



The Lives of the Miller's Tale: The Roots, Composition and Retellings of Chaucer's Bawdy Story

Peter G. Beidler

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With his Miller's Tale Chaucer transformed a colorless Middle Dutch account into the lively, dramatic story of raunchy Nicholas, sexy Alison, foolish John and squeamish Absolon. This book focuses on the ways Chaucer made his narrative more effective through dialogue, scene division, music, visual effects and staging. The author pays special attention to the description of John the carpenter's house, the suspension of the three tubs from the beams, and the famous shot-window through which the story's bawdy climax is enacted. The book's second half covers more than 30 of the tale's retellings--translations, adaptations, bowdlerized versions for children, coloring books, novels, musicals, plays and films -- and examines the ways the retellers have followed Chaucer in dramatizing the story, giving it new life on stage and screen. The Miller's Tale has had many lives -- it promises to have many more.

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