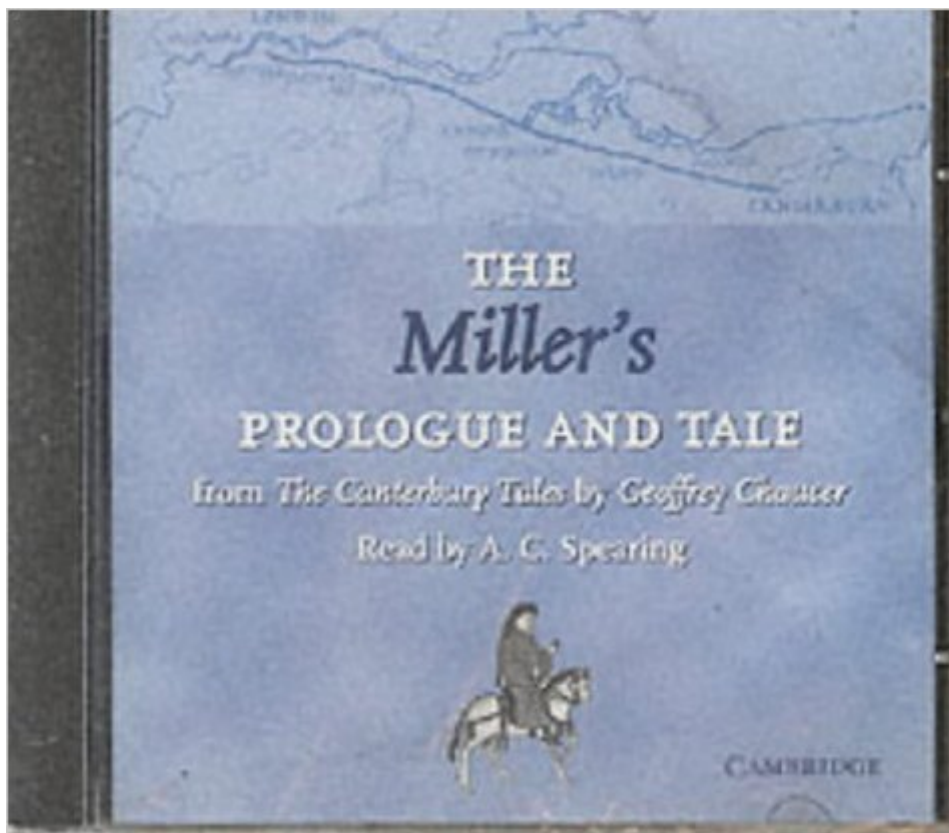


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Customer Reviews

For years I've been searching for an update to CD technology of something comparable to Caedmon's spoken word LPs and cassettes. I wore out my cassettes, but I surmise the company no longer exists, no CDs available anywhere. But now Cambridge University Press has started releasing Chaucer's Canterbury Tales in Middle English. I miss good old Jess Bessinger's voice and verve and facility for pronunciation, but A. C. Spearing's performance of this gem of the Caunterbury Tales is well worth the price of purchase. A. C. Spearing "reads" the Miller's description from the General Prologue and the connecting links between the Knight's Tale and the Miller's Tale. I say "reads," but this CD thankfully avoids the classic blunder of many online sound files read by professional academics (and I say this as one myself) that correct pronunciation is great, but too reverential an attitude toward the work can lead to a boring and godawful monotone. Spearing has fun with this. I may miss Bessinger's delight behind his tale-telling, but Spearing never forgets to enjoy one of the funniest stories ever set down writing. His adds his own attitude behind the words (different from Bessinger's but no less arch) and that makes for a good listen. I think he equals or even bests Bessinger with his vocal characterizations of Hende Nicholas, "yonge

wyfe" Alisoun, squeamish and amorous Absolon, and especially old carpenter John which are gems of comic performance. These are the real strengths of Spearing's version. Along with Cambridge's Wife of Bath CD, these are a very welcome addition to scholars, students, and Chaucerians everywhere. It's been long overdue. Thank you Cambridge and A. C. Spearing. Let's have more.

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