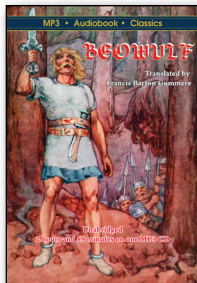


Medieval Classics



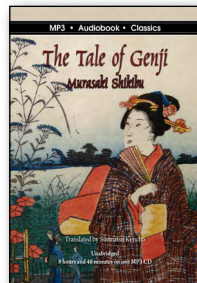
Beowulf

Author: Unknown, Translated by Francis Barton Gummere
Read by: Multiple readers
Format: MP3 CD in DVD case
Length: 3 hours 59 minutes (version 1)
Genre: Poetry, Epics

Beowulf is the title of the oldest surviving epic poem of Old English and the first to be written in the English vernacular. Beowulf, the title character, is a hero of the Geats in Scandinavia who travels to Denmark to help vanquish a monster from the swamplands known as Grendel who has been attacking the mead hall of Hrogar, king of the Danes. He slays the demon and is

Catalog: DB-1005
UPC: 0684758935854
MSLP: \$10.99

then attacked by Grendel's mother, who he also slays. He returns to Geatland a hero and later becomes king. After a prosperous reign of fifty years, he is attacked by a dragon but is mortally wounded in the contest. The poem ends with his cremation on a funeral pyre at sea and the interment of his ashes in a burial mound in Geatland.

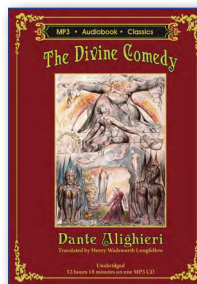


The Tale of Genji

Author: Murasaki Shikibu (973 or 978 – 1014 or 1031)
Read by: Multiple readers
Length: 8 hours and 48 minutes
Format: MP3 CD in DVD case
Genre: Fiction, Romance

Catalog: DB-1138
UPC: 0683422134371
MSLP: \$11.99

The Tale of Genji is a classic of Japanese literature that depicts the manners and intrigues of members of the court culture. The novel was written in installments delivered periodically to an audience of aristocratic women in the early 11th century and is attributed to Murasaki Shikibu, a noblewoman and lady-in-waiting. The story takes place over a long period of time, centers on Genji's romantic escapades and depicts the highly regimented customs of the day. There little in the way of plot, and a cast of some hundred characters come and go as the years go by, events evolve, affairs produce offspring, lovers die, power changes hands, and unexpected consequences multiply. Most of the characters are never given names, but rather referred to by their social role. The book ends abruptly in mid-sentence, and scholars have debated whether it was the intended ending, if there are missing chapters, or if Murasaki Shikibu simply left it unfinished.



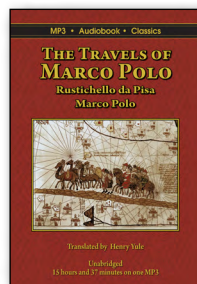
The Divine Comedy

Author: Dante Alighieri (1265 - 1321),
Translated by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Read by: Multiple readers
Format: MP3 CD in DVD case
Length: 12 hours 23 minutes
Genre: Poetry, Epics

The Divine Comedy is the centerpiece of Italian literature and one of the greatest works in world literature. Written between 1308 and 1321, at the end of the Middle Ages and the dawn of the Renaissance, it distills the essence of the medieval world-view. The poem is structured in three canticas that represent the three realms of the dead: Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso. Each cantica is composed of 33 cantos, which, together with the introductory canto, comprise a total of 100 cantos.

Catalog: DB-1004
UPC: 0684758935847
MSLP: \$12.99

The narrative describes Dante's own allegorical journey through the realms to salvation, accompanied first by the poet Virgil and later by his beloved Beatrice, and offers philosophical and moral commentary along the way. The *Divine Comedy* is a complex work full of symbol and allegory. Publication in Italian made the work accessible to a wide audience and contributed to the general growth in literacy. Its influence is nothing short of monumental. As T.S. Eliot wrote, "Dante and Shakespeare divide the world between them, there is no third."

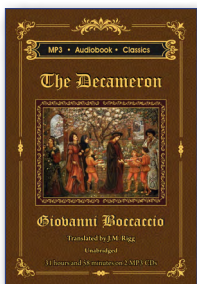


The Travels of Marco Polo

Author: Rustichello da Pisa (1274 - 1300) &
Marco Polo (1254 - 1324)
Read by: Multiple readers
Format: MP3 CD in DVD case
Length: 15 hours and 37 minutes
Genre: Biography, Autobiography & Memoir, History

Catalog: DB-1143
UPC: 0683422134524
MSLP: \$13.99

The Travels of Marco Polo is the English title of a travelogue about Marco Polo's travels to Asia and his experiences at the court of Kublai Khan in the 13th century. Polo left Venice with his father and uncle in 1276 for China and left to return in 1291, arriving in Italy in 1295. The book was written by French writer Rustichello da Pisa from stories he heard from Marco Polo when two were imprisoned in Genoa during 1298-1299. The book was published about 1300 and titled both *Book of the Marvels of the World* and *Description of the World* in French. It consists of four books: Book One describes the Middle East and Central Asia; Book Two describes China; Book Three covers coastal lands of the east; Book Four describes the return to Italy. Produced before the advent of the printing press, the book was quite popular. *The Travels of Marco Polo* were an important influence in Christopher Columbus' quest to seek a western route to Asia by sea.

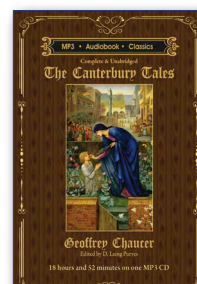


The Decameron

Author: Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375)
Read by: Multiple readers
Format: 2 MP3 CDs in DVD case
Length: 32 hours 41 minutes
Genre: Poetry, Fiction, Short Stories

The Decameron, subtitled Prince Galehaut, is a collection of novellas by the 14th-century Italian author Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375). The book is structured as a frame story containing 100 tales told by a group of seven young women and three young men sheltering in a secluded villa just outside Florence to escape the Black Death, which was afflicting the city. Boccaccio probably conceived *The Decameron* after the epidemic of 1348, and completed it by 1353. The various tales of love in *The Decameron* range from the erotic to the tragic. Tales of wit, practical jokes, and life lessons contribute to the mosaic. In addition to its literary value and widespread influence (for example on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*), it provides a document of life at the time. Written in the vernacular (the language of Florence), it is considered the masterpiece of classical early Italian prose. (Wikipedia)

Catalog: DB-1053
UPC: 0683422134159
MSLP: \$14.99



The Canterbury Tales

Author: Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343 - 1400)
Read by: Multiple readers
Format: MP3 CD in DVD case
Length: 18 hours and 52 minutes
Genre: Poetry

Catalog: DB-1174
UPC: 0683422135132
MSLP: \$13.99

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 that sealed his reputation as England's first great poet.