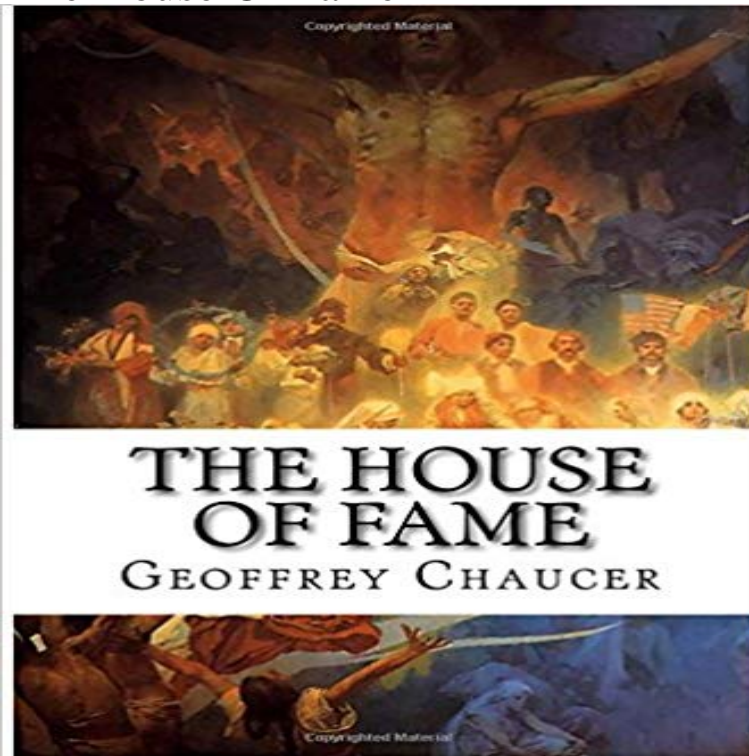


The House Of Fame



The House of Fame (Hous of Fame in the original spelling) is a Middle English poem by Geoffrey Chaucer, probably written between 1379 and 1380, making it one of his earlier works. It was most likely written after *The Book of the Duchess*, but its chronological relation to Chaucer's other early poems is uncertain. The House of Fame is over 2,000 lines long in three books and takes the form of a dream vision composed in octosyllabic couplets. Upon falling asleep the poet finds himself in a glass temple adorned with images of the famous and their deeds. With an eagle as a guide, he meditates on the nature of fame and the trustworthiness of recorded renown. This allows Geoffrey to contemplate the role of the poet in reporting the lives of the famous and how much truth there is in what can be told. The work begins with a proem in which Chaucer speculates on the nature and causes of dreams. He claims that he will tell his audience about his wonderful dream in full. Chaucer then writes an invocation to the god of sleep asking that none, whether out of ignorance or spite, misjudge the meaning of his dream. The first book begins when, on the night of the tenth of December, Chaucer has a dream in which he is inside a temple made of glass, filled with beautiful art and shows of wealth. After seeing an image of Venus, Vulcan, and Cupid, he deduces that it is a temple to Venus. Chaucer explores the temple until he finds a brass tablet recounting the Aeneid. Chaucer goes into much further detail during the story of Aeneas's betrayal of Dido, after which he lists other women in Greek mythology who were betrayed by their lovers, which lead to their deaths. He gives examples of the stories of Demophon of Athens and Phyllis, Achilles and Breseyda, Paris and Aenone, Jason and Hypsipyle and later Medea, Hercules and Dyanira, and finally Theseus and Ariadne.

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