

The Canterbury Tales

The Canterbury Tales are a series of stories written by the late, great English poet Geoffrey Chaucer. The tales are about a group of twenty-nine pilgrims who set off on a pilgrimage to a cathedral in Canterbury, England, about five miles south of London. The cathedral was a special place. It was a shrine where the archbishop Thomas A. Becket was murdered in 1170. This was the pilgrimage the twenty nine characters would make. They would start at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, which is near London.

The characters in this story tell the stories themselves. This style of writing is called framework. There are twenty-four different stories told by the characters who interact with each other throughout the entire tale. The stories are mostly old familiar ones revamped and retold with the Chaucer style. Most of the stories relate some kind of moral lesson or value. The story starts out with a prologue where Chaucer introduces all twenty-nine characters which includes himself. There are people from the three main sections of medieval society ; the church people, the royalty court people, and the common people. The characters are from the different class structures of feudalism, (a knight, a squire, a reeve) and open classes which emerge in city scenes such as a merchant and an innkeeper. The church class was a nun, a friar, and a pardoner. Chaucer used very keen detail to make the characters seem lifelike and almost modern in their personality traits.