



The Canterbury Tales

Geoffrey Chaucer (1343 - 1400) Edited by D. Laing Purvis

Read by:	Multiple readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	18 hours 52 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1174
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422135132
Style:	Collaborative	MSLP:	\$11.99
Genre:	Poetry, Historical Fiction		

The Canterbury Tales by Geoffrey Chaucer is a collection of stories told by a group of pilgrims who compete in a story-telling contest for a prize of a free dinner as they journey from Southwark to the shrine of Saint Thomas a Becket in Canterbury. The tales, which are told in both prose and poetry, are earthy, candid, comic and ironic, and often cast English society and the Anglican Church in a critical light. The structure of the work resembles *The Decameron* of Boccaccio, which Chaucer, a courtier and diplomat as well as an author, is likely to have read. *The Canterbury Tales* appeared at the end of the 14th Century and is considered the first important literary work written in Middle English, the language of the people, and became the base for the use

of English in those great works that might otherwise have been written in Latin for the ever-dwindling audience who spoke, wrote and read that dying language. Chaucer produced a long list of notable works, but *The Canterbury Tales* stand as his magnum opus and that sealed his reputation as England's first great poet.

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343 – October 25, 1400), is considered the greatest poet of the Middle Ages and the Father of English literature. His many works include *The Legend of Good Women* and *Troilus and Criseyde*. He is best known for his masterpiece *The Canterbury Tales*. His work may have often been written with the nobility as the likely audience; Edward III granted him a “gallon of wine a day for the rest of his life” as a token of his appreciation.

Chaucer was born in London to a family with propertied interests and connections with the aristocracy. At the age of 14 he became the page to the Countess of Ulster, who was the wife of the Duke of Clarence, second son of King Edward III. The position brought him into the court circle, where he served first as esquire to the royal court of Edward III. He traveled abroad frequently, representing the crown as an envoy, and came into contact with medieval Italian poetry. He served as comptroller for the port of London for twelve years and later as clerk of the king's works, supervising work on Westminster Palace and the Tower of London. He was the first poet to be buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.