**The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser**

Edmund Spenser is the next great poet after Chaucer. His works clearly reflects the medieval, Renaissance, reformation and national ship. He is also said to be called the child of renaissance. The age can be observed in his poetry. Spenser had come out brilliantly in bringing out the aim of renaissance, such as: revival of classical learning, passion for old literary forms, which were practiced, perfected and transmitted to the posterity. He is considered as a great inheritor of classical literature. The poems of Spenser contain antiquity and natural descriptions. It is based on mythological objects, nature and Gods. It has Greek mythology. Spenser seemed to be much influenced by the theory of Plato and Aristotle.

 The age of Spenser is also an age of reformation. He is regarded as premiere craftsman of nascent modern English verse and therefore became the greatest poet of English language. he aimed to bring England with great English literatures, which he proved by his important work Faerie Queene.

Faerie Queene by Spenser was written to glorify Queen Elizabeth. He also aimed to present a gentleman and a noble man as a virtuous and disciple human being. Spenser modelled Faerie Queene upon the epic Greek Homer, the Roman Virgil and the Italian Ariosto.

The Faire Queen Book 1 is based on religion and church. The Faerie Queen represented Queen Elizabeth; Red Cross Knights represented individual Christians on search for holiness with faith in Christ and with shield and cross. Una represents the truth, true Christian should have true faith. In book 1 we find that several villains arrive throughout the poem to separate the Red Cross Knight, a true Christian from Una, the truth. Spenser wanted to prove the defeat of false religion with the acceptance of true religion. Therefore the Red Cross knight is a symbol og holiness and chastity. He gets into trouble which he is unable to handle alone, but he succeeds with the help of Una, who signifies truth. Holiness cannot be attained without the knowledge of truth. Red Cross Knight has incomplete knowledge of truth though he signifies holiness therefore he mistakes Duessa without knowing the truth and reality of real Duessa, he rejects Una the symbol of truth for Duessa who is a symbol of falsehood. Later on he wins over falsehood by rejecting Duessa and accepting Una. Red Cross Knight finally comes up with holiness, chastity, truth, friendship and justice. He finally wins over temperance. Red Cross receives victory by holding the hand of truth.

Next Archimago Archimago is a sorcerer in The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser. Archimago suggests an 'arch-magician,' In the narrative, he is continually engaged in deceitful magics, as when he makes a false Una to tempt the Red-Cross Knight into lust, and when this fails, conjures another image, of a squire, to deceive the knight into believing that Una was false to him. He signifies deceitfulness working for evil. He tries to damage or crush the virtue of Red Cross by creating false Una, Sansfoy represents faithlessness. Whereas the Red Cross Knight somewhere himself represents faithlessness towards Una. Una is chaste and true whereas Duessa lascivious and false throughout the poem. Una is true despite her rejection from Red Cross Knight.

Somewhere Spenser tries to show that Protestants are more faithful and true tha Catholics. Again we find that God’s truth is higher. Una is an example of God’s supreme power.

The house of pride shows the downfall of Lucifer (Satan) to help where he starts considering himself better and supreme than God, the creator. It is further highlighted that Red Cross Knight always comes across sin and bad characters. It is the pride of Red Cross Knight that leads him to sin. He is more confident about his power which is ultimately the gist of God. He forgets God and considers his strength and power as his own.

The truth is ultimate no one is ultimate and no one can overcome it. When Una is attacked by Sansloy he tries to ruin her chastity but Una is saved by Fauna and Satyrs. Sansloy (lawless) carries off Una and kills her lion. This incident is supposed to refer to the suppression of the Protestant religion in the reign of Queen Mary. The admiration and adoration again shows the truth of Christianity. The nature and God stand together.

The pride of Red Cross Knight diminishes him to nothing and he is captivated by Duessa and Orgoglio. Red Cross succumbs himself before Orgoglio. It is Una the symbol of trueth who rescues Red Cross completely from the capture of Orgoglio and Dussa. Prince Arthur rescues Red Cross Knight from the capture of Orgoglio. he kills the giant Orgoglio. Prince Arthur is born humane but he is brought up with mythical power. Arthur’s victory over Orgoglio is an example that pride has no place. Arthur is powerful but has no pride, which leads his victory over Orgoglio. Whereas the pride of Red Cross Knight leads to defeat even though he is powerful.

The house of holiness is a place of recovery, where Red Cross Knight is treated for recovery. All the three daughters of Coelia are symbol of faith, hope and charity. The Red Cross recovery with the vision of new Jerusalem and Christ. This shows the faith of Red Cross in God.

the final end of the book comes with the Red Cross and Dragon. The Dragon is killed by Red Cross and the castle of Una’s parents is recovered. The three days symbols the crucification and resurrection of Christ of Christ. The falling of Red Cross in the ‘well of life’ stands for the birth and religious cause, the truth of life signifies the communion of man and God. Communion means taking bread and wine for survival. It shows the human relationship with Christ.

**Characters**

Arthur

Arthur is based on the figure of King Arthur in medieval legend. He isn't yet king when The Faerie Queene takes place. Spenser's character Arthur has much in common with the mythological Arthur including his origin story and the power of his weaponry. But whereas the historical Arthur (if he existed) would have been a Catholic, Spenser makes his Arthur a devout Protestant. His quest for Gloriana, who represents Elizabeth I, links his triumph to the triumph Spenser imagines for England. The character honors the role the figure of Arthur plays in British mythology, imagination, and national identity.

Red Cross Knight

The Red Cross Knight has a serious demeanor and a strong Christian Protestant religious faith. He wears a red cross on his shield to honor of Jesus's death on a cross. Though the Red Cross Knight is committed to his quest he is vulnerable to spiritual temptation.

Coelia

Coelia is the matron of the House of Holiness , heavenly and holy.

Despair

Despair is a cave dweller in Book 1 who nearly convinces the Red Cross Knight to commit suicide, discouraging and melancholy.

Dragon

The dragon is the hellish foe the Red Cross Knight defeats at the end. He represents the enemy in the English legend of St. George and the dragon, formidable, demonic.

Duessa

Duessa is a deceiver who appears in different disguises throughout the poem. Her true form is a beastly old woman. In Book 1 she disguises herself as the pure lady Fidessa. When she appears again in Book 5 she is on trial for her crimes and is sentenced to death, wicked, deceptive, shameful.

Dwarf

The dwarf in Book 1 accompanies the Red Cross Knight and Una on their quest.

False Una

The false Una is an enchantment created by Archimago to seduce the Red Cross Knight, imaginary.

Lucifera

Lucifera is the queen of the House of Pride , vain, glorious, worshipped.

Sansfoy

Sansfoy is one of three evil brother knights who threaten the Red Cross Knight . The Red Cross Knight kills him, symbol of faithless, evil

Sansloy

Sansloy is one of three evil brother knights. He briefly captures Una. lawless, evil.

Una

Una is the Red Cross Knight's lady. Her kingdom is under siege by a dragon. She represents the one true church of Protestant England, wise, faithful.

The Faerie Queene Book I tells the story of the knight of Holiness, the Red Cross Knight. This hero gets his name from the blood-red cross emblazoned on his shield. He has been given a task by Gloriana, "that greatest Glorious Queen of Faerie lond," to fight a terrible dragon (I.i.3). He is traveling with a beautiful, innocent young lady and a dwarf as servant. Just as we join the three travelers, a storm breaks upon them and they rush to find cover in a nearby forest. When the skies clear, they find that they are lost, and they end up near a cave, which the lady recognizes as the den of Error. Ignoring her warnings, Red Cross enters and is attacked by the terrible beast, Error, and her young. She wraps him up in her tail, but he eventually manages to strangle her and chops off her head. Error's young then drink her blood until they burst and die. Victorious, the knight and his companions set out again, looking for the right path. As night falls, they meet an old hermit who offers them lodging in his inn. As the travelers sleep, the hermit assumes his real identity--he is Archimago, the black sorcerer, and he conjures up two spirits to trouble Red Cross.

One of the sprites obtains a false dream from Morpheus, the god of sleep; the other takes the shape of Una, the lady accompanying Red Cross. These sprites go to the knight; one gives him the dream of love and lust. When Red Cross wakes up in a passion, the other sprite (appearing to be Una) is lying beside him, offering a kiss. The knight, however, resists her temptations and returns to sleep. Archimago then tries a new deception; he puts the sprite disguised as Una in a bed and turns the other sprite into a young man, who lies with the false Una. Archimago then wakes Red Cross and shows him the two lovers in bed. Red Cross is furious that "Una" would spoil her virtue with another man, and so in the morning he leaves without her. When the real Una wakes, she sees her knight is gone, and in sorrow rides off to look for him. Archimago, enjoying the fruits of his scheme, now disguises himself as Red Cross and follows after Una.

As Red Cross wanders on, he approaches another knight--Sansfoy, who is traveling with his lady. He charges Red Cross, and they fight fiercely, but the shield with the blood-red cross protects our hero; eventually, he kills Sansfoy. He takes the woman into his care--she calls herself Fidessa, saying that she is the daughter of the Emperor of the West. Red Cross swears to protect her, attracted to her beauty. They continue together, but soon the sun becomes so hot that they must rest under the shade of some trees. Red Cross breaks a branch off of one tree and is shocked when blood drips forth from it, and a voice cries out in pain. The tree speaks and tells its story. It was once a man, named Fradubio, who had a beautiful lady named Fraelissa--now the tree next to him. One day, Fradubio happened to defeat a knight and win his lady (just as Red Cross did)--and that lady turned out to be Duessa, an evil witch. Duessa turned Fraelissa into a tree, so that she could have Fradubio for herself. But Fradubio saw the witch in her true, ugly form while she was bathing, and when he tried to run away, she turned him into a tree, as well. When Fradubio finishes his story, Fidessa faints--because she is, in fact, Duessa, and she fears that she will be found out. She recovers though, and Red Cross does not make the connection, so they continue on their way.

Una, who continues to wander in search of her companion, the Red Cross knight. Stopping to rest under a tree, she is suddenly confronted by a lion; the beast is about to attack her, but seeing her gentle beauty and sensing her innocence, he forgets his rage and instead follows her around as a protector and companion. Soon, Una comes upon a damsel carrying a pot of water; terrified at seeing the lion, the girl, who happens to be deaf and dumb, flees home to her mother, who is blind. Una follows the girl to her house and asks for a place to sleep; when the women inside will not open the door for her, the lion forces it open. During the night, a church robber, who commonly gives his plunder to Abessa (the daughter) and Corceca (the mother), stops by with his latest spoils. But when he enters, the lion attacks and tears him to pieces. In the morning, Una sets off again. Riding along, she suddenly thinks she sees her knight on a nearby hill. It is not actually Red Cross but Archimago in disguise; however, Una is fooled and welcomes back her knight with tears of joy, and they now journey together. Soon, though, they happen upon the knight Sansloy, who is eager to avenge the death of his brother Sansfoy and who also takes Archimago to be Red Cross. He charges, knocks down Archimago, and is about to kill him when the sorcerer's disguise falls off. Seeing that it is not in fact Red Cross, Sansloy spares him and takes Una as his prize, killing the lion, which tries to save her.

Meanwhile, the real Red Cross has been led by Duessa to a wonderful palace the House of Pride. It is beautiful and lavish, with a wide entrance, but it is built weakly on a poor foundation. Red Cross and Duessa are brought in and marvel at the richness. They are welcomed by the whole court but especially by Lucifera, the Queen of the palace. Full of pride, Lucifera shows off for the knight by calling her couch, which is pulled by six beasts upon which ride her six counselors. They are: Idleness, Gluttony, Lechery, Avarice, Envy, and Wrath, their appearances appropriate to their names. The parade has just gone by when Sansjoy suddenly arrives, and seeing Red Cross, challenges him to a duel to avenge the death of Sansfoy. Red Cross is willing, but the Queen demands that they wait until the next morning.

When dawn breaks, the two knights ride out in front of the palace, and with the whole court watching, they begin their fight. They bloody each other, but Red Cross proves the stronger--he is about to kill Sansjoy when the latter suddenly disappears in a black cloud. Red Cross is then put to bed to heal his wounds, but Duessa, mourning the loss of Sansjoy, goes to awaken Night. Together they recover the body of Sansjoy and descend into Hell itself. There they find Aesculapius, a physician who was sent to Hell because he had the skill to bring men back to life, a power that Jove did not want mortals to enjoy. Duessa and Night persuade him to try and restore Sansjoy's life. Meanwhile, Red Cross's dwarf makes a horrible discovery: In the dungeons of the palace lie the bodies of thousands who were overcome by pride and could never leave this House. To avoid the same fate, Red Cross realizes he must leave at once, and with the dwarf, he flees the house as dawn breaks.

Sansloy, having captured Una, now means to have his lustful way with her; she cries out for help. Fortunately, the forest they are in has many woodgods--Faunes and Satyres, creatures half-human and half-animal--which come to her aid when they hear her cries. Sansloy flees, terrified at the sight of the beasts, who bow down before Una as if she were a goddess. Soon, a knight comes by-- Satyrane, born of a satyr and a human. He pledges to protect Una and goes with her as she continues her journey to find Red Cross. On their way, they come across an old man, who claims to have seen the Red Cross knight killed that day, by a pagan knight. Una is filled with grief; Satyrane, eager for revenge, asks where the pagan is now. The old man leads them to him--it is Sansloy, who did not, in fact, kill Red Cross but defeated Archimago disguised as the hero. Nevertheless, the pagan and Satyrane draw swords and fight; after many hours there is still no victor, and Una slips away in fear while they do battle.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross knight rests on the side of the road; he has not recovered from his battle with Sansjoy. Duessa had followed him and found him lying by a stream; he welcomes her company, not having learned his lesson. As they talk, a monstrous giant, Orgoglio, comes upon them. Only the pleas of Duessa keep the giant from killing Red Cross; instead, he takes Duessa as his lover and throws the knight in the dungeon of his castle. The dwarf, however, manages to escape and, going back along the road, meets Una. Hearing the dreadful news of Red Cross's capture, she faints twice but at last recovers. The dwarf then tells her how the deceit of Archimago first led Red Cross away. Una "up arose, resolving him to find / Alive or dead: and forward forth doth pas, / All as the Dwarfe the way to her ascend (I.vii.28)." On the way to the giant's castle, she meets a good knight, arrayed in marvelous armor: His shield is pure diamond and gleams in the sunlight. This is King Arthur, traveling with his squire, and he asks Una to say what grieves her.

She pours out her whole story: She is the daughter of a king and queen, who are held captive by a fierce dragon. Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, sent Red Cross to kill the dragon and free her parents, but that brave knight now lies captive to a giant. Arthur swears to free Red Cross and goes with them to the gate of the giant's castle. There, he blows his great horn, summoning out Orgoglio; Duessa follows, riding on a seven-headed beast. The giant attacks, and misses with his first blow; Arthur then hacks off his arm. Meanwhile, the squire tries to hold off the seven-headed beast, but he is drugged by Duessa and nearly killed. Arthur, furious, cuts off one of the heads of the beast. But Orgoglio knocks him down from behind and would have killed him had not Arthur unveiled his shield, which blinded both beast and giant. Now the knight brings the giant to the ground and chops off his head. Seeing Arthur victorious, Una runs into the castle and finds the dungeon where her knight lies. Red Cross has been weakened almost unto death, and he must be helped out by Una and Arthur. Once outside, they take Duessa and strip her, so that Red Cross can see that she is truly a witch. Then, they leave her to flee into the woods as they rest in the castle, victorious.

As Arthur, Red Cross, and Una rest after their victory at Orgoglio's castle, the lady asks Arthur to tell them about his name and lineage. This is a sore spot for Arthur; he says that he does not know who his parents were. He grew up in Wales (in Great Britain) and was tutored by the magician Merlin. Una then asks what brought him to Faerie Land, and this is an even more painful memory. It was the love of a maid, who had briefly appeared to him and called herself the Queen of Fairies, which led him to search for her in Faerie Land for the past nine months. Red Cross and Una give their sympathy, but now they must continue on their quest; after exchanging gifts, they leave Arthur. They continue toward Una's home, but she is worried that Red Cross is now too weak from his imprisonment to defeat the dragon keeping her parents captive.

Suddenly, they see a knight running toward them in fright; his name is Sir Trevisan, and he claims to be fleeing a terrible man named Despair. This Despair had already caused one of Trevisan's friends, Terwin, to kill himself. Red Cross is eager to challenge Despair, and Trevisan reluctantly leads them back to the cave where Despair, a gloomy old man, sits. There they see Terwin's body, and Red Cross eagerly desires to exact revenge upon Despair. But the old man remains calm and wearily asks Red Cross what problem he has with death. Death, he says, simply brings an end to a life of sin and, thus, cannot come too soon. He even knows of Red Cross's sins and weaknesses and almost persuades the knight to take his own life. However, Una steps in and stops him and pulls him out of the cave of Despair.

Seeing her knight's weakness, Una now knows for certain that he needs help, and so, she leads him to the House of Holiness. There, Caelia reigns with her three daughters, Fidelia, Sperenza, and Charissa, and many other virtuous people live with them. Caelia greets Una and, hearing of Red Cross's condition, commands her daughters to aid his recovery. First, Fidelia instructs him in discipline and the gospel; then, Sperenza comforts him, so that his sins do not again lead to despair. Next, hard Patience and bitter Penance make him suffer for the crimes he has committed, to purge himself. Finally, Charissa comes to Red Cross, and "Gan him instruct, in every good behest [behavior] / Of love, and righteousnesse, and well to donne (I.x.33)."

After instructing him, she takes him to a hospital where seven charitable men tend to his physical ailments. Now fully recovered in body and spirit, Red Cross receives one more grace--he is taken up to a high hill by Contemplation, a wise old hermit. There, he can see the new Jerusalem (God's city) and Cleopolis (the city of the Faerie Queene). Contemplation tells Red Cross his history and future: He is not a faerie but born from a mortal king--he was stolen by a faerie and brought to Faerie Land. He is destined to become a great saint of England, and his true name is George. Much amazed by this news, Red Cross returns down the hill to the House of Holiness. There, Una is eager to make for her castle, and so they soon depart.

At last, Una leads Red Cross to her native soil. As they approach her parents' castle, they hear the terrible roar of the dragon. Red Cross has Una stand aside at a distance, and then he confronts the beast. The dragon is covered in a flawless coat of scales, stronger than any metal, has a long tail with razor sharp spikes, and powerful wings that carry him to meet the knight. Red Cross charges at him and strikes, but his spear glances off the dragon's impenetrable hide, and both knight and horse fall to the ground. The dragon grabs them in its massive claws and lifts them into the air. Red Cross struggles until the dragon is forced to let them down; thrusting once more with his lance, he happens to strike one of the beast's wings, and finally manages to leave a wound. Furious, the dragon knocks Red Cross off his horse. Undaunted, the knight takes his sword and slices at the dragon's head, but it only stuns the dragon; angered, it lets out a fiery breath that scorches the whole field. Red Cross's armour is heated so much that it burns him; he writes in agony. The dragon knocks him backward, moving in for the kill, but the knight is fortunate enough to fall back into the Well of Life, which has great powers to heal wounds. The dragon, however, simply assumes it has won, and Una fears the worst for her hero.

The next morning, though, Red Cross emerges as good as new. Better, in fact, because through the magical power of the water he and his blade are stronger, and confronting the dragon again he cuts a deep wound in the beast's head. In retaliation, the dragon wounds Red Cross's shoulder with its tail and then tries to pull away the sacred shield with its claws. The knight manages to cut off the claws, but as he retreats he again falls, this time into a mire where a sacred tree grows, which, like the well, has magical healing powers. Another night passes, as Una frets and the dragon nurses its wounds. On the third day, Red Cross emerges from the grove refreshed and healed. The dragon is furious to see the knight still alive; it bends down its open mouth, intending to swallow its opponent whole. But Red Cross holds his ground and rams his sword deep into the dragon's throat. The beast crashes to the earth like a mountain falling from heaven, and it is dead.

Una's father and mother, the King and Queen of that land, see the defeat of the dragon and rush out to give thanks to Red Cross. The whole kingdom, which had been hiding in fear of the dragon for months, now comes out and celebrates with music, parades, feasting, and many gift for the victorious knight. All expect him to marry Una, but Red Cross announces that he still has a duty to serve the Faerie Queene for six years in her battle against a proud king. Una's father agrees that after that time, his daughter shall marry the knight. At that moment, though, a messenger runs onto the scene; he claims that the engagement cannot be made because Red Cross has already pledged his hand to another woman. The king demands an explanation; Red Cross tells him that the woman is Duessa, who only got his pledge by deceit and witchcraft. He gave his love to an imaginary woman, Fidessa, played by Duessa, and now he sees the truth and so he is free to love another. Una seconds all of this and also suggests that they examine the messenger to see if he is disguised as well. In fact, it turns out to be Archimago. The celebration of the engagement continues until Red Cross must sadly leave to fulfill his duty and destiny.