

The background of the cover is composed of three vertical panels. The left panel is grayscale and features a pattern of overlapping, rounded shapes that resemble leaves or petals. The middle panel is a vibrant purple and features a similar pattern of overlapping, rounded shapes. The right panel is a bright red and features a similar pattern of overlapping, rounded shapes. The text is overlaid on these panels.

# The Faerie Queene

Edmund Spenser

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# BOOK 1

# THE LEGENDE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE

LO I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,  
As time her taught, in lowly Shepheards weeds,  
Am now enforst a far vnfitter taske,  
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,  
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;  
Whose prayes hauing slept in silence long,  
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds  
To blazon broad emongst her learned throng:  
Fierce warres and faithfull loues shall moralize my song.  
Helpe then, ô holy Virgin chiefe of nine,  
Thy weaker Nouice to performe thy will,  
Lay forth out of thine euerlasting scryne  
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,  
Of Faerie knights and fairest *Tanaquill*,  
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long  
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,  
That I must rue his vnderued wrong:  
O helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong.  
And thou most dreaded impe of highest *Ioue*,  
Faire *Venus* sonne, that with thy cruell dart  
At that good knight so cunningly didst roue,  
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart,  
Lay now thy deadly Heben bow apart,  
And with thy mother milde come to mine ayde:  
Come both, and with you bring triumphant *Mart*,  
In loues and gentle iollities arrayd,  
After his murderous spoiles and bloudy rage allayd.  
And with them eke, O Goddess heauenly bright,  
Mirrour of grace and Maiestie diuine,  
Great Lady of the greatest Isle, whose light  
Like *Phoebus* lampe throughout the world doth shine,  
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,  
And raise my thoughts too humble and too vile,  
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,  
The argument of mine afflicted stile:  
The which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred a-while.

## CANTO 1

*The Patron of true Holinesse,  
Foule Errour doth defeate:  
Hypocrisie him to entrappe,  
Doth to his home entreate.*

A Gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Y cladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,  
Wherein old dints of deepe wounds did remaine,  
The cruell markes of many' a bloudy fielde;  
Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield:  
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,  
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:  
Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,  
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.  
But on his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore,  
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,  
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,  
And dead as liuing euer him ador'd:  
Vpon his shield the like was also scor'd,  
For soueraine hope, which in his helpe he had:  
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,  
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;  
Yet nothing did he dread, but euer was ydrad.  
Vpon a great aduenture he was bond,  
That greatest *Gloriana* to him gaue,  
That greatest Glorious Queene of *Faerie* lond,  
To winne him worship, and her grace to haue,  
Which of all earthly things he most did craue;  
And euer as he rode, his hart did earne  
To proue his puissance in battell braue  
Vpon his foe, and his new force to learne;  
Vpon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.  
A louely Ladie rode him faire beside,  
Vpon a lowly Asse more white then snow,  
Yet she much whiter, but the same did hide  
Vnder a vele, that wimples was full low,  
And ouer all a blacke stole she did throw,  
As one that inly mournd: so was she sad,  
And heauie sat vpon her palfrey slow:  
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,  
And by her in a line a milke white lambe she lad.  
So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,  
She was in life and euery vertuous lore,

And by descent from Royall lynage came  
Of ancient Kings and Queenes, that had of yore  
Their scepters stretcht from East to Western shore,  
And all the world in their subiection held;  
Till that infernall feend with foule vpror  
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld:  
Whom to auenge, she had this Knight from far cōpeld.  
Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,  
That lasie seemd in being euer last,  
Or wearied with bearing of her bag  
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,  
The day with cloudes was suddeine ouercast,  
And angry *loue* an hideous storme of raine  
Did poure into his Lemans lap so fast,  
That euery wight to shrowd it did constrain,  
And this faire couple eke to shroud thēselues were fain.  
Enforst to seeke some couert nigh at hand,  
A shadie groue not far away they spide,  
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand:  
Whose loftie trees yclad with sommers pride,  
Did spred so broad, that heauens light did hide,  
Not perceable with power of any starre:  
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,  
With footing worne, and leading inward farre:  
Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they entred arre.  
And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,  
Ioying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,  
Which therein shrouded from the tempest dred,  
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.  
Much can they prayse the trees so straight and hy,  
The sayling Pine, the Cedar proud and tall,  
The vine-prop Elme, the Poplar neuer dry,  
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all,  
The Aspine good for staues, the Cypresse funerall.  
The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours  
And Poets sage, the Firre that weepeth still,  
The Willow worne of forlorne Paramours,  
The Eugh obedient to the benders will,  
The Birch for shaftes, the Sallow for the mill,  
The Mirrhe sweete bleeding in the bitter wound,



The warlike Beech, the Ash for nothing ill,  
The fruitfull Oliue, and the Platane round,  
The caruer Holme, the Maple seeldom inward sound.  
Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,  
Vntill the blustering storme is ouerblowne;  
When weening to returne, whence they did stray,  
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,  
But wander too and fro in wayes vnknowne,  
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,  
That makes them doubt, their wits be not their owne:  
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,  
That which of them to take, in diuerse doubt they been.  
At last resolving forward still to fare,  
Till that some end they finde or in or out,  
That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,  
And like to lead the labyrinth about;  
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,  
At length it brought them to a hollow caue,  
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout  
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser braue,  
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gaue.  
Be well aware, quoth then that Ladie milde,  
Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash prouoke:  
The danger hid, the place vnknowne and wilde,  
Breedes dreadfull doubts: Oft fire is without smoke,  
And perill without show: therefore your stroke  
Sir knight with-hold, till further triall made.  
Ah Ladie (said he) shame were to reuoke  
The forward footing for an hidden shade:  
Vertue giues her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade.  
Yea but (quoth she) the perill of this place  
I better wot then you, though now too late  
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,  
Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,  
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.  
This is the wandring wood, this *Errours den*,  
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:  
Therefore I read beware. Fly fly (quoth then  
The fearefull Dwarfe:) this is no place for liuing men.  
But full of fire and greedy hardiment,  
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,  
But forth vnto the darksome hole he went,  
And looked in: his glistring armor made  
A litle glooming light, much like a shade,  
By which he saw the vgly monster plaine,



Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,  
But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,  
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.  
And as she lay vpon the durtye ground,  
Her huge long taile her den all ouerspred,  
Yet was in knots and many boughtes vpwound,  
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred  
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,  
Sucking vpon her poisonous dugs, each one  
Of sundry shapes, yet all ill fauored:  
Soone as that vncouth light vpon them shone,  
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.  
Their dam vpstart, out of her den effraide,  
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile  
About her cursed head, whose folds displaid  
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile.  
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle  
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;  
For light she hated as the deadly bale,  
Ay wont in desert darknesse to remaine,  
Where plaine none might her see, nor she see any plaine.  
Which when the valiant Elfe perceiu'd, he lept  
As Lyon fierce vpon the flying pray,  
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept  
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:  
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,  
And turning fierce, her speckled taile aduaunst,  
Threatning her angry sting, him to dismay:  
Who nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:  
The stroke down frō her head vnto her shoulder glaunst.  
Much daunted with that dint, her sence was dazd,  
Yet kindling rage, her selfe she gathered round,  
And all attonce her beastly body raizd  
With doubled forces high aboue the ground:  
Tho wrapping vp her wrethed sterne arownd,  
Lept fierce vpon his shield, and her huge traine  
All suddenly about his body wound,  
That hand or foot to stirre he stroue in vaine:  
God helpe the man so wrapt in *Errours* endlesse traine.  
His Lady sad to see his sore constraint,  
Cride out, Now now Sir knight, shew what ye bee,  
Add faith vnto your force, and be not faint:  
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee.  
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,  
His gall did grate for griefe and high disdaine,

And knitting all his force got one hand free,  
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,  
That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraîne.  
Therewith she spewd out of her filthy maw

A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,  
Full of great lumpes of flesh and gobbets raw,  
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke  
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe:  
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,  
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,  
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:  
Her filthy parbreake all the place defiled has.

As when old father *Nilus* gins to swell  
With timely pride aboue the *Aegyptian* vale,  
His fattie waues do fertile slime outwell,  
And ouerflow each plaine and lowly dale:  
But when his later spring gins to auale,  
Huge heapes of mudd he leaues, wherein there breed  
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male  
And partly female of his fruitfull seed;

Such vgly monstrous shapes elsewhere may no man reed.

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,  
That welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,  
His forces faile, ne can no longer fight.  
Whose corage when the feend perceiu'd to shrinken,  
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke  
Her fruitfull cursed spawne of serpents small,  
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,  
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,

And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

As gentle Shepheard in sweete euen-tide,  
When ruddy *Phoebus* gins to welke in west,  
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,  
Markes which do byte their hasty supper best;  
A cloud of combrous gnattes do him molest,  
All striuing to infixe their feeble stings,  
That from their noyance he no where can rest,  
But with his clownish hands their tender wings  
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame,  
Then of the certaine perill he stood in,  
Halfe furious vnto his foe he came,  
Resolv'd in minde all suddenly to win,  
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;  
And strooke at her with more then manly force,

That from her body full of filthie sin  
He raft her hatefull head without remorse;  
A streame of cole black bloud forth gushed frõ her corse.  
Her scattred brood, soone as their Parent deare  
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,  
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,  
Gathred themselues about her body round,  
Weening their wonted entrance to haue found  
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood  
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,  
And sucked vp their dying mothers blood,  
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.  
That detestable sight him much amazde,  
To see th'vnkindly Impes of heauen accurst,  
Deuoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,  
Hauing all satisfide their bloody thirst,  
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,  
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end  
Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst;  
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,  
His foes haue slaine themselues, with whom he should contend.  
His Ladie seeing all, that chaunst, from farre  
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie,  
And said, Faire knight, borne vnder happy starre,  
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye:  
Well worthy be you of that Armorie,  
Wherein ye haue great glory wonne this day,  
And proou'd your strength on a strong enimie,  
Your first aduenture: many such I pray,  
And henceforth euer wish, that like succeed it may.  
Then mounted he vpon his Steede againe,  
And with the Lady backward sought to wend;  
That path he kept, which beaten was most plaine,  
Ne euer would to any by-way bend,  
But still did follow one vnto the end,  
The which at last out of the wood them brought.  
So forward on his way (with God to frend)  
He passed forth, and new aduenture sought;  
Long way he trauelled, before he heard of ought.  
At length they chaunst to meet vpon the way  
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,  
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,  
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;  
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,  
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,

Simple in shew, and voyde of malice bad,  
And all the way he prayed, as he went,  
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.  
He faire the knight saluted, louting low,  
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was:  
And after asked him, if he did know  
Of straunge aduentures, which abroad did pas.  
Ah my deare Sonne (quoth he) how should, alas,  
Silly old man, that liues in hidden cell,  
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,  
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?  
With holy father sits not with such things to mell.  
But if of daunger which hereby doth dwell,  
And homebred euill ye desire to heare,  
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,  
That wasteth all this countrey farre and neare.  
Of such (said he) I chiefly do inquire,  
And shall you well reward to shew the place,  
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare:  
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,  
That such a cursed creature liues so long a space.  
Far hence (quoth he) in wastfull wilderness  
His dwelling is, by which no liuing wight  
May euer passe, but thorough great distresse.  
Now (sayd the Lady) draweth toward night,  
And well I wote, that of your later fight  
Ye all forweariet be: for what so strong,  
But wanting rest will also want of might?  
The Sunne that measures heauen all day long,  
At night doth baite his steedes the *Ocean* waues emong.  
Then with the Sunne take Sir, your timely rest,  
And with new day new worke at once begin:  
Vntroubled night they say giues counsell best.  
Right well Sir knight ye haue aduised bin,  
(Quoth then that aged man;) the way to win  
Is wisely to aduise: now day is spent;  
Therefore with me ye may take vp your In  
For this same night. The knight was well content:  
So with that godly father to his home they went.  
A little lowly Hermitage it was,  
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,  
Far from resort of people, that did pas  
In trauell to and froe: a little wyde  
There was an holy Chappell edifyde,  
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say

His holy things each morne and euentide:  
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,  
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.  
Arriued there, the little house they fill,  
Ne looke for entertainment, where none was:  
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will;  
The noblest mind the best contentment has.  
With faire discourse the euening so they pas:  
For that old man of pleasing wordes had store,  
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas;  
He told of Saintes and Popes, and euermore  
He strowd an *Aue-Mary* after and before.  
The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,  
And the sad humour loading their eye liddes,  
As messenger of *Morpheus* on them cast  
Sweet slōbring deaw, the which to sleepe them biddes.  
Vnto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:  
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,  
He to his study goes, and there amidde  
His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,  
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes  
Then choosing out few wordes most horrible,  
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame,  
With which and other spelles like terrible,  
He bad awake blacke *Plutoes* griesly Dame,  
And cursed heauen, and spake reprochfull shame  
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light;  
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name  
Great *Gorgon*, Prince of darknesse and dead night,  
At which *Cocytus* quakes, and *Styx* is put to flight.  
And forth he cald out of deepe darknesse dred  
Legions of Sprights, the which like little flyes  
Fluttring about his euer damned hed,  
A-waite whereto their seruice he applyes,  
To aide his friends, or fray his enimies:  
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,  
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes;  
The one of them he gaue a message too,  
The other by him selfe staide other worke to doo.  
He making speedy way through spersed ayre,  
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,  
To *Morpheus* house doth hastily repaire.  
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,  
And low, where dawning day doth neuer peepe,  
His dwelling is; there *Tethys* his wet bed

Doth euer wash, and *Cynthia* still doth steepe  
In siluer deaw his euer-drouping hed,  
Whiles sad Night ouer him her mâtle black doth spred  
Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,  
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yuory,  
The other all with siluer ouercast;  
And wakefull dogges before them farre do lye,  
Watching to banish Care their enemy,  
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.  
By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,  
And vnto *Morpheus* comes, whom drowned deepe  
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.  
And more, to lulle him in his slumber soft,  
A trickling streame from high rocke tumbling downe  
And euer-drizling raine vpon the loft,  
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne  
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne:  
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,  
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,  
Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet lyes,  
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enemyes.  
The messenger approching to him spake,  
But his wast wordes returnd to him in vaine:  
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.  
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,  
Whereat he gan to stretch: but he againe  
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.  
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine  
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,  
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.  
The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,  
And threatned vnto him the dreaded name  
Of *Hecate*: whereat he gan to quake,  
And lifting vp his lompish head, with blame  
Halfe angry asked him, for what he came.  
Hither (quoth he) me *Archimago* sent,  
He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,  
He bids thee to him send for his intent  
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.  
The God obeyde, and calling forth straight way  
A diuerse dreame out of his prison darke,  
Deliuered it to him, and downe did lay  
His heauie head, deuoide of carefull carke,  
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.  
He backe returning by the Yuorie dore,

Remounted vp as light as chearefull Larke,  
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore  
In hast vnto his Lord, where he him left afore.  
Who all this while with charmes and hidden artes,  
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,  
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes  
So liuely, and so like in all mens sight,  
That weaker sence it could haue rauisht quight:  
The maker selfe for all his wondrous witt,  
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight:  
Her all in white he clad, and ouer it  
Cast a blacke stole, most like to seeme for *Vna* fit.  
Now when that ydle dreame was to him brought,  
Vnto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,  
Where he slept soundly void of euill thought,  
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,  
In sort as he him schooled priuily:  
And that new creature borne without her dew,  
Full of the makers guile, with vsage sly  
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,  
Whose semblance she did carrie vnder feigned hew.  
Thus well instructed, to their worke they hast,  
And comming where the knight in slomber lay,  
The one vpon his hardy head him plast,  
And made him dreame of loues and lustfull play,  
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,  
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked ioy:  
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,  
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy,  
Her chaste hart had subdewd, to learne Dame pleasures toy.  
And she her selfe of beautie soueraigne Queene,  
Faire *Venus* seemde vnto his bed to bring  
Her, whom he waking euermore did weene,  
To be the chastest flowre, that ay did spring  
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,  
Now a loose Leman to vile seruice bound:  
And eke the *Graces* seemed all to sing,  
*Hymen iô Hymen*, dauncing all around,  
Whilst freshest *Flora* her with Yuie girlond crownd.  
In this great passion of vnwonted lust,  
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,  
He started vp, as seeming to mistrust,  
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:  
Lo there before his face his Lady is,  
Vnder blake stole hyding her bayted hooke,



And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,  
With gentle blandishment and louely looke,  
Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him took.  
All cleane dismayd to see so vncouth sight,  
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,  
He thought haue slaine her in his fierce despight:  
But hasty heat tempring with sufferance wise,  
He stayde his hand, and gan himselfe aduise  
To proue his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.  
Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,  
Tho can she weepe, to stirre vp gentle ruth,  
Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth.  
And said, Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my loue,  
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,  
And mightie causes wrought in heauen aboue,  
Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,  
For hoped loue to winne me certaine hate?  
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.  
Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state  
You, whom my hard auenging destinie  
Hath made iudge of my life or death indifferently.  
Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leaue  
My Fathers kingdome,--There she stopt with teares;  
Her swollen hart her speach seemd to bereaue,  
And then againe begun, My weaker yeares  
Captiu'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,  
Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:  
Let me not dye in languor and long teares.  
Why Dame (quoth he) what hath ye thus dismayd?  
What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?  
Loue of your selfe, she said, and deare constraint  
Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie night  
In secret anguish and vnpittied plaint,  
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight.  
Her doubtfull words made that redoubted knight  
Suspect her truth: yet since no' vntruth he knew,  
Her fawning loue with foule disdainefull spight  
He would not shend, but said, Deare dame I rew,  
That for my sake vnknowne such grieve vnto you grew.  
Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;  
For all so deare as life is to my hart,  
I deeme your loue, and hold me to you bound;  
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,  
Where cause is none, but to your rest depart.  
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease

Her mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art,  
And fed with words, that could not chuse but please,  
So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.  
Long after lay he musing at her mood,  
Much grieu'd to thinke that gentle Dame so light,  
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.  
At last dull wearinesse of former fight  
Hauing yrockt a sleepe his irkesome spright,  
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine,  
With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare delight:  
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,  
With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

## CANTO 2

*The guilefull great Enchaunter parts  
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:  
Into whose stead faire falshood steps,  
And workes him wofull ruth.*

BY this the Northerne wagoner had set  
His seuenfold teme behind the stedfast starre,  
That was in Ocean waues yet neuer wet,  
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre  
To all, that in the wide deepe wandring arre:  
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill  
Had warned once, that *Phoebus* fiery carre  
In hast was climbing vp the Easterne hill,  
Full enuious that night so long his roome did fill.  
When those accursed messengers of hell,  
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged Spright  
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tell  
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night:  
Who all in rage to see his skilfull might  
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine  
And sad *Proserpines* wrath, them to affright.  
But when he saw his threatning was but vaine,  
He cast about, and searcht his balefull bookes againe.  
Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,  
And that false other Spright, on whom he spread  
A seeming body of the subtile aire,  
Like a young Squire, in loues and lusty-hed  
His wanton dayes that euer loosely led,  
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:  
Those two he tooke, and in a secret bed,  
Couered with darknesse and misdeeming night,  
Them both together laid, to ioy in vaine delight.  
Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast  
Vnto his guest, who after troublous sights  
And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast,  
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearefull frights,  
As one aghast with feends or damned sprights,  
And to him cals, Rise rise vnhappy Swaine,  
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights  
Haue knit themselues in *Venus* shamefull chaine;  
Come see, where your false Lady doth her honour staine.  
All in amaze he suddenly vp start  
With sword in hand, and with the old man went;

Who soone him brought into a secret part,  
Where that false couple were full closely ment  
In wanton lust and lewd embracement:  
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire,  
The eye of reason was with rage yblent,  
And would haue slaine them in his furious ire,  
But hardly was restrained of that aged sire.  
Returning to his bed in torment great,  
And bitter anguish of his guiltie sight,  
He could not rest, but did his stout heart eat,  
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,  
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.  
At last faire *Hesperus* in highest skie  
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light,  
Then vp he rose, and clad him hastily;  
The Dwarfe him brought his steed: so both away do fly.  
Now when the rosy-fingred Morning faire,  
Weary of aged *Tithones* saffron bed,  
Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,  
And the high hils *Titan* discouered,  
The royall virgin shooke off drowsy-hed,  
And rising forth out of her baser bowre,  
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,  
And for her Dwarfe, that wont to wait each houre;  
Then gan she waile and weepe, to see that woefull stowre.  
And after him she rode with so much speede  
As her slow beast could make; but all in vaine:  
For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,  
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine,  
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine;  
Yet she her weary limbes would neuer rest,  
But euery hill and dale, each wood and plaine  
Did search, sore grieued in her gentle brest,  
He so vngently left her, whom she loued best.  
But subtill *Archimago*, when his guests  
He saw diuided into double parts,  
And *Vna* wandring in woods and forrests,  
Th'end of his drift, he praised his diuelish arts,  
That had such might ouer true meaning harts;  
Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make,  
How he may worke vnto her further smarts:  
For her he hated as the hissing snake,  
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.  
He then deuise himselfe how to disguise;  
For by his mightie science he could take

As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,  
As euer *Proteus* to himselfe could make:  
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,  
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell,  
That of himselfe he oft for feare would quake,  
And oft would flie away. O who can tell  
The hidden power of herbes, and might of Magicke spell?  
But now seemde best, the person to put on  
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:  
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,  
And siluer shield vpon his coward brest  
A bloudy crosse, and on his crauen crest  
A bounch of haire discoloured diuersly:  
Full iolly knight he seemde, and well addrest,  
And when he sate vpon his courser free,  
*Saint George* himself ye would haue deemed him to be.  
But he the knight, whose semblaunt he did beare,  
The true *Saint George* was wandred far away,  
Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare;  
Will was his guide, and grieve led him astray.  
At last him chaunst to meete vpon the way  
A faithlesse Sarazin all arm'd to point,  
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay  
*Sans foy*: full large of limbe and euery ioint  
He was, and cared not for God or man a point.  
He had a faire companion of his way,  
A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,  
Purfled with gold and pearle of rich assay,  
And like a *Persian* mitre on her hed  
She wore, with crownes and owches garnished,  
The which her lauish louers to her gaue;  
Her wanton palfrey all was ouerspred  
With tinsell trappings, wouen like a waue,  
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses braue.  
With faire disport and courting dalliaunce  
She intertaine her louer all the way:  
But when she saw the knight his speare aduaunce,  
She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,  
And bad her knight addresse him to the fray:  
His foe was nigh at hand. He prickt with pride  
And hope to winne his Ladies heart that day,  
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers side  
The red blood trickling staine the way, as he did ride.  
The knight of the *Redcrosse* when him he spide,  
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,

Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride:  
Soone meete they both, both fell and furious,  
That daunted with their forces hideous,  
Their steeds do stagger, and amazed stand,  
And eke themselues too rudely rigorous,  
Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,  
Do backe rebut, and each to other yeeldeth land.  
As when two rams stird with ambitious pride,  
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,  
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side  
Do meete, that with the terrour of the shooke  
Astonied both, stand sencelesse as a blocke,  
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:  
So stood these twaine, vnmoued as a rocke,  
Both staring fierce, and holding idely  
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.  
The *Sarazin* sore daunted with the buffe  
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;  
Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with cuff:  
Each others equall puissaunce enuies,  
And through their iron sides with cruell spies  
Does seeke to perce: repining courage yields  
No foote to foe. The flashing fier flies  
As from a forge out of their burning shields,  
And streames of purple bloud new dies the verdant fields.  
Curse on that Crosse (quoth then the *Sarazin*)  
That keepes thy body from the bitter fit;  
Dead long ygoe I wote thou haddest bin,  
Had not that charme from thee forwarned it:  
But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,  
And hide thy head. Therewith vpon his crest  
With rigour so outrageous he smitt,  
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,  
And glauncing downe his shield, from blame him fairely blest.  
Who thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark  
Of natiue vertue gan eftsoones reuiue,  
And at his haughtie helmet making mark,  
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did riue,  
And cleft his head. He tumbling downe aliue,  
With bloody mouth his mother earth did kis,  
Greeting his graue: his grudging ghost did striue  
With the fraile flesh; at last it flitted is,  
Whither the soules do fly of men, that liue amis.  
The Lady when she saw her champion fall,  
Like the old ruines of a broken towre,

Staid not to waile his woefull funerall,  
But from him fled away with all her powre;  
Who after her as hastily gan scowre,  
Bidding the Dwarfe with him to bring away  
The *Sarazins* shield, signe of the conqueroure.  
Her soone he ouertooke, and bad to stay,  
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.  
She turning backe with ruefull countenaunce,  
Cride, Mercy mercy Sir vouchsafe to show  
On silly Dame, subiect to hard mischaunce,  
And to your mighty will. Her humblesse low  
In so ritche weedes and seeming glorious show,  
Did much emmoue his stout hero"icke heart,  
And said, Deare dame, your suddein ouerthrow  
Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,  
And tell, both who ye be, and who that tooke your part.  
Melting in teares, then gan she thus lament;  
The wretched woman, whom vnhappy howre  
Hath now made thrall to your commandement,  
Before that angry heauens list to lowre,  
And fortune false betraide me to your powre,  
Was, (O what now auaieth that I was!)  
Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour,  
He that the wide West vnder his rule has,  
And high hath set his throne, where *Tiberis* doth pas.  
He in the first flowre of my freshest age,  
Betrothed me vnto the onely haire  
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage;  
Was neuer Prince so faithfull and so faire,  
Was neuer Prince so meeke and debonaire;  
But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,  
My dearest Lord fell from high honours staire,  
Into the hands of his accursed fone,  
And cruelly was slaine, that shall I euer mone.  
His blessed body spoild of liuely breath,  
Was afterward, I know not how, conuaid  
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death  
When tidings came to me vnhappy maid,  
O how great sorrow my sad soule assaid.  
Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,  
And many yeares throughout the world I straid,  
A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind  
With loue, long time did languish as the stricken hind.  
At last it chaunced this proud *Sarazin*  
To meete me wandring, who perforce me led



With him away, but yet could neuer win  
The Fort, that Ladies hold in soueraigne dread.  
There lies he now with foule dishonour dead,  
Who whiles he liu'de, was called proud *Sans foy*,  
The eldest of three brethren, all three bred  
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is *Sans ioy*,  
And twixt them both was borne the bloudy bold *Sans loy*.  
In this sad plight, friendlesse, vnfortunate,  
Now miserable I *Fidessa* dwell,  
Crauing of you in pittie of my state,  
To do none ill, if please ye not do well.  
He in great passion all this while did dwell,  
More busying his quicke eyes, her face to view,  
Then his dull eares, to heare what she did tell;  
And said, Faire Lady hart of flint would rew  
The vnderdeserued woes and sorrowes, which ye shew.  
Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,  
Hauing both found a new friend you to aid,  
And lost an old foe, that did you molest:  
Better new friend then an old foe is said.  
With chaunge of cheare the seeming simple maid  
Let fall her eyen, as shamefast to the earth,  
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gain-said,  
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,  
And she coy lookes: so dainty they say maketh derth.  
Long time they thus together traueiled,  
Till weary of their way, they came at last,  
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spread  
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse ouercast,  
And their greene leaues trembling with euery blast,  
Made a calme shadow far in compasse round:  
The fearefull Shepheard often there aghast  
Vnder them neuer sat, ne wont there sound  
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th'vnlucky ground.  
But this good knight soone as he them can spie,  
For the coole shade him thither hastily got:  
For golden *Phoebus* now ymounted hie,  
From fiery wheelles of his faire chariot  
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,  
That liuing creature mote it not abide;  
And his new Lady it endured not.  
There they alight, in hope themselues to hide  
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.  
Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes,  
With goodly purposes there as they sit:

And in his falsed fancy he her takes  
 To be the fairest wight, that liued yit;  
 Which to expresse, he bends his gentle wit,  
 And thinking of those braunches greene to frame  
 A girland for her dainty forehead fit,  
 He pluckt a bough; out of whose rift there came  
 Small drops of gory bloud, that trickled downe the same.  
 Therewith a piteous yelling voyce was heard,  
 Crying, O spare with guilty hands to teare  
 My tender sides in this rough rynd embard,  
 But fly, ah fly far hence away, for feare  
 Least to you hap, that happened to me heare,  
 And to this wretched Lady, my deare loue,  
 O too deare loue, loue bought with death too deare.  
 Astond he stood, and vp his haire did houe,  
 And with that suddein horror could no member moue.  
 At last whenas the dreadfull passion  
 Was ouerpast, and manhood well awake,  
 Yet musing at the straunge occasion,  
 And doubting much his sence, he thus bespake;  
 What voyce of damned Ghost from *Limbo* lake,  
 Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,  
 Both which fraile men do oftentimes mistake,  
 Sends to my doubtfull eares these speaches rare,  
 And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse bloud to spare?  
 Then groning deepe, Nor damned Ghost, (quoth he,)  
 Nor guilefull sprite, to thee these wordes doth speake,  
 But once a man *Fradubio*, now a tree,  
 Wretched man, wretched tree; whose nature weake,  
 A cruell witch her cursed will to wreake,  
 Hath thus transformd, and plast in open plaines,  
 Where *Boreas* doth blow full bitter bleake,  
 And scorching Sunne does dry my secret vaines:  
 For though a tree I seeme, yet cold and heat me paines.  
 Say on *Fradubio* then, or man, or tree,  
 Quoth then the knight, by whose mischieuous arts  
 Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see?  
 He oft finds med'cine, who his griefe imparts;  
 But double griefs afflict concealing harts,  
 As raging flames who striueth to suppress.  
 The author then (said he) of all my smarts,  
 Is one *Duessa* a false sorceresse,  
 That many errât knights hath brought to wretchednesse.  
 In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hot  
 The fire of loue and ioy of cheualree

First kindled in my brest, it was my lot  
To loue this gentle Lady, whom ye see,  
Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;  
With whom as once I rode accompanyde,  
Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,  
That had a like faire Lady by his syde,  
Like a faire Lady, but did fowle *Duessa* hyde.  
Whose forged beauty he did take in hand,  
All other Dames to haue exceeded farre;  
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,  
Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre:  
So both to battell fierce arraunged arre,  
In which his harder fortune was to fall  
Vnder my speare: such is the dye of warre:  
His Lady left as a prise martiall,  
Did yield her comely person, to be at my call.  
So doubly lou'd of Ladies vnlike faire,  
Th'one seeming such, the other such indeede,  
One day in doubt I cast for to compare,  
Whether in beauties glorie did exceede;  
A Rosy girlond was the victors meede:  
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,  
So hard the discord was to be agreede.  
*Frælis*sa was as faire, as faire mote bee,  
And euer false *Duessa* seemde as faire as shee.  
The wicked witch now seeing all this while  
The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,  
What not by right, she cast to win by guile,  
And by her hellish science raisd streightway  
A foggy mist, that ouercast the day,  
And a dull blast, that breathing on her face,  
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,  
And with foule vgly forme did her disgrace:  
Then was she faire alone, when none was faire in place.  
Then cride she out, Fye, fye, deformed wight,  
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine  
To haue before bewitched all mens sight;  
O leaue her soone, or let her soone be slaine.  
Her loathly visage viewing with disdain,  
Eftsoones I thought her such, as she me told,  
And would haue kild her; but with faigned paine,  
The false witch did my wrathfull hand with-hold;  
So left her, where she now is turnd to treen mould.  
Thensforth I tooke *Duessa* for my Dame,  
And in the witch vnweeting ioyd long time,

Ne euer wist, but that she was the same,  
Till on a day (that day is euery Prime,  
When Witches wont do penance for their crime)  
I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,  
Bathing her selfe in origane and thyme:  
A filthy foule old woman I did vew,  
That euer to haue toucht her, I did deadly rew.  
Her neather partes misshapen, monstrous,  
Were hidd in water, that I could not see,  
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,  
Then womans shape man would beleue to bee.  
Thensforth from her most beastly companie  
I gan refraine, in minde to slip away,  
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:  
For danger great, if not assur'd decay  
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.  
The diuelish hag by chaunges of my cheare  
Perceiu'd my thought, and drownd in sleepe night,  
With wicked herbes and ointments did besmeare  
My bodie all, through charmes and magicke might,  
That all my senses were bereaued quight:  
Then brought she me into this desert waste,  
And by my wretched louers side me pight,  
Where now enclosd in wooden wals full faste,  
Banisht from liuing wights, our wearie dayes we waste.  
But how long time, said then the Elfin knight,  
Are you in this misformed house to dwell?  
We may not chaunge (quoth he) this euil plight,  
Till we be bathed in a liuing well;  
That is the terme prescribed by the spell.  
O how, said he, mote I that well out find,  
That may restore you to your wonted well?  
Time and suffised fates to former kynd  
Shall vs restore, none else from hence may vs vnbynd.  
The false *Duessa*, now *Fidessa* hight,  
Heard how in vaine *Fradubio* did lament,  
And knew well all was true. But the good knight  
Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,  
When all this speech the liuing tree had spent,  
The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,  
That from the bloud he might be innocent,  
And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound:  
Then turning to his Lady, dead with feare her found.  
Her seeming dead he found with feigned feare,  
As all vnweeting of that well she knew,

And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare  
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eylids blew  
And dimmed sight with pale and deadly hew  
At last she vp gan lift: with trembling cheare  
Her vp he tooke, too simple and too trew,  
And oft her kist. At length all passed feare,  
He set her on her steede, and forward forth did beare.

### CANTO 3

*Forsaken Truth long seekes her loue,  
And makes the Lyon mylde,  
Marres blind Deuotions mart, and fals  
In hand of leachour vylde.*

NOught there vnder heau'ns wilde hollownesse,  
That moues more deare compassion of mind,  
Then beautie brought t'vnworthy wretchednesse  
Through enuies snares or fortunes freakes vnkind:  
I, whether lately through her brightnessse blind,  
Or through alleageance and fast fealtie,  
Which I do owe vnto all woman kind,  
Feele my heart perst with so great agonie,  
When such I see, that all for pittie I could die.  
And now it is empassioned so deepe,  
For fairest *Vnaes* sake, of whom I sing,  
That my fraile eyes these lines with teares do steepe,  
To thinke how she through guilefull handeling,  
Though true as touch, though daughter of a king,  
Though faire as euer liuing wight was faire,  
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,  
Is from her knight diuorced in despaire  
And her due loues deriu'd to that vile witches share.  
Yet she most faithfull Ladie all this while  
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd  
Farre from all peoples prease, as in exile,  
In wildernessse and wastfull deserts strayd,  
To seeke her knight; who subtilly betrayd  
Through that late vision, which th'*Enchaunter* wrought,  
Had her abandond. She of nought affrayd,  
Through woods and wastnesse wide him daily sought;  
Yet wished tydings none of him vnto her brought.  
One day nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,  
From her vnastie beast she did alight,  
And on the grasse her daintie limbes did lay  
In secret shadow, farre from all mens sight:  
From her faire head her fillet she vndight,  
And laid her stole aside. Her angels face  
As the great eye of heauen shyned bright,  
And made a sunshine in the shadie place;  
Did neuer mortall eye behold such heauenly grace.  
It fortun'd out of the thickest wood  
A ramping Lyon rushed suddainly,

Hunting full greedie after saluage blood;  
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,  
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,  
To haue attonce deuour'd her tender corse:  
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,  
His bloudie rage asswaged with remorse,  
And with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.  
In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,  
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,  
As he her wronged innocence did weet.  
O how can beautie maister the most strong,  
And simple truth subdue auenging wrong?  
Whose yeelded pride and proud submission,  
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,  
Her hart gan melt in great compassion,  
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.  
The Lyon Lord of euerie beast in field,  
Quoth she, his princely puissance doth abate,  
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,  
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late  
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:  
But he my Lyon, and my noble Lord,  
How does he find in cruell hart to hate  
Her that him lou'd, and euer most adord,  
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?  
Redounding teares did choke th'end of her plaint,  
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;  
And sad to see her sorrowfull constraint  
The kingly beast vpon her gazing stood;  
With pittie calmd, downe fell his angry mood.  
At last in close hart shutting vp her paine,  
Arose the virgin borne of heauenly brood,  
And to her snowy Palfrey got againe,  
To seeke her strayed Champion, if she might attaine.  
The Lyon would not leaue her desolate,  
But with her went along, as a strong gard  
Of her chast person, and a faithfull mate  
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:  
Still when she slept, he kept both watch and ward,  
And when she wakt, he waited diligent,  
With humble seruice to her will prepard:  
From her faire eyes he tooke commaundement,  
And euer by her lookes conceiued her intent.  
Long she thus traueiled through deserts wyde,  
By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,



Yet neuer shew of liuing wight espyde;  
Till that at length she found the troden gras,  
In which the tract of peoples footing was,  
Vnder the steepe foot of a mountaine hore;  
The same she followes, till at last she has  
A damzell spyde slow footing her before,  
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.  
To whom approching she to her gan call,  
To weet, if dwelling place were nigh at hand;  
But the rude wench her answer'd nought at all,  
She could not heare, nor speake, nor vnderstand;  
Till seeing by her side the Lyon stand,  
With suddaine feare her pitcher downe she threw,  
And fled away: for neuer in that land  
Face of faire Ladie she before did vew,  
And that dread Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.  
Full fast she fled, ne euer lookt behynd,  
As if her life vpon the wager lay,  
And home she came, whereas her mother blynd  
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say,  
But suddaine catching hold, did her dismay  
With quaking hands, and other signs of feare:  
Who full of ghastly fright and cold affray,  
Gan shut the dore. By this arriued there  
Dame Vna, wearie Dame, and entrance did requere.  
Which when none yeelded, her vnruely Page  
With his rude clawes the wicket open rent,  
And let her in; where of his cruell rage  
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment,  
She found them both in darkesome corner pent;  
Where that old woman day and night did pray  
Vpon her beades deuoutly penitent;  
Nine hundred *Pater nosters* euery day,  
And thrise nine hundred *Aues* she was wont to say.  
And to augment her painefull pennance more,  
Thrise euery weeke in ashes she did sit,  
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackcloth wore,  
And thrise three times did fast from any bit:  
But now for feare her beads she did forget.  
Whose needlesse dread for to remoue away,  
Faire Vna framed words and count'nance fit:  
Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray,  
That in their cotage small, that night she rest her may.  
The day is spent, and commeth drowsie night,  
When euery creature shrowded is in sleepe;