



The Compleat Angler

Izaak Walton (1593 - 1683)

Read by:	Nicole Lee	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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The Compleat Angler, or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation is a unique classic work, a treatise that celebrates the art and spirit of fishing. The subtitle conveys its essence well, as the material ranges from technical tips to quotations, anecdotes, poems, songs, turns of phrase and musings on the nature of creation. True to the spirit of the work, Walton revised the work through five editions in the twenty-five years following its initial publication in 1653, during which time it grew from thirteen to twenty-one chapters. Originally structured with two speakers, Piscator and Venator, later editions added new companions who each discoursed on the aspects of his favorite pastime. Walton was a reputed master in the use of worms, frogs, and grasshoppers for

bait fishing, but turned to humorist and retired cook Thomas Barker for the fly fishing section, which was added to and completed by his friend Charles Cotton in later editions. The book was thus a living thing, and developed much the way a blog might evolve in the present day.

Walton wrote of his pastime: "We may say of angling as Dr. Boteler said of strawberries: "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did"; and so, if I might be judge, God never did make a more calm, quiet, innocent recreation than angling." We might well say that God could have made a better book about angling, but doubtless God never did.

Izaak Walton (c. 1594 – December 15, 1683) was an English writer best known as the author of *The Compleat Angler*. He was also the author of a collection of short biographies entitled *Walton's Lives*. He was born in Stafford, the son of an innkeeper father who died before Izaak was three, and raised by his mother and a stepfather, also an innkeeper. He settled in London and worked as an ironmonger, opening a shop in Fleet Street and becoming active in the church, where he became friends with the vicar, John Donne. He apparently did well, retiring at age 50 and settling on a property just north of Stafford that was bordered by a small river. *The Compleat Angler* was published when he was 59 and ensconced in a life consisting of visits with fishing companions, collecting material for *The Compleat Angler*, and writing biographies of his favorite people.