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21L.463 Renaissance Literature
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The Faerie Queene, Book II

Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, has sent her knight **Guyon** on a quest, at the request of the Palmer, to defeat the enchantress **Acrasia**.

Canto i Guyon introduced; meets Archimago, who tells him that Duessa was ravished by the Red Cross Knight (hero of book one, as Archimago and Elissa are its villains). Guyon readies to fight with Red Crosse, but recognizes him in time. Guyon finds Amavia ["love of life"], a suicidal mother, with her baby and Mortdant ["death giver"], her husband lying dead beside her. Before she dies, Amavia blames Mortdant's death on the enchantress **Acrasia**, whose land is called the **Bower of Bliss**. Guyon's horse is stolen [by Bragadocchio].

Canto ii Guyon is unable to wash Amavia's blood off the infant's hands. Guyon and his companion the Palmer come to the castle of Medina ["the mean"], where she lives with her sisters Perissa ["too much"] and Elissa ["too little"], and are attacked by Huddibras and Sansloy ["lawless"], their suitors. Medina makes peace.

Canto iii Bragadocchio's adventures.

Canto iv Guyon finds Phedon being abused by Furor and Occasion. Guyon binds them and hears Phedon's account of how he murdered his lover Claribell with his friend Philemon claimed she was unfaithful, killed Philemon when he learned the story was a lie, and then fell victim to Furor and Occasion. Guyon is threatened by Atin [strife], the squire of Pyrochles ["fiery temper"], who comes looking for Occasion.

Canto v Guyon fights with Pyrochles, conquers, and spares him. Pyrochles asks that Occasion and Furor be freed; freed, they fight him, but the Palmer persuades Guyon not to help. Atin goes to Pyrochles' brother for help: Cymocles [who represents the desiring part of the soul] is another lover of Acrasia, and so he is found "given all to lust and loose living." Atin rouses him to anger and he goes to revenge his brother.

Canto vi Cymocles, separated from Atin, gets in Phaedria's boat to cross the Idle Lake, and is taken by her to an island, where she sings him to sleep. Guyon, also trying to Crosse, similarly meets Phaedria, and is separated from his Palmer when he gets into her boat. Cymocles wakes up to fight with Guyon, but Phaedria appeases them, and takes Guyon to the other shore. Pyrochles, inflamed by Furor, throws himself burning into the lake, but is saved by Archimago.

Canto vii Guyon, riding on, meets Mammon, a miser with hordes of gold, who offers him wealth in exchange for service. They debate the value of wealth. Mammon offers to show Guyon his treasure, and they go to his house, which is next to the gate of Hell. Guyon is shown heaps of gold, which he refuses, and Mammon's daughter Philotime ["love of honor"], who Mammon offers to Guyon as a wife. In the garden of Proserpina, Guyon sees Tantalus and Pilate being punished. Guyon successfully resists the

temptation to take gold, eat the garden's fruit, or rest on a silver stool, but once leaving the cave, he faints.

Canto viii the Palmer finds Guyon asleep and seeming dead, watched over by an angel. Cymocles and Pyrochles arrive with Atin and Archimago, and propose to dishonor Guyon by stripping off his armor. Arthur arrives and asks them to spare Guyon's body. They refuse, he fights and kills both. Guyon awakes and thanks him.

Canto ix Arthur tells Guyon of his quest to find Gloriana, the Faerie Queene (whose knight Guyon is); he fell in love with her in a dream. They come to the Castle of Temperance, which is besieged by Maleger and his troops. They disperse them and enter the castle, presided over by Alma. The castle has the form of a human body; mounting to the tower (the head), they find three sages: Fantasy, Reason, and Memory. Guyon and Arthur each find one of Memory's books to read.

Canto x The contents of Arthur's book: a history of Britain, offered to Queen Elizabeth.

Canto xi Guyon proceeds on his quest by boat, while Arthur stays behind. The castle of Temperance is again besieged by the passions and the senses. Arthur goes out to defend the castle, but is almost overthrown by the hag Impatience. To fight Maleger, he has to throw away his weapons and armor, and wrestles bodily against him. Maleger revives in contact with the earth, and Arthur finally defeats him by throwing him into water.

Canto xii Guyon and his sidekick, the Palmer (i.e., someone who has been on a pilgrimage), continue traveling towards their destination. On their voyage, they must negotiate a number of obstacles: the Gulf of Greediness and the Rock of Reproach, the Wandering Islands with the flirtatious Phaedria, the quicksand of unthriftiness, the whirlpool of decay, and the invitations of mermaids before finally arriving at the Bower of Bliss. They enter the ivory gate, and Guyon defies the porter, Genius. Next, they come to an arbor where Guyon is offered a drink by Excess; he rejects it. Continuing to travel to the Bower, they come to a fountain where two naked girls are bathing; the Palmer reminds Guyon that they need to keep going. The sound of music tells him that they are coming close to the enchantress Acrasia, who is resting with her sleeping lover Verdant while someone sings in the background. Guyon and the Palmer throw a net over them; they chain Acrasia, release Verdant with a few words of advice, and then Guyon destroys the Bower. As they leave, they are attacked by wild beasts; the Palmer tells Guyon that they are men, once her lovers, who Acrasia has turned into animals. The Palmer returns them to human form except for one who prefers to remain a pig.