



Chaucer: Ackroyd's Brief Lives

Peter Ackroyd

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In the first in a new series of brief biographies, bestselling author Peter Ackroyd brilliantly evokes the medieval world of England and provides an incomparable introduction to the great poet's works.

Geoffrey Chaucer, who died in 1400, lived a surprisingly eventful life. He served with the Duke of Clarence and with Edward III, and in 1359 was taken prisoner in France and ransomed. Through his wife, Philippa, he gained the patronage of John of Gaunt, which helped him carve out a career at Court. His posts included Controller of Customs at the Port of London, Knight of the Shire for Kent, and King's Forester. He went on numerous adventurous diplomatic missions to France and Italy. Yet he was also indicted for rape, sued for debt, and captured in battle.

He began to write in the 1360s, and is now known as the father of English poetry. His *Troilus and Criseyde* is the first example of modern English literature, and his masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, the forerunner of the English novel, dominated the last part of his life.

In his lively style, Peter Ackroyd, one of the most acclaimed biographers and novelists writing today, brings us an eye-opening portrait, rich in drama and colorful historical detail, of a prolific, multifaceted genius.

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