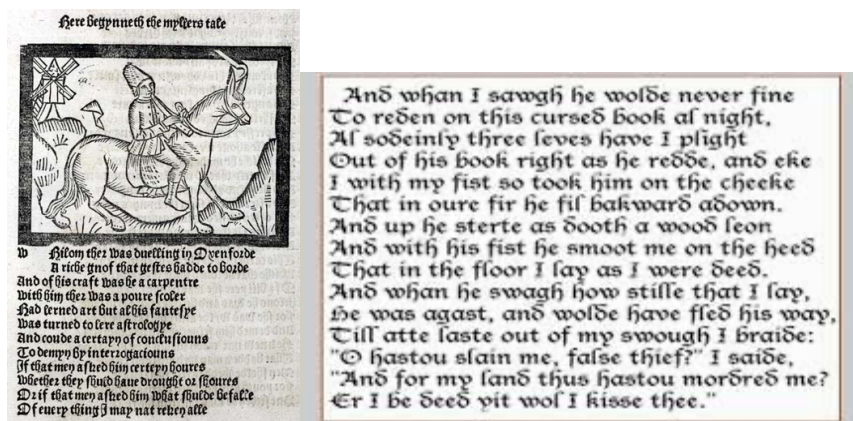
Notes on Chaucer for this story

Words to Use

Since Chaucer's death in 1400 it has been the position of most academics and literary historians that the poet did not complete the tale to be told by Roger of Ware, purposefully or not.

Some challenges in writing in Middle English

While there were glossaries to help me with vocabulary when I first wrote this story many years ago, there do not seem to be any definitive (then) contemporary books on grammar for a 20th century writer to look at and learn about verb tenses or noun endings, how modifiers agree, and why certain words with nuanced uses are chosen over others of similar meaning. In the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer himself changes the language and spelling of words to fit the personality of the storyteller or the character. So, there is no universal consistency to imitate. During Chaucer's life, spoken and written English was very vibrant and dynamic. In fact, especially in the *Canterbury Tales*, the poet was urging the evolution of the language along.



In my fictional "completion" of the *The Cook's Tale* central to the plot of "A Cook's Tale" short story, certain letter fonts are not readily available to typeset, especially to indicate "open" or "closed" vowel sounds. In those cases, context of a verse is needed to discern the intended meaning of a specific word. Apologies for my shortcomings. All errors in diction and syntax are mine to claim as well. Despite them, please enjoy.

Dateline

The tapestries of the unicorn mentioned in “A Cook’s Tale” were only woven a hundred years after Chaucer died. They are meant as a merciful clue the student left to give his professor a chance to perceive his trickery. It was the professor’s character flaw of ignoring details that aided his downfall.

The Canterbury Tales Text Source:

The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer

The New Cambridge Edition, Second Edition

Edited by F. N. Robinson

© 1957 Houghton Mifflin Company

Further Reading:

Brewer, Derek (2000) *The World of Chaucer* Illustrated Edition Woodbridge, Suffolk

Dyer, Christopher (2002) *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850-1520* Yale University Press, London, New Haven

Howard, Donald R. (1987) *Chaucer: His Life, His Works, His World* Dutton, New York

Mortimer, Ian (2008) *The Time Traveler’s Guide to Medieval England* Simon & Schuster, New York

(Recommendation: Mortimer is the best to pick if you only have time for one of these books. His is very readable. Though full of facts and researched information, it does not feel like an “academic read.” It is very enjoyable).
