



The Portable Chaucer: Revised Edition (Portable Library)

Geoffrey Chaucer



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In the fourteenth century Geoffrey Chaucer, who served three kings as a customs official and special envoy, virtually invented English poetry. He did so by wedging the language of common speech to metrical verse, creating a medium that could accommodate tales of courtly romance, bawdy *fabliaux*, astute psychological portraiture, dramatic monologues, moral allegories, and its author's astonishing learning in fields from philosophy to medicine and astrology. Chaucer's accomplishment is unequalled by any poet before Shakespeare and—in *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Cressida*—ranks with that of the great English novelists.

Both *The Canterbury Tales* and *Troilus and Cressida* are presented complete in this anthology, in fresh modern translations by Theodore Morrison that convey both the gravity and gaiety of the Middle English originals. *The Portable Chaucer* also contains selections from *The Book of Duchess*, *The House of Fame*, *The Bird's Parliament*, and *The Legend of Good Women*, together with short poems. Morrison's introduction is vital for its insights into Chaucer as man and artist, and as a product of the Middle Ages whose shrewdness, humor, and compassion have a wonderfully contemporary ring.



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