

The Elfin Knight



The
ELFIN KNIGHT

Book II of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*

Updated and annotated by
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For my son, River Edmond,
a true Elfin Knight.



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ntroduction

Edmund Spenser is an unsung hero in Christian literature. Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare seem to get their time, but Spenser's has been a long time in coming. And with good reason, I might add, for I suspect he is far too Christian for our modern taste buds.

I first read *The Faerie Queene* in college, where I stumbled through the archaic vocabulary, arbitrary spellings, and metrical lines, and gathered a confused and rather tangled impression of the six stories in Spenser's epic. Upon learning that Spenser had intended to write twelve books, I sighed with relief. But when I began teaching medieval literature for Atlas School a couple of years later, I included Book I of *The Faerie Queene* in the form of Roy Maynard's *Fierce Wars and Faithful Loves* (Canon Press, 1999). This decision was made because it was literature that we *ought* to read, but it certainly wasn't the case that I was looking forward to it. I was teaching a group of boys ranging in age from eight to thirteen, and I warned them that the task would be difficult but rewarding (I silently hoped). However, those six weeks were some of the most rewarding weeks I have ever spent with a class. We read aloud, discussed, acted out, and drew pictures of Spenser's tale of the Redcross Knight. At the close of those weeks, it had become obvious that we had all loved the world of Faerie Land, and we were anxious to return. And thus with a bit of arranging and rearranging, I decided that we would also read Book II. It was then that I began searching for another version like Maynard's that might bridge the Elizabethan world to ours with updated spellings, definitions of archaic vocabulary, and helpful explanations along the way. When time ran short and only one out-of-print copy could be procured that *almost* fit the bill, I decided to make one myself.

It was once again a time of enchantment and adventure, and when I mention *The Faerie Queene* now, my students' faces brighten and their eyes

are keen. They've regularly asked when we're going to do more and which book we'll do next. The older students have even asked to read the text in its original setting. They've been to Faerie Land, and they're willing to work even harder if it means another ride through the wilds of Spenser's imagination.

But I said that Spenser was too Christian—what of that? Spenser is too Christian in at least three glorious respects. First, Spenser is not a sentimentalist or a prude. Another way to say it is that he is not a gnostic. Moderns—Christians and non-Christians alike—have come to believe that this world is a necessary evil, but Spenser glories in the wildness and creativity of our triune God. He describes creation with exuberance and awe. He is not afraid to portray the truly gruesome nature of unchecked fury, the artificial appeals of sexual debauchery, and the physical glories of courage, beauty, and judgment.

Secondly, Spenser's world is a Faerie Land, a waterfall in which what we perceive as reality plunges into the pool of imagination. In the post-Enlightenment world, imagination and fairy tale have been looked upon with thick suspicion, particularly and most unfortunately in the Christian Church. Here, at the center of the world, where God's love has been so wildly creative, restoring a people to Himself, it is here where creativity and imagination have been so undervalued. But Spenser knew that the world God made *is* a Faerie Land and that the Scriptures are a true and lively fairy tale. And it is in this Faerie Land where true religion and theology take place, coming out of the hands and lips of courageous knights and fair maidens. In other words, because the world is supernatural and magic, it is full of meaning, brimming with symbolism. And just as the Apostle Paul looks back at the story of Abraham and sees an allegory of the Christian Church in Sarah and Isaac (Gal. 4:22–31), so too Spenser sees all of life and history teeming with symbolism, allegory, and typology. Jesus says we ought to see *Him* on every page of the Old Testament (Lk. 24:25–27), and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is practice in growing up into the wisdom of faith. *The Faerie Queene* is a rich allegory where names are full of meaning, and the story constantly begs for readers full of faith and imagination.

Lastly, Spenser was far more Christian than we, in that he was a poet, and *The Faerie Queene* is an epic poem. Not only has modernity sought to strip us of the joy of imagination, but it has no less than relegated the world of poetry to an irrelevant aristocracy, to a dark and dusty closet on a shelf below the bowling shoes. But the world God made is far more beautiful than our dry and humorless encyclopedias. God's spoken and written word is full of poetry and drama, narrative, and rhythm. As we read Spenser, may we recover a love for well-crafted speech and lyrical poetry, and may our words and the words of our students and children grow to more fully echo His, and may there come a day when mere speech is awkward, and it's somehow more comfortable to sing.

The hero of the second book of *The Faerie Queene* is Sir Guyon, the Knight of Temperance. It has not been my desire to pick the book apart in order to explain *completely* Spenser's picture of temperance. His story is sufficient to the task. However, I have made mention here and there a few thoughts on the subject. It appears that temperance for Spenser is a correlative to holiness, the thematic virtue of Book I. The meeting of Guyon and Redcross in the first canto is hardly incidental, nor is how they meet. Their meeting means that holiness and temperance are sometimes fooled into thinking of each other as enemies, but they are truly comrades at arms.

So what is temperance? Temperance seems to be a kind of dominion and rule. It is both defensive and offensive, full of restraint and unbridled. But it is particularly concerned with the physical material of the world. Temperance is dominion over creation. Spenser spends much of the book exploring the emotions of the body like anger and lust. At other points he is concerned with those things that allure our eyes and tastes, like greed, idleness, and gluttony. In the last few cantos, Guyon learns to rule wild beasts and an evil fortress. Some literary critics have suggested that where Book I (i.e., holiness) was concerned with spiritual or supernatural enemies and struggles, Book II is aimed at the natural and material. While this may be an overly simplistic explanation, it may be a start at any rate. But the point of Redcross and Guyon's meeting at the beginning is that there is no dichotomy. The spiritual struggle is a physical struggle and vice versa. Moderns no less than the ancients still "struggle" with a right understanding of this. We too easily listen to the Archimagos of our day and charge blindly at the very virtues we need the most.

Like Redcross, Guyon is saved by Prince Arthur. Arthur is undoubtedly the Christ-figure of Spenser's tale. This serves to accentuate the fact that while "natural man" may be able to defy many of the lures of sin and the world (with the aid of Holiness and the wisdom of the Palmer), natural man no less than spiritual man is in need of a Savior and redemption. We are unable to save ourselves in either case; it is the "exceeding grace of highest God, that loves his creatures so, and all his works with mercy doth embrace" (8.1.5-7).

My intent throughout this work has merely been to make Spenser more accessible, while preserving his words, rhythm, and style. This is not a commentary on the second book of *The Faerie Queene*. And while I have updated spelling, defined archaic words, and tried to explain difficult passages, I have also refrained from explaining and defining *everything*. I do hope that many who read this still find Spenser to be challenging. I do hope it takes a bit of work. All the same, perhaps this edition will keep the adventurous reader from losing the forest due to the trees.

I have left the book's preface in its original setting so as to give the reader a glimpse of the true treasure. Throughout the rest, I have updated spellings, as I mentioned. At several points, by altering spellings, I have modified Spenser's iambic pentameter. In other instances, I've merely given the updated spelling of the word in the margin in order to preserve the original meter. Quotation marks have been added to help the reader distinguish between speeches and the like. Spenser also capitalized words far more frequently than we usually do. I have lowered the case of many. The notes are relegated to the footnotes on each page and will no doubt be too many, too few, or too muddled for many readers. Many of the notes were originally intended for my class of boys, and this certainly comes through in their form and content. Lastly, I have defined many archaic or less familiar words in the margins of each page. Hopefully I have left you a few words to look up yourself. Occasionally I have given different glosses to the same word based on the context. Those aren't typos. Likewise, I have also defined some common words throughout the beginning of the text; towards the middle and end, I've left you to the fate of your memory. But just in case you're forgetful like me, I've tried to make a pretty thorough list of those kinds of words. They are listed on the following page, so as to ease your search for their meanings.

Finally, I have included as an appendix a short play that I wrote for my students to perform. This may be helpful for other school settings. The object of the drama was to have another opportunity to reflect on Spenser's story in a different light—through incarnation. The play is not meant to be serious; in fact it's rather silly in places. I've found that the absurd is often remembered and treasured by my students; I hope you may find the same, or at the very least enjoy some time on the stage together.

Thanks to my class at Atlas School for that first ride together through Faerie Land, for the laughter, and for many serious discussions. May you boys be sons of Sir Guyon, knights of temperance all your days. And yes, I know that the cover illustration is not *really* Sir Guyon, but use your imagination—it looks pretty close doesn't it? Thanks to one of the boys' parents (I can't remember who!) who suggested I pursue having this published. Thanks also to Bill and Robin Amos for facilitating the opportunity to teach; Robin made many copies of the original drafts that first year. Thanks also to Doug Jones and the rest of the folks at Canon Press. Thanks to Elizabeth Heale, whose commentary on *The Faerie Queene* was helpful and thought provoking. She was also kind enough to respond to an email inquiry from me. My wife kindly proofread the manuscript and offered her comments and helpful suggestions. She has also lent me a good bit of time that was rightly hers. Thank you. The ball's in my court.

TOBY J. SUMPTER
Spruce Cottage

Commonly used words:

eke—also

eftsoones—shortly

ne—neither, nor

ere—before

nathelesse—nevertheless

withouten—without

'gan—began

ensample—example

t'(abbreviation)—to _____

sprite—person, spirit

wight—person, creature, living thing

mote—might, may

puissance—strength, might

hight—called, named

THE SECOND BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QVEENE.
Contayning
 THE LEGEND OF SIR GYON.
 OR
 OF TEMPERAUNCE.¹

Right well I wote° most mighty Soueraine,	<i>know</i>
That all this famous antique history,	
Of some th'abundance of an idle braine	
Will iudged° be, and painted forgery,	<i>judged</i>
Rather then matter of iust° memory,	<i>just</i>
Sith° none, that breatheth liuing° aire, does know,	<i>since / living</i>
Where is that happy land of Faerie,	
Which I so much do vaunt°, yet no where show,	<i>praise</i>
But vouch antiquities, which no body can know. ²	

But let that man with better sence aduize°,	<i>advise</i>
That of the world least part to vs is red°:	<i>read</i>
And dayly how through hardy enterprize,	
Many great Regions are discovered,	
Which to late age were neuer mentioned.	
Who euer heard of th'Indian <i>Peru</i> ?	
Or who in venturous vessell measured	
The <i>Amazon</i> huge riuer now found trew?	
Or fruitfullest <i>Virginia</i> who did euer vew? ³	

1. This is Edmund Spenser's original preface to the second book of *The Faerie Queene*. No spellings have been changed so the reader can see with his own eyes the way the author originally wrote his tale. Watch carefully—Spenser uses the letter “i” instead of “j” and the letter “u” instead of “v” (among other things!).

2. Spenser addresses his writing to his “Sovereign,” meaning his Queen, Elizabeth I. He says that he knows some people will judge his story to be merely made up, a “painted forgery.” This is the case, he says, because no one knows where Faerie Land is.

3. Spenser says that wise men will know that many lands are constantly being discovered like Peru or the Amazon or Virginia. These new lands are proof that Faerie Land may be found if searched for.

Yet all these were, when no man did them know;
 Yet haue from wisest ages hidden beene:
 And later times things more vnknowne shall show.
 Why then should witlesse man so much misweene° *misjudge / be mistaken*
 That nothing is, but that which he hath seene?
 What if within the Moones faire shining spheare?
 What if in euery other starre vnseene
 Of other worldes he happily should heare?
 He wóder° would much more: yet such to some appeare. *wonder*

Of Faerie lond yet if he more inquire,
 By certaine signes here set in sundry place
 He may it find; ne° let him then admire, *nor*
 But yield his sence to be too blunt and bace,
 That no'te° without an hound fine footing trace. *could not*
 And thou, O fairest Princess under sky,
 In this fair mirrhour maist behold thy face,
 And thine owne realmes in lond of Faery,
 And in this antique Image thy great auncestry.⁴

The which O pardon me thus to enfold
 In couert vele, and wrap in shadowes light,
 That feeble eyes your glory may behold,
 Which else could not endure those beames bright,
 But would be dazled with exceeding light.
 O pardon, and vouchsafe with patient eare
 The braue aduentures of this Faery knight
 The good Sir *Guyon* graciously to heare,
 In whom great rule of Temp'raunce goodly doth appeare.⁵

4. Here Spenser gives a brief description of the whole story to follow. He aims to tell a story that is a mirror of the English Queen, her history, and the land of England.

5. Spenser begs the pardon of his Queen because he will tell of her under a "covert veil," that is, he will tell a story over top of her story. He says he will do this because otherwise feeble eyes would not be able to behold her "exceeding light." The overlaid story, he says, will be the adventures of a Faerie knight, the good Sir Guyon who will show forth the virtue of temperance. And thus the story begins.

anto I.

*Guyon by Archimago abused,
The Redcross knight awaits,
Finds Mordant and Amavia slain
With pleasure's poisoned baits.*

1

That cunning architect of cankered guile,
Whom Prince's late displeasure left in bands,¹
For falséd letters and suborned wile°,
Soon as the Redcross knight he understands,
To been departed out of Eden lands,
To serve again his sovereign Elfin Queen,
His arts he moves, and out of caitiffs'° hands
Himself he frees by secret means unseen;
His shackles empty left, himself escapéd clean.

plot

capturers'

2

And forth he fares full of malicious mind,
To worken° mischief and avenging woe,
Where ever he that godly knight may find,
His only heart-sore, and his only foe,
Since Una now he algates° must forgo,
Whom his victorious hands did earst° restore

work

*always
recently*

1. For those of you who have read Book I, this is our old friend, the devious magician Archimago, at it again!

To native crown and kingdom lately go:
 Where she enjoys sure peace for evermore,
 As weather-beaten ship arrived on happy shore.

3

Him therefore now the object of his spite
 And deadly food he makes: him to offend
 By forged treason, or by open fight
 He seeks, of all his drift the aimed end:
 Thereto his subtle engines he does bend
 His practic° wit, and his fair filed tongue, *experienced*
 With thousand other sleights: for well he kened°, *knew*
 His credit now in doubtful balance hung;
 For hardly could be hurt, who was already stung.²

4

Still as he went, he crafty stales° did lay *baits*
 With cunning trains° him to entrap un'wares. *traps*
 And privy spials° placed in all his way, *secret agents*
 To weet° what course he takes, and how he fares; *find out*
 To catch him at a vantage° in his snares. *weakness*
 But now so wise and wary° was the knight *careful*
 By trial of his former harms and cares,
 That he descried°, and shunnéd° still his sleight°: *endured / guarded / wit*
 The fish that once was caught, new bait will hardly bite.

5

Nathlesse° the enchanter would not spare his pain, *nevertheless*
 In hope to win occasion to his will;
 Which when he long awaited had in vain,
 He changed his mind from one to other ill:
 For to all good he enemy was still.³
 Upon the way him fortunéd to meet,
 Fair marching underneath a shady hill,
 A goodly knight, all armed in harness meet,
 That from his head no place appearéd to his feet.

2. When you know where the bees' nest is, you tend to stay away. Archimago knows it will be more difficult to assault Redcross this time since Redcross will be on his guard.

3. Archimago waited for a while in order to trap Redcross. But when no opportunity presented itself, he took what he could get.

6

His carriage was full comely and upright,
 His countenance demure and temperate,
 But yet so stern and terrible in sight,
 That cheered his friends, and did his foes amate°: *dismay*
 He was an Elfin born of noble state,
 And mickle° worship in his native land; *great*
 Well could he tourney and in lists debate°, *fight in tournaments*
 And knighthood took of good Sir Huon's hand,
 When with king Oberon he came to Faerie Land.⁴

7

Him als° accompanied upon the way *also*
 A comely Palmer, clad in black attire,
 Of ripest years, and hairs all hoary gray,
 That with a staff his feeble steps did stire°, *guide*
 Lest his long way his agéd limbs should tire:
 And if by looks one may the mind aread,
 He seemed to be a sage and sober sire,
 And ever with slow pace the knight did lead,
 Who taught his trampling steed with equal steps to tread.⁵

8

Such when as Archimago them did view,
 He weened° well to work some uncouth wile, *thought*
 Eftsoones° untwisting his deceitful clew°, *soon / plot*
 He 'gan° to weave a web of wicked guile, *began*
 And with fair countenance and flattering style,
 To them approaching, thus the knight bespake:
 "Fair son of Mars, that seek with warlike spoil.
 And great achievements great yourself to make,
 Vouchsafe° to stay your steed for humble miser's sake."⁶ *decide*

9

He stayed his steed for humble miser's sake,
 And bad° tell on the tenor° of his plaint°; *asked him / nature / trouble*

4. This is Sir Guyon our hero, our champion, our Knight of Temperance. He's not all those things at once mind you, but he's well on his way.

5. Sir Guyon is traveling on a horse, and beside him walks an old Palmer, a man of many years who is Guyon's trusty guide.

6. Archimago has assumed the beggar's cloth hoping to secure some pity.

Who feigning° then in every limb to quake,	<i>pretending</i>
Through inward fear, and seeming pale and faint	
With piteous moan his piercing speech 'gan° paint; ⁷	<i>began</i>
“Dear Lady how shall I declare thy case,	
Whom late I left in languorous° constraint?	<i>weak</i>

7. Archimago's putting on a show as if he's really scared.



Fairy Tales



Fairy tales are an important part of healthy Christian living. They are not simply “made up” stories with no impact or relation to real life or how we actually live. In fact, the history of the world is a beautifully told fairy tale. The story begins in a perfect garden with a man, a woman, a forbidden fruit, and a crafty dragon. There in the opening chapter of God's story, He reveals the theme of History: the struggle between the seed of the woman and the offspring of the dragon. The story unravels its tapestry of tales through centuries casting this same battle again and again showing the faithful woman and her children doing battle with the dragon and his crafty sons. The struggle climaxes at the Cross where Jesus defeats the dragon through his death and resurrection. We, who are God's people, are united to Christ and share in His victory.

This Gospel and all of history show emphatically that we do not live in a sterile, naturalistic universe. The world that the triune God created is filled with tales of giants and wizards, prophets and floods, fair ladies and dragons, angels and rainbows, magic and miracles. We live in a world where water comes out of the sky, fire shoots out of mountains, and millions of stars whirl above our heads. The God who made this world is a brilliant and excessively imaginative God. At least one way in which we honor and image our Creator is through recreating and imitating His arts. The stories we tell and paint and live ought to be filled with the same sorts of mind blowing events and details. The secularists and evolutionists are boring and uninteresting with their chance and arid naturalism. But we are the sons and daughters of a God who plays with dragons, dances over His people, and became a man for our salvation. We live in a faerie land, and we can't help but love fairy tales because we are in the middle of one.

Would God thyself now present were in place,
To tell this rueful° tale; thy sight could win thee grace.⁸ *awful*

10

“Or rather would, O would it so had chanced,
That you, most noble sir, had present been,
When that lewd° ribald° with vile lust advanced *immoral / wicked person*
Laid first his filthy hands on virgin clean,
To spoil her dainty corpse so fair and sheen,
As on the earth, great mother of us all,
With living eye more fair was never seen,
Of chastity and honor virginal:
Witness ye heavens, whom she in vain to help did call.”⁹

11

“How may it be,” said then the knight half wroth°, *angered*
“That knight should knighthood ever so have shent°?” *shed*
“None but that saw,” quoth° he, “would ween° for troth°, *said / know / certain*
How shamefully that maid he did torment.
Her looser golden locks he rudely rent,
And drew her on the ground, and his sharp sword,
Against her snowy breast he fiercely bent,
And threatened death with many a bloody word;
Tongue hates to tell the rest, that eye to see abhorred.”

12

Therewith amovéd from his sober mood,
“And lives he yet,” said he, “that wrought this act,
And doen° the heavens afford him vital food?” *do*
“He lives,” quoth° he “and boasteth of the fact, *said*
Nor yet hath any knight his courage cracked.”
“Where may that treachor° then,” said he, “be found, *traitor*
Or by what means may I his footing tract°?” *track*
“That shall I show,” said he, “as sure, as hound
The stricken deer doth challenge by the bleeding wound.”¹⁰

8. Archimago, laying it on thick, says, “If only you were telling this story; it would win you much favor.”

9. Archimago has told Guyon that some villain has just dishonored a young maiden. He calls the heavens to witness, perhaps alluding to Deuteronomy 22:27, where a betrothed maiden was not held liable for rape if it occurred in the countryside because she “cried out, but there was no one to save her.”

10. Guyon asks if the villain is still alive, Archimago says he is, Guyon asks where he is, and Archimago says he’ll take him to him.

13

He stayed not longer talk, but with fierce ire° *wrath*
 And zealous haste away is quickly gone
 To seek that knight, where him that crafty squire¹¹
 Supposed to be. They do arrive anon°, *soon*
 Where sat a gentle lady all alone,
 With garments rent, and hair disheveled,
 Wringing her hands, and making piteous moan;
 Her swollen eyes were much disfigured,
 And her fair face with tears was foully blubbered.¹²

14

The knight approaching nigh° thus to her said, *near*
 “Fair lady, through foul sorrow ill bedight°, *afflict*
 Great pity is to see you thus dismayed,
 And mar the blossom of your beauty bright:
 Forthy° appease your grief and heavy plight, *therefore*
 And tell the cause of your conceived pain.
 For if he live, that hath you doen° despite°, *done / wrong*
 He shall you do due recompense again,
 Or else his wrong with greater puissance° maintain.”¹³ *strength*

15

Which when she heard, as in despiteful wise,
 She willfully her sorrow did augment°, *increase*
 And offered hope of comfort did despise:
 Her golden locks most cruelly she rent,
 And scratched her face with ghastly dreariment,
 Nor would she speak, nor see, nor yet be seen,
 But hid her visage, and her head down bent,
 Either for grievous shame, or for great teen°, *grief*
 As if her heart with sorrow had transfixed been.¹⁴

11. The “crafty squire” is Archimago. He’s referred to as the squire for the next few stanzas.

12. That’s a real word. Use it often.

13. I.e., “He’ll pay you back or suffer worse for his actions.”

14. At the offer of being revenged, she pulls her hair out, scratches her face, and goes silent like a stone. Talk about a temper tantrum.

16

Till her that squire bespake, “Madame my lief°, *dear*
 For God’s dear love be not so willful bent,
 But do vouchsafe now to receive relief,
 The which good fortune doth to you present.
 For what boots° it to weep and to waiment°, *good is / lament*
 When ill is chanced, but doth the ill increase,
 And the weak mind with double woe torment?”
 When she her squire heard speak, she ’gan° appease *began*
 Her voluntary pain, and feel some secret ease.

17

Eftsoone° she said, “Ah gentle trusty Squire, *presently*
 What comfort can I woeful wretch conceive,
 Or why should ever I henceforth desire,
 To see fair heaven’s face, and life not leave,
 Since that false traitor did my honor reave°?” *steal*
 “False traitor certes°,” said the faerie knight, *truly*
 “I read° the man, that ever would deceive *say*
 A gentle lady, or her wrong through might:
 Death were too little pain for such a foul despite.” *wicked deed*

18

“But now, fair lady, comfort to you make,
 And read°, who hath ye wrought this shameful plight. *say*
 That short° revenge the man may overtake, *quickly*
 Where so he be, and soon upon him light.”
 “Certes°” said she “I wote° not how he hight,¹⁵ *truly / know / is named*
 But under him a gray steed did he wield,
 Whose sides with dappled circles weren° dight°; *were / covered*
 Upright he rode, and in his silver shield
 He bore a bloody cross, that quartered all the field.”¹⁶

19

“Now by my head,” said Guyon, “much I muse,
 How that same knight should do so foul amiss,
 Or ever gentle damsel so abuse:
 For may I boldly say, he surely is

15. I.e., “I don’t know what his name is.”

16. She describes the knight who dishonored her as a knight with a shield bearing a red cross. Uh-oh. Hold on now, who is this guy? Careful, Guyon.

A right good knight, and true of word unwise:
 I present was, and can it witness well,
 When arms he swore, and straight did enterprise
 The adventure of the Errant Damsel,
 In which he hath great glory won, as I hear tell.

20

“Nathless° he shortly shall again be tried, *nevertheless*
 And fairly quit him of the imputed blame,
 Else be ye sure he dearly shall abide,
 Or make you good amendment for the same:
 All wrongs have mends, but no amends of shame.¹⁷
 Now therefore lady, rise out of your pain,
 And see the salving° of your blotted name.” *healing*
 Full loath° she seemed thereto, but yet did feign°; *unwilling / pretend*
 For she was inly° glad her purpose so to gain. *on the inside*

21

Her purpose was not such, as she did feign,
 Nor yet her person such, as it was seen,
 But under simple show and semblant° plain *secret*
 Lurked false Duessa¹⁸ secretly unseen,
 As a chaste virgin, that wrongéd been:
 So had false Archimago her disguised,
 To cloak her guile with sorrow and sad teen°; *grief*
 And eke° himself had craftily devised *also*
 To be her squire, and do her service well aguised°. *disguised*

22

Her late° forlorn° and naked he had found, *recently / hopeless*
 Where she did wander in waste wilderness,
 Lurking in rocks and caves far under ground,¹⁹
 And with green moss covering her nakedness,
 To hide her shame and loathly° filthiness; *wicked*

17. Guyon knows the knight by his shield. It's Redcross of course. Guyon knows he's a faithful knight, but he vows to do a thorough investigation and either prove him innocent or require that he make amends for any wrong doing. The "Errant Damsel" is Una from Book I, for whom Redcross did many daring deeds.

18. Oooh . . . you should've known. This is no chaste maiden; this is Duessa, the wicked woman from Book I, teaming up with Archimago.

19. She was Gollum's long lost girl friend.

Since her Prince Arthur of proud ornaments
 And borrowed beauty spoiled. Her nathless^o *nevertheless*
 The enchanter finding fit for his intents,
 Did thus revest^o, and decked with due habiliments.²⁰ *re-clothe*

23

For all he did, was to deceive good knights,
 And draw them from pursuit of praise and fame,
 To slug in sloth and sensual delights,
 And end their days with irrenowned^o shame. *inglorious*
 And now exceeding grief him overcame,
 To see the Redcross thus avancéd high;
 Therefore this crafty engine he did frame,
 Against his praise to stir up enmity
 Of such, as virtues like mote^o unto him ally.²¹ *might*

24

So now he Guyon guides an uncouth way
 Through woods and mountains, till they came at last
 Into a pleasant dale, that lowly lay
 Betwixt two hills, whose high heads over placed,
 The valley did with cool shade overcast,
 Through midst thereof a little river rolled,
 By which there sat a knight with helm unlaced,
 Himself refreshing with the liquid cold,
 After his travel long, and labors manifold.

25

“Lo yonder he,” cried Archimage²² aloud,
 “That wrought the shameful fact, which I did show;
 And now he doth himself in secret shroud,
 To fly the vengeance for his outrage due;
 But vain: for ye shall dearly do him rue^o, *harm*
 So God ye speed, and send you good success;
 Which we far off will here abide to view.”

20. He put some clothes on her.

21. Archimage's chief purpose is to rid good knights of their praiseworthy virtues.

22. “Archimage” is a variant spelling of “Archimago.” It is the same character. This variant is used to help the line scan correctly, preserving the iambic meter.

So they him left, inflamed with wrathfulness,
That straight against that knight his spear he did address.²³

26

Who seeing him from far so fierce to prick°,	<i>ride</i>
His warlike arms about him 'gan° embrace,	<i>began</i>
And in the rest his ready spear did stick;	
Though when as still he saw him towards pace,	
He 'gan° rencounter° him in equal race. ²⁴	<i>began / battle</i>
They been met, both ready to affrap°,	<i>strike</i>
When suddenly that warrior 'gan° abase°	<i>began / put down</i>
His threatened spear, as if some new mishap	
Had him betide, or hidden danger did entrap. ²⁵	

27

And cried, "Mercy sir knight, and mercy Lord,	
For mine offence and heedless hardiment°,	<i>roughness</i>
That had almost committed crime abhorred,	
And with reproachful shame mine honor shent°,	<i>removed</i>
Whiles curséd steel against that badge I bent,	
The sacred badge of my Redeemer's death,	
Which on your shield is set for ornament."	
But his fierce foe his steed could stay° uneach°,	<i>stop / with difficulty</i>
Who pricked with courage keen, did cruel battle breathe.	

28

But when he heard him speak, straight way he knew	
His error, and himself inclining said;	
"Ah dear Sir Guyon, well becometh you,	
But me behooveth° rather to upbraid,	<i>ought</i>
Whose hasty hand so far from reason strayed, ²⁶	
That almost it did heinous violence	
On that fair image of that heavenly maid, ²⁷	

23. As soon as Redcross is pointed out to Guyon, he lowers his spear and proceeds to attack.

24. When Redcross sees Guyon galloping across the plain, he hurriedly arms himself, mounts his steed, and proceeds to charge toward Guyon.

25. Just before the knights are to meet, Guyon lowers his spear.

26. I.e., "I would wish you well, but I must rebuke you for your hasty attack." This is Guyon's first lesson in temperance. Temperance is not hasty or wrathful.

27. That's Glorianna, the Faerie Queene, who is also a picture of Queen Elizabeth of England.

That decks and arms your shield with fair defense:
Your courtesy takes on you another's due offense."

29

So been they both at one, and done uprear
Their beavers° bright, each other for to greet; *face guards*
Goodly comportance° each to other bear, *greeting*
And entertain themselves with courtesies meet,
Then said the Redcross knight, "Now mote° I weet°, *might / know*
Sir Guyon, why with so fierce saliance°, *assault*
And fell intent ye did at erst° me meet; *first*
For since I know your goodly governance,
Great cause, I ween°, you guided, or some uncouth chance." *think*

30

"Certes°," said he, "well mote° I shame to tell *certainly / might*
The fond encheason°, that me hither led. *foolish reason*
A false infamous faitour° late befell *villain*
Me for to meet, that seemed ill bested°, *undone*
And plained° of grievous outrage, which he read° *showed / explained*
A knight had wrought against a lady gent;
Which to avenge, he to this place me led,
Where you he made the mark of his intent,
And now is fled; foul shame him follow, where he went."

31

So can° he turn his earnest unto game, *did*
Through goodly handling and wise temperance.
By this his agéd guide in presence came;
Who soon as on that knight his eye did glance,
Eftsoones° of him had perfect cognizance, *presently*
Since him in Fairy court he late avized°;²⁸ *had seen*
And said, "Fair son, God give you happy chance,
And that dear cross upon your shield devised,
Wherewith above all knights ye goodly seem aguised°." *dressed*

32

"Joy may you have, and everlasting fame,
Of late most hard achievement by you done,
For which enrolléd is your glorious name

28. I.e., he realized who he was because he was in the Faerie court recently.

In heavenly registers above the sun,
 Where you a saint with saints your seat have won:²⁹
 But wretched we, where ye have left your mark,
 Must now anew begin, like race to run;
 God guide thee, Guyon, well to end thy work,
 And to the wishéd haven bring thy weary bark°.”

boat

33

“Palmer,” him answered the Redcross knight
 “His be the praise, that this achievement wrought,
 Who made my hand the organ of his might;
 More than goodwill to me attribute naught:
 For all I did, I did but as I ought.³⁰
 But you, fair sir, whose pageant next ensues,
 Well mote° ye thee, as well can wish your thought,
 That home ye may report thrice happy news;
 For well ye worthy been for worth and gentle thews°.”

*might**manners*

34

So courteous conge° both did give and take,
 With right hands plighted,³¹ pledges of good will.
 Then Guyon forward ’gan° his voyage make,
 With his black Palmer, that him guided still.³²
 Still he him guided over dale and hill,
 And with his steady staff did point his way:
 His race with reason, and with words his will,
 From foul intemperance he oft did stay,
 And suffered not in wrath his hasty steps to stray.³³

*farewell**began*

35

In this fair wise they traveled long yfere°,
 Through many hard assays°, which did betide;
 Of which he honor still away did bear,

*and far
adventures*

29. The Palmer is praising Redcross for the heroics of Book I.

30. I.e., “Palmer, give praise to God who made my hands. All I did was what I was supposed to do.”

31. That’s the secret knightly handshake.

32. A palmer is a permanent pilgrim, whose usual attire was a long black robe. A palmer would be a good guide, for he would have made many journeys and would be aware of many dangers.

33. Again, notice the sorts of things that the Palmer is helping Guyon avoid as he learns temperance.

And spread his glory through all countries wide.
 At last as chanced them by a forest side
 To pass, for succor° from the scorching ray,
 They heard a rueful° voice, that dernly° cried
 With piercing shrieks, and many a doleful lay;
 Which to attend, a while their forward steps they stay.

relief
sorrowful / sadly

36

“But if that careless heavens,” quoth she, “despise
 The doom of just revenge, and take delight
 To see sad pageants of men’s miseries,
 As bound by them to live in lives despite°,
 Yet can they not warn death from wretched wight°.
 Come then, come soon, come sweetest death to me,
 And take away this long lent loathéd light:
 Sharp by thy wounds, but sweet the medicines be,
 That long captived souls from weary thraldome° free.³⁴

wretched
soul

slavery

37

“But thou, sweet babe, whom frowning froward fate
 Hath made sad witness of thy father’s fall,
 Since heaven thee deigns to hold in living state,
 Long mayest thou live, and better thrive withal,
 Then to thy luckless parents did befall:
 Live thou, and to thy mother dead attest,
 That clear she did from blemish criminal;
 Thy little hands embrued° in bleeding breast
 Lo I for pledges leave. So give me leave to rest.”

stained

38

With that a deadly shriek she forth did throw,
 That through the wood re-echoéd again,
 And after gave a groan so deep and low,
 That seemed her tender heart was rent in twain,
 Or thrilled with point of thorough piercing pain;
 As gentle hind, whose sides with cruél steel
 Through launchéd, forth her bleeding life does rain,
 Whiles the sad pang approaching she does feel,
 Brays out her latest breath, and up her eyes doth seal.

34. Guyon and the Palmer hear a woman (Amavia) shrieking in the woods. She is cursing heaven for a great grievance and praying for death.

39

Which when that warrior heard, dismounting strait
 From his tall steed, he rushed into the thick,
 And soon arrivéd, where that sad portrait
 Of death and labor lay, half dead, half quick°, *alive*
 In whose white alabaster breast did stick
 A cruel knife, that made a grisly wound,
 From which forth gushed a stream of gore-blood thick,
 That all her goodly garments stained around,
 And into a deep sanguine° did the grassy ground.³⁵ *red*

40

Pitiful spectacle of deadly smart°, *pain*
 Beside a bubbling fountain low she lay,
 Which she increased with her bleeding heart,
 And the clean waves with purple gore did ray;
 Als° in her lap a lovely babe did play *also*
 His cruel sport, instead of sorrow due;
 For in her streaming blood he did embay° *bathe*
 His little hands, and tender joints imbrue°; *soak*
 Pitiful spectacle, as ever eye did view.³⁶

41

Besides them both, upon the soiled grass
 The dead corpse of an arméd knight was spread,
 Whose armor all with blood besprinkled was;
 His ruddy lips did smile, and rosy red
 Did paint his cheerful cheeks, yet being dead,
 Seeméd to have been a goodly personage,
 Now in his freshest flower of lusty head,
 Fit to inflame fair lady with love's rage,
 But that fierce fate did crop the blossom of his age.³⁷

42

Whom when the good Sir Guyon did behold,
 His heart 'gan° wax° as stark, as marble stone, *began / grow / stiff*

35. Guyon, upon hearing the screams, rushes into the woods. There he finds a woman (Amavia) who has just stabbed herself with a knife and is bleeding.

36. Guyon also finds a baby lying next to the bleeding woman. But instead of being sad, the baby is happily splashing in his mother's blood.

37. Beside the woman and the baby lies the corpse of a strong, good looking knight.

And his fresh blood did freeze with fearful cold,
 That all his senses seemed bereft atone° *at once*
 At last his mighty ghost 'gan° deep to groan, *began*
 As lion grudging in his great disdain,
 Mourns inwardly, and makes to himself moan:
 Till ruth° and frail affection did constrain, *misery*
 His stout courage to stoop, and show his inward pain.

43

Out of her goréd wound the cruel steel
 He lightly snatched, and did the floodgate stop
 With his fair garment: then 'gan° softly feel *began*
 Her feeble pulse, to prove if any drop
 Of living blood yet in her veins did hop;
 Which when he felt to move, he hopéd fair
 To call back life to her forsaken shop;
 So well he did her deadly wounds repair,
 That at the last she 'gan° to breath out living air.³⁸ *began*

44

Which he perceiving greatly 'gan° rejoice, *began*
 And goodly counsel, that for wounded heart
 Is meetest° medicine, tempered with sweet voice;³⁹ *best*
 “Ay me, dear lady, which the image art
 Of rueful pity, and impatient smart,
 What direful chance, arméd with revenging fate,
 Or curséd hand hath played this cruel part,
 Thus foul to hasten your untimely date;
 Speak, O dear lady, speak: help never comes too late.”

45

Therewith her dim eyelids she up 'gan° rear, *began*
 On which the dreary death did sit, as sad
 As lump of lead, and made dark clouds appear;
 But when as him all in bright armor clad
 Before her standing she espiéd° had, *seeing*
 As one out of a deadly dream affright,

38. Guyon pulls the dagger from her chest and stops the wound. He is also able to feel a pulse, and soon she begins breathing again.

39. Guyon is quite pleased with the progress the woman is making. He decides the best medicine for the moment is good counsel.

She weakly started, yet she nothing dread:
 Straight down again her self in great despite
 She groveling threw to ground, as hating life and light.

46

The gentle knight her soon with careful pain
 Uplifted light, and softly did uphold:
 Thrice he her reared°, and thrice she sunk again, *raised*
 Till he his arms about her sides 'gan° fold, *began*
 And to her said; "Yet if the stony cold
 Have not all seized on your frozen heart,
 Let one word fall that may your grief unfold,
 And tell the secret of your mortal smart°; *hurt*
 He oft finds present help, who does his grief impart."⁴⁰

47

Then casting up a deadly look, full low,
 She sighed from bottom of her wounded breast,
 And after, many bitter throbs did throw
 With lips full pale and faltering tongue oppressed,
 These words she breathéd forth from riven chest;
 "Leave, ah leave off, what ever wight° thou be, *creature*
 To let a weary wretch from her due rest,
 And trouble dying soul's tranquility.
 Take not away now got, which none would give to me."⁴¹

48

"Ah far be it," said he, "Dear dame for me,
 To hinder soul from her desired rest,
 Or hold sad life in long captivity:
 For all I seek, is but to have redressed
 The bitter pangs, that doth your heart infest.
 Tell then, O lady tell, what fatal prief° *trial*
 Hath with so huge misfortune you oppressed?
 That I may cast to compass your relief,
 Or die with you in sorrow, and partake your grief."⁴²

40. I.e., "If you can still speak, give me some explanation of your situation. Tell me what's wrong; maybe I can help."

41. I.e., "Leave a dying woman alone. Let me have the rest that no one has ever given me."

42. Guyon assures Amavia that he isn't trying to interrupt her rest. He just wants to know how he can "redress the wrongs" that afflict her soul or else die from grief with her. What a man, that Guyon.

49

With feeble hands then stretchéd forth on high,
 As heaven accusing guilty of her death,
 And with dry drops congealed° in her eye, *solidified*
 In these sad words she spent her utmost breath:
 “Hear then, O man, the sorrows that uneth° *hardly*
 My tongue can tell, so far all sense they pass:
 Lo this dead corpse, that lies here underneath,
 The gentlest knight, that ever on green grass
 Gay steed with spurs did prick°, the good Sir Mordant was. *ride*

50

“Was, aye the while, that he is not so now
 My lord my love; my dear lord, my dear love,
 So long as heaven’s just with equal brow
 Vouchsaféd to behold us from above,
 One day when him high courage did emmove°, *motivate*
 As want ye knights to seek adventures wild,
 He prickéd° forth, his puissant° force to prove, *rode / strong*
 Me then he left enwombéd° of this child, *pregnant*
 This luckless child, whom thus ye see with blood defiled.⁴³

51

“Him fortunéd, hard fortune ye may guess,
 To come, where vile Acrasia does won°, *live*
 Acrasia, a false enchantress,
 That many errant knights hath foul fordone°: *destroyed*
 Within a wandering island, that doth run
 And stray in perilous gulf, her dwelling is:
 Fair sir, if ever there ye travel, shun
 The curséd land where many wend amiss°, *go astray*
 And know it by the name; it hight° the Bower of Bliss.⁴⁴ *is called*

52

“Her bliss is all in pleasure and delight,
 Wherewith she makes her lovers drunken mad,
 And then with words and weeds° of wondrous might, *herbs*
 On them she works her will to uses bad:
 My lifest° lord she thus beguiled had; *dearest*

43. Amavia is telling Guyon her story: Sir Mordant was Amavia’s husband, and he went in search of adventures while Amavia stayed home pregnant.

44. Sir Mordant encountered Acrasia, a wicked witch who inhabits the Bower of Bliss.

For he was flesh: all flesh doth frailty breed.
 Whom when I heard to been so ill bestad°,
 Weak wretch I wrapped myself in palmer's weed°,
 And cast to seek him forth through danger and great dread.

*situated
garments*

53

"Now had fair Cynthia by even turns
 Full measured three quarters of her year,
 And thrice three times had filled her crooked horns,⁴⁵
 Whenas my womb her burden would forbear,
 And bade me call Lucina to me near.
 Lucina came: a man-child forth I brought:⁴⁶
 The woods, the nymphs, my bowers, my midwives were,
 Hard help at need. So dear thee babe I bought,
 Yet naught too dear I deemed, while so my dear I sought.

54

"Him so I sought, and so at last I found
 Where him that witch had thralléd° to her will,
 In chains of lust and lewd° desires bound,
 And so transforméd from his former skill,
 That me he knew not, neither his own ill;
 Till through wise handling and fair governance,
 I him recured° to a better will,
 Purged from drugs of foul intemperance:⁴⁷
 Then means I 'gan° devise for his deliverance.

*enslaved
indecent*

recovered

began

55

"Which when the vile enchantress perceivéd,
 How that my lord from her I would reprieve°,
 With cup thus charmed, him parting she deceived:
 'Sad verse, give death to him that death does give,
 And loss of love, to her that loves to live,
 So soon as Bacchus with the Nymph does link.'

release

45. Cynthia (or Artemis) was the Greek goddess of the hunt and the moon. Thus "three quarters of a year" or "thrice three times" would give us the grand total of nine months. The "crooked horns" are the phases of the moon.

46. Lucina was a goddess of childbirth and motorcycles. At any rate, while she was on her way to rescue her husband from Acrasia, she gave birth to a son.

47. This description sets Guyon at odds with the witch Acrasia and her Bower of Bliss. (Even Acrasia's name means "intemperance.") He is the Knight of Temperance; he battles all that is intemperate.

So parted we and on our journey drive,
 Till coming to this well, he stooped to drink:
 The charm fulfilled, dead suddenly he down did sink.⁴⁸

56

“Which when I wretch . . .” Not one word more she said
 But breaking off, the end for want of breath,
 And sliding soft, as down to sleep her laid,
 And ended all her woe in quiet death.⁴⁹
 That seeing good Sir Guyon, could uneth°
 From tears abstain, for grief his heart did grate,
 And from so heavy sight his head did wreath°,
 Accusing fortune, and too cruél fate,
 Which plungéd had fair lady in so wretched state.

*hardly**turn*

57

Then turning to his Palmer said, “Old sire
 Behold the image of mortality,
 And feeble nature clothed with fleshy tire°,
 When raging passion with fierce tyranny
 Robs reason of her due regality°
 And makes it servant to her basest part:
 The strong it weakens with infirmity,
 And with bold fury arms the weakest heart;
 The strong through pleasure soonest falls, the weak through smart°.”⁵⁰

*garments**majesty**pain*

58

“But temperance,” said he with golden squire°,⁵¹
 “Betwixt them both can measure out a mean,
 Neither to melt in pleasure’s hot desire,
 Nor fry in heartless grief and doleful teen°.
 Thrice happy man, who fares them both atween°:
 But since this wretched woman overcome
 Of anguish, rather than of crime hath been,

*square**misery**between*

48. The witch cast a spell on a cup, and when he stopped to drink at the stream where they are now, he immediately fell down dead.

49. That’s one long gasp of breath.

50. Guyon says that “fierce passion” is a tyrant. It is an abusive ruler that destroys lives through pain and pleasure.

51. Squire means “square”—as in the measuring device. The square was often used in art work to symbolize the virtue temperance. The Palmer speaks with “golden measure.”

Reserve her cause to her eternal doom,
 And in the mean^o vouchsafe her honorable tomb.”⁵² *meantime*

59

“Palmer,” quoth he, “death is an equal doom
 To good and bad, the common inn of rest;
 But after death the trial is to come,
 When best shall be to them, that lived best:
 But both alike, when death hath both suppressed,
 Religious reverence doth burial teen^o, *require*
 Which who so wants, wants so much of his rest;
 For all so great shame after death I ween^o, *suppose*
 As self to dying bad, unburied bad to been.”⁵³

60

So both agree their bodies to engrave^o; *bury*
 The great earth’s womb they open to the sky,
 And with sad cypress seemly it embrace^o, *decorate*
 Then covering with a clod^o their closéd eye, *lump of dirt*
 They lay therein those corpses tenderly,
 And bid them sleep in everlasting peace.
 But ere they did their utmost obsequy^o, *funeral rites*
 Sir Guyon more affection to increase,
 Benempt^o a sacred vow, which none should aye^o release. *swore / ever*

61

The dead knight’s sword out of his sheath he drew,
 With which he cut a lock of all their hair,
 Which meddling with their blood and earth, he threw
 Into the grave, and gan devoutly swear;
 “Such and such evil God on Guyon rear^o, *bring*
 And worse and worse young orphan be thy pain,

52. Temperance, the Palmer says, is able to steer a middle ground between “fierce passion” and “heartless grief.” He also says she’s worthy of burial.

53. Guyon says that it’s just as bad to die and be unburied as it is to die badly to begin. What’s the big deal? What does “shame” and “rest” have to do with being buried? Is this merely ancient paganism or is this Christian? Guyon understands that Christian burial looks in faith to the resurrection of the body: We bury bodies because they are like seeds. New and glorious bodies will one day rise from them (1 Cor. 15:35–44).

If I or thou due vengeance do forbear°,
Till guilty blood her guerdon° do obtain”:⁵⁴
So shedding many tears, they closed the earth again.

*give up
ransom*

54. Guyon cuts hair from each of the victims, dips it in their blood, and casts it into the grave vowing to revenge the evil that has destroyed this family. This provides the thematic cause of Guyon’s mission and gives greater definition to his quest. His mission: to seek out and destroy Acrasia and her Bower of Bliss.

Bury the Bachelorette

Directions: Identify where in the story the following quotes came from. Explain what they mean and their significance to the story.

1. “Fair son of Mars, that seek with warlike spoil,
And great achievements great yourself to make,
Vouchsafe to stay your steed for humble miser’s sake.”
2. “So courteous conge both did give and take,
With right hands plighted, pledges of good will.”
3. “Her bliss is all in pleasure and delight,
Wherewith she makes her lovers drunken mad.”