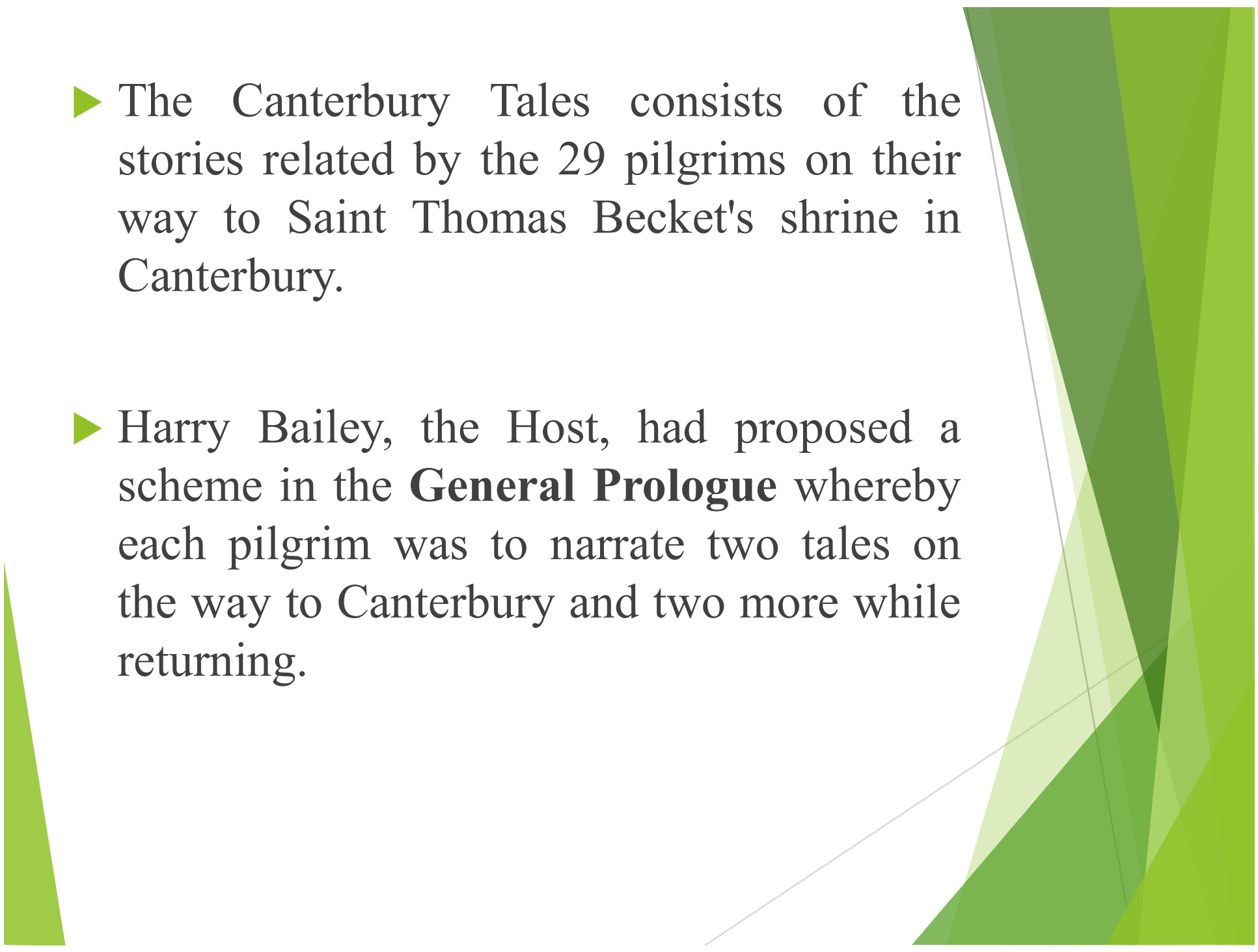




# UNIT - III

# THE CANTERBURY'S TALE

- ▶ The Narrator of *The Canterbury Tales* rents a room at the Tabard Inn before he recommences his journey to Canterbury.
- ▶ That evening, a group of people arrive at the inn.
- ▶ They are also going to Canterbury to receive the blessings of "the holy blissful martyr, St. Thomas à Becket.
- ▶ Calling themselves "pilgrims" because of their destination, they accept the Narrator into their company.

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- ▶ The Canterbury Tales consists of the stories related by the 29 pilgrims on their way to Saint Thomas Becket's shrine in Canterbury.
  - ▶ Harry Bailey, the Host, had proposed a scheme in the **General Prologue** whereby each pilgrim was to narrate two tales on the way to Canterbury and two more while returning.

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- ▶ The person who tells the best story will be rewarded with a sumptuous dinner paid for by the other members of the party.
  - ▶ The Host decides to accompany the pilgrims to Canterbury and serve as the judge of the tales.

# BEOWULF

- ▶ The **poem begins** with a history of the **Danish kings**, starting with Shild and leading up to the reign of the current king Hrothgar, Shild's great-grandson.
- ▶ **Hrothgar** is well loved by his people and successful in war.
- ▶ However, provoked by the singing and carousing of Hrothgar's followers, **Grendel**, a **monster in human shape** who lives at the bottom of a nearby swamp, appears at the hall late one night and kills thirty of the warriors in their sleep.

# Contd.,

- ▶ For the next twelve years the fear of Grendel's potential fury casts a shadow over the lives of the Danes.
- ▶ The protagonist **Beowulf**, a hero of the Geats, comes to the aid of Hrothgar, king of the Danes, whose great hall, Heorot, is plagued by the monster Grendel.
- ▶ **Beowulf** kills Grendel with his bare hands, then kills Grendel's mother with a giant's sword that he found in her lair.

# THE FAERIE QUEENE

- ▶ The **Faerie Queene** tells the stories of several knights, each representing a particular virtue, on their quests for the **Faerie Queene**, Gloriana.
- ▶ Redcross is the knight of Holiness, and must defeat both theological error and the dragon of deception to free the parents of Una .
- ▶ It is Edmund Spenser's longest, most complex and greatest poem.

# THE PARADISE LOST

- ▶ The first words of **Paradise Lost** state that the poem's main **theme** will be “Man's first Disobedience.”
- ▶ Milton narrates the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience, explains how and why it happens, and places the story within the larger context of Satan's rebellion and Jesus' resurrection.
- ▶ It is considered to be Milton's major work, and it helped solidify his reputation as one of the greatest English poets of his time.
- ▶ The poem concerns the biblical story of the Fall of Man: the temptation of **Adam and Eve** by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.



# THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

- ▶ The Rape of the Lock is a humorous indictment of the vanities and idleness of 18th-century high society.
- ▶ Pope intended his verses to cool hot tempers and to encourage his friends to laugh at their own folly.
- ▶ The poem is perhaps the most outstanding example in the English language of the genre of mock-epic.
- ▶ The strategy of Pope's mock-epic is to mock his society in its very failure to rise to epic standards, exposing its pettiness by casting it against the grandeur of the traditional epic subjects and the bravery and fortitude of epic heroes

## Contd.,

- ▶ Pope's mock-heroic treatment in *The Rape of the Lock* underscores the ridiculousness of a society in which values have lost all proportion, and the trivial is handled with the gravity and solemnity that ought to be accorded to truly important issues.
- ▶ The society on display in this poem is one that fails to distinguish between things that matter and things that do not.
- ▶ The poem mocks the men it portrays by showing them as unworthy of a form that suited a more heroic culture. Thus the mock-epic resembles the epic in that its central concerns are serious and often moral, but the fact that the approach must now be satirical rather than earnest is symptomatic of how far the culture has fallen.

# A Raisin in the Sun

- ▶ A Raisin in the Sun, was one of the first and most famous plays in the history of American Theater that explored the agonies of the Black community.
- ▶ The title of the play was taken from a poem by Harlem; the line went something like ‘a dream deferred might dry up, like a raisin in the sun’.
- ▶ The play describes the hopes, aspirations and struggle of a black family living in Southern Chicago.

## A Street Car named Desire

- ▶ Exploring the good, bad and the ugly of relationships, a Streetcar named Desire is based on the story of two sisters and their journey of life.
- ▶ While one of them Stella is struggling to make peace with her rather over dominating and brutal husband; the other sister Blanche has lost her grip over reality.

# PYGMALION

- ▶ Written and performed in 1912, Pygmalion derives its name from a Greek Mythological character of the same name.
- ▶ Bernard Shaw through this play demonstrated an unmatched wit by subtly mocking at the rigid British class system.
- ▶ The story of the play revolves around Henry Higgins, a phonetics professor, who plans to train a filthy street girl to pass for a Duchess at an ambassador's garden party.

# A DOLL'S HOUSE

- ▶ Controversial at the time when it was written in 1879, the play had stirred frenzy by criticizing the 19<sup>th</sup> century marriage systems.
- ▶ While many claimed that it was centered on women's rights, Henrik described it as a story that tells how every individual needs to find out what he/she wants from life.
- ▶ The protagonist of the story, Nora, rejects to live in a 'Doll House' created by her husband and therefore the false perception.

# Waiting for Godot

- ▶ The first ever professionally produced play by Samuel, Waiting for Godot narrates the story of two men in search for the meaning of life.
- ▶ They wait near a tree in a barren stretch of land for someone called Godot.
- ▶ It's their interesting conversations while they wait, the satire and the nonsense incorporated therein which makes for a delightful watch.

# Wuthering Heights

- ▶ This tumultuous tale of life in a bleak farmhouse on the Yorkshire moors is a popular novel.
- ▶ Populated largely by characters whose inability to control their own emotions leads to violence and revenge, it's a tale that spans two generations and two families.
- ▶ At the heart of the story is the mysterious 'gypsy', Heathcliff, adopted as a child into the Earnshaw family to live at Wuthering Heights.
- ▶ As he grows up, he becomes close to his adopted sister Cathy, falling in love with her only to be met with crushing disappointment when she marries Edgar Linton, a kind and gentle man from neighbouring Thrushcross Grange.
- ▶ Heathcliff disappears and returns a rich, educated man bent on revenge.



# Great Expectations

Great Expectations is full of humour and populated by an entertaining cast of brilliantly-named characters.

It tells the tale of Pip, an orphan from a poor background who learns a valuable lesson in life after his acquisition of personal wealth proves an unsatisfying experience that changes him for the worse, driving him away from the only people who've ever loved him.

Along the way he meets the enigmatic Miss Havisham, an old lady who has frozen everything in her house at the moment at which her life was so tragically altered.

The image of her wedding cake, still on the table but covered in cobwebs and mould, is one of many enduring and vivid scenes in this brilliant novel, which explores a number of moral themes including what it means to be a gentleman.

# Far from the Madding Crowd

- ▶ Thomas Hardy's evocative novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* is set in 'Wessex', an early region of south-west England .
- ▶ Rural life is a central theme in a story that follows the shepherd Gabriel Oak and his love for Bathsheba Everdene, a beautiful and independent newcomer to the local farm she's just inherited.
- ▶ Unfortunately, Oak isn't the only one with his eye on the wilful Bathsheba, and two rivals appear on the scene in the shape of another farmer, Mr. Boldwood, and a soldier, Sergeant Troy.
- ▶ Love and its dangerous and destructive power are explored among a number of other themes, including luck and tragedy.