



# **The Annotated Ancient Mariner: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner**

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

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Coleridge's greatest work, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, is utterly unique, unlike any other ballad. No narrative poem has rivaled it in combining scenes of terror with scenes of incomparable beauty. Although enormously popular in the nineteenth century, it is seldom read or studied today. This annotated version by Martin Gardner will help to renew the appreciation and deepen the understanding of Coleridge's unjustly neglected masterpiece.

Preceding the poem is a biographical sketch of the great poet, which emphasizes those aspects of his many-sided life and personality that have the strongest bearing on the poem, especially on circumstances surrounding its composition. Both the 1798 and 1834 versions of the poem are presented, with notes on words, lines, and stanzas that Coleridge later excised. Following the poem, Gardner summarizes major critical attitudes toward the ballad, discusses possible higher levels of meaning, and closes with questions concerning the poem's much-debated moral.

Many artists have illustrated the *Rime*, but none as skillfully as Gustave Doré. He was far and away the most popular and prolific book illustrator of all time, and though his work has been out of fashion for some time, it is becoming harder and harder to dismiss him as a mere yeoman illustrator.

Here is your chance to read, or reread, Coleridge's classic *Rime*, to fully understand it, and to relish Doré's magnificent illustrations.

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