

This is a link to a “modern” English text of *The Faerie Queene*, called *Stories from the Faerie Queen* and written by Mary Macleod in 1916. It is not the complete text :

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/sfq/index.htm>

To view the poem in its original English, visit:

<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/fqintro.html>

A number of characters in *The Prophecy Keepers* have their roots in *The Faerie Queene*. Specific passages follow these descriptions:

In *The Prophecy Keepers*, we learn that the fairy queen Gloriæna has disappeared. Her twin sister Lucifæra is responsible and probably had help from Sir Redcrosse, Gloriæna’s traitorous guard. In Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, *Gloriana* is the titular character, who is served by the various knights of that poem, including the Redcrosse Knight.

Lucifæra is the Dark Queen of *The Prophecy Keepers* series. We first meet her in *The Prophecy Keepers*, Chapter One. In Spenser, *Lucifera* is queen of the House of Pride (FQ.I.iv). Lucifæra’s disguise is based on the descriptions of Spenser’s Duessa (FQ.I.ii) and *Lucifera* (FQ.1.iv). The description of Ofermod Court is based on the House of Pride (FQ.I.iv).

Archimago in *The Prophecy Keepers* series is based on Spenser’s Archimago, who is a sorcerer capable of changing both his own appearance and that of others. His magic is ultimately proven weak and ineffective.

In *The Prophecy Keepers*, Sir Redcrosse (or the Redcrosse Knight) was Arethus’s knight and Gloriæna’s personal guard. He betrays both of them by aligning himself with Lucifæra. We meet him again in the final chapter of *The Charm of Urizen*, at which point he is partly able to atone for his actions. In Spenser, the Knight of the Red Cross represents Holiness. During his journey, he mistakes falsehood for truth by following the deceitful Duessa. He suffers for this mistake, but in the end, this suffering makes way for the restoration of his virtue.

In the fifth chapter of *The Prophecy Keepers*, Argante, one of the Seven Dæmons, is hiding in the guise of a human named Devon. Argante is inciting the desire for luxury (in the old-fashioned sense of the word) in the townspeople of Englafeld. His true, goatish form is revealed at the end of the chapter. Throughout the chapter, Britomartus, a marginalized fanatic, acts as a kind of foil to Argante.

In Spenser (FQ.III. xii), Argante is a giantess who symbolizes lechery. I base my Argante’s appearance on Lechery in Spenser’s parade of sins (FQ.I.iv.24-6; see excerpt below). In FQ.III, *Britomart* is a female knight who represents chastity.

Chapter Two of *The Charm of Urizen* tells the story of Acrasia, one of the Seven Dæmons, who in the form of an enormous girl named Regowuh Gebbs, is holding court over a town of feral children. Guyon, another child, tries to stop her.

The name Acrasia comes from the Greek word *akrasia* (ακρασια), meaning one who is

incontinent, who does not have power or command over oneself. In Spenser, *FQ.II*, Acrasia represents intemperance and self-indulgence. She is captured by Sir Guyon, one of the six virtuous knights of that poem, who represents temperance and self-control.

In *The Charm of Urizen* chapter five, Lisandra, Cærwyn, Arethus, and Æscere encounter the Dæmon Abelgan, which takes the form of an angry little boy, who is always accompanied by Sæl, whom he calls his mother. She constantly rains abuse upon him, which stirs up his rage even more. After the companions subdue Abelgan and Sæl, they are met by the page Atin, who is seeking Sæl for his knight, Pyrochles, because “Pyrochles is disposed to fight and needs [Sæl’s] help.” Later in the chapter we meet Pyrochles and his brother Cymochles, whose mistress was Acrasia. We also meet Phædria, who is mistress of the island on which a Prophecy Keeper lives.

In Spenser (*FQ.II*), Atin is Pyrochles’s servant. Pyrochles, son of Acrates and Despite, symbolizes rage without cause. He carries a shield on which are written the words “Burnt I do burn.” Sir Guyon overcomes Pyrochles, and afterwards Pyrochles tries to drown himself in a lake, but is rescued by Archimago. Cymochles, Pyrochles’s brother, sets out to avenge what he thinks is his brother’s death by Guyon, but is stopped by Phædria, mistress of Idel Lake, who represents “immodest mirth.” (II.vi; xii: 14-17)

Below is a passage relevant to *The Prophecy Keepers*, especially Chapter One, which can be found at the Sacred Texts website:

The House of Pride (Corresponds to *The Faerie Queene* Book 1, canto iv)

Now the Red Cross Knight, because of his lack of loyalty to Una, fell into much danger and difficulty. His first fault was in believing evil of her so readily, and leaving her forlorn; after that he was too easily beguiled by the pretended goodness and beauty of Duessa. All who fight in a good cause must beware of errors such as these. If matters do not go exactly as we wish, we must not lose heart and get impatient; even if we cannot understand what is happening, we must trust that all will be well. We must keep steadily to the one true aim set before us, or else, like the Red Cross Knight, we may be led astray by false things that are only pleasant in appearance, and have no real goodness.

Duessa and the Knight travelled for a long way, till at last they saw in front of them a grand and beautiful building. It seemed as if it were the house of some mighty Prince; a broad highway led up to it, all trodden bare by the feet of those who flocked thither. Great troops of people of all sorts and condition journeyed here, both by day and night. But few returned, unless they managed to escape, beggared and disgraced, when, ever afterwards, they lived a life of misery.

To this place Duessa guided the Red Cross Knight, for she was tired with the toilsome journey, and the day was nearly over. It was a stately palace, built of smooth bricks, cunningly laid together without mortar. The walls were high, but neither strong nor thick, and they were covered with dazzling gold-foil. There were many lofty towers and picturesque galleries, with bright windows and delightful bowers; and on the top there was a dial to tell the time.

It was lovely to look at, and did much credit to the workman that designed it; but it was a great pity that so fair a building rested on so frail a foundation. For it was mounted high up on a sandy hill that kept shifting and falling away. Every breath of heaven made it shake; and all the back parts, that no one could see, were old and ruinous, though cunningly painted over.

Arrived here, Duessa and the Red Cross Knight passed in at once, for the gates stood wide open to all. They were in the charge of a porter, called “Ill-come,” who never denied entrance to

any one. The hall inside was hung with costly tapestry and rich curtains. Numbers of people, rich and poor, were waiting here, in order to gain sight of the Lady of this wonderful place.

Duessa and the Knight passed through this crowd, who all gazed at them, and entered the Presence Chamber of the Queen. What a dazzling sight met their eyes! Such a scene of splendor had never been known in the court of any living prince. A noble company of lords and ladies stood on every side, and made the place more beautiful with their presence.

High above all there was a cloth of state, and a rich throne as bright as the sun. On the throne, clad in royal robes, sat the Queen. Her garments were all glittering with gold and precious jewels; but so great was her beauty that it dimmed even the brightness of her throne. She sat there in princely state, shining like the sun. She hated and despised all lowly things of earth. Under her scornful feet lay a dreadful dragon, with a hideous tail. In her hand she held a mirror in which she often looked at her face; she took great delight in her own appearance, for she was fairer than any living woman.

She was the daughter of grisly Pluto, King of Hades, and men called her proud Lucifera. She had crowned herself a queen, but she had no rightful kingdom at all, nor any possessions. The power which she had obtained she had usurped by wrong and tyranny. She ruled her realm not by laws, but by craft, and according to the advice of six old wizards, who with their bad counsels upheld her kingdom.

As soon as the Knight and Duessa came into the presence-chamber, an usher, by name *Vanity*, made room and prepared a passage for them, and brought them to the lowest stair of the high throne. Here they made a humble salute, and declared that they had come to see the Queen's royal state, and to prove if the wide report of her great splendor were true.

With scornful eyes, half unwilling to look so low, she thanked them disdainfully, and did not show them any courtesy worthy of a queen, scarcely even bidding them arise. The lords and ladies of the court, however, were all eager to appear well in the eyes of the strangers. They shook out their ruffles, and fluffed up their curls, and arranged their gay attire more trimly; and each one was jealous and spiteful of the others.

They did their best to entertain the Knight, and would gladly have made him one of their company. To Duessa, also, they were most polite and gracious, for formerly she had been well known in that court. But to the knightly eyes of the warrior all the glitter of the crowd seemed vain and worthless, and he thought that it was unbecoming so great a queen to treat a strange knight with such scant courtesy.

Suddenly, Queen Lucifera rose from her throne, and called for her coach. Then all was bustle and confusion, every one rushing violently forth. Blazing with brightness she paced down the hall, like the sun dawning in the east. All the people thronging the hall thrust and pushed each other aside to gaze upon her. Her glorious appearance amazed the eyes of all men. Her coach was adorned with gold and gay garlands, and was one of the most splendid carriages ever seen, but it was drawn by an ugly and ill-matched team. On every animal rode one of her evil Councilors, who was much like in nature to the creature that carried him.

The first of these, who guided all the rest, was *Idleness*, the nurse of Sin. He chose to ride a slothful donkey; he looked always as if he were half asleep, and as if he did not know whether it were night or day. He shut himself away from all care, and shunned manly exercise, but if there were any mischief to be done he joined in it readily. The Queen was indeed badly served who had Idleness for her leading Councilor.

Next to him came *Gluttony*, riding on a pig; then *Self-indulgence* on a goat, *Avarice* on a camel, *Envy* on a wolf, and *Wrath* on a lion. Each in his own way was equally hideous and hateful.

As they went along, crowds of people came round, shouting for joy; always before them a foggy mist sprang up, covering all the land, and under their feet lay the dead bones of men who had wandered from the right path.

So forth they went in this goodly array to enjoy the fresh air, and to sport in the flowery meadows. Among the rest, next to the chariot, rode the false Duessa, but the good Knight kept far apart, not joining in the noisy mirth which seemed unbecoming a true warrior.

Having enjoyed themselves awhile in the pleasant fields, they returned to the stately palace. Here they found that a wandering knight had just arrived. On his shield, in red letters, was written the name "Sans Joy," which means *Joyless*, and he was the brother of *Faithless*, whom the Red Cross Knight had slain, and of *Lawless*, who had taken Una captive. He looked sullen and revengeful, as if he had in his mind bitter and angry thoughts.

When he saw the shield of his slain brother, Faithless, in the hands of the Red Cross Knight's page, he sprang at him and snatched it away. But the Knight had no mind to lose the trophy which he had won in battle, and, attacking him fiercely, he again got possession of it.

Thereupon they hastily began to prepare for battle, clashing their shields and shaking their swords in the air. But the Queen, on pain of her severe displeasure, commanded them to restrain their fury, saying that if either had a right to the shield, they should fight it out fairly the next day.

That night was passed in joy and gaiety, feasting and making merry in bower and hall. The steward of the court was *Gluttony*, who poured forth lavishly of his abundance to all; and then the chamberlain, *Sloth*, summoned them to rest.

Below are passages relevant to *The Charm of Urizen*:

Acrasia

In the course of their journey, Sir Guyon and the Palmer came at last to the shores of a great lake. The water of this lake was thick and sluggish, unmoved by any wind or tide. In the midst of it floated an island, a lovely plot of fertile land, set like a little nest among the wide waves. The island was full of dainty herbs and flowers, beautiful trees with spreading branches, and with birds singing sweetly on every branch. But everything there--the flowers, the trees, and the singing birds--only served to tempt weak-minded people to be slothful and lazy. Lying on the soft grass in some shady dell, they forgot there was any such thing as work or duty, and cared for nothing but to sleep away the time in idle dreams.

Up to the present, Sir Guyon had only had to face adventures of a stern and painful kind, but now he was to be put to quite a different test. Would he fall a prey to the sloth and luxury of this island, or would he remain faithful to his knightly duty?

When Sir Guyon and his companion, Conscience, came to the shore of the lake, they saw, floating near, a little gondola, all decked with boughs. In the gondola sat a beautiful lady, amusing herself by singing and laughing loudly. She came at once when Guyon called, and offered to ferry him across the lake; but when the Knight was in the boat, she refused to let the Palmer get in, and neither money nor entreaties would induce her to take the old man with them.

Sir Guyon was very unwilling to leave his guide behind, but he could not go back, for the boat, obeying the lady's wish, shot away more swiftly than a swallow flies. It needed no oar nor pilot to guide it, nor any sails to carry it with the wind; it knew how to go exactly where its owner wanted, and could save itself both from rocks and shoals.

The name of the lady in the gondola was Phædria; she was one of the servants of the wicked enchantress, Acrasia, whom Sir Guyon was now on his way to attack. She hoped that the beautiful island would entrap the Knight, and make him delay his journey and forget his purpose.

On the way, as was her custom, she began joking and laughing loudly, thinking this would amuse her guest. Sir Guyon was so kind and courteous that he was quite ready to join in any real merriment; but when he saw his companion grow noisier and sillier every moment, he began to despise her and did not care to share her foolish attempts at fun. But she went on still in the same manner till at last they reached the island.

When Sir Guyon saw this land, he knew he was out of his way, and was very angry.

“Lady,” he said, “you have not done right to me, to mislead me like this, when I trusted you. There was no need for me to have strayed from my right way.”

“Fair sir,” she said, “do not be angry. He who travels on the sea cannot command his way, nor order wind and weather at his pleasure. The sea is wide, and it is easy to stray on it; the wind is uncertain. But here you may rest awhile in safety, till the season serves to attempt a new passage. Better be safe in port than on a rough sea,” she ended laughingly.

Sir Guyon was not at all pleased, but he checked his anger and stepped on shore. Phædria at once began to show off all the delights of the island, which grew in beauty wherever she went. The flowers sprang freshly, the trees burst into bud and early blossom, and a whole chorus of birds broke into song. And the lady, more sweetly than any bird on bough, would often sing with them, surpassing, as she easily could, their native music with her skilful art. She strove, by every device in her power, so to charm Sir Guyon that he would forget all deeds of daring and his knightly duty.

But Sir Guyon was wise, and took care not to be carried away by these delights, though he would not seem so rude as to despise anything that a gentle lady did to give him pleasure. He spoke many times of his desire to leave, but she kept on making excuses to delay his journey.

Now it happened that Phædria had already allured to the island another knight. This was Cymocles, whose name means *the Anger of the Sea*. He was the brother of Pyrocles (*the Anger of the Fire*), whom you may remember Sir Guyon had already fought and conquered. Cymocles had been sunk in a heavy sleep when Sir Guyon arrived, but when he woke up and discovered the new-comer, he flew at once into a furious rage, and rushed to attack him.

Sir Guyon, of course, was quite ready to defend himself, and Cymocles soon found that he had never before met such a powerful foe. The fight between them was so terrible that Phædria, overcome with pity and dismay, rushed forward, and implored them, for her sake, to stop. She

blamed herself as the cause of all the mischief, and entreated them not to disgrace the name of knighthood by strife and cruelty, but to make peace and be friends.

So great is the power of gentle words to a brave and generous heart, that at her speech their rage began to relent. When all was over, Sir Guyon again begged the lady to let him depart, and to give him passage to the opposite shore. She was now quite as glad as he was for him to go, for she saw that all her folly and vain delights were powerless to tempt him from his duty, and she did not want her selfish ease and pleasure to be troubled with terror and the clash of arms. So she bade him get into the little boat again, and soon conveyed him swiftly to the farther strand.