

The Canterbury Tale:

Canterbury Tale:

is Chaucer's most famous, greatest, influential, milestone, masterpiece and most celebrated work in English literature but unfinished.

* It was a collection of 24 stories/Tales, consisting 17000 lines, written in middle English dialect of London in past Tense.

Chaucer's long poem follows the journey of a group of pilgrims, 31 including Chaucer himself from the Tabard Inn in Southwark to St. Thomas a Becket's shrine at Canterbury Cathedral, through Thames river. The Host, Harry Bailey, suggests each pilgrim tell two tales on the way out and ~~2~~ two on the way home and the best storyteller is to be rewarded with a free supper on their return.

Original plan = 120

Total pilgrims = 30

Each pilgrim tells on

Each pilgrim will tell = 4 tales, two while going and 2 while returning
 $30 \times 4 = 120$ = but completed 24 only.

Although 29 pilgrims are mentioned in line 24 of the General Prologue. Then, the Narrator joins the group making 30. The Host, Harry Bailey makes 31. The Canon's Yeoman, who joins the group later makes 32.

The Narrator gives a description of 27 pilgrims. Except 2nd Nun's Tale or Nun's Priest's)

The Canterbury Tales have the Characters from 3 social groups.

1. Nobility 2. Church 3. Commoners.

Note: According to Philip Hobsbaum and other scholars Chaucer's fictional pilgrims departed for Canterbury from the Tabard Inn at Southwark at 4.45 AM sunrise on 17 April 1387.

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* All Characters belong from different-different professions and all represent their mindset, morals, thoughts, nature and their social class.

* The Canterbury Tales is a genre of satire on the 14th century society and Chaucer all his pilgrims.

* There are four pilgrims that are not criticised or satirised by Chaucer in The Canterbury Tales-

1. Knight 2. Parson 3. Clerk 4. Plowman

* The Variety of social types allowed presentation of a highly varied collection of literary genres, religious legend, courtly romance, story, fabliau, saint's life, allegorical tale, beast fable, medieval sermon, alchemical account and, at times, mixtures of these genres.

* The variety of Chaucer's tales shows the breadth of his skill and his familiarity with many literary forms, linguistic styles and rhetorical devices.

Literary Adaptations:

* Science Fiction writer Dan Simmons wrote his Hugo Award winning novel Hyperion, based on an extra-planetary group of pilgrims.

* Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins used The Canterbury Tales as a structure for his 2004 non-fiction book about evolution titled

"The Ancestor's Tale: A Pilgrimage to the Dawn of Evolution"