

**AP English Notes**  
**October 13, 2004**

**The Cook** (from Tuesday's class)

The cook is employed by the members of the guild as their cook. He can distinguish London ale by flavor, which means he probably drinks too much. The work suggests he is a fine cook who uses many spices to hide the rancid condition of the food.

Perhaps the most interesting remark by Chaucer concerns the pus filled sore that is on Cook's leg. This suggests the Cook made have spread disease through scratching the sore and then putting his hands on the food; however, ideas concerning the spread of disease were not known in this time.

**The Miller**

The Miller was a big burly fellow who always won the prize in wrestling. He was barrel-chested, rugged and stocky. He could break any door by ramming it with his head. His beard was red and broad as a spade. Moreover he had an ugly wart on his nose from which a tuft of red hairs protruded and wide black nostrils. His mouth was as big as a furnace and he was a loudmouth and told dirty stories (tavern tales).. He was well versed in stealing grain (with a golden thumb) and charged thrice the amount, yet he was reasonably honest. He wore a white coat and a blue hood. He could play the bagpipes well and led the pilgrims out of town to its music.

**The Summoner**

The Summoner and the Pardoner rode together and may have been involved in the same type of religious swindles. The Summoner would summons the people to religious court and the Pardoner would sell them a pardon for their offense.

The Summoner's task within the church was to summons (or call) an individual before the ecclesiastical (church) court for a violation against the laws of God.

The Summoner is described as having a face on fire like a cherubim "angel before the throne of God" (this angel's face is red from being before God or in His radiance). The real problem with the Summoner's face is acne or carbuncles. We can see some of the treatments for acne in this age which includes pastes of quicksilver, lead, boric, as well as scrubbing with brimstone. Yet, part of his problem may have been his diet; Chaucer says the Summoner loved garlic, onions, and leeks. Obviously, his breath would have been atrocious. The Summoner also loved "strong red wine" and would only speak in Latin (the few phrases that he knows) when he is drunk.

His eyes are very narrow with black scabby brows and his beard did not grow in the scarred

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places on his face. He is also known as “hot and lecherous.” Last but not least, he wears a large garland on his head.

He financed his life style by spying on the village youth and requiring payment for keeping quiet about what he saw, such as couple having a tryst in a field. He allowed a man to keep a concubine for a quart of wine.