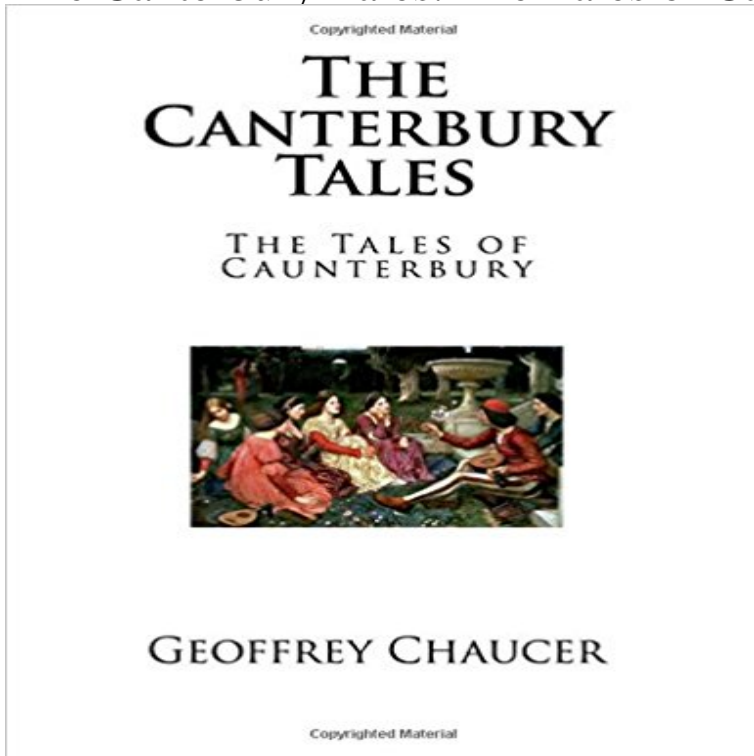


The Canterbury Tales: The Tales of Caunterbury



The Original Classic - Complete The Canterbury Tales Geoffrey Chaucer The Canterbury Tales (Middle English: Tales of Caunterbury) is a collection of 24 stories that runs to over 17,000 lines written in Middle English by Geoffrey Chaucer. In 1386 Chaucer became Controller of Customs and Justice of Peace and then three years later in 1389 Clerk of the Kings work. It was during these years that Chaucer began working on his most famous text, The Canterbury Tales. The tales (mostly written in verse, although some are in prose) are presented as part of a story-telling contest by a group of pilgrims as they travel together on a journey from London to Canterbury in order to visit the shrine of Saint Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. The prize for this contest is a free meal at the Tabard Inn at Southwark on their return. After a long list of works written earlier in his career, including Troilus and Criseyde, House of Fame, and Parliament of Fowls, The Canterbury Tales is near-unanimously seen as Chaucers magnum opus. He uses the tales and the descriptions of its characters to paint an ironic and critical portrait of English society at the time, and particularly of the Church. Chaucers use of such a wide range of classes and types of people was without precedent in English. Although the characters are fictional, they still offer a variety of insights into the customs and practices of the time. Often, such insight leads to a variety of discussions and

disagreements to people in the 14th century. For example, although a variety of social classes are represented in these stories and all pilgrims on a spiritual quest, it is apparent that they are more concerned with worldly things than spiritual. Structurally, the collection resembles The Decameron, which Chaucer may have read during his first diplomatic mission to Italy in 1372.

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