

# ORLANDO INNAMORATO

## OR ORLANDO IN LOVE



**MATTEO MARIA BOIARDO**

A translation into English by

**A. S. KLINE**

*Illustrated Edition*



# ORLANDO INNAMORATO

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## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	5
List of Characters .....	6
Book I: Canto I: Angelica at the Court of Charlemagne .....	22
Book I: Canto II: The Tournament .....	33
Book I: Canto III: The Founts of Love and Loathing .....	42
Book I: Canto IV: War in Spain .....	52
Book I: Canto V: Seeking Angelica .....	63
Book I: Canto VI: The Cup of Forgetfulness .....	73
Book I: Canto VII: The Battle at the Gates of Paris .....	81
Book I: Canto VIII: Joyous Palace and Castle Cruel .....	90
Book I: Canto IX: Dragontina's Enchanted Garden .....	98
Book I: Canto X: The First Battle of Albracca .....	108
Book I: Canto XI: Agricane within the City .....	115
Book I: Canto XII: The Tale of Tisbina, Iroldo, and Prasildo .....	122
Book I: Canto XIII: The Tale of Albarosa .....	132
Book I: Canto XIV: Freedom for Orlando .....	139
Book I: Canto XV: The Company of Nine .....	147
Book I: Canto XVI: Galafrone Routed .....	155
Book I: Canto XVII: Rinaldo's Quest .....	163
Book I: Canto XVIII: Two Duels .....	171
Book I: Canto XIX: The Death of Agricane .....	178
Book I: Canto XX: Brandimarte and Marfisa in Action .....	186
Book I: Canto XXI: Leodilla's Tale .....	193
Book I: Canto XXII: The Twin Sisters .....	202
Book I: Canto XXIII: Rinaldo at Bay .....	210
Book I: Canto XXIV: Orlando's Labours .....	217
Book I: Canto XXV: Orlando at Albracca .....	224
Book I: Canto XXVI: The Death of Truffaldino .....	232
Book I: Canto XXVII: Orlando's Duel with Rinaldo .....	240
Book I: Canto XXVIII: Rinaldo Saved .....	248
Book I: Canto XXIX: The Tale of Orrigille .....	255
Book II: Canto I: Agramante's War Council .....	262
Book II: Canto II: The Bridge Perilous .....	271
Book II: Canto III: Seeking Ruggiero .....	280
Book II: Canto IV: Falerina's Garden .....	289
Book II: Canto V: Brunello the Thief .....	299
Book II: Canto VI: Rodomonte in Provence .....	307
Book II: Canto VII: Morgana's Lake .....	315
Book II: Canto VIII: Faery Treasure .....	323
Book II: Canto IX: Fortune's Tresses .....	331
Book II: Canto X: Balisardo the Shape-Shifter .....	339
Book II: Canto XI: Brandimarte to the Rescue .....	347
Book II: Canto XII: Disguise and Deceit .....	354
Book II: Canto XIII: In the Realms of Morgana and Alcina .....	362
Book II: Canto XIV: Rinaldo Returns to France .....	370
Book II: Canto XV: The River of Love .....	378
Book II: Canto XVI: The Tourney at Mount Carena .....	386
Book II: Canto XVII: The Tale of Narcissus .....	393
Book II: Canto XVIII: The Fall of Albracca .....	401
Book II: Canto XIX: Barigaccio the Robber .....	409

Book II: Canto XX: The Tournament in Cyprus .....	417
Book II: Canto XXI: Atlante's Prophecy .....	425
Book II: Canto XXII: The Catalogue of Kings .....	433
Book II: Canto XXIII: The Siege of Montalbano.....	441
Book II: Canto XXIV: The Clash of Monarchs .....	451
Book II: Canto XXV: Febosilla's Palace .....	459
Book II: Canto XXVI: Doristella's Tale .....	466
Book II: Canto XXVII: Brandimarte's Marriage .....	474
Book II: Canto XXVIII: The Hunt at Bizerte .....	482
Book II: Canto XXIX: Agramante in Spain and France.....	489
Book II: Canto XXX: The Battle at Montalbano .....	497
Book II: Canto XXXI: The Phantom Army .....	505
Book III: Canto I: Mandricardo's Deeds.....	512
Book III: Canto II: Hector's Armour .....	520
Book III: Canto III: Princess Lucina .....	528
Book III: Canto IV: Retreat to Paris .....	536
Book III: Canto V: Ruggiero and Bradamante .....	544
Book III: Canto VI: Seeking Durindana.....	551
Book III: Canto VII: The River of Laughter .....	558
Book III: Canto VIII: Paris Besieged .....	566
Book III: Canto IX: Fiordispina and Bradamante .....	574
Translator's Note .....	578
About the Translator .....	579





## INTRODUCTION



Matteo Maria Boiardo (1440-1494), the son of Giovanni di Feltrino and Lucia Strozzi, ranked as a member of the nobility as Count of Scandiano, his birthplace. He studied at the University of Ferrara, acquiring knowledge of Latin, Greek and other languages, and becoming a doctor of law and philosophy. He found favour with Borso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (d.1471) and his successor, Ercole d'Este, both patrons of the arts, and in 1473 he was a member of the retinue that escorted Eleonora of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand I, to meet Ercole, her spouse, at Ferrara. Five years later Boiardo was invested with the governorship of Reggio, an office which he filled with noted success till his death, except for a brief interval (1481–86) when he was governor of Modena. His minor literary works, pursued from his youth upwards, consisted of love poetry in imitation of Petrarch, adaptations of Herodotus, Apuleius, and others, and a set of eclogues. He married Taddea Gonzaga in 1472.

His unfinished romance 'Orlando Innamorato (or 'Orlando in Love') which was published posthumously in 1495 borrows its setting from the 11th Century 'Chanson de Roland', written in Old French, which tells of the death of Roland at the Battle of Roncevaux (Roncesvalles). Orlando is here an Italian version of Roland the Christian knight who, in the French epic poem, fights for Charlemagne in a battle between the Christian paladins and the invading Saracens. The historical battle in 778, was actually with the Basques, retaliating after the destruction of Pamplona by Charlemagne's army. Here follows a brief synopsis of Boiardo's story:

The beautiful Angelica (daughter to the king of Cathay) and her brother Argalia arrive at Charlemagne's Court. To win her hand a knight must first defeat Argalia in single-combat. Orlando and Rinaldo are in love with her, but when Argalia is slain by the heathen knight Ferrau, Angelica flees pursued by them. Angelica and Rinaldo drink the waters of enchantment, and Angelica is filled with a burning love for Rinaldo, while Rinaldo is now indifferent to her. Orlando and Rinaldo arrive at Angelica's castle where the company also includes Agricane, King of Tartary; Sacripante, King of Circassia; Agramante, King of Africa; and Marfisa an Asian warrior-queen.

Meanwhile, France is threatened by heathen invaders led by King Rodomonte of Sarza, in company with King Gradasso of Sericana whose principal reason for going to war is to win Orlando's sword Durindana (Durandel in the French epic). Rinaldo leaves the castle and Angelica and Orlando set out for France in search of him. Rinaldo and Angelica again drink the enchanted waters, reversing their state; she is now in love with him but Rinaldo is indifferent to her. Rinaldo and Orlando fight for her hand, but King Charlemagne intervenes and promises Angelica's hand to whichever of the two wins most honour in the battle against the heathen. He leaves her in the care of Duke Namus. Orlando and Rinaldo arrive in Paris in time to repulse an attack by Agramante. Namus' camp is overrun but Angelica escapes, with Rinaldo in pursuit, followed by Ferrau who, having defeated her brother Argalia, considers Angelica his. Ariosto pursued their story at the start of his own epic.

Of Boiardo's other characters the most important is the female knight Bradamante, Rinaldo's sister, who loves the heathen knight Ruggiero. Ruggiero, who is claimed to be a descendent of Hector, and of Alexander the Great, has also fallen fatally in love with the Christian Bradamante. It is prophesied that they will wed and found the Italian House of Este. Opposed to this outcome is Atlante, an African wizard who seeks to prevent Ruggiero from converting to Christianity. By the end of Boiardo's poem, Ruggiero is imprisoned in Atlante's castle, however, Bradamante is close by.

Other characters of importance in Boiardo's work, who also appear in Ariosto's, are: Astolfo, a friend of Orlando, who is captured by the sorceress Morgana and her sister Alcina; Mandricardo, a Tartar king; and a young knight named Brandimarte, who is in love with the beautiful Fiordelisa.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**Note:** Where names are spelled differently by Ariosto in the 'Orland Furioso', his spelling is preferred, for the sake of consistency.

**ADRIANO.** A knight-king.

**AGOLANTE.** A Saracen king of Africa, son of Barbante. Father of Troiano, Almonte, and Galaciella. Grandfather of Ruggiero.

**AGRAMANTE.** A Saracen king of Africa, the son of Troiano. His horse is Sisifalto.

**AGRANORE.** King of Agrigento.

**AGRICANE.** Emperor of Tartary. The father of Mandricardo. His sword is Tranchera.

**AIGUALDO.** Duke of Ireland.

**ALANARDO.** Count of Barcelona.

**ALARDO.** Son of Amone.

**ALBAROSA.** The sister of Count Orrisello.

**ALBRIZAC.** A necromancer.

**ALCINA.** A sorceress, sister to the sorceress Morgana.

**ALDA.** Orlando's wife. Sister to Oliviero.

**ALDOBRANDINO III D'ESTE** (1335-1361). A significant figure in the House of Este.

**ALEXANDER, THE GREAT** (356-323BC), a supposed ancestor of Ruggiero.

**ALFONSO II OF ARAGON** (791-842AD). King of Biscaglia.

**ALFONSO V** (1385-1458) King of Sicily, Aragon and Catalonia.

**ALFONSO DUKE OF CALABRIA.** Alfonso II of Naples. Brother of Ercole d'Este's wife, Eleanor of Aragon.

**ALFONSO D'ESTE** (1476-1534). Ercole's son.

**ALFRERA.** King of Sri Lanka (Taprobana).

**ALIBANTE OF TOLEDO.** A Moor.

**ALIEL.** A demon summoned by Balisardo.

**ALMONTE.** A Saracen, the son of Agolante and brother to Troiano, therefore uncle to Agramante. The father of Dardinello.

**ALZIRDO:** King of Tremizon, in Algeria.

**AMERIGO.** Duke of Savoy.

**AMIRANT.** The Emir.

**AMONE.** Duke of Dodona. The son of Bernardo of Chiaramonte. Brother to Milone, Buovo, Girardo, Pope Leo, and King Otho of England. Husband of Beatrice, father of Rinaldo, Bradamante, Guicciardo, Ricciardo, Alardo, and Ricciardetto.

**ANGELICA.** Daughter of Galafrone, Khan of Cathay (a realm in India).

**ANGELIERI.** A Christian knight fighting for Charlemagne.

**ANGELINO.** A follower of Rinaldo.

**ANSALDO.** Count of Nuremberg.

**ANSELMO OF RIPA.** Father of Pinabel.

**ANSUARDO.** Count of Lorraine.

**ANTIFOR OF ALBAROSSIA.** A Christian knight.

**ANTIPATER** (c400-319BC). A Macedonian general, said (on no good evidence) to have poisoned Alexander the Great.

**ANTROPOFAGON.** King of the Lestrigioni (the Laestrygonians, or Anthrophagi)

**AQUILANTE THE BLACK.** A son of Oliviero. His brother is Grifone the White.

**ARCHIDANTE.** Count of Sanguinto.

**ARCHILORO.** Galafrone's captain.

**ARCIMBALDO.** Count of Cremona. Son of King Desiderio.

**ARGALIA.** Angelica's brother. His horse is Rabicano.

**ARGALIFA.** The Caliph.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**ARGANTE OF AFRICA.** The third son of Alexander the Great and Elidonia. Father of Barbante.

**ARGANTE OF RUSSIA. EMPEROR.**

**ARGESTO.** A giant.

**ARGOSTO OF MARMONDA.** Agramante's Admiral.

**ARIANTE.** A suitor of Orrigille.

**ARIDANO.** The guardian of Morgana's bridge.

**ARIGALTE.** King of Amonia.

**ARNALDO OF BILANDA.** Slain by Orlando.

**ARRICARDO OF PERPIGNAN.** A defender of Montalbano.

**ARUGALTE.** A pagan warrior.

**ASTOLFO.** A knight of France, son of King Otho of England, and cousin to Rinaldo, Orlando, Bradamante, and Ricciardetto etc.

**ATLANTE.** An African sorcerer, from Carena. Ruggiero's foster-father.

**ATTAMANDRO.** The second son of Alexander the Great and Elidonia.

**AVINO.** A son of Namus, his three brothers are Avorio, Ottone, and Belengiero.

**AVORIO.** A son of Namus.

**BALANTE.** A king, slain on Charlemagne's orders, by Rugiero the Vassal, for his treacherous taking of the castle of Aspromonte.

**BALDUINO.** A Maganzese.

**BALGURANO.** A Saracen knight.

**BALIFRONTI.** King of Mulga.

**BALISARDO.** An evil giant, a necromancer.

**BALIVERZO.** King of Normandia.

**BALLANO.** A king, supporting Angelica.

**BALORZA.** King of Ethiopia.

**BALUGANTE.** Father of Serpentino. Brother of King Marsilio of Spain. His sister Galerana is married to Charlemagne.

**BAMBIRAGO.** King of Arzila.

**BARBANTE.** Father of Agolante. A descendant of Alexander the Great.

**BARBOTTA.** A thief in Fugiforca's crew.

**BARDARICO.** King of the Canary Islands.

**BARDINO.** The kidnapper of Monodante's eldest son.

**BARDULASTO.** King of Alcazar.

**BARICHEO.** Marsilio's treasurer.

**BARICONDO OF MAJORCA.** A Moor.

**BARIGACCIO.** A robber captain, the son of Taridone the corsair. His horse is Bataldo.

**BARIGANO.** King of Bernica and Rassa.

**BAROLANGO.** A Saracen knight.

**BASALDO.** An Anatolian Turk.

**BAVARDO.** A king.

**BELENGIERO.** A son of Namus.

**BELISANDRA.** A ruler on the Barbary Coast, abducted by Rinaldo.

**BELTRAMO.** Son of Rampaldo. A treacherous rebel against his father's rule.

**BESSUS.** Satrap of Bactria who assassinated Darius III, and was executed by Alexander the Great.

**BLACK FAERY.** Aquilante's protector.

**BORDACCO.** King of Damascus.

**BOVARTE.** A Moorish co-ruler with Languirano.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**BOVO OF DOZONA.** A follower of Charlemagne.

**BRADAMANTE.** Daughter of Amone. A warrior-maid, of the House of Chiaramonte. Rinaldo's sister, and Ricciardetto's twin. With Ruggiero the founder of the House of Este.

**BRANDIMARTE.** A son of Monodante, and a Saracen. At birth named Bramadoro. Brother to Ziliante and Leodilla. His horse is named Batoldo.

**BRANZARDO.** King of Bugia. Agramante's viceroy in Bizerte (Hippo).

**BRONTINO.** King of Normana.

**BRUNALDO.** Emperor of Trebizond.

**BRUNELLO.** A devious Saracen, in the service of King Agramante. He is crowned, by him, King of Tingitana.

**BUCIFARO.** King of Alcazar.

**BUOVO** (Bevis) of Hampton (Southampton), descendant of Ruggiero I, ancestor of our Ruggiero.

**CALABRUN.** King of Aragon.

**CALIDORA.** The maiden encountered by Orlando, near Narcissus' Fount.

**CARAMANO.** King of Santaria.

**CARDONE.** An Indian king, fighting for Gradasso.

**CARDORANO.** King of Cosca.

**CAROGIERO.** Descended from Agolante, in a parallel line to Agramante. Mordante is his illegitimate son.

**CHARLEMAGNE** (748-814AD). (Pronounced 'shaar·luh·mein' in English). Charles the Great, King of the Franks and Lombards, and Emperor of Rome. He is Orlando's uncle.

**CHIARO.** A don killed by Orlando.

**CHIARONE.** A knight.

**CIRCELLA.** An enchantress whose history is depicted on a loggia viewed by Orlando.

**CLARICE.** Rinaldo's wife.

**CLEVES.** Duke in Charlemagne's army.

**CLODOVACO.** Son to Floviano, brother of Constante.

**CONSTANTE.** Son to Floviano, brother of Clodovaco.

**CONSTANTO.** Son of Constante.

**CONSTANTINE.** Constantine the Great (c272-337AD) who gave his name to Constantine in Algeria.

**CORBINO.** Brother of Orrigille.

**COSTANTIN.** Brother to King Mambrino.

**COSTANZO.** King of Greece. The son of Avatarone.

**DANIBERTO.** King of Frisa.

**DANIFORTE.** Seneschal of Tunis.

**DARDINELLO.** King of Zumara. The son of Almonte.

**DEMOGORGON.** Ruler of the Faery Realm.

**DESIDERIO.** King of Pavia. Ruler of Lombardy.

**DOLISTONE.** King of Liza. Father of Fiordelisa and Doristella.

**DORALICE.** Daughter of the King of Granada, Stordilano.

**DORICONTE.** A soldier in Marsilio's army.

**DORIFEBO.** King of Valencia.

**DORILONE.** King of Ceuta.

**DORISTELLA.** Fiordelisa's sister. Daughter of the King of Liza.

**DRAGINAZZO.** A demon.

**DRAGONTINA.** A sorceress.

**DUDON.** The son of Uggiero.

**DUDRINASSO.** King of Libicana.

**DUODO OF ANTONA.** A Christian knight.

**DURASTANTE.** King of India, slain by Orlando.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**ELIDONIA.** Alexander the Great's (fictitious) mistress.

**ERMELINA.** Wife of Uggiero the Dane.

**FALCONE.** A knight.

**FALERINA.** A sorceress. Her enchanted garden is in the realm of Orgagna.

**FALSETTA.** A demon.

**FALSIRONE.** Father of Ferrau.

**FARALDO.** King of Arabia.

**FARURANTE.** King of Maurina.

**FEBOSILLA.** A faery.

**FAUSTUS.** A character in the innkeeper's tale. Iocondo is his brother.

**FERRAU** (Feraguto). The son of Falsirone and Lanfusa. A brother to Isolier. Nephew of Marsilio.

**FIORAVANTE.** Son of Fiorello.

**FIORDELISA.** In love with the knight Brandimarte. Doristella's sister, and daughter to the king of Liza, Dolistone.

**FIORDISPINA.** Of Spain. Sister to Matalista.

**FIGORELLO.** Son of Fiovo.

**FIOVO.** Son of Constanto.

**FLOVIANO.** Son of Polidante.

**FOLVO.** King of Fez.

**FOLDERICO.** A rich old man.

**FOLICONE.** Count of Almeria.

**FOLVIRANTE.** King of Navarre.

**FOUNTAIN FAERY.**

**FRAMARTE.** King of Persia.



**FRANCARDO.** King of Elissa; fighting for Gradasso.

**FUGIFORCA.** A kidnapper.

**GALACIELLA.** Daughter of Agolante. Agramante's aunt. Wife to Ruggiero II. Mother of our Ruggiero, and Marfisa.

**GALAFRONE.** Khan of Cathay (a realm in India). Father of Angelica and Argalia.

**GALERANA.** The daughter of Galafrone the King of Spain. Sister of Marsilio, Balugante, and Falsirone.

**GAMBONE.** A slave in Doristella's tale.

**GANO OF POITIERS.** Count of Maganza. Called Ganelone, and leader of the Maganzese.

**GIANBARONE.** Son of Clodovaco.

**GIASARTE.** A pagan warrior defeated by Astolfo.

**GINAMO OF BAYONNE.** Uncle to Gano.

**GIRARDO.** Renounced his Christianity due to Orlando.

**GORDANETTO.** King of the Arabs.

**GORGONE.** King of Africa, slain by the sons of Alexander and Elidonia.

**GRADASSO.** King of Sericana.

**GRANDONIO OF VOLTERRA.** King of Morocco.

**GRIFALDO.** King of Getulia.

**GRIFONE.** Count of Maganza. Cousin to Gano.

**GRIFONE.** Son of Oliviero, Brother to Aquilante.

**GUALCIOTTO.** King of Bellamarina.

**GUALTIERO OF MONLEONE.** A Christian knight.

**GUICCIARDO.** Eldest son of Amone.

**GUY.** Duke of Burgundy.

**GUIDO.** Count of Montfort.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**HUON OF BORDEAUX.** A Christian knight.

**IACHETTO.** A Christian knight.

**IROLDO.** A knight, a native of Babylon.

**ISOLIER.** A pagan leader from Spain. Ferrau's brother.

**IVONE.** A kinsman and follower of Rinaldo.

**LAMPORDO.** A giant.

**LANFUSA.** The mother of Malagisi.

**LANGUIRANO.** A Moorish co-ruler with Bovarte.

**LARBINO (1).** A king loved by Calidora.

**LARBINO (2).** King of Portugal.

**LEODILLA.** Daughter of King Monodante. Sister to Brandimarte and Ziliante.

**LOCRINO.** A suitor of Orrigille.

**LUCINA.** Daughter to the King of Cyprus, Tibiano.

**LURCONE.** King of Norway.

**MACARIO OF LUSAN.** Of the House of Maganza.

**MALAGIGI.** Son of Lanfusa. A sorcerer.

**MALAGRIFFA.** A demon.

**MALAPRESA.** A thief.

**MALCOMPAGNO.** A robber.

**MALGARINO.** A Moor

**MALZARISE.** A Saracen king.

**MAMBRINO.** A Saracen king.

**MANDRICARDO.** King of the Tartars. His father is Agricane.

**MANIBRUNO OF IRELAND.** A Christian knight.

**MANILARDO.** King of Noritia.

**MARADASSO.** King of Andalusia.

**MARBALUSTO.** King of Oran.

**MARCHINO.** Lord of Aronda.

**MARCOLFO.** A Saracen.

**MARFISA.** A warrior-maiden. Ruggiero's twin sister.

**MARFUSTO.** Kidnapper of Leodilla.

**MARICOLDO.** King of Galicia.

**MARIGANO.** Count of Gerona.

**MARIGOTTO.** King of Satalia. A Turk.

**MARSILIO.** King of Spain. Father of Fiordispina. Brother of Falsirone, Balugante and Galerana. Uncle of Ferrau and Isolier.

**MARTASINO.** The new king of Garamanta, replacing his predecessor the aged priest of Apollo who is unnamed in the text.

**MATALISTA.** Brother to Fiordispina.

**MENADARBO.** Sultan of Egypt and Syria.

**MILONE.** Brother to Almone, father of Orlando.

**MIRABALDO.** King of Bolga.

**MONODANTE.** King of the Distant Isle. Father of Brandimarte (Bramadoro), Ziliante and Leodilla.

**MORBECO.** A Turk from Anatolia.

**MORDANTE.** King of Tolometta.

**MORGANA.** The Treasure Faery. A sorceress. Sister to Alcina.

**MORGANTE.** A king in Marsilio's army.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**MORIDANO.** A Saracen king.

**MULABUFERSO.** King of Fizano.

**NAMUS.** Duke of Bavaria. He is the father of Avorio, Avino, Belengiero, and Ottone.

**NARBINALE.** Count of Algeciras.

**NORANDINO** (Nur ed-Din 12th century AD, father of Saladin). Ruler of Damascus.

**OBERTO.** A knight His name, as Oberto dal Leone, assumed by Argalia at Charlemagne's court.

**OLIBANDRO.** Brother to Sacripante.

**OLIVALTO.** Lord of Cartagena.

**OLIVIERO.** Marquis of Vienne. The son of Ranier of Rheims. Father of Grifone and Aquilante. Brother of Alda.  
His sword is Altachiera.

**ORDAURO.** Suitor to Leodilla.

**ORIDANTE.** A giant.

**ORIGANTE.** Lord of Malaga.

**ORIONE.** King of Macrobia.

**ORINGO.** A knight in Uldarno's tale of Orrigille.

**ORLANDO.** Count of Brava. Lord of Anglante. Son of Milone. Nephew to Charlemagne, and Almone. Cousin to Rinaldo. In love with Angelica. His sword is Durindana. His horse is Briigliador. Betrothed to Alda.

**ORRIGILLE.** A woman from Bactria.

**ORRILO.** A villain.

**ORRISELLO.** Count of Montefalcone.

**OTACHIER.** Son of Philip, King of Hungary.

**OTHO.** King of England, father of Astolfo.

**OTTINO.** Count of Toulouse.

**OTTONE.** A son of Namus.

**PANDRAGON.** King of Gotia.

**PANTASILICOR.** A king in Thessaly, captured, and hung, by Rinaldo.

**PARICONE.** Count of Alva.

**PARTANO.** Count of Cordoba.

**PASITEA.** One of the three graces who appear to Rinaldo.

**PERODIA.** Queen of Liza.

**PHILIP.** King of Hungary.

**PILIASI.** A Russian prince, defeated by Astolfo.

**PINABEL.** Count of the House of Maganza.

**PINADORO.** King of Constantine.

**PIPIN.** The father of Charlemagne.

**POLIDANTE.** Son of Polidoro.

**POLIDORO.** Son of Astyanax.

**POLIFERNO.** King of Orgagna.

**POLINDO.** Lover of Albarosa.

**PORUS.** King of India. Defeated by Alexander the Great at the Battle of the Hydaspes.

**PRASILDO.** A lord, in Babylon.

**PRUSIONE.** King of Alvarrachie.

**PULIANO.** King of Nasamona.

**RADAMANTO.** The giant King of Moscow and Comano.

**RAIMONDO OF PICARDY.** A Christian knight.

**RAINERI.** Count of Altafoggia.

**RAMPALDO.** Duke of Reggio, A descendant of Buovo. Grandfather of our Ruggiero.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**RANCHIERA.** A giant.

**RANIBALDO.** Duke of Anversa.

**RANIER OF RHEIMS.** Father of Oliviero.

**RICARDO OF NORMANDY.** A Christian knight.

**RICCIARDETTO.** Son of Amone. Twin brother to Bradamante. Brother to Rinaldo.

**RICCIARDO.** Son of Amone.

**RIGONZONE OF PARMA.** A supporter of King Desiderio.

**RINALDO.** Son of Amone, brother of Bradamante, Guicciardo, Ricciardo, Ricciardetto and Alardo. Cousin to Orlando. A nobleman from Montalbano (Montauban), of the House of Chiaramonte. His horse is named Baiardo (Bayard), his sword is Fusberta, his war-horn is named Bondino.

**ROBERTO.** Count of Asti.

**RODOLFONE.** A relative of Duke Namus.

**RODOMONTE.** King of Sarza. A noted Saracen leader.

**ROTOLANTE.** Orlando's pseudonym at the Cyprus tournament

**RUBICONE.** A rogue.

**RUGGIERO I,** son of Gianbarone. Ancestor of our Ruggiero.

**RUGGIERO II,** son of Rampaldo. Father of our Ruggiero.

**RUGGIERO.** A heathen descendent of Alexander the Great, and Hector. Grandson of Agolante, in love with Bradamante. His ancestor was Ruggiero son of Gianbarone. His father was Ruggiero of Reggio, the son of Rampaldo, and husband of Galaciella, Agolante's daughter. His sister is Marfisa. His horse is named Frontino, his sword Balisarda. With Bradamante he founds the House of Este.

**RUGIERO THE VASSAL.** He slew King Balante at Orlando's behest.

**RUPARDO.** An enemy of Brandimarte.

**SACRIPANTE.** King of Circassia, in love with Angelica. His horse is named Frontalate, renamed Frontino by Ruggiero.

**SALAMONE.** King of Brittany.

**SALARDO.** Count of Alverna.

**SANSONE OF PICARDY.** A Christian knight.

**SANTARIA.** King of Sweden.

**SARITRONE.** King of Mongolia.

**SAVARONE.** King of Media.

**SCARAPINO.** One of Malagisi's demons.

**SCOMBRANO.** Rodomonte's pilot.

**SERPENTINO.** King Marsilio's nephew.

**SIGIERI.** Duke of Arles.

**SILVANELLA.** A faery.

**SINAGONE.** King of Calatrava.

**SINIBALDO.** Count of Holland.

**SMIRIGLIO OF MAGANZA.** A Christian knight,

**SOBRINO.** King of Algoco and Garbo.

**SONNIBERRA.** The eldest son of Alexander the Great and Elidonia.

**SORRIDANO.** King of the Hesperides.

**SPINAMACCHIA.** A robber.

**SPINELLA OF ALTAMONTE.** A Spanish Saracen.

**STELLA.** Wife to Grifone.

**STORDILANO.** King of Granada. Father of Doralice.

**STRACCIABERRA.** King of Lucinor; fighting for Gradasso.

**TANFIRONE.** King of Almasilla.

**TARDOCO.** King of Djerba.

## LIST OF CHARACTERS

**TARIDONE.** A pirate. Father of Barigaccio.

**TEBALDO.** Duke of Bourbonne.

**TEODORO.** King of Armenia. Lover of Doristella

**TIBIANO.** King of Cyprus and Rhodes. The father of Lucina.

**TISBINA.** A lady of Babylon.

**TORINDO.** King of Turkey.

**TROIANO.** Son of Agolante. Almonte's brother. Agramante's father.

**TRUFFALDINO.** King of Baghdad. A rogue.

**TURLONE.** A giant.

**TURPIN.** Archbishop of Reims (753AD) (died c794AD). Claimed by Boiardo and Ariosto as a source for the history of Charlemagne's reign.

**UBERTO.** Duke of Bayonne.

**UGETTO OF DARDONA.** A Christian knight.

**UGGIERO,** the Dane. Father of Dudon. His horse is Rondello. His sword is Curtana.

**UGO.** Of the House of Maganza.

**UGO ALBERTO OF SAXONY.** A Christian lord,

**UGO OF COLOGNE.** A Christian knight.

**UGO OF MARSEILLE.** A Christian knight.

**ULDANO.** King of Denmark. Cousin of Uggiero.

**ULDARNO.** A knight from Bactria.

**ULIENO.** The King of Sarza, father of Rodomonte.

**UNGIANO.** A champion fighting for Agricane.

**URGANO.** A giant.



**URGINO.** A Saracen lord.

**URNASSO.** An Indian king, fighting for Gradasso.

**USBEGO.** A Turk from Bursa.

**VALIBRUNO.** Count of Medina.

**VARANO.** King of Armenia.

**VIVIANO.** Son of Lanfusa and Buovo d'Agramonte. Malagisi's brother.

**WHITE FAERY.** An enchantress.

**WILLIAM,** Lord of Orleans.

**WILLIAM,** Lord of Roussillon.

**WILLIAM THE SCOT.** A Christian knight.

**ZAMBARDO.** A giant who guards the Bridge of Death.

**ZILIANTE.** Son of King Monodante. Brother of Brandimarte and Leodilla.



BOOK I: CANTO I: ANGELICA AT THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE



ARGOMENTO.

*Ciò che intende cantar dice l'Autore,  
 E l'apparecchio che fa il Re Gradasso,  
 Davanti a Carlo Mano Imperatore,  
 Sfida Angelica ogni Baron. Ahi lasso,  
 Malagigi vien preso. A sorte fuore  
 De l'urna cauan chi primiero il passo  
 Moni contra Argalia. Va Astolfo a terra.  
 L'Argalia fa con Ferraguto guerra.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**P**ER Gradasso che per appetito di acquistar Baiardo, e Durindana se ne va in Francia, Si mostra all'huomo quanto spesso per una benche picciola cosa si esponghi a pericoli grandissimi

**M**ALAGIGI preso, dinota quanto douereffimo esser prudenti nelle nostre operationi, poi che spesso ne auiene il contrario, di quello ch'era il nostro uolere.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 1-3: BOIARDO'S INTRODUCTION**

You gentlemen and knights, assembled here,  
To learn of things both delightful and new,  
Be still, and pay attention, and give ear  
To the fine tale that I'll now sing for you;  
For you'll hear of great deeds of yesteryear,  
Of boundless feats, miraculous but true,  
That Orlando, through love, once set in train,  
In the days of the Emperor Charlemagne.

Nor should it seem so wonderful to you  
To hear a tale of Orlando in love;  
Tis ever the proudest man, in my view,  
That Love subjugates; no arm will prove  
E'er strong enough, no blade, however true,  
Nor bravery sufficient, though we move  
Heaven and Earth, nor shield, nor coat of mail;  
In the end, Love, conquering all, will prevail.

This history's known to few, for its teller,  
Bishop Turpin, concealed the tale from sight.  
He may have feared that it might seem other  
Than respectful to that most worthy knight,  
In that he, when faced with Love, was the loser,  
Though he'd conquered all other foes, outright.  
Of Orlando, I speak, the brave and true.  
Now, to our story, without more ado.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 4-7: KING GRADASSO SETS OUT TO INVADE FRANCE**

Thus, in Bishop Turpin's true history,  
We read that there reigned, in the Orient,  
Past India, a king rich and mighty,  
So powerful, so magnificent  
In his great strength, and in his bravery,  
He envied none, in all the world's extent.  
Gradasso was the name of this leader,  
A serpent at heart, a giant in stature.

Yet, as is oft the case, I would maintain,  
Great lords most long for what they do not own,  
And the harder the thing is to obtain,  
The more they'll risk their kingdom and their throne.  
Not possessing what it is they would attain,

They'd lose all that they have for that alone.  
Two things, a sword, a horse, lacked Gradasso,  
Durindana, and the steed Baiardo.

He assembled an army, from everywhere  
In his vast realm; to war he had recourse,  
Knowing that his treasury could not bear  
The purchase of the weapon or the horse.  
Two knights were the owners of that pair;  
'Merchants' who'd not yield except to force.  
Therefore, he chose to go with sword and lance,  
And use his power to capture them, in France.

A hundred and fifty thousand he chose  
Of his multitude of knights, but his thought  
Was not to employ them to come to blows;  
Twas to duel, in single combat, he sought,  
Against Charlemagne or any of those  
Fine men (and faithful Christians) at his court.  
Alone, he would conquer, raze to the ground,  
All that the sun views and the seas surround.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 8-12: THE FEAST OF PENTECOST AT CHARLEMAGNE'S COURT**

At present, under sail, let him advance,  
Though you'll hear more about him when they land,  
And return to King Charlemagne and France.  
A review there, of his folk, he did command,  
Every Christian prince, with sword and lance,  
Paraded before him, lords of the land,  
Every knight; for his will might not be crossed:  
To tourney at the Feast of Pentecost.

Every paladin attended at the court,  
To celebrate on the appointed day.  
From every country, and region, they sought  
Fair Paris, in their infinite array.  
And many a Saracen, his knights had fought,  
Was there, for twas a royal court, they say,  
Where any not a renegade or traitor,  
Was promised a safe sojourn, as ever.

Thus, many were the folk that came from Spain,  
Keeping their noble leaders' company:  
Snake-eyed Grandonio, the Christians' bane,  
And bold Ferrau, a griffin's gaze had he,

King Balugante, kin to Charlemagne,  
And Serpentino his son, of that country,  
With Isolier, and many another  
Whose deeds, in the joust, I'll speak of later.

In Paris sounded many an instrument,  
Loud drums and trumpets, as the bells rang out.  
Their steeds, adorned each in a splendid vestment,  
Great chargers, with fine trappings all about,  
Wrought with rare gold and gemmed ornament,  
Defied description, peerless without doubt;  
His knights, striving to please the emperor,  
Had done all they could to show him honour.

And now the great day was already here,  
On which the tournament was to begin,  
Such that to Charlemagne's table drew near,  
All the knights and true barons who had been  
Asked to honour his board and, there, appear.  
Twas a mighty host sat down to eat within  
The pavilions erected for the Feast;  
Twenty-two thousand and thirty, at least.

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 13-18: RINALDO CONTEMPLATES HIS ENEMIES THE MAGANZESE**

King Charlemagne, with a radiant face,  
Sat on his golden throne midst his peers,  
(At his Round Table, each lord found a place);  
Before him the Saracens who, it appears,  
Needed no couch or bench for them to grace,  
But, spreading fine carpets like true Emirs,  
Sat straight as deer-hounds; and, indeed, refused  
To endorse the customs the Frenchmen used.

The book says tables to the left and right  
Had been set; at the first, in majesty,  
Sat three great rulers, kings in their own right,  
Of England, Lombardy, and Brittany,  
Renowned, throughout Christendom, for their might;  
Otho, Desiderio, Salamone;  
With other Christian kings, from far and wide,  
Ranked according to merit, on each side.

Marquises, dukes occupied the second;  
Noble counts and resplendent knights the third.  
Maganza's House there found honour; beyond

All, on Gano of Poitiers twas conferred.  
Rinaldo's eyes blazed, longing to respond  
To those proud traitors with an angry word,  
For, by that ill clan, he was mocked and scorned,  
As appearing less well-dressed and adorned;

Though he offered a smiling face, instead,  
Hiding angry feelings deep in his breast,  
Saying to himself: 'Rascals, born and bred,  
Tomorrow, in the lists, perchance I'll test  
If to your saddles you are truly wed!  
Asinine clan. Accursed race! Oh, rest  
Assured, if my heart fails not, you all shall lie  
Prone on the earth, and know my lance thereby.'

King Balugante, following his gaze,  
And well-nigh divining his inner thought,  
Sent his interpreter (with him always)  
To ask if honour, in this emperor's court,  
Was best won by wealth or valour, these days.  
For he, who was a stranger, ever sought,  
(Since Christian ways he'd rarely observed)  
To honour every man as he deserved.

Rinaldo laughed, and answered pleasantly,  
'Please report to your king, that if he would  
Honour these Christians, then gluttony  
At the table, and a woman that's good  
In bed, these win their hearts, most readily;  
Yet, as fighting men, be it understood,  
When it's time for knights to show their valour,  
Let him then grant each man his due honour!'

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 19-22: ANGELICA APPEARS ACCOMPANIED BY FOUR GIANTS AND A KNIGHT**

While they were conversing in this manner,  
The sound of instruments filled all the air;  
While, behold, many a golden platter,  
Filled with delicacies, that host did share;  
While, as gifts, King Charlemagne did offer  
Enamelled goblets, wrought with subtle care,  
To some lord, to indicate he'd paid heed  
To his performance of some noble deed.

The emperor was gazing round, happily,  
And indulging in quiet conversation,  
Reflecting that his own proud majesty  
Was enhanced by the peers of his nation;  
While sand in the wind was this company  
Of pagans, when, to the consternation  
Of all, a new arrival met their sight,  
A fair lady, with four giants and a knight.

They appeared at the end of the great hall,  
The giants most fearsome, each one vast in height,  
While the lady walked calmly, midst them all,  
(Escorted by the warrior) shining bright  
As does the morning star, born to enthrall,  
Fair as the rose, or lily gleaming white;  
In sum, to speak the truth of her wholly,  
Never, on Earth, was there seen such beauty;

Yet, within that place, was Galerana,  
And Alda, the wife of Orlando,  
And there too Clarice, and Ermelina,  
And many another beauty, also,  
That I'll not name: yet none was lovelier,  
Though all were fair, and virtuous; and, oh,  
I'd say, each seemed the fairest in that hall,  
Till she came to steal the prize from them all.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 23-28: SHE ADDRESSES  
CHARLEMAGNE AND ISSUES A CHALLENGE**

Every Christian prince, and every knight,  
Turned his gaze in the maiden's direction.  
The Saracens leapt to their feet outright,  
And, all amazed, they approached the vision,  
Each won by her beauty, stunned by the sight;  
While, seeming of happy disposition,  
She smiled so as to melt a heart of stone,  
And spoke, as follows, in a gentle tone:

'Magnanimous lord and king, your virtue,  
And your noble paladins' every deed,  
(Knights renowned in all lands, as is their due,  
On every sea-girt shore that Fame's decreed)  
Leads me to hope the hardship that we two  
Poor pilgrims, have undergone, in our need,  
Has not been wasted; we, who journeyed here  
From the Earth's ends, to honour your good cheer.

Give me leave, my lord, to outline at least,  
In a few brief words, the pressing reason  
That has brought us here, to your royal feast.  
Oberto dal Leone, here makes one,  
Of noble birth, and renowned in the East  
For his deeds, yet driven forth, however,  
As am I, Angelica, his sister.

Beyond the Don, two hundred days journey,  
The news reached our kingdom, on a day,  
Of a great gathering here, and a tourney,  
With a host of knights in splendid array,  
And a crowd of fine folk making merry.  
Not cities, gems, or treasure, they do say,  
Are the prize for whome'er best wins renown,  
But a rose-garland, borne as is a crown.

And therefore, my brother, here, decided  
That he could best reveal his passing skill  
Where all of the finest knights abided  
And meet them one by one, if they so will.  
Baptised or pagan, if you are guided  
To perform noble deeds, and would fulfil  
Your destiny, then come to Merlin's Stone,  
By Pine Spring; it stands in the field, alone.

Do so, however, upon one condition,  
(He who'd prove himself, mark what I say)  
That once he's toppled from his saddle, none  
May then seek to resume the fight that day,  
But must yield himself to a distant prison.  
Yet he that can unhorse Oberto may  
Take my person as his prize, for my part;  
While my brother, with these giants, will depart.'

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 29-32: ORLANDO IS  
SMITTEN WITH LOVE OF HER**

As she ended, she fell upon her knees,  
At Charlemagne's feet, to hear his reply.  
Every man gazed at her (she did so please),  
Orlando most, who drew near, by and by.  
The heart within him trembled without cease,  
He blushed but hid his longing from her eye,  
And while looking, steadfastly, at the ground,  
Quite full of shame, one thought within did sound:

‘Oh, mad Orlando,’ to himself, he cried,  
 ‘To be transported, so, with fond desire!  
 See you not the sin to be e’er denied,  
 Lest you fail your God, and fall to the fire?  
 Where is Fortune leading you, that ill guide?  
 Caught am I, and in Love’s strong net am tied,  
 I, who held the world as naught; I, a knight,  
 Am conquered by this maid, without a fight!

I cannot, from this heart of mine, erase  
 The sweet vision of her most lovely face,  
 And I shall die without her; in a blaze  
 Of fire and light, my soul will leave its place.  
 My strength now fails, my body scarce obeys,  
 While Love, thus, clasps me tight in his embrace.  
 Knowing is of no help, and thought a curse:  
 I see the better, yet I choose the worse.’

In this manner, silently, Orlando  
 Lamented his new-discovered passion;  
 Indeed, the old and white-haired Duke Namor  
 Felt as deep a pang, in his own fashion.  
 He trembled, stunned and faint, troubled so,  
 His face was pallid, his colour ashen.  
 But why say on? The peers all felt the same,  
 All were on fire, as was King Charlemagne.

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 33-35: FERRAU AND RINALDO ARE ALSO SMITTEN**

All stood, unmoving, and quite stupefied,  
 While gazing at her, with extreme delight;  
 And Ferrau, most rash it cannot be denied,  
 Seemed to burn with ardour, for the knight  
 Thrice started forward, seeking a fair bride  
 In her, despite the giants he must fight,  
 Though three times he retreated (if not more)  
 So as not to annoy the emperor.

He shifted from one foot to the other,  
 Rubbed his brow, and could scarcely keep still.  
 Rinaldo too was caught gazing at her;  
 His face, in shame, flushed crimson, as it will.  
 But wise Malagigi had her measure,  
 For he whispered, softly: ‘You’ll have your fill  
 Of me, ere I’m done, you vile enchantress,  
 And wish you’d spared our court your bold address.’

King Charlemagne, in a lengthy reply,  
 Offered his answer to the lovely maid.  
 Seeking to keep so fair a lady by,  
 He gazed; spoke; spoke and gazed, with much delay,  
 While naught that she did seek could he deny.  
 Her demands he would meet that very day,  
 And swore on the Book that it would be so.  
 She left; her brother and the giants also.

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 36-40: MALAGIGI DISCOVERS THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER**

They had not issued far from the city,  
 When Malagigi sought a magic spell,  
 Took up his book to unveil all swiftly,  
 And summoned up four demons, out of Hell.  
 How stunned he was, Lord of Eternity,  
 How troubled he was in mind, you know well;  
 He viewed, almost as if by second sight,  
 Charlemagne dead, his court destroyed outright.

He discovered this lady of such beauty,  
 Was King Galafrone’s lovely daughter,  
 Full of deceit, and every treachery,  
 Commanding evil spells, like her father;  
 And the maid had journeyed to our country,  
 For that evil old monarch had sent her,  
 Accompanied by this knight, her brother,  
 Named not Oberto but Argalia.

Galafrone had granted him a steed,  
 Blacker than charcoal, one that ran faster  
 Than the wind, with grace added to its speed;  
 A shield, a helm, a breastplate; and after  
 These gifts a sword, by magic forged indeed.  
 Brave treasures thus he had, from his father,  
 His greatest gift, a lance all clad in gold,  
 Of precious workmanship, and worth untold.

Galafrone sent him forth with all this gear,  
 Deeming his son would prove invincible.  
 And gave him too a ring, it would appear,  
 Whose power, in truth, was scarcely credible.  
 The ring he’d ne’er employed, yet held it dear.  
 Its virtue rendered one invisible  
 If held to the lips, while a spell-bringer  
 Was thwarted if twas worn on the finger.

And then he asked Angelica the fair,  
To accompany him on his journey,  
For her face invited love, everywhere,  
And drew brave noblemen to the tourney.  
And, once the enchanted weapons, there,  
Had done their dark work, to Galafrone,  
The defeated knights would be shipped, tight-bound,  
And imprisoned by that accursed 'hound'.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 41-44: HE QUICKLY  
OVERCOMES THE GIANTS**

The sprites he'd summoned, to Malagigi  
All of these distant matters had made known;  
But let us turn to Argalia, swiftly  
That had, but now, arrived at Merlin's Stone,  
Where he had raised a wondrous canopy,  
With marvellous skill designed and sewn.  
There, overcome by the desire for rest,  
He was soon by pleasant slumber possessed.

Not far away the fair Angelica  
Had laid her lovely head upon the grass,  
Beneath the great pine beside the water,  
While the four giants let no intruder pass.  
Sleeping, she seemed no human creature,  
But a heavenly angel, with that mass  
Of golden hair; on her finger she wore  
The ring whose power I told you of before.

Malagigi, borne aloft by a demon  
Approached the place, in silence, through the air,  
He found the lady slumbering by the fountain,  
Upon a flowery bank, all unaware,  
And guarded by the four, each a mountain  
In stature, who fixed him with their glare.  
Malagigi cried: 'You, worthless cattle,  
I'll see you all dead, and not in battle;

Your maces and flails will not avail you,  
Nor your curved scimitars, nor your brave darts;  
Deep in sleep, I'll see death come upon you,  
Like gelded sheep, and still your evil hearts.'  
He delayed not, took up his book anew,  
And cast a magic spell, in several parts;  
Nor had he turned the close-writ page, and found  
Another, ere they slumbered on the ground.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 45-50: BUT IS CAPTURED BY  
ANGELICA AND ARGALIA**

Once they were down, he neared Angelica,  
And drew forth his sword, stealthily,  
To cut her throat but, as he drew closer,  
He hesitated, she seemed so lovely.  
In two minds, he was forced to linger,  
And, at last, decided: 'Here's what must be:  
I'll bind her with my magic, to be sure,  
And take her as she lies there on the floor.'

He set his naked blade upon the ground,  
Then he grasped the book again in his hand,  
And read the spell again, that he had found,  
But in vain, for naught worked as he had planned,  
For the ring she wore kept her safe and sound,  
Thwarting the power his art might command;  
While the mage, thinking she was bound in sleep,  
Tried to plant on her a kiss, long and deep.

From the lady there issued a great cry:  
'Ah, woe is me! Am I, thus, undefended?'  
The magician was astounded, thereby;  
He'd thought her captive, as he'd intended.  
She called out to Argalia, nearby,  
Grasping the mage's arms, while she fended  
Him away, till her brother suddenly  
Awoke and, unarmed, ran to her swiftly.

As soon as he saw the noble Christian  
Behaving so with his darling sister,  
The surprise, the shock, well-nigh struck him dumb;  
At least, he could take the thing no further;  
But, recovering his wits, his feelings numb,  
He seized a pine-branch and struck the other,  
Crying: 'You must die, you evil traitor,  
That seek thus my sister to dishonour!'

While she cried: 'Bind the fellow, brother,  
Bind him tight, ere I'm forced to let him go,  
For, without the ring, you'd lack the power  
To contain him, as I can, that I know!'  
He ran to obey his sister's order,  
Hastening to where, spellbound by their foe,  
The giants lay, and tried to wake the first  
He came to, ere the mage had done his worst.

Though he tugged, here and there, with all his might,  
He found that all his efforts were in vain,  
So, he stripped a length of chain, strong but light,  
From the giant's flail, and hurried back again.  
Then he bound Malagigi's arms, outright,  
Though his efforts cost him no little pain,  
The neck and shoulders, and the legs also,  
Encircling the mage, from head to toe.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 51-53: AND WHISKED AWAY  
TO THEIR LAND OF CATHAY**

Once she saw that Malagigi was tight bound,  
Angelica sought his book of magic,  
And at his breast the sacred tome she found,  
That bound spirits, slavish and demonic.  
She opened it at once, and, all around,  
Soared a host of such sprites, all in frantic  
Motion, filling the air o'er sea and land,  
Clamouring loudly: 'What is your command?'

She answered: 'Take this fellow far away,  
Past India and Tartary, to that city  
In my father's great kingdom of Cathay,  
For he, Galafrone, rules that country.  
Present him to my sire as mine, then say  
That I've caused him to be taken swiftly,  
And that since he's been made a prisoner  
The rest but slight annoyance will offer.'

Once she'd ceased speaking, in an instant,  
Malagigi was whisked off through the air,  
And presented to her father that same moment,  
Then held neath the sea, in a stony lair.  
Angelica scanned the book, now intent  
On rousing the giants still slumbering there,  
That oped their eyes, and yawned in vast surprise,  
Wondering what had caused their near-demise.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 54-58: ASTOLFO IS CHOSEN,  
BY LOT, AS THE FIRST TO FIGHT ARGALIA**

While these events transpired, the tension  
Mounted in Paris, for Count Orlando  
Thought he should be the first to champion  
The cause, and take the field against the foe;  
But Charlemagne was of the firm opinion

That it was wrong for him to argue so,  
Since each man thought himself the finest knight,  
And, thus, that he should be the first to fight.

Orlando was greatly afeared that he  
Would have to, sadly, concede the lady,  
For her brother might be conquered easily,  
And she be handed to the victor, promptly.  
He himself was assured of victory,  
So much so, he thought her his already,  
And was annoyed he must wait to appear,  
For, to a lover, an hour seems like a year.

The question was now openly discussed,  
In grand council, by all the royal court,  
As to what order might prove fair and just;  
And, once every man had aired his thought,  
Twas agreed that to Fortune they'd entrust  
The matter, and so draw lots ere they fought,  
To see who should first seek the honour  
Of winning this fair maid from the other.

Thus, the name of each martial paladin  
Was inscribed on a separate slip in turn,  
And each Christian lord, and Saracen,  
Threw his own into the large golden urn.  
Next, a little lad stepped before the men,  
And gave the lots, within its depths, a churn,  
Then drew them one by one; the first to hand,  
Was that of Duke Astolfo, of England.

Next was that of Ferrau, then Rinaldo,  
While the fourth lot that was drawn named Dudon;  
Then came the witty giant Grandonio;  
Belengiero, with Otton, upon  
His heels; then King Charlemagne's did show.  
And, in short, thirty more had come and gone,  
Before Orlando's lot appeared in sight;  
I'll not say how that tormented our knight.

**BOOK I: CANTO I: 59-67: HE IS UNHORSED  
AND TAKEN PRISONER**

The day was declining towards evening,  
Ere the lots had all been drawn, and displayed.  
Then Duke Astolfo, eager for the fighting,  
Proudly called for his armour, undismayed



Though night approached, and the sky was darkening,  
Saying as bold men do, when unafraid:  
In a brief while, the contest would be won;  
And Oberto, with his first blow, undone.

You should know Astolfo the Englishman,  
Was handsome, and, in that, beyond compare,  
As courteous as wealthy, and no less than  
Charming in his mode of dress, and his air.  
His strength was less evident when he ran  
A course in the lists, oft toppled there,  
Yet, when he was, he'd blame ill fortune, then  
Ride forth, fearlessly, to be downed again.

To return to our story, he was dressed  
In armour that was worth a deal of treasure;  
His shield adorned with pearls, of the finest,  
His mail of pure gold, wrought for his pleasure;  
While his helm was more costly than the rest,  
Thanks to a gem, precious beyond measure,  
That was, if Bishop Turpin tells no lies,  
A great ruby, like a walnut in size.

His steed was covered in a leopard's skin,  
With trappings that were wrought of finest gold,  
He issued forth alone, convinced he'd win,  
And fearing naught, being as brave as bold.  
It was late, and the shadows drawing in,  
When he reached Merlin's Stone, raised of old,  
And as he reached the place, that handsome knight  
Blew loudly on his horn, with all his might.

At the sound, Argalia rose to his feet,  
(For he'd been sleeping by the fountain's side)  
Donned his armour, and when it was complete,  
And he was clad head to foot, full of pride,  
He set out this ardent enemy to meet,  
Clad all in white, as was his steed beside.  
With shield on arm, and this same lance in hand,  
He'd felled many a knight, you understand.

They saluted each other, courteously,  
And renewed the terms that had been agreed,  
As Angelica rode to meet them, calmly;  
Then they drew apart, each upon his steed.  
They turned together, simultaneously,  
Then, crouched behind their shields, advanced at speed,

But, at the very first touch, Astolfo  
Flew upwards, legs above, and helm below.

The duke lay sprawling there upon the sand,  
And cried, in his anguish: 'Cruel Fortune,  
My foe for no reason, this you've planned!  
You thrust me from the saddle, all too soon;  
Deny it if you can. 'Twas underhand!  
I know all men must dance to your tune,  
For, had I but stayed there, I'd have won her,  
And yet tis the Saracen you honour!'

The mighty giants now seized Astolfo  
And led the duke within the tent nearby.  
Angelica was moved to pity though,  
Once his armour was removed; to her eye  
He seemed both handsome and refined; and so  
She had those huge warders, standing by,  
Treat him well, and with proper courtesy,  
Or as much as prisoners ever see.

And there he remained, unwatched and unbound,  
Solacing himself beside the fountain,  
And, while the moon shone, Angelica found  
Him a fair sight; when twas clouded again,  
She sent him to a bed, draped all around,  
And stood guard with the giants, as and when,  
While Argalia stood sentry at her side,  
As darkness cloaked the land, both far and wide.

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 68-73: FERRAU TAKES UP THE CHALLENGE**

At dawn, though the shadows had barely fled,  
Bold Ferrau appeared, all armed for the fight,  
And blew on his war-horn to wake the dead,  
Such that the world seemed ending outright.  
Every creature nearby turned tail, and sped  
From the thunderous noise, in their sheer fright;  
Only Argalia felt no terror,  
But leapt to his feet, and donned his armour.

The bold youth seized his helmet, and then ran  
To his steed, mounted, urging its advance,  
His sword hung at his left side, and began  
A fierce charge, firmly grasping shield and lance.  
Rabicano, his courser, like the man

Showed no fatigue, but o'er the sand did dance  
So swiftly, so lightly, that where he'd been  
Not a trace of their passage could be seen.

Ferrau waited there, consumed by longing,  
Like all lovers, impatient of delay,  
And when he saw Argalia advancing  
Paused not, some mighty challenge to convey,  
But charged him wildly, without saluting,  
With lowered lance, about to gain the day,  
For he'd have sworn an oath, that, surely,  
He must conquer, and so win the lady.

But at the first touch of Argalia's spear,  
He was shaken to the core; in a trice,  
All his courage seemed like to disappear,  
His ardour spent; as if caught in a vice,  
His chest compressed; and then the knight, flung clear,  
Hit the ground so hard his blood turned to ice.  
And yet, as Ferrau lay there, stretched full length,  
He summoned up his valour and his strength.

Their love, or youth, or their very nature  
Will often make men quick to take offence,  
And Ferrau now loved beyond all measure,  
And was so young, his pride was so immense,  
That to be near him engendered terror,  
For the slightest cause did his mind incense,  
And sent him forth, his weapon in his hand,  
As his quarrelsome soul did e'er demand.

No sooner had he touched the ground below,  
Than deep anger and shame raised him once more,  
Forgetting the terms he'd agreed with his foe,  
And, consumed by both, he now thought to draw  
His blade and, though on foot, avenge the blow.  
He ground his teeth, and charged him, as before,  
As Argalia cried: 'You're my prisoner,  
And have no right to oppose me further!'

## BOOK I: CANTO I: 74-83: HE FIGHTS THE GIANTS

Though bold Ferrau feigned not to hear his foe,  
As he recklessly advanced o'er the ground.  
Now the giants had been roused in the meadow,  
And, fully-armed, came running at the sound,

While emitting such a fearsome bellow  
No thunder-crack e'er matched it, I'll be bound.  
Bishop Turpin says (a comment to astound!)  
That it shook the fields for two miles around.

Ferrau, on hearing, turned his head their way,  
Yet (believe me) showed not a sign of fear.  
Argesto (immeasurable, I would say)  
The largest, was the first one to draw near.  
Lampordo was the next to join the fray,  
Covered with hair, a beast he did appear;  
Urgano was third; while, thirty-feet tall,  
Turlone was the fourth to meet the call.

Lampordo's spear struck Ferrau on the thigh,  
And if his life had not been charmed, surely  
That warrior would have been slain thereby,  
And that first blow had undone him, wholly.  
But no storm-wind o'er the ocean doth fly,  
No lightning speeds through the air as quickly,  
No leopard springs, no greyhound is as fleet,  
As Ferrau, who sought vengeance to complete.

He struck Lampordo in the lower belly,  
And pierced, thus, his doughy flesh, side to side,  
Striking the groin, through stomach and kidney.  
One blow was not enough, for in their pride,  
The other three attacked him, suddenly,  
While Ferrau swung again, striking wide.  
Only Argalia gave him no trouble,  
That merely sat his steed, to watch the battle.

Now Ferrau leapt twenty feet through the air,  
And struck Urgano on the head, so hard  
He cleft him to the teeth, beyond repair;  
While he was thus occupied, still unmarred,  
Argesto swung his mace; all unaware  
Brave Ferrau received the blow and, off guard,  
Was struck on the head, and with such a thud  
That both his nose and his mouth spouted blood;

Though this but rendered him fiercer, for he  
Was a man without fear, and so he brought  
The giant to the ground, cleaving him wholly,  
From the shoulder to the waist, as they fought;  
Yet was not free of peril, completely,  
For Turlone, from behind, his body caught,

And offered a real and sudden danger,  
Possessed of a strength beyond all measure.

He embraced him, and carried him away,  
But by fortune or strength Ferrau won free,  
(I know not which) and all was still in play:  
The giant wielding his iron club freely,  
While, with his sword, Ferrau kept him at bay,  
As they continued to battle fiercely,  
With greater force than I could say or show,  
Each striving to demolish his strong foe.

The result of the fight was as follows:  
That Turlone the giant's show of force,  
Had shattered Ferrau's helmet, and his blows  
Had left the head unprotected, yet the course  
Of the battle was changed, for Ferrau chose,  
In a stroke aimed full low, to seek recourse,  
And sliced at those legs clad in chain-mail,  
Severing both, and, thus, thought to prevail.

The one near death, the other simply dazed,  
Dropped, both of them together, to the ground.  
Argalia leapt down, somewhat dismayed,  
And bore the knight to the fount, at a bound,  
Where the cool water, once twas gently sprayed  
On his face, restored him; his wits yet sound.  
Argalia would have borne him to his tent,  
But Ferrau would neither yield nor consent.

'What is it then, to me, if Charlemagne  
Agreed to your Angelica's demand?  
Am I so much his slave, I may not claim,  
To fight on; though unseated by your hand?  
Love drove me on to fight; tis why I came,  
To win your sister thus, you understand;  
I must possess her now, or seek to die.'  
Such was Ferrau's desire, and his bold cry.

### **BOOK I: CANTO I: 84-91: FERRAU PROVOKES ARGALIA INTO RENEWING THEIR DUEL**

The sound of their quarrel woke Astolfo,  
Who, till that moment, had been fast asleep,  
Deaf to every thunderous shout or bellow  
From the giants, and slumbering long and deep.  
As the knights now bandied words to and fro,

He sought to intervene, and thereby keep  
The peace, between the pair, end their discord,  
Though Ferrau would scarce a hearing afford.

Argalia cried: 'Can you not see, sir knight,  
That you are now disarmed, your head revealed?  
Perchance you think your helm is rather light?  
Why, tis left there, in pieces, on the field!  
I leave it to your judgment, as of right,  
To choose if you would die, or better, yield.  
If you fight on, with naught to hide your head,  
Our duel must end swiftly; you'll lie dead!'

Ferrau replied: 'It grants me courage thus  
To battle without helmet, shield or mail,  
And so, honour the battle fought between us.  
I'd fight naked, still hoping to prevail,  
To win a lady half so glorious!  
So did the amorous knight with words assail  
Argalia, for Love stirred such desire  
In him, for her, that he'd have leapt through fire.

But Argalia was troubled that the knight  
Appeared to hold him in such low esteem,  
As to offer to duel naked; that first flight  
Through the air, and the second, it would seem  
Had done naught to reduce the towering height  
Of his arrogance; his pride was still extreme.  
'Sir knight,' he cried, 'if you've an itch, indeed  
I'll scratch it for you, in your hour of need!

Mount your steed, and do the best you can,  
For I'll treat you as you've now deserved;  
Nor would I hold back from any man  
Because his head upon a plate was served.  
If, in truth, to seek but ill is still your plan,  
Then for you, I think, this hour was reserved!  
Defend yourself, now, and show your valour;  
You must be slain, and I achieve that honour!'

But Ferrau laughed at his words, as if he  
Esteemed such a flow of words but little.  
He mounted his horse, and cried, loudly:  
'Hear this, worthy knight! Concede the battle!  
Grant me your sister, and do so promptly,  
And I'll grant you, in turn, your acquittal.  
Fail to do that same, and I guarantee,  
Midst the shades, in the other world you'll be!'

Argalia, overcome by anger  
At the arrogance Ferrau thus displayed,  
Leapt on his steed, roused by his ill manner,  
Cursing aloud, and threatening with his blade;  
Naught that he cried could be heard, however.  
With drawn sword, a swift attack he made,  
Spurring his horse (leaving his lance behind  
Leaning against a tree) with rage, near blind.

Both urged their chargers on, quite recklessly,  
Driving their coursers hard against the foe.  
No knight on earth e'er charged more furiously.  
Neither bold Rinaldo, nor Orlando,  
Would have outpaced that pair, it seems to me,  
Nor would have gained the least advantage so.  
Of a fine duel then, my lords, you'll hear,  
If, to my next canto, you'll lend an ear.



BOOK I: CANTO II: THE TOURNAMENT



ARGOMENTO.

*Fugge Argalia da Ferrau, Rinaldo  
Segue Angelica, e il simul ne fa Orlando,  
Giostra fanno in Parigi. In arcion saldo  
Serpentin molti abbatte senza brando,  
Ma ei dal Danese, d'ira, e d'honor caldo  
Scanalcato poi resta nol pensando.  
Da Grandonio alla fine è il forte Vggieri  
Giurato a terra, e molti Cavalieri.*



ALLEGORIE.

FERRAU lasciato solo dall'Argalia, & Angelica, c'insegna à non voler contra il di uere, perche altrimenti rimarremo al fine con le mani piene di vento.  
Angelica seguitata da Rinaldo, & da Orlando, ne dimostra, che la vanità del Mondo è anco seguita da huomini forti, & sapienti.  
La Corona di Rose, che in pregio si guadagnaua il vincitore della giostra è significata per la Fama, che fa conoscer l'huomo virtuoso per tutto il Mondo.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 1-5: THE JOUST IS THWARTED**

I have told you, my masters, how the fight  
Was conducted with a show of arrogance  
On the part of Argalia, that proud knight,  
And of Ferrau, so powerful with a lance.  
The one's armour was enchanted outright,  
The other proof against all circumstance  
But a blow to his paunch that plates of steel,  
Twenty-thick, went a good way to conceal.

He that has seen a pair of lion battle  
For supremacy, and dispute together,  
Or heard, overhead, the thunder rattle,  
As two storms conflict in fiery weather,  
Has seen naught next to these men of mettle,  
Who so fiercely attacked one another;  
For the heavens seemed on fire, the earth to shake,  
As their steel blades clashed, for a woman's sake.

Every blow but added to their fervour,  
While their eyes were fixed in a savage stare.  
Each, thinking himself to be the better,  
Drenched in sweat, at his enemy did glare.  
Argalia now swung hard at the other,  
Seeking to strike his head, unhelmed and bare.  
And believed, at that point, without a doubt,  
That his stroke would suffice to end the bout.

But when he saw that his gleaming blade,  
Far from its drawing blood, had been repelled,  
He marvelled at the sight, was sore dismayed,  
While his hair rose, his confidence dispelled.  
At that moment, Ferrau the blow repaid,  
Sought to shatter his helm like ice, and yelled:  
'To your Allah, on high, I commend you;  
To his paradise this blow will send you!'

And the bold knight accompanied his rant,  
With a fierce two-handed swing of his sword.  
Had it struck a mountain of adamant,  
Twould have sliced it in two, be assured;  
Yet not a mark of its passage did it grant;  
Enchantment true protection did afford.  
I know not what strange thoughts ran through his head,  
Uncertain if he were alive or dead.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 6-9: FERRAU SEEKS ANGELICA'S HAND REGARDLESS**

But after they'd paused awhile in thought,  
Without either seeking to launch a blow,  
(Each marvelling at how the other ought  
To be dead, and yet was untouched also)  
Argalia found tongue, and made retort:  
'Sir knight, I should explain that, head to toe  
My armour is enchanted, as you've seen,  
Or else I'd been slain, as you should have been.

Now you should cease from attacking me,  
For all that you will gain is harm and scorn!  
Ferrau replied: 'By Allah, all you see,  
Of steel-plate and mail, the shield that's borne  
Upon my arm, I bear from courtesy,  
And as adornment, since such things are worn.  
Indeed, I need them not, my flesh is charmed,  
And, but for the one place, cannot be harmed.

So let me, rather, give you sound advice,  
Though you seek it not; I'll counsel you  
To avoid the peril of our fighting twice.  
Grant me your sister, without more ado,  
That fair flower of the lily, beyond price;  
Refuse and you'll not survive the issue.  
If you but grant me her in peace, my brother,  
Then shall I be bound to you forever.'

Argalia answered: 'My bold sir knight,  
I might agree to what you've thus proposed,  
And be willing to strike a pact outright,  
And call you brother, for I'm so disposed,  
But Angelica must say if such be right,  
Or whether to the match she stands opposed.'  
Ferrau declared himself content with this;  
They might confer together, twas his wish.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 10-13: SHE REFUSES TO ACCEPT HIM, AND PLANS TO RETURN TO CATHAY**

Though Ferrau was young, his complexion  
Was dark, he was loud-voiced, and his face  
Was forever fearsome, in its expression;  
His eyes were red, his eyelids blinked apace,

He cared little for cleanliness of person,  
The dirt and dust on his visage a disgrace.  
He possessed a pointed skull, and wiry hair  
Thick, and as black as charcoal, everywhere.

And so, he little pleased Angelica,  
That, ever, liked the handsome and the fair,  
Who, when she'd spoken with Argalia,  
Said: 'Brother, to be clear, I do not care  
For this; I'd rather drown in the water  
Of this fount, or beg for a paltry share  
Of what this world may offer, ere I'd wed  
That vile savage; I'd rather die instead.

By Allah, I pray you, now, be content  
To let me have my way in this matter.  
Return, display all your warlike intent,  
(Meanwhile, a magic spell I shall further  
That will return us to the Orient)  
Then disengage, and so follow after –  
No steed is swift enough to long pursue;  
Midst the wooded Ardennes, I'll wait for you.

From there, we'll make our way together  
To our dear father's realm beyond the sea.  
Be there within three days, for thereafter,  
I'll be gone, on the wind, speeding swiftly;  
For the book of that vile necromancer  
Must yield a spell, he who tried to shame me.  
If I've left, you must travel overland,  
Recent knowledge, of that route, you command.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO II: 14-16: ANGELICA VANISHES**

They returned to where Ferrau was waiting,  
And Argalia informed the ardent knight  
That his sister rejected his wooing,  
But Ferrau still demanded that they fight,  
For he'd conquer, or die, by so doing.  
As they did, the fair one vanished from sight,  
A fact the lover realised, instantly,  
Since he'd had his eyes on the lovely lady,

For he'd constantly glanced at her face,  
It seeming to increase his power always;  
And now that she had vanished from the place,  
He knew not what to do, or what to say.

Then Argalia turned, and fled apace,  
And was soon many a mile on his way,  
Spurring towards the meeting-place assigned,  
Leaving Ferrau, and the duel, far behind.

The amorous youth now became aware  
How he'd been deceived, and ran from the field,  
Searching through the woods, here, there, everywhere,  
To find where the maid might lie, concealed.  
His face seemed ablaze, his eyes to glare,  
As he mused on the treachery revealed.  
Thus, he ran, and searched on, and stopped for naught,  
Though he failed to find the one that he sought.

### **BOOK I: CANTO II: 17-20: ASTOLFO TAKES ARGALIA'S LANCE, AND MEETS RINALDO**

Let us turn to Astolfo; that brave knight  
Had stayed, alone, by the spring, as you know.  
And had gazed on the battle with delight,  
As each combatant struggled with his foe.  
Now free, his captors dead, or out of sight,  
He thanked God for liberty, and made to go,  
Not waiting upon chance, as yet unharmed,  
And mounted on his courser, fully armed,

Except he lacked a lance, for that weapon  
Had been splintered when he had met his fall.  
Gazing round, he saw one leaning upon  
The pine tree (Argalia's you'll recall),  
A fine one too, gold laminate thereon,  
That enamelled and adorned it overall.  
Astolfo seized the thing, without a thought,  
Though not knowing by enchantment twas wrought.

He turned away, confident and happy,  
As a man is when released from prison;  
By the woods met Rinaldo, and briefly,  
Told him all that had, there, been seen and done.  
Amone's son was burning so fiercely  
With the fires of love, and restless passion,  
That he'd ventured forth from the city gate  
To learn of Ferrau's duel, and his fate.

Away, for the Ardennes, Ferrau had ridden,  
So, Rinaldo left the English duke behind,  
(He of the leopard ensign), and, as bidden,

Baiardo his swift steed (slow to his mind)  
Took that same road, though he was well-chidden  
By his master, called a mule, and maligned  
As lazy (his lord pierced to the marrow  
By Love) though far swifter than an arrow.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 21-24: ORLANDO LAMENTS**

Let us leave Rinaldo to his passion,  
And return to the town with Astolfo,  
Where that knight was asked many a question  
Discreetly, yet at length, by Orlando,  
Seeking news, there, of the competition  
And the outcome of the battle, although  
He made no mention of his love at all,  
Knowing the knight was a babbler withal.

When he learned the news of Angelica,  
That she'd vanished, and her brother had fled,  
(Rinaldo following on his heels, thereafter)  
With a foul look, he headed for his bed,  
Where he lay, like one felled by disaster,  
Struck down by grief, and to sorrow wed;  
For that courageous flower of chivalry  
Drowned like some lowly lad, in misery.

'Alas,' he said 'I have no means to counter  
This base enemy that strikes at my heart!  
Why cannot I wield sharp Durindana;  
Fight this Love, split the rogue apart,  
That so fills my soul with burning ardour,  
Till I feel naught else but his fiery dart?  
What torment can match this misery?  
I burn with love; I freeze with jealousy!

I know not if that angelic creature  
Could deign to love so worthless a person;  
Or the garland of contentment, ever,  
Crown me as Fortune's happiest son;  
For such he'd be who was but loved by her.  
Oh, if Hope abandons me, and she, un-won,  
Scorns me, and turns her lovely face away,  
I'll kill myself, and none shall cry me nay.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 25-28: HE TOO LEAVES IN PURSUIT OF ANGELICA**

Oh, misfortune! Should Rinaldo find her  
In the Ardennes Forest, his lechery  
Is well-known, and the virgin will never  
Leave his clutches intact, yet, woe is me,  
While they perchance are face to face, ever,  
I weep like a little maid, uselessly,  
Cheek cradled in my hand, and cry my fears,  
Seeking to ease my heart with idle tears.

Perchance I think that solitude can hide  
The flame that consumes my heart within?  
Yet, I'll not die of shame; this eventide,  
By God, I'll quit this Paris, and begin  
To seek for the maid myself, far and wide.  
Summer and winter all this world of sin,  
I'll search, o'er dale and hill, the seas as well,  
The heights of Heaven, and the depths of Hell.'

Speaking thus, he raised himself from his bed,  
Where he'd lain so long, weeping endlessly.  
Waiting for night, while day so slowly sped,  
It grieved him, as he paced there, ceaselessly.  
A moment seemed a hundred years; his head  
Was full of bitter thoughts; then, secretly,  
When darkness fell, and shadows covered all,  
He went forth, armed, beneath night's dusky pall.

He took not his quartered shield, but he bore  
One whose hue was of dark vermilion;  
Yet he rode his valiant Brigliador,  
As he cantered to the gate, watched by none;  
His departure no squire or servant saw;  
And in a moment more the Count was gone,  
Sighing deeply, to misery a prey,  
As towards the Ardennes he made his way.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 29-32: CHARLEMAGNE'S TOURNAMENT BEGINS**

Three great champions, thus, sought adventure.  
Rinaldo, and Orlando, and that flower  
Of Pagandom, Ferrau, forth did venture;  
While Charlemagne thought to fill the hour  
With a tourney, splendid beyond measure,



Summoning all the means in his power.  
He called for King Salamon, Duke Namus,  
Count Gano; all the noble and famous;

And said to them: 'My lords, it seems to me,  
That the joustier who first enters the lists,  
Should fight each newcomer, successively,  
While the help of Fortune he yet enlists;  
If he's conquered, his challenger shall be  
That knight's replacement while his luck persists,  
And so on, till the final loser's down,  
And the last man mounted wins the crown.'

They all approved King Charlemagne's decree,  
And gave praise to this novel invention  
Of their master, so wise in chivalry.  
The order was proclaimed; he who'd make one,  
Should ride in, the next day, for the tourney,  
While the king granted martial primacy,  
For the joust, to the bold Serpentino;  
He'd be the first to encounter a foe.

On the day, the dawn was clear and serene;  
The brightest sun there ever was lit the sky.  
King Charlemagne was the first to be seen  
Unarmoured, but for greaves, cantering by  
The lists, on his great charger, o'er the green,  
Baton in hand, his sword sheathed; nearby  
His counts, barons, knights waited on him,  
And catered to his every wish, and whim.

### **BOOK I: CANTO II: 33-36: SERPENTINO TAKES THE FIELD**

Behold, Serpentino took to the field,  
Fully armed, and marvellous to see.  
He reined in his charger; the steed revealed  
Its fiery nature, rearing powerfully,  
Then paced here and there, with unconcealed  
Ardour, around the square, rapidly,  
Nostrils flaring, as if set to emit,  
Fire; flames in its eyes, foam about its bit.

Its bold rider seemed equally daring,  
Holding his posture, with a fearful gaze,  
Clad in splendid armour, proudly wheeling,  
Firm in the saddle, his fierce eyes ablaze.

Women, children, pointed at this princeling,  
Whose strength and valour men praised always,  
Such that, as he passed before their eyes,  
They cried that none but he would gain the prize.

The emblem that he bore upon his shield,  
And likewise on his surcoat, and the rest,  
Was a great gold star on an azure field,  
Which he wore as well on his helmet crest.  
That helm, his armour, the arms he did wield,  
Were infinitely rich, and of the finest  
Tempered steel, that gleamed in the morning light,  
All adorned with pearls and gems, shining bright.

Thus, the champion entered the arena,  
Passed the barrier, and reined in his steed;  
Then, unmoving, like some mighty tower,  
Paused, as the trumpets called o'er the mead,  
And knights, at each corner, sought to enter,  
Each armed more richly; while a few, indeed,  
Were more adorned with gems, pearls and gold  
Than, perchance, is Paradise, its wealth untold.

### **BOOK I: CANTO II: 37-40: HE CONQUERS ANGELINO, RICARDO AND SALAMONE**

The first contestant, the champion's first foe,  
Bore a silver moon, on a shield of blue,  
Twas the lord of Bordeaux, Angelino,  
Master of war, and jousts and tourneys too.  
He was, at once, charged by Serpentino,  
Who attacked, so swiftly he well-nigh flew.  
For his part, Angelino came on, briskly,  
Lowering his lance, and glaring fiercely.

He thrust the steel tip at Serpentino,  
Aiming at the joint twixt helm and shield;  
The latter merely crouched to meet the blow,  
And struck the visor, that the eyes concealed,  
Head over heels went this Angelino,  
A cry arose, as if close thunder pealed,  
And all roared for the first joust was done,  
And he who bore the star that round had won.

Next came Ricardo, a most puissant knight,  
That was the ruler of all Normandy;  
A golden lion he bore, a noble sight,

On a field of red, and he rode swiftly,  
But Serpentino paused not, in full flight,  
And met his foe midway, striking fiercely,  
While such a mighty blow that lord did land,  
That Ricardo's head slammed into the sand.

How King Balugante rejoiced to see  
The valour of his brave son in the field!  
Salamone followed, seeking victory;  
That wise monarch bore a chequered shield  
And a golden crown on his helm, and he  
Charged down the list, yet was forced to yield  
To Serpentino's blow; his targe it found,  
And felled both horse and rider to the ground.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 41-44: THEN ASTOLFO, BUT  
IS UNSEATED BY UGGIERO, THE DANE**

Astolfo seized his lance, twas the weapon  
Argalia left leaning gainst that tree.  
His emblem three leopards richly done  
In gold on a field gules, mounted firmly,  
He yet found mishap, and was soon undone  
His steed stumbling, treading unsurely;  
For a moment he nigh lost the light of day,  
His right foot twisting, as he fell away.

This misfortune much displeased the crowd,  
And Serpentino, no doubt, more than most;  
He'd thought to triumph, yet now sighed aloud,  
At his false prediction; he could hardly boast  
Of this duke borne tent-wards, nor feel as proud  
As he had formerly, ashamed almost.  
Astolfo was quite safe, though not yet sound,  
His dislocated ankle set and bound.

Despite Serpentino's martial skill,  
Uggiero the Dane of fear was free.  
His swift and eager steed obeyed his will,  
As it flew, like a north wind o'er the sea.  
A field of azure his great shield did fill,  
On it a silver chevron, and proudly  
On his helm a basilisk he displayed,  
He that to the lists came thus arrayed.

The trumpets sounded. Each lowered his lance,  
And the brave pair charged to the encounter.  
No bout had been so fierce, no mischance  
Marred their meeting, like a clap of thunder  
It pealed; Uggiero, in his swift advance,  
Tore Serpentino's saddle from under  
That champion and, with its broken girth,  
The Knight of the Star promptly fell to earth.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 45-48: WHO THEN DEFEATS  
BALUGANTE, ISOLIER, GUALTIERO AND  
SPINELLA**

Since mighty Uggiero had won the bout,  
Twas his turn to defend the ground he'd won.  
King Balugante gave a mighty shout,  
And charged, hurt by the fall of his brave son,  
But he was flattened, turn and turnabout,  
By the Dane, and his involvement was done.  
Twas Isolier next engaged to fight,  
A powerful, and a most dextrous, knight.

He was Ferrau's brother; and on his shield  
Three golden moons shone on a sea of green.  
Lance in hand, he urged his steed o'er the field,  
But Uggiero stopped his course, as was seen.  
So cruel was the thrust that made him yield,  
So pitiless the blow, so fierce, I ween,  
That he lay stunned, seven hours and more,  
And was seen awhile labouring at death's door.

Gualtiero of Monleone fell  
To Uggiero, as had the three before;  
A dragon was his emblem, it did dwell,  
Crimson in colour, upon a field or.  
'Let's not fight amongst ourselves,' came the yell  
From Uggiero, 'we Christians!' such his roar:  
'It gives these pagans great cause for laughter,  
That we seek to people the hereafter!'

One was Spinella of Altamonte,  
Whose gleaming emblem was a golden crown  
On a blue field; to show himself worthy  
He had come to court; the Dane knocked him down,  
Before the king, and his nobility.  
Next Matalista, he of some renown,  
Fiordispina's brother, joined the fight,  
Lithe in the saddle, and a strong, bold knight.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 49-53: AND MATALISTA,  
BUT IS DOWNED BY GRANDONIO**

His shield was divided, part gold, part black,  
While the crest on his helm was a dragon.  
He was thrown to the ground, on his back,  
While, its saddle empty, his mount ran on.  
King Grandonio now rode to the attack;  
God help the Dane! Without any question  
Twas needed now for, to the furthest corner  
Of this Earth, no martial knight was stronger.

The Moor, he was of gigantic stature,  
And he rode, fully armed, a mighty steed.  
He held a black shield before his armour,  
On which was writ a line of golden screed.  
No Christian was so foolish ever  
As to ignore that mad dog, or his creed.  
Gano of Poitiers but viewed his face,  
Then departed, silently, from the place.

Macario of Lusan, Pinabel,  
And then the Count of Altafoggia  
Did likewise, and Falcone left as well,  
Each moment there seeming like forever.  
Alone of all that treacherous cartel,  
Grifone stood firm, disposed to linger  
By the gate, held by valour or by shame,  
Or thinking the rest would do the same.

Returning to the dreadful Matalista,  
That had stirred such a storm as he'd passed by,  
His strength was so great he was the bearer  
Of a ship's mast of a lance, I tell no lie;  
And his steed was no less fearful either;  
It trampled all the sand, and flung it high;  
For twould break any stone that lay around,  
If the knight let it gallop o'er the ground.

On this Fury, he rode against the Dane,  
And struck hard at the centre of his shield,  
And split it, while Uggiero felt the pain,  
As he fell, stunned, next his steed, on the field.  
Duke Namus helped him stand upright again,  
And then bore him from the lists to be healed  
Of the wounds, to his left arm, and his chest;  
A full month, in his bed, now forced to rest.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 54-56: WHO PROCEEDS TO  
WORK HIS WAY THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN  
KNIGHTS**

Great, it seems, was the cry that filled the square,  
And loudest from the Saracens it rose,  
Grandonio, with pride beyond compare,  
Issued threats, which had small effect on those  
Brave knights still left. Turpin of Rheims, was there.  
They met half-way down the course, I suppose,  
Each disposed to swiftly end that affair,  
Where Turpin left his mount, at such a speed  
That he almost saw the face of Death, indeed.

Astolfo, meanwhile, had re-joined the throng,  
Cantering up, on a sturdy white palfrey.  
Armed with only a sword, he mixed among  
The ladies, laughing and chatting calmly,  
Solacing himself, as one who had long  
Been known for speaking well, and wittily.  
But while he was speaking, lo, Grifone  
Was thrown to the sand, dismayed wholly;

With him went the emblem of Maganza,  
Twas a white falcon on an azure field.  
Grandonio, with arrogance, cried louder:  
'O Christians, are you disposed to yield?  
Are you weary? Do we joust no longer?'  
So, Guy of Burgundy appeared, and wheeled  
His steed; a lion, black on gold, he bore,  
And was downed, like the others, by the Moor.

**BOOK I: CANTO II: 57-63: INCLUDING  
OLIVIERO, MARQUIS OF VIENNE**

The powerful Angelieri fell  
(His crest a dragon with a woman's head);  
Avino, and Avorio, as well,  
Ottone, Belengiero, all wed  
Those four, to a chequered shield, so they tell,  
Of blue and gold and, to foster dread,  
A black eagle, on their helm, did display,  
As the Bavarians still do today.

The strength of their fierce foe, Grandonio,  
Now seemed but to increase the more he fought;  
He slew Alardo, and Ricciardetto,  
After Ugo of Marseille, and mocked this court  
Of Christian cowards, riding to and fro,  
As another knight to conquer, now, he sought,  
And, thus, roused to anger King Charlemagne;  
Twas then the Marquis Oliviero came

Sallying forth to meet this boastful foe;  
And the Christians again raised their eyes;  
For King Charlemagne welcomed him below,  
While, above, the clouds cleared from the skies,  
As every trumpet blared and horn did blow.  
The small and the great cheered, loud were their cries:  
'Hail the lord of Vienne, Oliviero!'  
Gripping his lance, he smiled, Grandonio.

Each attacked the other, spiritedly;  
Their fury was as great as ever seen.  
The throng watched in suspense, attentively,  
While waiting on the clash of arms between  
This mighty pair, the silence uncanny,  
So deep that it enveloped all the scene.  
Oliviero checked the other's advance,  
Striking home, high on the shield, with his lance.

Nine thick layers of steel had that shield;  
Oliviero's blow pierced them through.  
He shattered the breastplate, and so revealed  
The flesh beneath, while a clear inch or two  
Of his lance-point entered as it did yield.  
But Grandonio's aim was ever true;  
He struck Oliviero on the brow,  
And flung him seven yards beyond, I vow.

All thought he must be dead, his helm broken,  
Cracked in half, indeed, and those that saw  
His face swore that there was scarce a token  
Of life within, and that he breathed no more.  
Oh, Charlemagne's dismay, what grief unspoken!  
At last, in tears, he cried: 'My son, wherefore  
Has God this great and dire misfortune brought  
Upon the flower, the honour, of my court?'

## BOOK I: CANTO II: 64-68: ASTOLFO VOWS TO DEFEAT GRANDONIO

Grandonio had shown his arrogance  
Before, now it was insupportable.  
He shouted at the knights, and shook his lance:  
'Brave lords of drunkenness, incapable  
Of aught but swilling in the inns of France!  
More than a cup I wield, unconquerable!  
Is this the Round Table's valiant order,  
That one may threaten, and receive naught further!'

Charlemagne, listening to his scornful cry,  
Hearing the insults aimed at his great court,  
Was troubled in both heart and mind thereby;  
With crimson face, with blazing eyes, he sought  
A champion: 'Who will this oaf defy?  
Have I no loyal man who'll make retort?  
Where's Gano of Poitiers, where's Rinaldo,  
Where is that traitorous bastard, Orlando?

Son of a whore! You faithless renegade!  
Show your face, and may I fall dead if I  
Don't hang you myself! Thus am I obeyed!  
Charlemagne uttered many a like cry.  
Astolfo, listening to that loud tirade,  
Silently left the crowd and, by and by,  
Having re-equipped himself, reappeared,  
As, towards the lists, his mount he steered.

The Frankish lord did not himself believe  
That he could conquer the Saracen,  
But his firm intention was, I believe,  
To do his duty by the king once again.  
To his saddle proudly he did cleave,  
The very model of a knight I'd maintain,  
But all who recognised Astolfo cried:  
'Lord, send another; he can barely ride!'

Astolfo bowed his head most gracefully,  
Before King Charlemagne: 'My Lord,' he said,  
'I'll thrust this Moor from his saddle, promptly,  
Such I think is your desire, or strike him dead.'  
The king, annoyed, replied disdainfully:  
'God help you, then! Be it on your own head.'  
And muttered to his knights: 'I must consent,  
Though we scarcely need more embarrassment!'

Astolfo now threatened the pagan knight  
With being set to work an oar, at sea;  
This left the giant so ready for a fight  
That none was ever so enraged as he.  
In the very next canto that I write,  
You will hear, if the good Lord allows me,  
Of great wonders, of adventures stranger  
Than you've been told of, or read of, ever.

BOOK I: CANTO III: THE FOUNTS OF LOVE AND LOATHING



**BOOK I: CANTO III: 1-6: GRANDONIO IS CONQUERED BY ASTOLFO**

My lords, when I ended the last canto,  
Astolfo was putting the Moor to scorn,  
Crying: 'Brigand, you'll not be boasting so  
When tis to Hell's deep pit you're being borne.  
Vaunt not the conquering of your foe,  
I'll send you to the galleys; night and morn  
You can row there, where your giant stature  
May win you honour at your leisure!'

Grandonio, who was a king full used  
To making mock, and not to being mocked,  
Swelled with rage, at his being so abused.  
Even as the sea's fury is unlocked,  
By a passing gust, wind and water confused,  
Troubling the bold helmsman, so, deeply shocked,  
Grandonio, storming, fretting, thus, was led  
To grind his teeth aloud, and shake his head.

He quivered, hissing like an angry snake,  
Then he rode some distance from Astolfo,  
And wheeled maliciously, his ire to slake,  
Aiming his enormous lance at his foe,  
While fully believing (make no mistake)  
That he would skewer his opponent so,  
And hurl him from the saddle, ne'er to stand,  
Or send him to lie, dying, on the sand.

Astolfo turned to meet the headlong Moor,  
As he charged towards him, furiously,  
Yet, though pale of face, his heartbeat unsure,  
He sought death before disgrace; as, swiftly,  
They met together, with a mighty roar  
From Grandonio; they felt the shock briefly,  
Then the Saracen was downed, before them all;  
You can guess the shouts attending his fall.

Immeasurable was the sound of that cry,  
As if Earth burned, and all the heavens fell.  
The people in the stands, set there on high,  
Leapt to their feet, the noble folk as well.  
They pressed forward to seek the reason why  
The warrior was down, and what befell.  
The Saracens were mute, the emperor  
Disbelieving, saw the foe bathed in gore.

In falling from his mount, Grandonio  
Had landed on his left, his wounded side  
Where the blow he'd had from Oliviero  
Had pierced the flesh, and now opened wide.  
The African lay stunned, before his foe,  
His face pallid, all his ancestry belied,  
While the blood spurted forth, in such amount  
It seemed like water from a flowing fount.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 7-9: WHO THEN DEFEATS GIASARTE AND PILIASI**

Some said Astolfo's bold thrust was the cause,  
And so granted his valour all the praise.  
While others chose to think it what it was;  
(The result of some enchantment) in a daze,  
Grandonio was borne off, midst the pause,  
Who slew Astolfo later, legend says,  
In revenge, though the Moor was slain as well,  
In that fight, or so quite other verses tell.

Astolfo remained there as the victor,  
Though he could scarce believe his own success.  
There were, midst the pagans, but two further  
Knights, now left, that true valour did possess;  
Giasarte, whose hair was dark in colour,  
And Piliasì; two sons of kings no less.  
Giasarte's father, a puissant lord,  
Had conquered all Arabia with his sword;

While Piliasì's father ruled Russia,  
Having gained almost all of Tartary;  
His western border was the Don River,  
A great king, beyond the north-wind, was he.  
To render my tale somewhat shorter,  
Astolfo was challenged by these, solely.  
He jousting with them briefly and, in short,  
Downed one, then the other, as if in sport.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 10-19: ASTOLFO FIGHTS THE MAGANZESE**

Meanwhile a messenger sought out Gano,  
To tell him of Grandonio's fall,  
Though he would not credit that Astolfo  
Had aught to do with the defeat at all,  
But rather thought, and was sure it was so,

That some strange accident, as can befall  
Any man, some unheard-of circumstance,  
Had caused the thing, a matter of mere chance.

Hence, he considered he himself could gain  
The triumphal honours of the tourney,  
And with a high position to maintain  
Took eleven Counts with him, a small army,  
The flower of Maganza's House, in his train,  
And with a show of pomp, like to royalty,  
Went to Charlemagne and, eloquently,  
Offered his excuse for proving tardy.

Whether Charlemagne believed his tale,  
Or not, I cannot say, but with a greeting  
He welcomed him; while Gano did not fail  
To send word to Astolfo that the jousting,  
(Since not a pagan now sought to prevail)  
Would be twixt the Christians remaining;  
For Astolfo was still bound to satisfy  
All who his skill and valour would deny.

Astolfo, who was voluble by nature,  
Replied: 'Tell Gano, I care not at all  
Whether he or some Saracen shall feature,  
Though I deem him less than them withal,  
An enemy to God and every creature,  
Thief, traitor, heretic, to lies in thrall;  
Let him come. For I esteem him no more  
Than a rotten sack, full of horse-manure.'

Count Gano gave no answer to this slur,  
But charged at Astolfo in his fury,  
Muttering to himself: 'You wretched cur!  
Wait there till I punish you, and swiftly.'  
He was certain (as his allies would concur)  
He'd hurl the duke from his saddle, shortly;  
Twould be nothing new, for he'd done more  
To such madmen, many a time before.

Yet the outcome was not as he had planned.  
Count Gano's shoulders struck the solid ground,  
And Macario too, of that wretched band,  
Following on behind, a like fate found.  
'Shall God allow this vile affront to stand,'  
Cried Pinabel, 'and see this brainless hound  
Shame all the mighty House of Maganza?'  
And, with that, his sharp lance he did lower.

Yet, as he raged, he parted from his steed.  
Ask me not if the duke rejoiced aloud.  
He shouted to the skies: 'Vile clan, take heed;  
I'll down you one by one; come all you crowd  
Of fools.' Smiriglio now charged at speed,  
But fell before Astolfo, swiftly cowed,  
And was dragged aside (by his hands and feet)  
Oh, how Count Gano groaned at his defeat!

As he was borne aside, Falcone cried:  
'Is Fortune so inimical to us,  
Has Heaven to this wretch the skill supplied  
To render all our House ridiculous?'  
He lashed himself to his saddle; so, tied,  
He could not fall; the action malicious,  
And then rode to encounter Astolfo,  
Assured of his retaining his seat so.

But Astolfo struck in such a manner  
Upon his visor, with such fearsome force,  
That the knight rocked hither and thither,  
Still seated, as if lifeless, on his horse.  
The crowd expected him to fall, however,  
Until twas seen that he had made recourse  
To his fraudulent device; up went the shout:  
'The traitor's tied to his steed; drag him out!'

Some others of his House led him away,  
Falcone in great pain, and filled with shame,  
To say naught of Gano's chagrin that day.  
Astolfo cried: 'Come now, who seeks for fame?  
I'll yet scratch his itch, wriggle as he may.  
Let him be roped on tight, tis all the same;  
A madman's far more trouble when he's free,  
Than when he's safely tied, it seems to me.'

### BOOK I: CANTO III: 20-24: A MASS BRAWL ENSUES

Now, Anselmo of Ripa, that false Count,  
Conjured up the thought in his mind  
Of a vengeful trick to even the account:  
He would come upon Astolfo from behind  
And, in charging thus, spill him from his mount.  
Lord Raineri, would fight first, as a blind,  
Count of Altafoggia; he would follow,  
And was certain to down this Astolfo.



The duke, then, encountered Lord Raineri,  
Who, legs outspread, departed from his steed;  
As Astolfo composed himself, briefly  
(He'd but little time to do so, indeed)  
Anselmo charged him, unexpectedly,  
Enacting that false and treacherous deed,  
Though the villain made it seem an accident  
And not a trick, performed with ill intent.

The plan succeeded, and Astolfo fell  
Flat on his back, upon the sand below.  
Think you it did his courage thus dispel?  
He found his feet, recovered from the blow,  
Disdainful, angered, drew his sword as well,  
And swift as lightning ran towards the foe,  
Count Gano and his crew; reached Grifone,  
And swung the blade at his head, wildly.

Though the latter's strong helm survived the blow.  
Now a grand melee arose in the square,  
As Gano, Ugo, and Macario  
Leapt at Astolfo, their steel blades laid bare,  
But Namus, and Turpin, and Ricciardo,  
Counter-attacked, to aid in the affair,  
While others hastened in, from every side,  
And even Charlemagne his sword applied,

Landing a mighty blow, here, then there,  
And breaking the heads of more than thirty.  
'What traitor, thus, what rebel, doth so dare  
To mar my feast?' the king cried out, loudly,  
As he wheeled his courser, and none did spare,  
For he swung his great sword, mercilessly.  
All made room for the mighty emperor,  
Fleeing swiftly, or showing him honour.

### **BOOK I: CANTO III: 25-30: ASTOLFO IS ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED**

'What means this?' he demanded, of Gano,  
'What is't you do?' Astolfo met his glare,  
While Grifone, still smarting from the blow,  
Fell on his knees, before the monarch, there,  
And cried in an anguished voice, gainst his foe:  
'Justice, my lord, justice; great wrong repair!  
Oh, noble sire, most worthy and most wise,  
Was I not attacked before your very eyes?

Seek to know, my lord, from all these men  
What occurred, and transpired, I beg of you.  
If you find I began this brawling, then  
I'll take the blame, and suffer for it too.  
Let me be drawn and quartered, as and when,  
If twas not the Englishman; for I speak true.  
And if you prove the contrary, and twas he  
Place the guilt where it belongs; not on me.'

Astolfo was so angered by the matter,  
He forgot that King Charlemagne was there,  
And cried: 'Tis all false, you lying traitor,  
Born of a wicked clan, in that foul lair.  
I'll have the heart from your chest, hereafter,  
(Nay, ere I depart) its foul depths laid bare.'  
Grifone calmly answered: 'Fear you not,  
I'll deal with you when we've left this spot,

But in this square tis reason rules the day;  
I shall not bring dishonour on my king.  
'Treacherous dog!' Astolfo then did bray;  
'You thief, you rogue, you thrice-accursed thing!'  
Charlemagne did a troubled face display.  
'By the one true God, Astolfo,' sighing,  
The king chided him, 'Use greater courtesy  
Or, to your cost, you'll answer now to me.'

Astolfo heeded his king not a whit,  
Adding fresh insult to past injury,  
Like one offended, with the truth of it  
Understood by none, by himself only.  
Behold, Count Anselmo, who, in a fit  
Of bravado, or by mischance simply,  
Came close to them; Astolfo, undismayed,  
Leapt upon the deceiver, with drawn blade.

And, truly, he'd have struck Anselmo dead,  
If Charlemagne had failed to intervene.  
All blamed Astolfo then, and sought his head,  
While the king had him hustled from the scene.  
To the keep, under close guard, he was led,  
And there chained, in a cell low and mean,  
Where he paid the price of his own excess,  
Held there longer than he'd willingly confess.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 31-36: RINALDO DRINKS FROM THE FOUNT OF LOATHING**

Let us leave him there, who's yet happier  
Than those three distant lovers, wounded so  
By the fair, but long-fled Angelica.  
They paused not day or night, but on did go.  
Though their paths differed from one another  
They each arrived, travelling fast or slow,  
In the wooded Ardennes; twas Rinaldo  
Came there first, through spurring on Baiardo.

The baron began to search among the trees,  
And came upon a grove, all shadowy;  
Within it was a fount, that, without cease,  
Flowed there amidst the wood, most pleasingly.  
Charmed by that happy place, at his ease,  
He entered it, unhesitatingly,  
And found a gleaming fountain, at its heart,  
A fount not wrought by any human art.

The fountain had been carved of alabaster;  
It was pure white, and so adorned with gold  
It made the bright green grass e'en brighter,  
That was lit, all about, with flowers untold.  
Merlin had wrought it, so the valiant lover  
Tristan might drink there, and events unfold  
That would see him quit Iseult his true love;  
Though the cause of his ruin she did prove,

For the luckless Tristan, not e'en by chance,  
E'er came upon that gleaming fount, it seems,  
Though many a time he rode, with his lance,  
Seeking adventure, near its glittering streams.  
Its nature was such, that if, perchance,  
A lover drank there, the maid of his dreams,  
Whom he loved truly, he would love no more,  
But loathe the one whom he'd adored before.

The sun was high, the day was burning hot,  
When, drenched in sweat, the weary Rinaldo  
Attained the flowery bank, in that sweet spot,  
And, tempted by the stream, slid from Baiardo.  
Once down, his former love he soon forgot,  
For quenching his thirst, and his passion, so,  
He drank of that cool and pleasing water,  
Which, in a trice, robbed him of his ardour.

For (to himself) he thought what foolishness  
It was to yet pursue so vain a thing.  
He no longer prized that beauty to excess  
That he'd once thought more than everything,  
Beyond the merely mortal; I digress,  
It was all that enchanted stream's doing.  
His longing was transmuted, moreover,  
Into pure loathing for Angelica.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 37-39: THEN WANDERS ON, AND FALLS ASLEEP BY THE FOUNT OF LOVE**

Rinaldo issued forth, fearlessly,  
From that grove, occupied in noble thought;  
And, musing so, the knight came, suddenly,  
Upon a second sparkling fount, unsought,  
Pure and crystalline, while all the lovely  
Flowers of spring, that blossoming Nature wrought,  
Glowed there, and all that green turf brocaded;  
The fount a pine, a beech, an olive shaded.

This was the Fount of Love, and a wonder  
Produced by Nature, not by Merlin's art,  
While its enchanted waters held the power  
To stir the mind with passion, and the heart.  
Many a knight of old drank, there, in error,  
Of that accursed stream, but, for his part,  
Rinaldo drank not of it; for the first,  
The Fount of Loathing, had assuaged his thirst.

Pleased with that fair place, the valiant knight,  
Decided he might rest awhile, and so  
He rid Baiardo of his bridle, that he might  
Graze all about, while, close to the sweet flow,  
He sank down on the bank, his burden light,  
To slumber in the shade and, thus, below  
The spreading branches, he slept, unaware  
Of the adventure that would find him there.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 40-42: ANGELICA DRINKS OF THE FOUNT, RINALDO FLEES**

After Angelica had left the scene,  
Of that fight twixt Ferrau and her brother,  
She came upon that bank of verdant green,  
And dismounted to drink of the water.  
Lo, something new, that ne'er had been:

Since Love had long sought her pride to lower,  
On seeing, midst the flowers, our valiant knight,  
At once, her heart, by Love, was set alight.

She tethered her white palfrey to the pine,  
Having sipped, and approached him where he lay;  
All else seemed base, she thought the knight so fine,  
And knew no means to drive that thought away.  
White lilies grew there, roses did entwine  
Amongst the thorns, in elegant array,  
And these she gathered in her hands apace,  
Then scattered their soft petals o'er his face.

Rinaldo woke, and then rose up in haste,  
On seeing the maid's visage overhead.  
She greeted him with reverence, ill-placed,  
For his expression changed, and off he sped,  
Leapt to his saddle, and the wind outpaced,  
Now scorning every sweet word that she said,  
As through the dense wood he galloped swiftly.  
She mounted, and followed on her palfrey.

### BOOK I: CANTO III: 43-50: HER LAMENT

And as she followed on, behind, she cried:  
'Oh, valiant cavalier, fly not from me!  
For I love you more than myself; denied  
Your presence I must die; oh, pity me.  
Tis not Ginamo of Bayonne doth ride  
To attack you, I am no enemy,  
No traitorous Gano, nor Macario.  
Oh, I loathe all others, I love you so!

Since, more than my life itself, I love you,  
How can you bear to show me such disdain?  
Glance back, at least, and see what tis you do;  
Is my face so frightful? Am I so plain?  
That so dangerous a flight you pursue,  
Through dark and perilous woods, maintain  
So fierce a pace? Oh, pity the lowly;  
I'll be content to follow you, more slowly.

If I were the cause of some harm to you,  
Some mishap to yourself, or to your steed,  
If I could bear to live on after you,  
Twould be a harsh and bitter life indeed.  
Oh, turn a moment, and show mercy to

Her that you flee from, sir knight; take heed!  
I am not such that you should run from me,  
Rather should I be followed, if I flee!

These, and far sweeter, words the maiden cried,  
But all that she said she uttered in vain.  
Baiardo sped on, dense trees on every side,  
And vanished in the distance, o'er the plain.  
Who could describe her pleas, sent far and wide,  
Or how she grieved, and beat her hands, in pain?  
Wildly she spoke, yet did but passion fuel,  
Calling the sun, the stars, the heavens cruel,

Yet naming Rinaldo as the cruellest.  
Her bitter anguish she sought to express:  
'Who would have thought that one that is so blessed  
With handsome looks, could prove so merciless?  
I'm not such a fool in love, or so distressed,  
As not to see that all my charms mean less  
Than naught to this precious knight Rinaldo.  
And yet he should not scorn to be loved so.

Should he not offer me a glimpse, at least,  
Of his fair face, so that by gazing there,  
I might upon those handsome features feast,  
Or quench love's fire, and so no longer care?  
Reason would wish to find desire had ceased,  
And yet reason has no place in this affair.  
I call him cruel, of harsh unbending will,  
Yet, be that as it may, I love him still.'

And, as she lamented, her tear-filled eyes  
She turned back to the beech tree, nearby.  
'Fair leaves and blossom,' said she, midst her sighs  
'You touched his handsome face, and, oh, how I  
Envy the fate that granted you that prize!  
A happier lot Fortune brought, thereby,  
To you than me! I would have swooned to death  
Had I lain there, and felt his gentle breath.'

Retreating, the lovely maid dismounted  
From her white palfrey, and ended her plaint;  
Yet, where Rinaldo had laid down his head,  
She kissed the soft turf, free of all restraint,  
Thinking that might quench the fire; instead,  
Love's flame burnt more fiercely, yet a faint  
Suggestion that the place eased her sorrow  
Led her to rest, and slumber in that hollow.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 51-58: FERRAU FINDS ARGALIA AND ATTACKS HIM**

My lords, no doubt you will be wondering  
Where King Gradasso has been all this while.  
You should know that he was, though travelling,  
Not three days away, give or take a mile.  
His fleet had reached Spain; twas plain sailing;  
But more of that pagan later; meanwhile  
I must return to our lovers, and say now  
What has become of them; and first Ferrau.

Through the forest, the warrior had gone,  
His heart and mind inflamed beyond measure,  
Love, and ire, burning him, as he rode on.  
He cared not a straw for life or treasure,  
Lacking Angelica to gaze upon,  
Or at least a sight of that Argalia,  
So that he might, at least, ease his dolour  
By wreaking dire vengeance on her brother.

Journeying onwards, with this thought in mind,  
And so, looking all around him as he rode  
A knight, sleeping in the shade, he did find,  
And knew, by the emblem his shield showed,  
Twas Argalia; to a tree behind  
His steed was tethered; gently Ferrau slowed,  
Freed the creature, then whipped it where it stood,  
And sent it, fleeing madly, through the wood.

Sliding quietly, and swiftly, to the ground,  
He sat down neath a laurel bush, nearby,  
To which his brave charger he tightly bound,  
And waited for the knight to blink an eye.  
To rouse him, who seemed not to hear a sound,  
Seemed base, though he was thwarted thereby  
Of prompt vengeance; that fiery spirit fumed,  
Yet restrained himself, though by rage consumed.

In a little while, the warrior awoke,  
And realised that his courser was gone.  
(Imagine how he felt, at that foul stroke  
Of ill-fortune, that, on foot, must journey on!)  
But Ferrau rose now, from his place, and spoke:  
‘Think naught of it, sir knight, for here is one;  
And since either you or I must die, perforce,  
Whichever one survives shall have the horse!

I let your own steed loose, and so you’ve lost  
The opportunity to disappear again.  
Come, show your valour now, and pay the cost.  
Display your front not your back; I’ll be plain,  
Your flight was an insult; I’ll not be crossed;  
You’ll regret that you fled from me in vain.  
Be brave then, and defend yourself, I say,  
If you’d not lose your life, this very day.’

‘I make no excuse,’ Argalia cried,  
‘For my retreat was honourable; I swear,  
On this hand, this arm, and all beside;  
E’en on this heart within, that all was fair,  
Twas not through exhaustion I denied  
You satisfaction, or pain, or fear, there,  
I only delivered you short measure,  
That I might fulfil my sister’s pleasure.

And you may take that as it pleases you,  
But I’ll satisfy your wish anywhere.  
Whether peace or war, you’d now pursue,  
You’ll recall how you, previously, did fare.’  
So spoke the youth, and right boldly too,  
But Ferrau waited not, and flailed the air  
With his naked sword, exclaiming loudly:  
‘Defend yourself!’ and advancing swiftly.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 59-67: HE SLAYS ARGALIA, THEN FULFILS THE WARRIOR’S DYING WISH**

Each warrior now ran to meet the other,  
Displaying his great strength and mastery.  
The blows of their swords were heard, moreover,  
A mile off, echoing from tree to tree.  
Argalia leapt into battle, as ever.  
His sword he held high, most chivalrously,  
Saying, to himself: ‘He’s proof against a blow,  
But perchance a knock may yet bring him low.’

He swung at Ferrau, threatening to strike  
And, surely, he would have stunned the knight,  
But the latter leapt at him, and both alike  
Seized the other, clasping his foe’s arms tight.  
Argalia strained; Ferrau gave a hike  
To his enemy’s frame and, swifter outright,  
Grappling, then dislodging the other,  
Downed him; though he was the stronger,

For exercising his enormous might,  
Argalia grasped Ferrau, dragged him over,  
And was about to strike, and end the fight  
With a fierce gauntlet-blow, when the latter  
Drew a knife, and though the blade seemed but slight,  
Pierced Argalia below his armour,  
Stabbing the warrior deep in the groin,  
Where the upper cuisse and the mail-skirt join.

Lord, what a shame that was! If he'd lived on,  
None would have out-fought Argalia,  
A stronger man or braver there was none;  
Complete, though alas a non-believer.  
He realised now his fighting days were done,  
And, in an anguished voice, lacking power,  
He turned his gaze on Ferrau, with a cry:  
'Ah, grant me one final wish, ere I die.

This I ask that you do, of chivalry:  
Oh, sir knight, seek not my plea to deny!  
Bear me, armoured, to a river swiftly,  
And then cast me in the flood, there to lie.  
For if someone were to come upon me  
And find this armour,' he gave a deep sigh,  
'I'm certain twould be said the knight was base,  
That, thus armed, was yet slain in this place.'

Ferrau so wept, overwhelmed with pity,  
That he seemed but ice melting in the sun.  
'God knows,' he said, speaking the words softly,  
'How grieved I am that you are thus undone.  
A sad thing has come about suddenly,  
Such as fate, or the heavens, bring on one,  
For I fought this battle for glory, only,  
Seeking not your death, but my victory.

As regards your last plea, rest now content,  
I promise, on my Faith, your final wish,  
I'll fulfil, according to your intent;  
For you may ask, nay command me, in this,  
To do more; yet inasmuch as I consent,  
Since in Christendom I skirt the abyss  
And am like to die if aught of this is known,  
Then come grant me a favour of your own.

Let me employ your helmet for four days,  
And then I'll set it by, this I do swear.'  
Argalia, dying, fixed on him his gaze,  
And seemed to give consent, his mind elsewhere.  
Ferrau waited, midst that woodland maze,  
Till Argalia no more this life did share,  
And when he saw his term was at an end,  
He took him in his arms, like a dear friend.

Weeping endlessly, that ardent warrior,  
Removed the helmet, gently, from his head,  
Then (cutting away the crest however)  
Laced that borrowed helm on his own instead.  
Then, mounting on his steed, to the river  
He bore him, on a path that swiftly led  
To its bank, above a deep pool below,  
And gave Argalia to the passing flow.

### **BOOK I: CANTO III: 68-70: ORLANDO SEEKS FOR AND FINDS ANGELICA**

Ferrau stood there for a moment, gazing,  
Then walked, musing, along the river.  
But let me speak of Orlando, searching  
Through that wilderness for Angelica.  
In torment and despair at not finding  
The one he pursued, still he sought her  
Cursing his ill fate, till his heart did leap,  
On reaching the place where she lay asleep.

How lovely she looked, lost in slumber,  
You'd not conceive, nor can I tell thereof;  
It seemed that the grass and flowers, about her,  
And all the river bank, there, spoke of love.  
All things beautiful today, all that were  
So then, when more beauteous all did prove,  
Would pale (like the stars beside Diana,  
Or her white orb next the Sun) beside her.

Orlando was lost in admiration,  
As if life were suspended; a dreamer,  
Eyes fixed, in rapture, on that fair vision,  
Seeking not to wake her from her slumber.  
Softly asking, of himself, a question:  
'Am I in paradise, or somewhere other?  
For, though I see her, she cannot be real;  
And I asleep, that yet still see and feel.'

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 71-76: BUT IS SURPRISED  
BY FERRAU**

So, the Count, observing her with delight,  
Reasoned idly with himself, as he stood there.  
Oh, how little suited to love, that knight,  
How much more to some fine martial affair!  
He who lets the moment escape him quite  
Comes away with but little, as his share;  
As was the case in this fine encounter,  
Where, by delay, he lost a great treasure;

For Ferrau came walking along the shore,  
And reached the open field, treading softly,  
And there a knight, who stood alone, he saw,  
But knew not from his arms who he might be,  
Not recognising the Count; furthermore,  
He perceived the maid, and knew it was she  
Whom he sought, and, in an instant, his face,  
With his innermost thoughts, altered apace,

For Ferrau believed that, without a doubt,  
The knight stood there to guard the maid closely.  
So, he approached, with an arrogant shout,  
Confronting the knight, boldly and proudly:  
‘The maid is mine, and never yours, you lout;  
If I were you, I’d leave; renounce the lady,  
Or else your life, or fight with me for both,  
For to toy a while with you I’m nothing loth.’

Count Orlando was angered to the core;  
He feared he’d lost his opportunity;  
And cried: ‘Ah, go your way, sir, as before,  
’Twould be unwise to pick a fight with me;  
For though, I swear on my faith, I no more  
Wish to fight than to do you injury,  
Your presence here offends me so deeply  
It may lead you to die, prematurely.’

‘Either you or I must depart from here,  
That, at least, is what I think I heard,  
But be assured I shall not disappear,  
’Tis you that shall not linger; you’ve my word,  
For I shall so confound you, in your fear,  
If fire alone a means to flee conferred,  
You’d leap into the flames to escape me!’  
So Ferrau spoke, and advanced ardently.

The Count, who was angered beyond measure,  
A surge of blood reddening his face, cried:  
‘Orlando am I; be it the world’s pleasure  
To come against me, all shall be denied.  
While you I shall deal with at my leisure;  
A new-born babe more trouble might provide  
Than you, you spawn of a wicked mother!’  
And, with that, he drew forth Durindana.

**BOOK I: CANTO III: 77-81: THEY FIGHT, WHILE  
THE LADY VANISHES ONCE MORE**

And so, there began the greatest fight  
That was ever waged twixt two warriors,  
Their two weapons glittering in the light,  
Carving plate and mail away, perforce,  
In hastening to end that affair outright,  
Lest the maid woke with it yet in course,  
And their labour all expended in vain,  
Should she instantly take to flight, again.

And, indeed, the girl with the lovely face  
Was roused by the noise of their struggle,  
Quite terrified to see that grassy place  
Strewn with bright pieces of shorn-off metal,  
So much so that she mounted and, apace,  
Urged her palfrey from the scene of battle,  
Departing, through the forest, in full flight.  
Orlando called out to the other knight:

‘Sir, will you show me the great courtesy  
Of resuming this, our quarrel, later?  
Let me mount, and so pursue the lady,  
And I’ll remain your debtor forever.  
’Twould seem but an act of great folly,  
To fight for one who’s here no longer,  
For she that we are fighting o’er has fled;  
For God’s sake, let me follow her, instead.’

‘No, no,’ replied Ferrau, vigorously,  
Shaking his head at the Count ‘I think not.  
If you wish to conclude, prematurely,  
Then your claim to the maid must be forgot.  
For there’s room for but one of us only  
In this place, and to seek her, tis my lot.  
No, I shall conquer you, sir, and have done,  
For you must slay me if you’d be that one.’

'By God, you have small advantage here!  
Cried Orlando, and they commenced again,  
Fighting fiercely, for neither man felt fear,  
As the very next canto will make plain.  
Thwarting the other's victory, twould appear  
Orlando, maddened, well-nigh burst a vein,  
While to speak of Ferrau I'll not linger,  
For he, all his life, was filled with anger.



BOOK I: CANTO IV: WAR IN SPAIN



ARGOMENTO.

Diuide la battaglia Fiorde spina ,  
 Ch'Orlando, e Ferrau faceano insieme ,  
 Gradasso manda la Spagna in rouina ,  
 Onde ogni sua Città pauenta e teme ,  
 Carlo sua gente à Rinaldo destina ,  
 Come à colui, che più d'ogn'altro ha speme.  
 Combattono le genti con fracasso ,  
 Rinaldo fa battaglia con Gradasso.



ALLEGORIE.

FIORDESPINA che mettendo pace tra Orlando, & Ferrau, menando il Saracino in aiuto al Re Marfilio, ci dinota la coscienza, che rimordendo l'huomo de vna cosa mal fatta, lo inuita à cose onorate.

CARLO, che manda aiuto al Re Marfilio, dimostra che lo huomo fauio, non solamente deue considerare le cose presenti, ma prendere anco quelle che hanno da venire.



**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 1-4: A LADY ON HORSEBACK APPEARS, SEEKING FERRAU**

I told you, my lords, in my last canto,  
Of that fierce duel, and perchance, on Earth,  
The Sun, in its circling, ne'er a duo  
Shone upon, of such compelling worth.  
No like three-day battle had Orlando  
Ever fought with another, since the birth  
Of his prowess, labouring to beat Ferrau,  
(But for that with Don Chiaro) ere now.

In engaging with the other, once more,  
With dreadful looks, and threatening gaze,  
Each yet found himself amazed, I feel sure,  
That the other's skill so deserved his praise.  
Thinking himself unrivalled, each now saw,  
Impressed by the other's martial ways,  
That his foe was as valorous a knight  
As himself, and his equal in a fight.

For they had recommenced their savage game,  
Striking at each other, mercilessly,  
Sparks flew from their swords, fire and flame,  
Their shields were shattered, their armour swiftly  
Split apart, till their state proved much the same,  
Their arms and legs exposed, gradually;  
And though they were uncut, both those two  
Struck now here, and now there, were black and blue.

And, thus, the bout continued, all in vain,  
For neither man had a hope of winning,  
When suddenly came riding, o'er the plain,  
A woman in black samite, who, beating  
Her sweet face with her hands, as if in pain,  
Cried: 'Ah me! Deserted!' midst her weeping,  
'What man, what god, will bring me succour now,  
Searching amidst this forest for Ferrau?'

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 5-10: FIORDISPINA BRINGS NEWS OF THE INVASION**

On perceiving the two, she rode outright  
Between them on her palfrey, while the two  
Reined in their chargers, and so ceased the fight.  
Greeting them with respect, she turned to view  
Orlando, and said: 'Most courteous knight,

Although I am, indeed, unknown to you,  
As you to me, I beg you, of mercy,  
That which I ask now, do not deny me!

I pray you end the fight, let peace prevail,  
And release Ferrau of obligation,  
For I find myself, now, in great travail,  
And there is none but he can aid me; none.  
If Fortune's favour I may someday hail,  
Then perchance the time (Allah's will be done!)  
Shall come, when that fair deed I may reward.  
I shall not fail to do so; be assured.'

He replied: 'I am content so to do,  
(For he was ever full of courtesy)  
And, if ever I may be of help to you,  
Then I offer my services, freely;  
And to my word I am forever true.  
If this Ferrau should chance to be, sadly,  
Absent when needed, then, be not afraid,  
I'd do what any knight should, in your aid.'

She bowed towards Orlando, gracefully,  
Then, turning to address Ferrau, she said:  
'Tis Fiordispina; do you not know me?  
To battle, with this champion, you're wed,  
While ruin's descending on your country:  
Your father Falsirone is now led  
In chains; Valencia burns and Aragon;  
Barcelona is besieged, yet you duel on.

For a mighty monarch, King Gradasso,  
Who rules Sericana, has crossed the sea,  
To fight Charlemagne; we Muslims also,  
Christians and Saracens, equally,  
He brings to ruin, and to peace cries no;  
He wants no truce, all folk his enemy.  
Gibraltar, he has taken, and Seville,  
And he would bend all Spain, now, to his will.

King Marsilio now looks to you alone,  
And summons you by name, in his distress.  
I saw him beat his face, and weep, and groan,  
And tear at his hair, in his wretchedness.  
Return: free your father, defend the throne,  
And thwart this King Gradasso's wilfulness.  
For you'll ne'er win a greater victory,  
Nor one that will gain you greater glory.'

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 11-13: ORLANDO AND FERRAU TAKE THEIR SEPARATE WAYS**

Much troubled, by all that she had to say,  
 Ferrau turned to address Count Orlando,  
 Saying: 'I swear, by Allah, that this day  
 You've fought better than any knight I know.  
 This fight cannot but suffer some delay,  
 For duty summons me, and I must go,  
 But when we resume, if I should conquer,  
 I'll deem myself the world's finest warrior.'

Each knight now took a separate course.  
 Orlando set his sights on the Orient,  
 Since his thoughts and desires drove him, perforce,  
 To seek Angelica; yet his intent  
 Was thwarted somewhat, for she'd had recourse  
 To necromancy when she swiftly went  
 From there, being borne aloft magically,  
 While her flight, and its path, none could see.

Ferrau pursued his way with much ardour,  
 Crashing through the forest, on his way,  
 For each long hour seemed to last forever,  
 Ere he could fight Gradasso, though, that day,  
 He rode as fast as the wind, or faster;  
 Yet I must leave him there, and now relay  
 My news of the emperor Charlemagne,  
 Who'd heard the ill rumours out of Spain.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 14-22: CHARLEMAGNE APPOINTS RINALDO TO AID MARSILIO**

He had summoned his council together;  
 Rinaldo, and all his peers, met his gaze.  
 He addressed them: 'Men say, if a neighbour  
 Finds that his house is suddenly ablaze,  
 We should look to our own. I say further  
 That though Marsilio has Moorish ways,  
 'Tis no matter, his country borders France,  
 And thus, we should aid him, with sword and lance.

It seems right to us, and tis our intent,  
 That we send help in every way we can,  
 To fight against this monstrous regiment  
 Of King Gradasso's; for I hear his plan  
 Is to threaten France itself, not content

With his invasion of Spain; his army's van  
 Has not approached our border idly;  
 He presents himself as our enemy.

We have therefore decided, for our safety,  
 To send forth fifty thousand knights; that force  
 Rinaldo shall lead, to whose bravery  
 And skill we have so often had recourse,  
 And whose worth is such, it seems to me,  
 That to do so must prove the better course.  
 Our captain then, in this shall be Rinaldo,  
 That most renowned lord of Montalbano.

And he shall rule Bordeaux, and Roussillon,  
 And Languedoc, and Gascony also,  
 As long as the war lasts, and hereupon  
 I command their lords to aid him against the foe.'  
 As he said this, Rinaldo knelt upon  
 The ground, while the king his grace did bestow  
 Upon him, and then cried: 'Sire, from this hour,  
 I'll do all, for you, that lies within my power.'

His eyes were filled with tears of happiness,  
 And not one word more could the knight utter.  
 The emperor granted him a fond caress,  
 And said: 'My son, I'd have you remember,  
 I place my realm in your hands, nothing less,  
 For the whole kingdom is in grave danger.  
 Orlando is away, and none knows where;  
 I now place the state itself in your care.'

He said this quietly, in the warrior's ear,  
 As all his peers rejoiced with Rinaldo,  
 All those that in the field would now appear:  
 His followers Ivone, Angelino,  
 And all who would now march beside the peer.  
 He knew what things to say, due thanks to show;  
 And soon his force was marching towards Spain,  
 While word was sent that would their entry gain.

That band of knights, experienced in war,  
 Followed Rinaldo and, departing France,  
 Climbed the high Pyrenean slopes, before  
 They glimpsed Aragon, in their advance,  
 Crossed the Col du Perthus, viewed the shore  
 And reached fair Girona, free of mischance.  
 Marsilio, halting there, had earlier  
 Despatched Grandonio to Barcelona,

To hold it against enemy attack,  
 Though deeming the defence would be in vain.  
 He could see no other end but its sack,  
 Next the surrender of the whole of Spain,  
 And, full of melancholy, all hope did lack.  
 He sat alone, nor e'er would speech maintain,  
 Till, all at once, the troops from France drew near,  
 While Ferrau the brave chose to re-appear.

The king still had with him Serpentino,  
 Spain's Caliph, Emir, and King Morgante,  
 Spinella, and Isolier, also,  
 And Matalista known for bravery,  
 (Fiordispina's brother he) although  
 Both Balugante and Falsirone,  
 His brothers, had been captured while, again,  
 His other lords had been taken or slain.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 23-24: GRADASSO'S PROGRESS THROUGH SPAIN**

That giant of an emperor, Gradasso,  
 Having sailed, in force, from Sericana,  
 Had subdued the Indian shores also,  
 And conquered Sri Lanka (Taprobana),  
 Then Persia, and Arabia, to their woe,  
 Having claimed all of north-east Africa,  
 And lands afar; he'd circled o'er the main,  
 Ere ever he had reached that land of Spain.

He'd combined many armies together,  
 Led by many kings, whom I'll not name here,  
 More men than had been united ever.  
 First, he captured Gibraltar, twould appear,  
 Then laid siege to, and conquered Granada,  
 While laying waste the country, far and near;  
 Toledo and Seville he pounced upon,  
 Took Valencia, then stormed Aragon.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 25-29: MARSILIO AND RINALDO MARCH TO THE RELIEF OF BARCELONA**

As I've said, he held captive all those lords  
 Obedient to Marsilio, but for  
 Those slain, or defending, with their swords,  
 That same king in Girona; and one more,

Grandonio, now besieged by his hordes,  
 Who would shortly be taken, he was sure,  
 Since Barcelona was, both night and day,  
 Attacked, and soon must fall to him as prey.

But let us return to Marsilio.  
 He offered his thanks to Charlemagne,  
 In royally welcoming Rinaldo.  
 Then he embraced Ferrau, the hope of Spain,  
 And said: 'My nephew, believe me, I know  
 That your courage and strength will regain  
 All our lost lands from this wretch Gradasso,  
 In destroying him you save the realm also.'

He gave orders that, the following day,  
 Their forces must head for Barcelona,  
 For Grandonio had messaged him, by way  
 Of endless signal fires, seeking further  
 Aid; the vanguard formed, without delay,  
 Its captains being two knights of valour,  
 Who left at dawn, to march against the foe,  
 Brave Spinella, and bold Serpentino.

That pair commanded twenty thousand men.  
 While Rinaldo's banner followed after,  
 Fifty thousand troops behind it; and then,  
 Morgante followed, and Matalista,  
 With thirty thousand more as brave again,  
 And the Emir and Isolier, with a further  
 Twenty thousand, then Ferrau with his force,  
 Of thirty thousand warriors, foot and horse.

Marsilio led the rear-guard, a host  
 Of fifty thousand in due procession.  
 Their orderly ranks, all along the coast,  
 Occupied the road in swift succession.  
 The sun was bright, the banners they did boast  
 Fluttered as they went, in martial fashion;  
 Soon they were revealed to King Gradasso,  
 The pennants of a fast-advancing foe.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 30-35: GRADASSO ORDERS AN ATTACK**

He summoned to him four kings: Cardone,  
 Francardo, Urnasso, Stracciaberra,  
 And said: 'Reduce Barcelona for me,  
 This day, and erase the place forever.'

Leave not a single soul alive! But he,  
 Grandonio, who wars for his master,  
 I would have him alive, and in my hand;  
 Against my savage hound I'd have him stand.'

These four kings came out of India,  
 And with them was many a dark-skinned race;  
 The host immeasurable in number.  
 Two thousand elephants their ranks did grace,  
 Armed with howdahs, and many a siege tower.  
 Gradasso ordered to the leading place,  
 Sri Lanka's king, a giant of a man,  
 That rode a tall giraffe, amidst his clan.

You've never seen so cruel a visage,  
 As that of this king; his name, Alfrera.  
 'Go forth,' said Gradasso, 'take the stage,  
 Go defeat their vanguard, as our leader.  
 Take all the men you have, their ranks outrage.'  
 And then he turned his face towards another,  
 The King of Arabia, at his side,  
 Faraldo, on whom Gradasso relied.

He gave this wicked brute a direct order:  
 To win the banner of King Charlemagne,  
 And make the knight Rinaldo his prisoner.  
 'But see that his horse, Baiardo, you gain,  
 Or I'll hang you like a thief but higher;  
 For tis the reason we are here in Spain,  
 Tis what brought me here from Sericana,  
 That courser, and the sword, Durindana.'

Then he commanded the King of Persia,  
 To seize Morgante and Matalista;  
 He being a man of mighty valour.  
 Behold the giant king of Macrobial!  
 His skin was as black as coal in colour;  
 To take Isolier, and the Emir,  
 Was his task, he went afoot only,  
 The name of this giant was Orione.

Ethiopia's king was a giant in cunning,  
 Whose open mouth was a palm's width in size;  
 He arrived before Gradasso, this Balorza,  
 And was told to seize Ferrau as his prize.  
 Then the king sent men from Sericana,  
 To supplement those forces, and likewise

Sent forth their lords, ere he was content;  
 He then retired, unarmoured, to his tent.

### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 36-40: ALFRERA OF SRI LANKA DEFEATS SERPENTINO AND SPINELLA**

Let me speak once more of Marsilio:  
 That king had reached the slopes above the sea,  
 And now could view the open plain below,  
 Filled full with armed men, bent on victory.  
 At first, the king could scarcely credit though,  
 That Earth could yield so vast a company,  
 As had been brought together at that place,  
 Too many to be counted, face to face.

The armies soon drew closer together,  
 Their standard bearers leading, o'er the plain.  
 There were Muslims on one side and the other,  
 For Moors flanked the troops of Charlemagne,  
 As Serpentino, and the bold Spinella  
 Of Altamonte, urged on the forces of Spain,  
 And both parties now raised their battle-cries  
 Which threatened to bring down the very skies.

The mountains and the shore echoed loudly  
 To the sound of the horns and drums' thunder  
 As Serpentino led the charge, riding swiftly  
 On his splendid, and most fearsome courser.  
 Yet nothing could seem as dreadful surely,  
 As the advance of that fierce king, Alfrera,  
 The giant urging his giraffe o'er the land,  
 (Twas twenty feet in height) his club in hand.

That weapon was made of solid iron,  
 And it measured three full palm-widths around.  
 Yet Serpentino, at full speed, raced on,  
 With lowered lance, fast eating up the ground,  
 And struck at the giant, yet broke his weapon,  
 While that fantastic creature wheeled around,  
 And ran at Serpentino with such force,  
 He fell, to lie, half-dead, beside his horse.

Alfrera simply left him lying there,  
 And rode, on his giraffe, against the foe.  
 He seized Spinella, as the hound the hare,  
 And dragging him aboard, clubbed those below,  
 Who defended the standard, none did spare,

Won the banner, with a single fierce blow,  
And sent it on, still the fight pursuing,  
With the captive Spinella, to his king.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 41-43: BUT IS DRIVEN OFF  
BY RINALDO**

Rinaldo now briefly left his command  
To Alardo, his brother, and Ivone,  
For he'd viewed the battlefield near to hand  
And seen Alfrera charging in fury,  
And the troops all scattering, nigh unmanned,  
So, he delayed not, but sent word, swiftly,  
To Alardo to charge with all his force,  
While for bold Alfrera he set his course.

How might he slay a warrior that wore  
A serpent's skin covering his breastplate?  
Yet with such force against his foe he bore,  
He toppled him, giraffe and all, then straight  
Against the enemy ranks charged, once more,  
Wheeling Baiardo, Fusberta's full weight  
Of blade clearing a path, till his strong force  
Of Christians arrived; whence no recourse

Was left to Gradasso's bands but to fly,  
Two hundred thousand scattered instantly,  
Their broken standards toppled from the sky.  
Alfrera rose, a fearsome sight to see,  
(To show him needs a better pen than I  
Yet wield) but, finding the enemy  
Had shattered his forces, he sped away;  
To flee himself, or seek to save the day.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 44-49: WHO KILLS  
FARALDO OF ARABIA, AND FRAMARTE OF  
PERSIA**

Rinaldo, deep amidst the enemy,  
Swung his mighty sword to left and right,  
Severing arms, and heads, furiously,  
Sending men, bloodied, to the ground, outright.  
Like a herd of goats, the foe fled swiftly,  
Before the ardour of the Christian knight;  
But now that warrior had more to do,  
For Faraldo and his force came in view.

He was the crown king of Arabia,  
Possessed of no end of strength and skill,  
Yet now had little time to show either,  
For the lance pierced his chest, so as to spill  
His life blood, the tip protruding further.  
Rinaldo spurred Baiardo on, at will,  
Slaying the Arabs, scattering them abroad,  
Struck by the steed, or toppled by his sword.

As ever, he found himself in company  
With mighty followers, against the foe,  
Alardo, Angelieri, Ivone,  
Guicciardo, and Ricciardetto,  
Were present; and, mounted again swiftly,  
Once more, to the fray, sped Serpentino;  
Yet Rinaldo was still first among the best,  
His great deeds were ever praised by the rest.

Chased by Rinaldo for a league or more,  
The Arabian force was in full flight,  
Camel and dromedaries fled before  
Baiardo; now Framarte met our knight,  
The Persian king's gold banner he now saw;  
Rinaldo aimed his lance, which deep did bite,  
Three good yards beyond the king's back, it showed,  
Borne off by him, as on his courser strode.

That great king then toppled, dead, to the ground,  
As his men fled, wildly, o'er the open field.  
Rinaldo swung Fusberta all around;  
Ask me not how many men tried to yield.  
Behold Orione, that savage hound,  
None more abandoned the war revealed;  
His skin deep-black, no clothes did he wear,  
For his hide was hard as bone, everywhere;

This naked giant now joined in the fight,  
The wretch wielding a tree in either hand,  
Scattering the Christians in sudden flight;  
Helms, shields proved no defence, you understand,  
So much so that Rinaldo's force seemed slight,  
And he constrained to summon back his band  
Of faithful brothers, sounding brief retreat,  
Before returning to ensure the foe's defeat.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 50-52: ALFRERA RETURNS TO THE ATTACK, WITH BALORZA OF ETHIOPIA**

But as he shared his counsel with the rest  
And they granted him their views, equally,  
The giant Alfrera their group addressed,  
With lowered lance, leading a company;  
A great host too, advanced, at his behest,  
Balorza's Ethiopians, a vast sea  
Of men, marching forth in endless files,  
Covering a vast tract of several miles.

Those ranks came on with such a fearsome cry  
They shook the earth, the sea, the heavens too;  
Ivone, Serpentino, these did eye,  
Suggesting aid, ere they attack this crew.  
Said Rinaldo: 'No honour's gained thereby,  
Retreat if you wish, yet I, I promise you,  
Alone, will shortly drive them o'er the field,  
And destroy them all, though they seek to yield.'

Without another word, the cavalier,  
Clenched his teeth, and swiftly galloped away.  
That ardent knight shattered his lance, I fear,  
But needed help from no other, on that day,  
Who, with Fusberta's blade, a path did clear,  
Shouting, threateningly, amidst the fray:  
'Give ground, you vile, ungovernable crew,  
I'll send you all to Hell; there you may stew.'

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 53-58: BALORZA CAPTURES RICCIARDETTO**

King Marsilio, watching from a hill,  
Saw the sudden movement on the field,  
And so informed Ferrau that twas his will  
That his men should advance, with sword and shield.  
Rinaldo, thrusting hard, was plunging still  
Amidst the Saracens, and thus concealed  
From view; he was all bloodied from the fight,  
None has e'er witnessed a ghastlier sight.

Now pitched battles broke out everywhere;  
While none outdid Ferrau in endeavour,  
As he headed the knights advancing there,  
Brave and valiant men who fought for honour.  
Matalista and Morgante, wrought their share

The Caliph, and Emir, full of valour,  
Ricciardetto and Angelino,  
Ivone, Alardo, Serpentino.

Balorza, his features as black as night,  
Grasped Ricciardetto, and yet fought on,  
Unhampered by the weight of that young knight,  
Clasping him to his side, all weebegone.  
The others rushed to aid him, as was right,  
But the giant clung to him, whereupon  
Alardo, Ivone, and Angelino,  
Charged him, though he but mocked the weakling foe.

Alfrera dragged Isolier, with force,  
Despite his stout resistance, from his steed,  
Though the bold Ferrau swiftly crossed his course,  
Staying close in Isolier's hour of need;  
Yet the knight could barely control his horse,  
In dread of the giraffe, strange beast indeed,  
Such that he failed to make his mount advance,  
That but swerved aside, at the slightest chance.

Cruel Orione of Macrobia,  
Slaughtered many a man with those two trees;  
His chest and face were somewhat bloodier,  
But, with bone-like skin, he fought with ease,  
Unharmd by swords, or lances, or whatever.  
Let me turn to Rinaldo, if you please:  
He was much perturbed to see his foe  
Balorza, bearing off Ricciardetto.

Rinaldo knew he must show his valour  
Now, or never; he loved Ricciardetto,  
And would have died to save him, moreover.  
The warrior ground his teeth, angered so  
That his eyeballs rolled, to see his brother  
In such distress, constrained by the foe.  
But I must leave his plight for a moment,  
And the siege of Barcelona now present.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 59-62: MEANWHILE GRANDONIO DEFENDS BARCELONA**

I've said Grandonio was commanded  
To defend Barcelona, resolutely;  
While Gradasso equally demanded  
That his Indian troops reduce the city.

Bishop Turpin his tale much expanded,  
In recounting this task's enormity.  
Thus, before the place could be subdued,  
(Its walls were strong) a struggle now ensued.

To the south, where the city met the sea,  
Innumerable warships faced the shore,  
While a host of elephants, equally  
Lined the sands, bearing turrets, trained for war.  
Dark-skinned warriors fired their arrows freely,  
Cowing the people, who, fearful of more,  
Fled from the streets, behind their walls of stone,  
While Grandonio stood to face them, alone.

A great cry arose, from his enemies,  
As they charged against the ramparts below,  
While he yet defended the walls, with ease;  
Twas hard to counter this Grandonio.  
He hurled great beams, the trunks of mighty trees,  
Pillars, chunks of towers, upon the foe,  
Stones from the battlements, while every throw  
Downed an elephant, or dealt some cruel blow.

Grandonio strode about the wall above,  
And leapt from place to place as required,  
Raining destruction, with his every move,  
With every heavy object which he fired  
On those below; an obstacle did prove,  
To their assault, acting as he desired,  
Pouring down pitch and sulphur from on high,  
A seething mass of flame from out the sky.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 63-65: RINALDO SLAYS BALORZA**

Let me pause, and return to Rinaldo,  
Whose mind was greatly troubled as he thought  
How he might rescue Ricciardetto,  
Yet despairing of finding what he sought;  
For Balorza gazed down on those below,  
Grasping the iron club with which he fought,  
Clad head to toe in armour, defiant,  
Mounted there on his warlike elephant.

Thus, a head-on assault seemed bound to fail,  
Nor would Rinaldo's weapon reach so high  
That he could strike, and pierce the other's mail;

Yet from Baiardo a strange course he did try,  
Leaping up, from his steed's back, to assail  
That savage mount, and so climb, thereby,  
To catch the giant unaware, split his helm  
And steel cap, and strike, to overwhelm,

With a second blow, that cleft his skull in two,  
Dealt with the force of hammer on anvil,  
Balorza fell, and with a like force too,  
Such that the ground there quaked; then he lay still.  
The Saracens about him now fled from view,  
Robbed of courage by that great fall, and will.  
They fled, as hares before the leopard flee,  
Hunted by that brave knight, relentlessly.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 66-70: ALFRERA CAPTURES FERRAU, THEN REPORTS TO GRADASSO**

Meanwhile, Ferrau, had spent four hours, or more,  
Pursuing Alfrera (seeking a way  
To free Isolier, whom that giant bore)  
Eyes blazing, tracking him through that affray,  
Till the giraffe, that strange mount, trained for war,  
Reached the pavilion where Gradasso lay,  
Carrying its rider to the entrance there,  
With Ferrau behind, who an attack did dare.

Alfrera, on finding himself assailed,  
And cornered, dropped Isolier, and then  
Swung his club at Ferrau's helm; he prevailed,  
Unseating the knight and, dismounting again,  
He then knelt on him, his foe stunned and paled,  
And bound the warrior tightly, and when  
He'd done so, retrieved the other knight,  
Isolier, whom he'd taken in the fight.

Alfrera, entering, addressed Gradasso:  
'My lord, our men are scattered every way.  
He seems too strong for us, this Rinaldo,  
And honour must be paid to him this day,  
Though I hate to praise your enemy so.  
An hour or two ago, I hear men say,  
He split Balorza's skull; think then, my lord  
The value to the foe he doth afford.

Be pleased to ask any of your men, here,  
Or take my word, regarding his great skill.  
I myself saw Faraldo pierced, I fear,  
Front to back by his lance; him he did kill,  
And the King of Persia, whom you held dear,  
Both were felled, subject to Rinaldo's will.  
And, I admit, I too he overbore,  
A thing that has ne'er happened heretofore.'

Gradasso said: 'How can Allah thus allow  
Such power to be vested in Rinaldo?  
If I were the crowned king of heaven, now,  
(For I esteem as naught this world below)  
I would not rest content an hour, I vow,  
Till in person, I'd revealed, if this foe  
Is one valiant enough to thwart me so,  
And keep from me his courser, Baiardo.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 71-74: GRADASSO JOINS THE BATTLE IN PERSON**

With this, the king called for his armour,  
Which mighty Samson had worn formerly,  
None on this earth was finer or stronger.  
From head toe, he was steel-clad, entirely.  
Meanwhile his people were wont to scatter,  
In fear, Rinaldo hunting them freely.  
Gradasso had to speed his preparation,  
Ere Rinaldo reached his frail pavilion.

He stayed not, but mounted his Arab mare,  
A steed of quite immeasurable size;  
None was larger in the world; standing there  
She was as great as Baiardo, leastwise.  
Behold Rinaldo, the Saracens' despair,  
Riding o'er the plain, the foe before his eyes,  
Slaying many, and scattering all the rest,  
Shattering head or shoulder, arm or chest.

Gradasso charged on his mare, at speed,  
With confidence, and daring, in his glance,  
Caring not a whit for any man, indeed,  
And towards bold Rinaldo aimed his lance,  
But he raised such a thunder that his steed  
Terrified Baiardo with her loud advance;  
Full nine feet, Baiardo leapt in the air;  
No higher leap e'er witnessed anywhere.

Gradasso marvelled at the wondrous feat,  
But showed no concern, advancing swiftly,  
Scattering the troops, ere they could retreat,  
Unseating Ivone and Morgante.  
Alfrera followed, their fall to complete,  
And make them his prisoners, entirely,  
Binding tight, Guicciardo, Angelino,  
And Spinella, all downed by Gradasso.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO IV: 75-79: AND TEMPORARILY HALTS RINALDO**

But, by now, Rinaldo had turned about,  
And seeing the Saracen's great power,  
Called for his heavy lance, and gave a shout:  
'O Baiardo, my brave courser, the hour  
Demands you fail me not, see now the rout,  
Pay attention now, and the ground devour,  
Not, by God, because I fear that man there,  
Though he owns to a strength beyond compare.'

With this he drew down his steel visor,  
And charged full boldly against the king.  
Who admired his proud advance, however,  
Content to wait, pleased still with everything.  
It seemed a slight task to greet the other,  
And this Rinaldo from his saddle fling.  
But the proof is in the outcome, as we say;  
He met with more than he thought, on that day.

The clash was greater in enormity  
Than any other that you might have heard.  
Baiardo's hind-quarters sank completely  
To the earth; the first time that had occurred.  
He soon raised his lord again, though sadly  
Rinaldo was half-stunned, and scarcely stirred.  
The bold mare too had fallen in a heap,  
But Gradasso raised her, and with a leap,

He charged at the other knights, once more,  
Spurring her on, while ordering Alfrera,  
To catch the steed Baiardo, and be sure  
To do so carefully, with his master,  
Rinaldo, but the giant failed to procure  
Either, for Baiardo ran the faster,  
O'er the plain, and bore away the knight,  
Who revived, in a while, while still in sight.



Indeed, he thought he still was midst the fray,  
And sought Gradasso, grasping at his sword.  
Alfrera followed, though in vain I'd say,  
(On his giraffe, pursuing that brave lord)  
For Baiardo, o'er the plain, fled away,  
And a greater turn of speed did afford,  
Until Rinaldo could turn the steed about,  
And seek for King Gradasso midst the rout.

**BOOK I: CANTO IV: 80-89: GRADASSO AND  
RINALDO ENGAGE IN A RUNNING BATTLE**

He found him just as he'd overcome  
Alardo, who was Rinaldo's brother,  
Gradasso saw him not; for he came from  
Behind, as he sought to down another,  
And so, he only heard the sudden hum  
Of Rinaldo's blade, and sought to recover,  
As the latter swung, two-handed, with such force,  
He thought to strike the monarch from his horse.

And yet that mighty blow was nothing new  
To one who wore the garland of valour,  
Think not that he flinched, or that it drew  
A drop of blood, or marked his strong armour.  
He called to Rinaldo: 'I'll prove to you,  
(Perchance you'll live, to tell of it later)  
Which of us is the finer warrior;  
And, should you win, I'll yield you due honour.'

So, the mighty Gradasso spoke, and then  
He emphasised his message with a blow.  
Rinaldo bowed beneath it, stunned again;  
He'd never known so fierce a hit, although  
His helmet saved him from the Saracen,  
Which had belonged to King Mambrino,  
And he clung to Baiardo as the steed  
Bore him away from the scene, at speed.

Gradasso followed for a mile or so,  
Wishing to capture him at any price,  
But, quickly losing sight of Rinaldo,  
Halted and turned back; yet, in a trice,  
Rinaldo, alert once more to his foe,  
And thinking that a fresh blow would suffice  
To wreak revenge on the king, two-handed,  
His sword on the monarch's helm now landed.

He struck there with such overwhelming force  
King Gradasso's teeth rattled with the blow;  
That valiant ruler swayed a little on his horse,  
Unamused: 'He's the very devil, though,'  
He said, 'swerving not an inch from his course,  
Whether the battle brings him joy or woe;  
Yet Fortune will not favour him forever,  
As, sooner or later, he'll discover.'

Such the speech the proud Gradasso uttered,  
As he engaged once more, his eyes aflame.  
Ask not, if our knight watched, as he muttered;  
Oh, he kept his eye, my lords, on the game.  
For the giant aimed a swing as he spluttered,  
A two-handed blow; twas more of the same;  
And though Rinaldo had parried the blow,  
He would still have been slain by his fierce foe.

He'd no wish to linger, and Baiardo  
With an almighty leap now saved the day.  
The giant sought to redouble his first blow,  
Yet Baiardo now leapt the other way.  
'Must Allah yet deny my purpose so?'  
The monarch asked, at this wild display;  
And made a third attempt, but all in vain,  
For Baiardo seemed a winged steed again.

Wearying of this idle task he chose  
To demonstrate his mastery elsewhere.  
And so plunged amidst the ranks of his foes,  
Toppling riders and steeds; yet, even there,  
Rode not a hundred paces, I suppose,  
Ere our knight sought his company to share,  
And though he did little yet of mention,  
Forced the king to pay him close attention.

At last, they turned to their fierce duel once more,  
Which demanded great care from Rinaldo.  
But that giant, Orione, he now saw,  
Still dragging behind him Ricciardetto.  
The vile dog grasped him by the feet, as before,  
While the youth cried for aid, in his great woe,  
Such that Rinaldo, witnessing his plight,  
Thought he'd die of compassion at the sight.

His eyes with such a flood of tears did flow,  
That Rinaldo could scarcely see a thing.  
He'd ne'er, in all his life, been troubled so,  
Yet he felt his pride and anger swelling;  
I'll describe to you, in the next canto,  
The end of all this unresolved duelling,  
Which, as I have said, had begun at dawn,  
Lasted all day, and yet more blows did spawn.



BOOK I: CANTO V: SEEKING ANGELICA



ARGOMENTO.

Rinaldo vien da Gradasso isfidato .  
 E Malagigi da Angelica sciolto .  
 Rinaldo con inganno in mar guidato  
 Arriua in vn giardin vago e ben colto ,  
 Vince Orlando vn Gigante ismisurato  
 E vende al vecchio padre il figlio tolto .  
 La Sfinge uccide il buon Conte gagliardo ,  
 Combatte poi col Gigante Zambardo .



ALLEGORIE.

IL lamento, che fa Rinaldo trouandosi aggabato , c'insegna  
 quanto noi doueressimo preporre l'honore à tutte le altre  
 cose.

ORLANDO , che racquista il figliuolo al pellegrino , ci dimo-  
 stra quanto Iddio sia misericordioso , quando vno se gli rac-  
 comanda di buon cuore .

LA Sfinge è figurata per il Demouio, che cerca con mille inirighi  
 inuilupparci il ceruello, per guadagnarci le anime nostre .

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 1-6: RINALDO SLAYS ORIONE, THE GIANT KING OF MACROBIA**

You will recall, my lords, how brave Rinaldo  
Was much troubled on seeing Orione,  
Bearing away poor Ricciardetto.  
He abandoned Gradasso completely,  
And attacked the giant, who, as you know,  
Went all naked into battle, for he  
Possessed so thick and hard a hide, all over,  
He had no need to clad it with armour.

Now, Rinaldo had dismounted promptly  
To keep Baiardo safe from all attack,  
At the hands of this giant Orione;  
Indeed, he'd swiftly slipped from off his back.  
It seems that the giant believed that he  
Had at last found a knight that naught did lack  
In the way of courage, who sought to fight  
Hand to hand, for he mocked him outright;

Rinaldo merely sought to save his steed,  
While the giant had not met with Fusberta,  
Nor the strength of Rinaldo's arm; indeed,  
If he had, he'd have wished for more armour.  
Rinaldo swung, and wrought a mighty deed,  
Slicing that wretch's thigh, who did utter  
A loud bellow like a bull, saw the blood,  
And dropped Ricciardetto where he stood.

As Ricciardetto lay there on the ground,  
Stunned and stupefied, scarcely breathing,  
The giant gripped his club, and glanced around,  
While Rinaldo stood, patiently, watching.  
The king aimed a blow, seeking to confound  
The knight, like to send a mountain reeling.  
He had merely retired a pace or two,  
When, behold, King Gradasso came in view.

Rinaldo was unsure of what this meant,  
Though he certainly felt a touch of fear,  
Yet appeared as well-nigh indifferent,  
And a swift blow towards the giant did steer.  
Fusberta whistled, swung with true intent,  
Sweeping through the air, and slicing sheer  
Through the giant's side; so fiercely it flew  
That the wretch fell to the earth, cut in two.

The bold knight scarcely lingered though,  
Not seeking to observe the giant's descent,  
But swiftly remounted his Baiardo,  
A close meeting with Gradasso his intent.  
But the king was still musing on the blow,  
The wondrous sword-stroke, that the giant had rent,  
And signed, with his un-gauntleted hand,  
For him to join him; well-nigh a command.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 7-13: GRADASSO PROPOSES A DUEL THE FOLLOWING DAY**

He addressed the warrior: 'Come, sir knight,  
It would surely be a crime for such prowess,  
And such courage as you have shown in fight,  
To perish here; twould bring me much distress.  
You're surrounded by my men, such that flight  
Offers not the smallest chance of success;  
To escape's impossible, you surely see,  
You'd be caught or slain, should you seek to flee.

Allah forbid that I show disrespect  
To as valiant a warrior as you,  
So, for honour's sake, I hereby elect  
(Since the evening is nigh upon us too)  
That we fight tomorrow and, there, effect  
A duel on foot, so naught can hide our true  
Abilities; unequal mounts do so,  
Hence, I'll quit my mare, and you Baiardo.

But let us first agree upon a pact:  
That if you chance to kill or capture me,  
I'll release all my prisoners intact;  
King Marsilio's subjects shall go free,  
And your friends, by my gracious act.  
But if, instead, I gain the victory,  
Baiardo's mine; and, win or lose the test,  
I'll depart, nor come again to the West.'

Rinaldo sought no time to think, but cried:  
'Sire, this duel must be; an encounter  
That will but bring me pleasure, on my side,  
And can only add to my own honour.  
Your skill and prowess are such beside  
That, if I'm defeated by your valour,  
There is surely no shame in such a fate,  
Rather glory, that I die at your dictate.

As for your suggestion, I reply  
That I wish you well, and thank you kindly,  
Yet I am not in such dire straight, that I  
Must beg for my life, or seek your mercy,  
For, come the whole world in arms, I defy  
Its efforts, and your guards', to prevent me  
From departing; and if you wish, perchance,  
To prove it, I suggest that they advance.'

Promptly then, the king and knight agreed,  
On the required arrangements for the fight.  
The place would be the shore, six miles indeed  
From their forces, and therefore out of sight.  
Each could employ the armour he might need,  
For defence, and the weapon of a knight,  
His good sword; but no lance, or club, or dart,  
He'd bring, nor a friend, that might take his part.

Each was eager, and prepared to appear  
For the encounter, at the break of day,  
And rehearsed in their minds, devoid of fear,  
The varied skills that they might set in play.  
Yet, before they arm, I would have you hear  
Of Angelica, at home, in Cathay,  
Having been conveyed, by magic art,  
(As I've related) to that far-off part.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 14-18: ANGELICA IS  
TORMENTED BY HER LOVE FOR RINALDO**

Despite the distance, she could not remove  
From her mind, the image of Rinaldo;  
And as a wounded deer (here, struck by Love),  
Whose pain but grows with time, and feels the flow  
Of heart's-blood, finds the faster she may move,  
The more it hurts, and adds to her deep woe,  
So, she, whose flame burnt higher, for Rinaldo  
Felt the fire in her heart increase also.

To sleep at night the maid could ne'er aspire,  
For thoughts of love now possessed her mind.  
And if, when long-tormented in Love's fire,  
She found a little rest, with tears half-blind,  
Before the dawn, she dreamed, in her desire,  
Of Rinaldo, who seemed to flee, unkind  
As ever, filled with anger, from her sight;  
She abandoned, in that forest, by the knight.

She ever turned her face towards the west,  
As she sighed and she wept, while exclaiming:  
'In that place, midst those people, he doth rest  
That cruel, yet so handsome man,' complaining  
Of him. 'He cares naught for me, he confessed,  
And this one thing saddens all my being,  
That I must love, despite myself, I own,  
A man whose heart is harder than a stone.

To my art's extremes, I've sought to pursue,  
Every enchantment known, every spell,  
Culled rare herbs at night, when the moon was new,  
And, at the sun's eclipse, strange roots, as well,  
Yet this savage pain, that pierces me through,  
And grieves my poor heart more than I can tell,  
Enchantments, herbs or gems cannot remove;  
Love conquers all; such things but idle prove.

Why could he not have come to Merlin's stone,  
Where I captured the mage, Malagigi?  
I'd not have screamed, faced with him alone!  
His wretch of a cousin, I've sunk deeply,  
Yet I'll release him, so that, having shown  
A fine example of true courtesy,  
The knight may see how, by loving kindness,  
Is revealed his endless ungratefulness.'

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 19-22: SHE FREES  
MALAGIGI BUT ASKS A FAVOUR OF HIM**

With this, she plunged far beneath the sea,  
To where Malagigi was imprisoned.  
By magic, she was borne there easily,  
While no other way there could be opened.  
When the mage heard the charmed bolt shot free,  
He thought some demon had been commissioned  
To murder him, there, in that sunken keep,  
For no one ever wandered midst the deep.

Once there, she had the wise Malagigi  
Borne, in a trice, to her palace above.  
And, in a splendid chamber she, swiftly,  
From his arms, the heavy chains did remove.  
As yet, she'd done all this most silently,  
But when his feet were free, and he could move,  
She said: 'You were my prisoner, my lord,  
But, to you, full liberty I now afford.

Yet since I've released you from that cell,  
 I ask a favour of you, in return;  
 If you brought me your cousin, twould be well,  
 From death to life I'd be restored, in turn.  
 Rinaldo, I mean; for with pain I dwell,  
 I hide not my deep woe; I freeze and burn;  
 Love torments me, with fire and ice, I say,  
 And allows me no peace, by night or day.

If you will swear to me, on your honour,  
 That you will have Rinaldo come to me,  
 I'll reward you indeed for that small favour,  
 With what you desire most fervently,  
 Your precious book of magic; however,  
 No deceit, if to my terms you agree!  
 I warn you, an enchanted ring I bear,  
 That can thwart your magic spells, everywhere.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 23-27: HE IS TO BRING RINALDO TO HER**

Malagigi raised no opposition,  
 But swore to what she wished, readily.  
 Without knowing Rinaldo's position,  
 He could bend his will, of a certainty.  
 At sunset, he started on his mission,  
 And as darkness descended, rapidly,  
 Upon a demon's back the bold mage flew,  
 Through the air, all Earth open to his view.

A flow of speech the demon did maintain,  
 (As he sped upon his way, through the night)  
 With regard to the invasion of Spain,  
 And Ricciardetto's capture in the fight,  
 And the terms of the duel did explain.  
 Of all that had occurred, throughout that flight,  
 The demon spoke, although I'll not deny  
 He coloured it, well-knowing how to lie.

At last, they were approaching Barcelona,  
 (It was, perhaps, an hour before the dawn).  
 Once there the mage quit the demon's shoulder,  
 And searched the barrack-tents, as he had sworn,  
 For the knight, who, ere the day was older,  
 To fair Angelica must now be borne.  
 He found Rinaldo, fast asleep, within,  
 And woke him, so his own task might begin.

Rinaldo had never felt so happy,  
 In his life, as when he saw his cousin there,  
 And, on his leaving his bed instantly,  
 Warm embraces passed between the pair.  
 Then Malagigi said: 'Come, dress swiftly,  
 For an oath I made, a promise did swear.  
 You can release me from it, if you will;  
 If not, I must return, a captive still.

Let no suspicion in your mind be bred,  
 Of your facing any kind of danger,  
 You need simply take a maiden to bed,  
 Fair as the lily, glowing like amber.  
 In freeing me, with joy you shall be fed.  
 This maid, with a blushing face, moreover,  
 Is one perchance you'd ne'er have thought to seek,  
 Angelica it is, of whom I speak.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 28-31: BUT RINALDO, NOW LOATHING HER, REFUSES**

Now Rinaldo, upon hearing the name  
 Of that maid whom he now loathed, heart and soul,  
 Felt a deep annoyance, while a flame  
 Of pride and anger o'er his cheeks now stole.  
 He sought to reply, but no answer came,  
 His throat seemed choked as by a blazing coal,  
 Tongue-tied, he now would speak, now delay,  
 And, for a while, not a word could he say.

At last, being yet a knight of valour,  
 Who e'er refused to hide behind a lie:  
 'Aught would I do that preserves my honour,  
 (I would even consent, my friend, to die)  
 Face the harshest fortune, any danger,  
 All grief and suffering,' such was his reply,  
 'Yet, hear this Malagigi, I will never  
 Not even to free you, seek her ever.'

Malagigi was stunned by his answer;  
 Those words he'd ne'er expected to hear.  
 And he begged Rinaldo to reconsider,  
 And keep him from the dungeon he did fear,  
 Out of mercy, and reminded him of former  
 Services, should he hold him less than dear  
 As his kin; but all proved of no avail;  
 Rinaldo still refused to hear his tale.

When he'd pleaded a while, yet been denied,  
He cried: 'Rinaldo, tis true what they say,  
The ungrateful are never satisfied,  
Though the kindest of good deeds comes their way.  
I've well nigh been to Hell for you, and fried  
In its fires, yet to prison you'd convey  
My body thus, to perish. Yet, beware,  
I can drive you to shame and deep despair.'

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 32-35: MALAGIGI DECEIVES  
RINALDO AND GRADASSO**

When he'd spoken, he turned upon his heel,  
And vanished in a trice, upon his way,  
And then, once he was where he might reveal  
(Having conjured up a plan, I should say)  
His great book of magic spells, yet conceal  
His power to call up demons, night or day,  
He chose Falsetta, and Draginazzo,  
From those summoned, and let the others go.

As a herald he disguised this Falsetta,  
Dressed like a servant to Marsilio,  
The demon bore Spanish insignia,  
Coat of arms, and staff of office, also,  
And he then appeared as a messenger,  
In Rinaldo's name, before Gradasso,  
To inform him that, this next day, at three,  
Rinaldo would take the field; joyously,

Gradasso agreed, and gave Falsetta  
A golden cup to reward the fellow;  
The demon then returned to his master,  
And changed his semblance so as to show  
A ring in his ear, not on his finger,  
His head wrapped in a cloth; the robe below  
Down almost to his feet, and trimmed with gold,  
As Gradasso's words he feigned to unfold.

He'd the look of a Persian Al-Mansur,  
With a gilded sword and a mighty horn,  
And, to the king and court of Spain, he bore  
A message that at break of day, this morn,  
His master Gradasso would walk the shore,  
Armed, and alone, such was the oath he'd sworn,  
Nor would that valiant king fail to appear;  
While the imp ensured Rinaldo could hear.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 36-39: THE DEMON  
DRAGINAZZO TAKES ON GRADASSO'S FORM**

Rinaldo, therefore, armed himself in haste,  
(It being near to dawn) amidst all there,  
And, quietly, Ricciardetto he graced  
With the task of his steed Baiardo's care.  
'I know not if I'll win, or be disgraced;  
I place my trust in God, in this affair,  
Yet if the Lord shall see me fight in vain,  
Command my men; return to Charlemagne,

Obeys his will, while yet you breathe, I say,  
Don't follow my example, for, I own,  
I have erred through anger, many a day,  
Or disdain; he hurts his foot, not the stone,  
That kicks the wall, in furious display,  
To my king, who is worthy of his throne,  
And has ever favoured me all his reign,  
I leave Baiardo, if perchance I'm slain.'

He spoke other words to Ricciardetto,  
And, with tears in his eyes, clasped him once more,  
Then, leaving behind the steed, Baiardo,  
Our knight, alone, proceeded to the shore.  
A ship was anchored there, in dawn's fair glow,  
No sailors seemed aboard, or none he saw,  
And no one else was present on the sand,  
As he waited for Gradasso, sword in hand.

Yet Draginazzo appeared, and, behold,  
He'd the form of Gradasso, and was dressed  
In a surcoat all of blue, barred with gold,  
O'er bright armour, its steel the very best,  
While a crown his shining helm did uphold,  
That had a pure white pennant for a crest.  
A scimitar he had, and that white horn  
That by the king himself was always borne.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 40-42: RINALDO FIGHTS  
WITH DRAGINAZZO**

The demon now approached along the shore,  
Walking in the manner of Gradasso.  
From its sheath his scimitar he did draw.  
He seemed to shed bright flame, to spark, to glow.  
Rinaldo, cautious as to what lay in store,

Stood ready, his sword positioned low,  
But Draginazzo hesitation read,  
And aimed a furious blow at his head.

Rinaldo replied to that hissing blade  
With a fierce back-handed stroke to the thigh.  
Both redoubled their blows, as on they laid,  
Waxing more spirited as time went by.  
Our knight breathed hard, with every move he made,  
Seeking to prove his strength, his courage high,  
And discarded his shield, as on he poured,  
Employing both his hands to swing his sword.

He struck hard, seeking to win high renown,  
Throwing all his weight behind that fierce blow.  
Fusberta struck against the demon's crown,  
Sending his white crest to the ground below,  
Then slid along the helm, and ran on down,  
Sounding against the hard shield of his foe,  
Scoring, from top to bottom, all it found,  
Till its tip sank, a foot deep, in the ground.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 43-47: WHO LURES HIM ABOARD SHIP AND THEN VANISHES**

The cunning demon now seized the moment,  
Turned his back, at once, and appeared to flee;  
While Rinaldo, not perceiving his intent,  
Thought him beaten, and pursued joyously.  
While he upon this blind pursuit was bent,  
Falsetta set his course towards the sea,  
Our knight crying: 'Wait, my lord Gradasso:  
He that flees can't hope to ride Baiardo;

Is this the courage that a monarch shows?  
Feel you no shame in showing me your back?  
Turn; here's the steed, none better I suppose,  
Whether in stout defence or bold attack.  
His saddle's new, see how his fine coat glows,  
Fresh shod but yesterday, naught does he lack.  
Come, take him, sire, and be not so afraid,  
I offer him at the point of my blade.'

The demon waited not, but sped away  
As if he were carried on the breeze,  
And like an arrow sped across the bay,  
To land aboard the vessel, there, with ease.

Nor did Rinaldo linger on his way,  
But plunged in, and reached it, by degrees,  
Climbed aboard and dealt such a blow, I vow,  
As made the demon leap from stern to bow.

Now, Rinaldo was absorbed in the fight,  
And pursued the imp, wielding Fusberta,  
Unaware that the vessel was in flight,  
And, across the waves, sped ever further.  
So involved in the battle was our knight,  
That its motion he failed to discover  
Till the ship was seven miles from the shore,  
When the imp vanished, to be seen no more.

He disappeared in a puff of smoke. Ask not  
If Rinaldo was amazed; he was indeed.  
He searched the ship, examined every spot;  
It was empty, though it moved away at speed,  
For the sails were full, and thus the upshot  
Was that he saw the land behind recede,  
And alone on the deck, his strength all spent,  
You may imagine that bold knight's lament!

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 48-52: RINALDO LAMENTS HIS SITUATION**

'Ah, Lord, on high,' he cried, 'for what sin  
Have you punished me with this misfortune?  
I know I've often erred (where to begin?)  
But this penance is most inopportune.  
I'll be shamed forever, without, within  
The royal court, my motives they'll impugn,  
Not a soul will believe a word I say  
Should I recount all that's occurred this day.

The king has appointed me commander,  
And well-nigh placed his realm in my hand,  
But like a false, vile, coward of a traitor,  
I now flee across the waves, far from land.  
I seem to hear the roar, growing louder,  
Of that foreign host, pounding o'er the sand,  
And the cries of my troops, their misery,  
As Alfrera slays, and seeks the victory.

How could I quit you, my Ricciardetto?  
How could I leave you to the enemy?  
And you, sad prisoners of Gradasso:



Gucciardo, Alardo, Ivone?  
I wish I'd been vanquished by the foe,  
On that day we entered Spain, so boldly!  
I was thought fine and brave, in my armour;  
Yet this shame has robbed me of my honour.

I sail the sea. Who will excuse the deed?  
When I'm accused, by, all of cowardice?  
He condemns himself that betrays his creed,  
I am no knight, who breaks our code in this.  
Would that I was Ferrau, and he was freed,  
And I, in his place, prisoned in the abyss,  
To die in torment, in those depths below,  
Rather than live on, thus, and bear such woe.

What will be said, at Charlemagne's great court,  
When this affair is spoken of, in France?  
To what shame will Mongrana's House be brought,  
By one of their own fleeing sword and lance?  
Gano, all Maganza's House in short,  
Will through the halls, in triumph, there advance.  
Woe is me! I called the man a traitor,  
Yet can no more; lacking in true honour.'

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 53-55: THE SHIP REACHES A GARDEN-ISLE AMIDST THE SEA**

So, the valiant warrior groaned and sighed,  
And added fresh cries to his sad lament,  
Reflecting thrice, now humbled in his pride,  
As to whether to his own death to consent;  
And thrice he, thus, approached the vessel's side,  
As if to leap down, armed, was his intent.  
Fear for his soul, and dread of Hell below,  
Alone restrained Rinaldo in his woe.

The ship sailed on, meanwhile, o'er the sea,  
Three hundred miles beyond the Straits, flying  
Faster than a dolphin swims, wondrously,  
Amidst the waves, to port its course lying,  
As from Seville a stern-wind blew strongly,  
While our knight was yet groaning and sighing.  
Then it tacked, and, in an instant, released  
From that near gale, sailed gently to the east.

The ship was packed with stores on every side;  
(Though it seemed to lack both captain and crew)  
With bread and wine, in casks, twas well-supplied.  
Rinaldo felt no wish to eat, tis true,  
But prayed to God and in Him did confide.  
And as he knelt in prayer, there came in view,  
A garden-isle, graced by a palace, fair,  
A garden bordered by the waves everywhere.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 56-61: WE TURN TO ORLANDO WHO ENCOUNTERS A PILGRIM IN DISTRESS**

I shall leave him in that marvellous isle,  
Of which I'll tell many a wondrous thing,  
And return to Orlando, who, meanwhile,  
As I've said, in amorous thought, pursuing  
Angelica, day and night, for many a mile,  
Was forever further eastwards journeying,  
Searching, alone, for that absent beauty,  
Though none could offer news of the lady.

He'd crossed the waters of the River Don,  
And, meeting not a soul, he rode all day,  
That brave warrior, still travelling on,  
But, at nightfall, met a pilgrim, on his way;  
(The man was sad and aged) whereupon,  
The palmer cried: 'Alas,' in deep dismay,  
'Who has reft from me, my sole hope and joy?  
I commend you to God, O, my lost boy!'

'May God aid you, pilgrim,' Orlando cried,  
'Tell me the reason for your sad lament.'  
The wretched man his complaints multiplied,  
Crying: 'Alas for my poor innocent!  
Great ill-luck have I met with here,' he sighed,  
'And a giant of a man with foul intent.'  
Orlando begged him then his tale to share,  
And give the substance of the whole affair.

'I'll tell you the reason for my sadness,'  
He replied: 'since you clearly seek to know.  
Two miles away, behind me, more or less,  
There a tall cliff, that you can see, although  
My sight's so dim, through age and my distress,  
That I cannot, and, observed from below,  
Its colour seems that of a living flame,  
While all bare is the summit of that same;

And a voice from there echoes all around,  
And though I cannot tell you what it says,  
In this world there is no more fearful sound.  
Beneath the cliff a foaming torrent plays,  
And like a crown encircles all that ground.  
There's a gate (guarded by a giant always)  
Tis of adamant, that leads to a bridge  
Of dark-coloured stone, beneath the ridge.

My son, who's but a little lad, and I  
Were walking close to that place, a while ago;  
And the cruel and evil giant my weak eye  
Failed to spot; the wretch was well-hidden though,  
Nigh-concealed behind some boulders nearby.  
He seized my boy; he'll consume him, I know.  
And, now you've heard the reason why I grieve,  
Well, my advice is: turn your steed, and leave.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 62-65: THE COUNT DEFEATS A GIANT**

Orlando thought a moment, then replied:  
'No matter what, I'm riding on my way.'  
Said the pilgrim: 'God save you then!' and sighed,  
You've no wish it seems to survive the day.  
Believe me, tis a fact, nor have I lied,  
When you have seen that giant's strength in play,  
His height, his great legs, his monstrous arms,  
Your hair will rise; all passers-by he harms.'

Orlando smiled, and begged the man to wait,  
At that spot, for God's sake, a little while;  
But if an hour had passed, and he was late  
In returning, to put a goodly mile,  
Or more, between himself and that dark gate.  
'An hour', he repeated; then for that pile  
Of blood-red rocks he headed; by and by  
The giant appeared: 'So then you wish to die,

Bold knight, it seems,' he called to Orlando.  
'The King of Circassia placed me here.  
None may pass, for there dwells an evil foe  
On that cliff, a monstrous form, all men fear,  
Who will answer any question; yet, know,  
That all who choose before her to appear,  
Must, in turn, solve the riddles she poses,  
And dies unless true answers he discloses.'

Orlando now demanded the young boy,  
But the giant replied with a mighty 'No!  
And so, the two their weapons did employ,  
Contesting fiercely, trading blow for blow.  
The giant's club made the Count's sword seem a toy,  
Yet, without describing all the ebb and flow,  
Of the fight, the Count troubled him so sore,  
He yielded, crying: 'Ah, I can no more!'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO V: 66-69: AND CLIMBS THE CLIFF TO QUESTION THE SPHINX**

Thus, the lad was saved by Count Orlando,  
And soon returned to his weeping father.  
The pilgrim drew a cloth, as white as snow,  
From his pouch, and a book did uncover,  
That with gold, and bright enamel, did glow,  
Which he'd hidden there, a precious treasure.  
And then he said, turning to Orlando,  
'Sir knight, I can't repay the debt I owe,

For a lifetime would prove insufficient  
As would, indeed, my power to do so.  
Yet, please, accept this tome (wise, and ancient)  
Of wondrous virtue, for its pages show  
The answer to every riddle, present  
Or past; all, that is, that a man need know.'  
'Now, farewell!' said he, handing him the book,  
And so departed, with a thankful look.

Count Orlando stood awhile, lost in thought,  
Then, gazing at the stony cliff above,  
Determined to ascend it, for he sought,  
To view the wondrous creature there, and prove,  
The truth of the old pilgrim's strange report,  
That the doubt in his mind she could remove,  
For, to this question, he'd know the answer:  
Where, on Earth, he might find Angelica.

Safely o'er the dark bridge he did clatter  
For the giant no objection now did show;  
Not desiring more of Durindana,  
He opened, thus, the gate to Orlando,  
Who climbed the cliff; high above the water,  
Then through a gloomy tunnel he did go,  
To attain the place where that strange creature  
Crouched, in silence, on a mighty boulder.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 70-75: HE FAILS TO UNRAVEL HER RIDDLES AND SLAYS HER**

She had the smiling face of a maiden,  
Above a lion's breast; and golden hair;  
A wolf's teeth behind her lips were hidden;  
She'd eagle's talons, the arms of a bear,  
The body, and the tail, of a dragon,  
And wings that a peacock's hues did share.  
And she beat hard with her tail on the rock,  
Its harsh and stony darkness to unlock.

When the monstrous creature saw the knight  
She fanned her open wings, and coiled her tail,  
Hiding all but her fair visage from sight;  
A cavern yawned behind that feathery veil.  
Count Orlando posed his question, outright:  
'Amidst strange lands, where foreign tongues prevail,  
From the icy poles to the equator,  
Night's dark to light, where dwells Angelica?'

In sweet speech, that most subtle beast replied,  
Responding thus to Orlando's question:  
'She, that torments your mind so, may be spied  
Near Cathay; Albracca's her location.  
And now you must answer me,' she sighed,  
'What creature walks with purposeful motion,  
Without feet? And what other do we see  
Using four, and then two, and later three?'

The Count pondered, seeking to unravel  
Her strange questions, but then, without reply,  
Quite unable to solve either riddle,  
Drew Durindana, and raised it on high.  
The Sphinx and he began a fierce battle,  
As she about his head commenced to fly,  
Menacing him, striking with tail and claw,  
Though such attack his enchanted hide bore.

If his flesh had not been charmed, all over,  
As indeed it was, then that precious knight,  
Would have suffered wounds to back and shoulder,  
Arms and chest, in that most furious fight.  
His pride was hurt, and fuelled his anger,  
For the blows she landed were scarcely light.  
He waited his moment and, with a spring,  
Leapt up, as down she swooped, and clipped a wing.

The monster screeched, and earthwards did sail,  
Her cry echoing all about the place.  
About Orlando's legs she coiled her tail,  
And gripped his shield with her claws, for a space,  
In a last vain attack, one bound to fail,  
For he struck, while still caught in her embrace,  
Pierced her gut and, struggling free of his foe,  
Hurled her, from the cliff, to the ground below.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 76-77: THOUGH THE BOOK HELD THE ANSWERS TO HER QUESTIONS**

The Count descended and located his steed,  
Then took to the road, urged on by passion,  
Though wondering, as he galloped o'er the mead,  
About the answers to her dual question.  
He thought of the palmer's book, its screed  
Held the riddles, no doubt, with their solution.  
'I forgot the thing, so was forced to fight,  
Yet perchance God thought twas only right.'

Opening the tome, to all the creature  
Had asked he now sought the true solution.  
He found that it was the seal, whose nature  
Is to walk on the sand, its fins in motion.  
There too we human beings did feature,  
That on all fours make infant progression,  
Yet when we cease to crawl, two feet we see  
Suffice, though, with a stick, the old make three.

**BOOK I: CANTO V: 78-83: ORLANDO FIGHTS THE GIANT WHO GUARDS THE BRIDGE OF DEATH**

Now, while reading he came to a river,  
A dark torrent, twas both fearsome and deep,  
But lacked any means to cross the water,  
While its banks were slippery and steep.  
Hoping some passage o'er to discover,  
His way along its border he did keep,  
And saw a giant, on a bridge, on high:  
Which bold Orlando approached, by and by.

When the giant caught sight of him, he cried:  
 'O wretched knight! It seems an evil fate  
 Has brought you here to me, in all your pride!  
 This is the Bridge of Death; and soon or late,  
 All must come here; the paths on every side  
 Twist and wind, but ever lead to its gate.  
 There's no escaping it, for by and by,  
 Upon this bridge, one of us two must die.'

This giant, who was the bridge's guardian,  
 Was named Zambardo, and mighty was he.  
 His brow was two feet high, in proportion  
 Was his body, or all that one could see,  
 For he was armoured, a hill in motion,  
 And held a metal club, huge and heavy,  
 And from the club five iron chains did fall,  
 And attached to each was an iron ball;

Each such ball was twenty pounds in weight.  
 From head to foot a serpent's hide he wore,  
 A complete defence neath his mail and plate.  
 A sheathed scimitar upon his left he bore.  
 Worst of all, a net he'd hidden, near the gate,  
 Such that, when some knight battled there before  
 The Bridge of Death, howe'er bravely he fought,  
 In its strong mesh he would, at last, be caught.

This net was invisible, neath the sand;  
 He could trip it, with his foot, as he pleased,  
 And once he'd done so, take the web in hand,  
 Then, to the river, drag the knight he'd seized.  
 No escape was there from what he'd planned;  
 With death alone his captives' torments ceased.  
 Not knowing this, Orlando dismounted,  
 And approached the bridge, all fear discounted.

Armed with his shield, he gripped Durindana,  
 With as close an eye on his enemy  
 That seemed large and fierce enough, as ever  
 One might keep watch on a little baby.  
 A hard fight followed, with this great creature,  
 But, of that, you will hear no more from me,  
 In this canto; twas so hard to prevail,  
 I've need of rest, ere I resume the tale



**BOOK I: CANTO VI: THE CUP OF FORGETFULNESS**



**BOOK I: CANTO VI: 1-13: ORLANDO KILLS THE GIANT BUT IS CAUGHT IN HIS NET**

Let me tell you, my lords, of that great battle  
Than which no other fight was more cruel.  
You heard Zambardo's challenge (and the rattle  
Of that iron mace he bore for the duel)  
And now you'll hear of Orlando's mettle,  
How a valiant reply he sought to fuel,  
As all of his ill-fortune I rehearse,  
For none could have, nor ever has, proved worse.

The Bridge of Death he mounted, while his eye  
Followed Zambardo and his vicious mace.  
The Count came only half-way to his thigh,  
But he leapt up towards the giant's face.  
And struck him on the arm as he passed by.  
The giant had swung his weapon, at full pace,  
But Orlando saw the blow descending,  
And leapt away, ere it made an ending.

The mighty pagan was troubled greatly,  
But Orlando soon troubled him the more,  
Striking the giant on the arm so fiercely,  
That he dropped his iron club to the floor.  
The Count rose like a bird, repeatedly,  
Redoubling his blows, on high did soar,  
But the other's serpent skin was so tough  
No effort of the Count's seemed enough.

After his mace was knocked to the ground,  
The giant, Zambardo, drew his scimitar;  
The Count was a valiant knight, he'd found,  
But knew that he could use his net later,  
In which the man might be caught, and bound.  
The knight's helm he now sought to shatter,  
Striking hard with a back-handed blow,  
And twenty feet in reverse reeled his foe.

At this, Orlando became quite heated,  
Such that his visage commenced to glow;  
His eyeballs rolled and, far from defeated,  
He swung his bright sword at Zambardo,  
So swiftly that, as the move completed,  
Durindana's light near blinded his foe,  
While the sword bent, its blade from tip to head  
Four-fingers wide, so Bishop Turpin said.

Zambardo was struck on hip and thigh,  
As Durindana cut through serpent-skin,  
And serpent-scales, and in its passing by  
Cleft a belt, with many an iron pin.  
A mail-corselet he wore; the blade, say I,  
Cared naught for that, and would have plunged within,  
Had not Zambardo a sudden refuge found,  
For he dropped, in an instant, to the ground.

He fell by accident or by design,  
I know not which, but down the giant went,  
While his visage had paled, a telling sign,  
On seeing the speed of the blade's descent.  
His heart beat fast, a chill gripped his spine,  
Yet he retrieved his mace and, with intent,  
Swung it hard like a flail; near burst his veins,  
But entwined Count Orlando in its chains.

That side-swipe wrapped Orlando all around.  
He fell beside Zambardo, and the pair  
Continued their fierce struggle on the ground.  
The Count rose to his feet first, and once there,  
Grasping Zambardo's helm, a firm grip found,  
But the giant now clasped his ribs like a bear,  
And, matching the strength of our warrior,  
Sought to drag Orlando to the river.

The Count, who had dropped Durindana,  
Beat hard, with both hands, at the giant's face.  
He hit so hard he almost stunned the other,  
And Zambardo fell once more, with ill-grace;  
Orlando landed on his back, moreover,  
And wrapped the giant's head in his embrace,  
Thus, Zambardo's blindness was near complete;  
Yet still the monster staggered to his feet.

The merciless assault began once more,  
The giant's mace against Durindana,  
Though Orlando when tied to the floor  
Could not reach the giant, so, to further  
His attacks, he leapt, as he had before.  
No such duel has ever appeared stranger,  
Yet Orland put him through his paces,  
For he wounded the giant in four places.

Sly Zambardo now feigned to strike his foe,  
But chose to pause, half-way through his action,  
And, waiting till the Count, to thwart the blow,  
Stepped back (anticipating that reaction)  
With a two-handed grip, sought to bestow  
A like blow, and complete the transaction;  
But the Count caught the chains with his blade,  
As the mace fell, still wholly unafraid,

And broke the weapon's shaft quite in two.  
But don't imagine our knight was satisfied,  
For he reversed his swing, and wrought anew.  
Durindana sliced through the giant's side  
As it had done before, and passed on through.  
What could save Zambardo now? Not mere pride,  
For Orlando's blade had struck so, in its course,  
No lightning-bolt e'er sped with greater force.

It had sliced him apart, from left to right,  
(Little or nothing held him together).  
The giant knew that death was now in sight,  
And his whole face showed a ghastly pallor.  
But he kicked at the ground beneath the knight,  
And released the net from its sandy cover.  
It embraced the Count, its throat now taut,  
Knocking away his sword, as he was caught.

**BOOK I: CANTO VI: 14-19: A PASSING FRIAR  
ATTEMPTS, BUT FAILS, TO FREE HIM**

His arms were pinioned, painfully I'd say,  
Such that the Count could hardly move within.  
And so strong was the mesh, with little play,  
That neither hand could his freedom win.  
Orlando took to prayer: 'Aid me this day,  
O Lord in Heaven, O Holy Virgin!'  
He cried aloud, as he struggled there inside,  
While as he did so, proud Zambardo died.

Now, that ground was deserted, solitary,  
For indeed, people rarely ventured there.  
Orlando dangled midst the scenery,  
Beneath the open sky, of all hope bare.  
Naught availed, not his strength or bravery,  
Nor his ardour, aided him in this affair.  
With naught to eat he hung there, in full sight,  
All the day, and he barely slept that night.

He passed a day and night, and then at morn,  
His hunger growing, and his hopes no higher,  
He believed he heard a noise, in the dawn,  
And behold, came an aged, white-haired friar.  
The Count saw him and, in a voice forlorn,  
Sought to raise a cry, and bring him nigher:  
'Father, friend of God, come, aid me now!  
For I am close to death, here, I avow.'

The old friar was quite taken by surprise,  
And marvelled at the mesh that held him so.  
Twas a solid net of steel that met his eyes,  
And he could see no way to free Orlando.  
The latter said: 'Take my sword; there it lies,  
And cut the thing, above me or below.'  
The friar cried: 'My son, twould be a sin  
If I should wound you as you hung within!'

'Fear not, you can wield the blade, for I  
Am well-protected; you'll not injure me.'  
He replied, pleading so, that, by and by,  
The friar took the sword, cautiously,  
And, with an effort, hoisted it on high,  
And then he swung it, somewhat awkwardly,  
But could not aid him, though he attacked it;  
The friar's strongest blow merely scratched it.

On finding his attempts were all in vain,  
He let fall the blade, and, speaking gently,  
Tried hard to comfort the Count, in pain:  
'If you would die a Christian death,' said he,  
'Then despair not and, rather than complain,  
Have faith in God, and suffer patiently;  
Accept your death, as a Christian ought,  
And you will be a knight at Heaven's Court.'

**BOOK I: CANTO VI: 20-22: THE FRIAR  
PREPARES TO TELL HIS TALE**

Many another thing, he knew, he told,  
Well-nigh the whole martyrology;  
The sufferings of the Saints, in days of old,  
Some flayed, some crucified, savagely.  
'My son,' he said, 'if I may be so bold,  
Be thankful to the Lord, if equally  
You yourself must perish.' The Count replied,  
'I'll be thankful to Him on the other side,

Of this mesh! I curse the mule that brought you!  
 It's help that I need, not consolation,  
 A youngster would have sliced the thing in two;  
 'Tis my mischance to suffer your oration!  
 The friar answered: 'Ah me, bold knight, renew  
 Your courage, succumb not to frustration,  
 And despair, but, since life must be forgot,  
 Come, think of your soul, and forsake it not.

Can you, who are so valiant a knight,  
 Allow the thought of death to concern you?  
 Know that Providence, of boundless might,  
 Ne'er abandons those that keep hope in view!  
 I will recount to you the dreadful plight  
 I've found myself in; yet in God, anew,  
 I placed my trust, as I have ever done,  
 And so survived a far worse affliction.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 23-27: THE FRIAR AND THE OGRE**

'Three friars, and I, left fair Armenia,  
 To seek indulgence at a holy shrine  
 In Georgia, yet entered Circassia,  
 Having lost, of our true road, every sign.  
 One of us went ahead, who was bolder,  
 Seeking a path, as the place seemed benign,  
 And yet he soon came racing back again,  
 Pale of face, and seeking aid, o'er the plain.

We watched, in fear, as from a peak on high,  
 Descended an Ogre, vast in size,  
 Whose forehead bore a solitary eye.  
 He was armoured, perchance (I but surmise)  
 With dragons' claws, united to deny  
 A weapon entry, and was armed likewise,  
 With triple darts, and iron club, thus he  
 Soon captured, and bound, him; then us three.

He dragged us all behind him to his cave,  
 Where dwelt many another prisoner,  
 And with these eyes I saw him eat that brave  
 Young friar, who had just led us hither.  
 He consumed him savagely, all save  
 His torn robe, and cruelly he did suffer.  
 Then the Ogre regarded me, but cried,  
 'I'd starve before I ate this, fresh or dried!'

And with his foot he sent me flying  
 From the summit of that cliff, steep and high.  
 Three hundred yards, I went soaring,  
 But put my trust in God, as from the sky  
 I fell, and, lo, his aid was forthcoming,  
 My robe caught on a bramble, by and by,  
 A thorny bush, deep-rooted in the stone.  
 I hung beneath, concealed, but quite alone.

Not daring to breathe, suspended there,  
 I stayed till darkness came, but that night...'  
 As he told his tale, while taking great care  
 To keep a strict watch, suddenly, in fright,  
 He cried: 'Ah me, behold him, and despair,  
 The evil creature comes, a fearsome sight!  
 Sir knight, may the Lord above preserve you!  
 He cried, as to the nearby woods he flew.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 28-35: ORLANDO IS RELEASED BY THE OGRE, AND SLAYS HIM**

He paused not a moment, and with that cry,  
 He plunged amidst the trees, and disappeared,  
 Long before the cruel giant wandered by,  
 Whose beard and jaws with crimson blood were  
 smeared.

The Ogre gazed, from his solitary eye,  
 At Orlando, hanging there, as he neared,  
 Then grasped the net and shook it, and again,  
 Unable to disturb its strands of chain.

'This one is far too fine to leave', he thought,  
 'Now I've found him; he's as fat as a sheep,  
 He'd make a good dinner; he's well-caught;  
 A shoulder might taste well, the rest will keep.'  
 Then some means to extract the Count he sought,  
 Turning his glance about and, in its sweep,  
 Seeing Durindana, there, on the ground,  
 Set down his club, and picked up what he'd found.

He propped the club, and the three darts he bore,  
 Against an oak-tree, and then swung the blade,  
 Two-handed, then employed it like a saw,  
 Till a wide, and substantial, hole he'd made.  
 He freed the Count intact, though somewhat sore,  
 (With his charmed hide, of death quite unafraid).  
 While the mesh had been cut, and pounded hard,  
 He was but drenched in sweat, and little marred.



While his joy was so great at being free,  
That the Count cared not a fig for the pain.  
Rather he broke from the Ogre, swiftly,  
And seized the iron club, and not in vain.  
While the heartless giant was more than angry,  
Who'd thought a fat and helpless sheep to gain,  
Finding now that the facts were otherwise:  
He'd have to fight, his gain to realise.

As you know, each held the other's weapon,  
And Orlando was afraid of his own sword,  
Therefore, he danced about, hither and yon,  
And some distance did the Ogre afford.  
The latter swung the blade in desperation,  
While Orlando great respect did accord  
To Durindana, though seeking his chance,  
And so hesitated oft in his advance.

He struck the giant with the club, however  
It did little to blunt his fierce attack,  
Due to those griffon claws worn as armour,  
(For naught's as strong as those) on front and back.  
Yet, the Count knew in the end he'd conquer;  
In a day, or two, or three, his foe would lack  
The stamina required, but then he thought,  
(Continuing to exercise his art)  
Of seizing, and then employing, a dart.

At the first chance that he had, it was done,  
Snatched up, from where it leant against the tree.  
Aiming carefully, he hurled the weapon  
At the giant's eye, and did so perfectly,  
(As you'll recall he only had the one,  
Set high above his nose, with which to see).  
The dart pierced the socket, then the brain,  
And the Ogre toppled to the dusty plain.

No second blow was needed. Orlando  
Knelt and gave thanks to God; and, only then,  
The friar emerged, to view the fallen foe;  
But, on viewing the Ogre once again,  
Who still seemed fierce whether dead or no,  
He uttered a brief prayer, and cried amen,  
And fled till, reassured smilingly  
By our Count, he returned, reluctantly.

## **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 36-38: THE COUNT FREES THE CAPTIVES FROM THE OGRE'S CAVE**

And then he cried: 'O Knight of the Lord,  
As I must name you for your valiant deed,  
To free the souls trapped in that abhorred  
Villain's cave, would, according to our creed,  
Prove a noble work, and pious; rest assured.  
I can guide you to the place, but, take heed,  
Should we meet another giant, on the way,  
Expect but little help from me, this day.'

So, the friar led Orlando to the cave,  
And while he remained, himself, well behind,  
Orlando approached the place to save  
The prisoners, though was dismayed to find  
Its entranced sealed with stone, much like a grave.  
He heard the cries of those captives consigned  
To its depths, but a vast slab served to block  
Its mouth, ten feet by ten of solid rock.

A good foot and a half thick, was that stone,  
With a pair of bolts, that barred it like a door.  
But here the Count showed that he alone,  
Of valiant knights, possessed the strength and more,  
To move it, though a man of flesh and bone.  
He cut the bolts with Durindana, and once sure  
Of his ground, dragged it open, and set free,  
Those behind, to enjoy their liberty.

## **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 39-42: HE HEARS NEWS OF ANGELICA**

Orlando quit the friar, and off he sped,  
Down a trail, that seemed to lead through the wood,  
But, coming to a crossroads, he stopped dead,  
And, pondering there as to the way he should  
Pursue, musing on which of these paths led  
To habitation, all three seeming good,  
Saw a messenger hastening on his way,  
And sought to learn his news, without delay.

'I journey,' said the man, 'through Media,  
With a message seeking prompt assistance,  
From the sovereign king of Circassia;  
Tis my lady, the queen, in this instance,  
That requires his help; for hear me further,

The emperor of Tartary from a distance  
Desires her; thoughts of her fill his head,  
While the lady would wish to see him dead.

The fair maiden's father, Galafrone,  
Is an ancient man and a peace-lover.  
He has no wish for war with Tartary,  
For a mighty lord is this emperor;  
So, he's told his daughter she must marry,  
Though against her will, this hated other,  
Which the maid would rather die than do,  
Refusing, when her father asked her to.

She fled to the city of Albracca;  
Tis only a day's journey from Cathay,  
Yet so strongly fortified, however,  
A besieger would meet with long delay.  
And there the fair maid has taken cover,  
(Angelica she is named, I should say)  
Who shines brighter than the brightest star,  
More beautiful, more radiant by far.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 43-46: HE DRINKS FROM THE CUP OF FORGETFULNESS**

Once the messenger had left, Orlando  
Galoped along the road, at full speed,  
For he thought he had won the maid (or so  
It seemed in his mind) but for some deed.  
His musing was soon interrupted though,  
For he saw a high walled turret o'er the mead,  
Above a bridge, that spanned a deep river,  
By which one might safely cross the water;

And, on the bridge, there stood a lovely maid;  
She held a crystal goblet in her hand,  
And on seeing the Count, a bow she made,  
And welcomed him, with an air of command.  
Sweetly, she said: 'Sir knight, I am afraid,  
That you will seek in vain to cross our land,  
Unless you follow ancient custom here;  
For none by force or cunning shall win clear:

Our custom is that you must stop and drink  
From this crystal cup, of the river's water.'  
Of neither fraud nor magic did he think,  
And innocently drank deep, as ever.

Yet, in an instant, his eyes began to blink,  
His thoughts now seemed those of another,  
He knew not how he'd come there, when, or why,  
If he was still the Count, or changed thereby.

Angelica had vanished from his thought,  
His memory, with all the boundless love  
That had troubled his life; the emperor's court,  
He forgot, for that deep draught did remove  
Everything from his heart he'd ever sought,  
Except this new lady; strange that did prove,  
For he harboured no hope he might win her,  
Yet seemed subject to her will forever.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 47-53: HE VIEWS A FRESCO PORTRAYING CIRCELLA'S HISTORY**

Our Count of Brava, the bold Orlando,  
Passed beyond the gate, on Brigliador,  
Dismounting at a palace in a meadow.  
So fine was that place, he gazed in awe.  
Amber columns, on gold bases below,  
Supported a fair loggia, whose floor,  
Was rich with green and white polished marble;  
Its ceiling with blue and gold enamel.

A garden near the loggia showed fair,  
Shaded by nodding palms, and green cedar,  
Midst many a fine tree, planted with care.  
The meadow beneath the trees, moreover,  
Was verdant, spring ever blossoming there.  
A wall of marble was the garden's border,  
And, from every flower, and every tree,  
A sweet and subtle fragrance floated free.

The Count admired the loggia's walls within.  
All three had been adorned by some master  
Of the painter's craft, who'd wrought therein,  
With such skill that his art eclipsed Nature.  
Orlando viewed the work, and sought to win  
A reading of the tale, through every feature.  
Of fair ladies, and brave warriors, it told,  
And every figure's name was wrought in gold.

A lady was shown there, beside the sea,  
Her face so lifelike, and without a flaw,  
That he thought she spoke, melodiously;

And this maid drew mariners to the shore,  
Only to turn them to creatures, clearly  
Depicted, so their altering forms he saw.  
Some were changed to wolves, or winged griffons,  
Others to bears, wild boars, savage lions,

The painting showed a ship there at anchor,  
From which had disembarked a handsome lord,  
Whose fair looks, and sweet speech, in the other  
Inspired love; for this knight she now adored.  
She was seen proffering the key, moreover,  
That opened the lock to her secret hoard,  
Where lay the potion that she used to alter  
Many a guest of hers to some wild creature.

And then the lovely maiden was portrayed  
As blinded by the love she bore this knight,  
Such that she was deceived, herself betrayed  
By her own subtle spell, and drank outright  
From the magic cup; as a white deer, strayed  
Then, into a hunter's net; while her plight,  
The lord grieved over now, who loved that same  
Circella, for such was the lady's name.

All of their history was shown, entire:  
How the knight fled; how she her form regained.  
The work was rich with gold; it shone like fire,  
And lit the garden, which fresh glory gained.  
The Count was stunned; he did naught but admire  
That wondrous art, no other thought sustained.  
But as he stood, and viewed the paintings so,  
He heard a great noise that filled the meadow.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 54-58: MARSILIO JOINS FORCES WITH KING GRADASSO**

The source of those same sounds you shall know,  
And the reason for that noise, and its nature;  
But first I turn again to King Gradasso  
Who clad as a champion, in full armour,  
Had gone to the shore to face Rinaldo.  
He waited all that day for him; however,  
He was unlikely to arrive, you'll agree,  
Being two thousand leagues away, at sea.

And once the stars appeared in the sky,  
Yet there was still no sign of Rinaldo,  
He knew he'd been deceived and, by and by  
Returned to camp, quite furious with his foe.  
And, as the heavens darkened there, on high,  
Yet his brother came not, Ricciardetto  
Believed that he'd been taken, or been slain,  
And so, his mind and heart were filled with pain.

You can imagine how the youth did suffer;  
Yet his state of grief was not so complete,  
As to fail to call his men together,  
And make preparations for safe retreat.  
Their force then departed, under cover  
Of the darkness; their going so discrete,  
The troops heard not that served Marsilio,  
Camped three miles from these of Rinaldo.

They travelled without rest till they came  
To the border with France; and in the morn,  
King Gradasso heard the news of that same  
Withdrawal, and a fresh campaign was born;  
For Marsilio fearing that he'd lost the game,  
(Of Serpentino and Ferrau now shorn;  
With his troops disinclined to face the foe;  
All the Christians gone; and no Rinaldo)

Hastened to bow low before Gradasso,  
And, humbly, sank down on bended knee,  
And spoke of the falseness of Rinaldo,  
Telling a tale of Christian perfidy.  
He promised homage to his erstwhile foe,  
To be his vassal, and hold the country.  
In brief, the two were swiftly in accord,  
And both camps soon united neath one lord.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 59-61: GRADASSO AND MARSILIO ADVANCE ON PARIS**

Thus, Marsilio pledged that, thereafter,  
He would follow Gradasso, loyally.  
Grandonio yielded Barcelona,  
And Gradasso swore to move, instantly,  
Against Charlemagne, and moreover  
To gain the steed Baiardo; if not, he  
Would lay France waste, destroying all he found,  
And raze the walls of Paris to the ground.

Ricciardetto and his men had, by now,  
Re-joined the Emperor Charlemagne's army,  
Though unable to explain to him how  
Rinaldo had vanished, and thus many  
A rumour sped, while Gano did avow  
He was a traitor; so, did his whole family;  
While others cried 'nay', called him a liar,  
To fight those who claimed so, their desire.

Gradasso swiftly crossed the Pyrenees,  
And led his troops on the road to Paris.  
Charlemagne reinforced his brave armies,  
Content to simply strengthen the city's  
Defences, issuing numerous decrees,  
And manning all the towers and bridges.  
All was in order, when behold one morn  
The invaders of France appeared at dawn.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 62-65: THE TWO ARMIES ENGAGE**

Positions had been chosen days before,  
And all were ready to defend the wall.  
Now the trumpets summoned men to war,  
While the banners were unfurled at their call.  
The citizens, in the squares, weapons bore.  
Saint Marcel's gate was oped wide; standing tall,  
The infantry marched out, knights at their back.  
Uggiero the Dane led their attack.

Gradasso had divided his army  
Into five regiments, each one was vast.  
The first held men of India only,  
Dark-skinned troops, of the warrior caste,  
Joined under two kings, one Cardone,  
A baying hound, howling as he went past,  
His companion, the merciless Urnasso,  
Axe in hand, waving six spears at the foe.

The second force was led by Stracciaberra,  
(Most wild and brutal of mortal creatures,  
His teeth were like a wild boar's and terror  
He struck in all those who viewed his features)  
And Francardo, whose long arrows ever  
Seemed to strike a city's farthest reaches;  
The third host was that from Taprobana,  
Commanded by their fierce king Alfrera;

While the fourth was the regiment of Spain;  
Marsilio led forth many a knight.  
The fifth regiment clothed hills and plain,  
And bore Gradasso's banners to the fight,  
So vast a host that monarch did maintain,  
It defied description, ranked beyond sight.  
Now let us gaze on Uggiero's army,  
As he engaged with that of Cardone.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO VI: 66-69: UGGIERO THE DANE FIGHTS CARDONE AND URNASSO**

Uggiero led ten thousand men to war,  
In well-ordered ranks, and close array.  
Through the armies of India they tore,  
And sent the foe fleeing on their way.  
He himself, upon the hound Cardone, bore,  
Who, on an armoured camel, yet did bay,  
And turned his lance against that giant's breast,  
Spearing him in the centre of his chest.

Both shield and armour proved of little aid,  
He was flung to the sand in that attack,  
Legs flailing at the air, his debts repaid,  
For the lance had pierced him front to back.  
Urnasso, his ally, a spear-throw made,  
Nor strength nor accuracy did he lack;  
It pierced the shield, plate, mail, and naked skin,  
Drawing hot blood from the Dane's flesh within.

Enraged, Uggiero, spurred-on his steed,  
As, with great force, a second spear was thrown,  
That caused the Dane savage pain, indeed,  
For it pierced his left shoulder to the bone.  
'You, traitorous dog,' he thought, 'if tis decreed  
That I reach you, I'll make you sigh and groan!  
His foe hurled his other spears to the ground,  
Gripped his axe in both hands, and whirled it round.

Know, my lords, that he rode a unicorn,  
A valiant steed, and filled with ardour.  
Upon its brow it bore a yard-long horn,  
With which it could pierce through shield and armour.  
But here I'll pause my verse, and rest till dawn,  
For too lengthy a canto wearies ever,  
While the fierce contest, now beginning,  
Must prove long, and cruel, in the winning.

BOOK I: CANTO VII: THE BATTLE AT THE GATES OF PARIS



ARGOMENTO.

Gli eserciti di Spagna, e'l Sericano  
 Fan col Francese feroce battaglia,  
 Gradasso ad vn ad vn di mano in mano.  
 Prende tutti i Baron Christian di vaglia.  
 Al fin gettato giù da Astolfo al piano  
 Con la sua lancia d'or senza scermaglia.  
 Scioglie i frigion, manda sua gente ardita  
 Ver Levante, che pria s'era partita.



ALLEGORIE.

ASTOLFO che libera i Christiani dalle mani di Gradasso, abbattendolo contra il pensiero d'ogn'uno, è la prouidentia d'Iddio, il quale lascia metter l'huomo sotto i piedi de' cattui, & poi miracolosamente lo libera, accioche lui solo si conosca per Signore; padre, & difensore di tutti coloro che gli son diuoti, & che col cuore lo adorano, & offeruano i suoi precetti.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 1-5: CHARLEMAGNE  
PRAYS FOR THE SAFETY OF PARIS**

A harsh, and cruel, and strange war had been born,  
As I have said. The Dane now felled Urnasso;  
His sword, Curtana, through his mail had shorn,  
And pierced his chest; confounded were the foe;  
Yet Urnasso's evil steed, the unicorn,  
Struck the Dane and, driving through below  
His breastplate, forcing apart his armour,  
Wounded his thigh; a vile blow to suffer.

Three separate wounds had brave Uggiero;  
He thus retired, to have them dressed and bound.  
As Charlemagne now sent against the foe  
King Salamone, to regain lost ground,  
With bold Bishop Turpin, while, for Gano,  
He had the Saint-Denis drawbridge downed,  
That he and his strong force might challenge fate.  
Ricardo issued through another gate,

With the powerful Angelieri,  
Also, mighty Dudon the chivalrous.  
Through Porte Royal went Guy of Burgundy,  
With Oliviero, the glorious;  
While Duke Namor passed the fourth swiftly,  
To fight the enemy, in manner furious,  
With his sons: Avino, Avorio,  
Ottone, and the brave Belengiero.

Charlemagne, the fiercest of them all,  
Rode forth to lead the host, in full armour,  
Yet, in a humble voice, on God did call,  
Asking that Paris be spared dishonour.  
Monks and priests upon their knees did fall,  
Midst crosses and relics, in deep prayer,  
Begging the Lord, and all his Saints, to save  
Their Emperor, and his squadrons of the brave.

Now the bells in every bell-tower rang out,  
The trumpets blared, drums beat, many a cry  
Rising high above; as, with one great shout,  
They charged Gradasso's troops; and, by and by,  
All were mingled, midst the ranks and without,  
Eager to conquer fiercely, or to die,  
While Oliviero, through the host, did bore,  
Like a fierce current that invades the shore.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 6-11: OLIVIERO SLAYS  
STRACCIABERRA; CHARLEMAGNE KING  
FRANCARDO**

As knights on horseback crossed his path, he slew  
Them, instantly, or hurled them to the ground.  
Swinging sharp Altachiera midst that crew,  
Often backhanded blows he dealt around,  
His mighty sword-strokes ever straight and true;  
Then Lucinor's Stracciaberra he found,  
A king in India, whose mouth dripped gore,  
And showed protruding fangs like some wild boar.

Brief was the fight; down swept Altachiera,  
Between the eyes, down to the jaws below,  
Cleaving the face of Stracciaberra,  
Shattering the fangs of his swarthy foe.  
He turned that fierce blade against another,  
Then scattered a whole squadron at a blow.  
Twas while he was fighting thus, o'er the plain  
That he was joined, there, by King Charlemagne.

The king had bathed his sword in blood that day,  
Mounted on that valiant steed Baiardo,  
Routing all those who sought to block his way,  
Bolder than any king the world could show.  
He'd sheathed his sword, his lance was now in play,  
When he caught sight of bold King Francardo,  
A king, in India, who fought bow in hand,  
Elissa his fair realm in that far land.

He fired arrows, without pause; all defied.  
Black was his skin; his camel was pure white.  
The emperor's lance pierced him side to side,  
As they crossed paths, his own mount in full flight.  
The foe thought of his soul, as the flesh died,  
Yet Baiardo drove onwards, in his might;  
The camel with the dead king blocked his way,  
But the eager steed leapt high, and would not stay.

'Who'll thwart my passage, now?' cried Charlemagne,  
'Who is not happy to escape my sword?'  
So spoke the king, and plied his blade again,  
A shining flame, amidst that alien horde.  
Urnasso's unicorn coursed o'er the plain,  
Its saddle empty of its Indian lord,  
And pointed its sharp horn towards Baiardo;  
That valiant steed was scarcely troubled though,

For, without a sign from the Christian king,  
 Baiardo turned, and kicked his hooves on high,  
 Upon the bridge of its shoulder, striking  
 The horned creature, and downing it thereby.  
 As King Charlemagne passed on smiling.  
 But the enemy host increased, and by and by,  
 Others of Gradasso's generals, came after,  
 And, among the first in sight, was Alfrera.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 12-13: ALFRERA  
 CAPTURES BISHOP TURPIN, OTTONE AND  
 BELENGIERO**

That giant rode his tall giraffe, and fiercely  
 Swung his gigantic club, beneath the sky.  
 He met brave Bishop Turpin, and swiftly  
 Tucked him in his belt, dangling waist-high,  
 And, as if that was naught, seized Ottone,  
 And bold Belengiero, neath the king's eye;  
 Then, gathering up all three, on he went  
 Depositing them at Gradasso's tent.

He at once returned to the battlefield,  
 Where on other Christians he might prey,  
 While Marsilio his brave sword did wield,  
 And, with his Moorish troops, now joined the fray.  
 Life and limbs were at risk, but none would yield;  
 Each Christian did all he might, that day;  
 Oliviero and the knights nigh formed a ring,  
 Gathered there to defend their lord and king.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 14-18: THE KINGS AND  
 LORDS DUEL ONE ANOTHER**

The king rode Baiardo (French fleurs-de-lys  
 Adorned his caparison from hoof to mane);  
 Oliviero at his side he could see,  
 While Dudon kept his back; behind him came  
 Brave Ricardo and Angelieri,  
 Duke Namor, and Gano; Charlemagne  
 Led his small squadron in close formation,  
 As they advanced on the Moorish nation.

Ferrau encountered Oliviero;  
 The former possessed some small advantage,  
 But not enough to lay the Christian low.  
 Then they fought with swords; by that stage

Spinella was Angelieri's foe,  
 While gainst King Morgante Gano did wage  
 Fierce war; Namor faced the Argalifa,  
 As the other ranks converged together.

When the squadrons met, beneath the sun,  
 Dudon attacked the brave Grandonio,  
 And the two battled fiercely, once begun,  
 With iron clubs, that dealt a mighty blow.  
 All the lords and knights duelled, one on one.  
 King Charlemagne fought King Marsilio,  
 And would have beaten him, it appeared,  
 If Ferrau towards his uncle had not veered;

For troubled by the Moorish monarch's plight,  
 Ferrau had broken from Oliviero,  
 And so, in turn, that marquis joined the fight  
 On the side of Charlemagne, gainst the foe.  
 Each one of them was a valiant knight,  
 Brave-hearted, skilled, and strong of arm also,  
 Charlemagne braver than ever, I may say,  
 For he rode on bold Baiardo that day.

Each one of them, great lord or mighty king,  
 Ever strove for high esteem and honour,  
 Nor sought to employ the shield when fighting  
 But, two-handed, swung the blade e'en harder.  
 Then the Christians sent their foes fleeing,  
 Routing the ranks, and hastening after,  
 Though back to the field came bold Alfrera,  
 To see the fall of Marsilio's banner.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 19-23: THE MOORS FLEE,  
 ALL BUT FERRAU; ALFRERA IS DRIVEN FROM  
 THE FIELD**

The Moorish army raced across the plain,  
 Nor could Grandonio stem their retreat.  
 They sped past Marsilio King of Spain;  
 He joined them; his misery complete.  
 The Argalifa fled from Charlemagne,  
 As did Morgante, their men reaped like wheat,  
 While Spinella too, the field now disdained;  
 Till Ferrau alone, that brave knight, remained.

He held firm, with the semblance of a lion,  
Never turning his back upon the foe,  
Though most fiercely attacked by bold Dudon,  
By King Charlemagne, and Oliviero.  
Ferrau advanced, lunging with his weapon,  
And fought them all, veering to and fro,  
But on the point of losing one enemy,  
Was once more surrounded by all three.

Captured then, or slain, of a certainty,  
Ferrau had been, but Alfrera, I say,  
Swinging a club, both immense and weighty,  
With his first great blow nigh-on won the day.  
Guy of Burgundy surrendered swiftly,  
Joined by Duke Namor, nearly swept away,  
But Dudon, and brave Oliviero,  
With Charlemagne, charged at this mighty foe.

From three sides they came, confidently,  
Seeking to thwart the man, and lay him low,  
Alfrera could not counter them, nimbly;  
His mount, the giraffe, was far too slow.  
But he could swing his club, and wildly,  
Though Charlemagne, and the rest, dodged each blow.  
Unable to do more, his head bowed low  
He turned his mount, and fled to King Gradasso.

The monarch glared at him, as he drew near,  
Revising his former good opinion,  
Met him head on, and angered did appear:  
'Base wretch,' he cried, 'sad, useless minion,  
Unashamed at fleeing such fools, in fear.  
Monstrous coward! Off, to my pavilion,  
Take yourself, you giant with half a brain,  
And never let me see you armed again!'

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 24-26: GRADASSO  
UNSEATS CHARLEMAGNE, BUT IS FORCED TO  
RETIRE BRIEFLY**

With that, Gradasso spurred on his brave mare,  
And showing his strength, nigh superhuman,  
He drove back Dudon here, Ricardo there,  
Then Salamone; his Sericanan  
Forces at his heels, none did he spare,  
A warrior with the heart of a dragon.  
His lance was bound about with iron bands,  
And a weapon of might in those strong hands.

Count Gano was the next he encountered,  
Striking the falcon emblem on his shield,  
Knocking him from his steed, his legs outspread.  
He then saw Charlemagne far o'er the field,  
And so, with lowered lance towards him sped,  
Downed him at a blow, and would see him yield,  
But first seized hold of brave Baiardo's rein;  
Yet the steed turned its rear, and kicked again,

Neighing loudly, hooves flying, at his knee,  
Catching him there, and like to prove his bane.  
His greave was strong, wrought with spells, and weighty,  
Yet it buckled, sparks flew; such was the pain  
He'd ne'er known the like, it flared endlessly;  
While he yelped, the steed did his freedom gain,  
And then, with loose bridle, and flying mane,  
Baiardo ran for Paris, o'er the plain.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 27-29: HE RETURNS AND  
ROUTS THE CHRISTIAN ARMY**

Gradasso retired to his pavilion,  
(Seek not to plumb the depths of his great woe!)  
One who'd followed his court he did summon,  
Wise in medicine, who doctored the blow.  
He bandaged the knee, and on his wisdom  
Drew to concoct an elixir also,  
Which the king drank, then cried, to one and all,  
It felt as if he'd ne'er been kicked at all.

He re-joined the battle, a fiercer foe  
It seemed; for none could counter his advance,  
The first to try was bold Oliviero,  
But he went down before that mighty lance.  
Angelieri, Guy, Avorio,  
Avino, followed; all met with mischance.  
In short, none could escape the man that day,  
All captured in the heat of that affray.

The whole Christian army took to flight,  
There was no defence against this Gradasso.  
And there scarcely remained a single knight,  
For the best were slain, or taken by the foe.  
The noblemen were captured in the fight,  
Leaving the common soldiers to their woe,  
While those left standing could ne'er attack,  
Since the enemy, on all sides, drove them back.



**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 30-36: UGGIERO  
DEFENDS THE GATE BUT IS CAPTURED**

In Paris it was known their host had fled,  
And Charlemagne was taken prisoner.  
Uggiero, still recovering, quit his bed,  
His thigh was dressed, he then donned his armour,  
And full of woe, ordered his courser led  
To the main gate; he himself sped thither,  
On foot, to review the situation,  
Not long passing ere he was on station.

When he reached the gate itself, it was barred,  
And beyond it he could hear screams and cries.  
The baptised were dying there, while the guard  
Let them die, lest opening it prove unwise.  
And thus, through fear, his own honour marred;  
The French perished, neath the defenders' eyes,  
Till the Dane commanded him to throw it wide,  
His to defend, and let the troops inside.

The guard refused, lacking pity, as before,  
And, scowling, cried he'd not unbar the gate,  
(With proud and threatening words) and what is more,  
Had he not abandoned it to its fate,  
There and then, he would have perished, for sure.  
The Dane seized an axe; the guard did not wait,  
But quit his post, and fled, running hard,  
While Uggiero had the gate unbarred;

It was opened, and the drawbridge let down.  
Then the Dane mounted it, with axe in hand.  
Care was needed now; into the town  
Fled the Christian troops, a frightened band.  
All would be first that in that sea did drown,  
Yet amongst these men, lost and unmanned,  
Were their foes, who now met brave Uggiero,  
That, with his axe, dealt them many a blow.

Gradasso's men attacked the bridge with fury,  
Serpentino ahead of all the rest,  
Leaping o'er the bridge, tempestuously.  
Uggiero sought his course to arrest  
With his axe, striking at his helm, fiercely.  
Sparks flew from its steel, twas of the best,  
And enchanted, so saving him from harm,  
As was all his armour; he felt not a qualm.

Uggiero now faced the main attack,  
Led by Ferrau, and King Gradasso,  
A great host of men at that monarch's back;  
And knowing he could not beat back the foe,  
The Dane had the drawbridge raised; no lack  
Of courage did that brave warrior show;  
For, standing tall against the swelling throng,  
He held the moat alone, but not for long.

Gradasso ne'er moved from before the Dane,  
Telling his soldiers to stand back the while,  
Till, hearing the gate behind him barred again,  
Uggiero swung his axe, though not with guile,  
For Gradasso grasped it, some time did strain,  
Then snapped it, dismounting in fine style,  
And that fine champion, brave Uggiero,  
Was swiftly taken captive by his foe.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 37-39: PARIS AWAITS ITS  
FATE**

No noblemen were left to hold the city.  
Now the shades of night shrouded all the land.  
The citizens, paraded, penitently,  
In white robes, deeply chastened, cross in hand.  
The churches were full, the prisons empty;  
All waited for the dawn that would command  
Their fate, the gates must open, they would know  
Death and destruction, in those streets of woe.

Astolfo too was freed from confinement,  
Who had long lain, neglected, in his cell,  
Since the day of his disgrace (the tale went  
That he had died, for such the guards did tell).  
The man was nothing if not eloquent,  
A great boaster indeed, when all was well,  
And on hearing the news, he cried: 'Alas!  
'Tis through my humble self this came to pass!

Gradasso must have known I was confined,  
Or he'd never have fought King Charlemagne;  
Though I can amend it, yet; tis in my mind  
To meet Gradasso and then seize that same.  
At dawn tomorrow, then, you'll surely find,  
Myself armed, riding forth, that right to claim.  
Watch from the walls, the hour of vengeance share;  
Woe to the monarch that awaits me there!

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 40-43: GRADASSO  
OFFERS PEACE, IN EXCHANGE FOR THE STEED  
AND THE SWORD**

Beyond the walls, joy filled the enemy,  
They clustered now round King Gradasso,  
Who sat tall, amidst his generals, proudly,  
Planning to take Paris on the morrow.  
He pardoned Alfrera, his manner kindly,  
While, to the captives, honour he did show.  
Seating Charlemagne, at his command,  
Beside himself, and taking his foe's hand,

He said: 'Wise emperor, every lord,  
Every brave nobleman, desires glory  
And feeds on honour; kings who would but hoard  
Wealth, at ease in their own territory,  
Rather than have their valour known abroad  
And have their name and fame sung in story,  
Deserve to be deposed. I might have stayed  
In the East; I sought the West, to win a blade,

And gain a steed, and not to conquer France  
Or Germany, or Spain, or Hungary.  
What I shall do, and not with sword or lance,  
But in the way of true diplomacy,  
Will show I have no wish now to advance  
On Paris; honour gained suffices me.  
Thus, I order that you and your lords stay  
Here with me, as my guests, for but one day,

And then to Paris you may go, for I  
Have no wish to seize your realm outright;  
On this condition: that none shall deny  
Me Rinaldo's steed, for I gained that right,  
When he deceived me, and chose to fly;  
Which makes but a villain of any knight.  
And I wish, that similarly, Durindana  
Shall be mine, and sent to Sericana.'

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 44-48: CHARLEMAGNE  
ACCEPTS, BUT ASTOLFO ISSUES A CHALLENGE**

Charlemagne said he should have Baiardo,  
And Orlando's sword also would be his.  
Then, Gradasso desired some knight to go  
And bring the steed, for twas his fondest wish.

So, to the city went Lord Ricardo;  
But Duke Astolfo, on hearing of this,  
In full command now, scornful of the pact,  
Had Ricardo detained, while his next act

Was to send a herald to Gradasso,  
Issuing his firm challenge to that king  
And all his camp; saying, if Rinaldo  
Was claimed by them to be fleeing,  
Or captive, or slain, then all should know  
It was a lie, scarcely worth repeating,  
Nor was the courser owned by Charlemagne;  
And he must fight, if the steed he would gain.

Gradasso then demanded to know who,  
And of what rank, was this Astolfo?  
Charlemagne explained, though his view  
Of the challenge he suppressed, but Gano  
Cried: 'He is a mere buffoon, I tell you,  
Who fools about at court; that being so,  
Pay him no heed nor, on account of this,  
Cease from fulfilling your firm promise.'

Gradasso replied: 'You speak well, and yet,  
Think not that speaking well will free you.  
'Tis on Baiardo that my heart is set;  
And, say what you wish, the fellow seems true,  
And brave; for you were captured, don't forget,  
With a deal of pain, yet he would pursue  
The battle with myself; let him, indeed,  
Play the warrior; but, bring me the steed.

For if I have to fight to win the horse,  
Then I shall deal with you all as I choose.  
If you seek to pursue this other course,  
The terms of our agreement I refuse.'  
How King Charlemagne was troubled, perforce!  
Having thought, by this, to pay his dues,  
Regain his freedom, realm, lords, wealth and all,  
He might lose all, through this fool, and his gall.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 49-55: ASTOLFO AND  
GRADASSO TAKE TO THE FIELD**

At first light, Astolfo clothed Baiardo  
In a brave leopard-skin caparison.  
The duke's helm was adorned with a fine show

Of giant pearls; a gilded sword he had on.  
He bore so many gems to meet the foe,  
He seemed a king beyond comparison,  
A king of all the world, his shield golden,  
His lance, Argalia's gilded weapon.

The sun arose at the very moment  
That he entered the field where they would fight.  
He sounded his brave horn with bold intent,  
And shouted a challenge with all his might:  
'O King Gradasso, if you're less than content  
To encounter me alone, twould be no slight  
If you brought that giant Alfrera along.  
Or come, if you wish, a thousand strong;

Bring Marsilio, his brother Balugante,  
The latter's son, brave Serpentino;  
Bring Ferrau's father, Falsirone,  
And him I conquered, giant Grandonio.  
Let the proud Ferrau himself join the fray,  
Your lord and paladins, the rest also;  
Lead forth your crew entire, in fine parade,  
Of neither you nor yours, am I afraid.'

Through the air, Astolfo's challenge pealed.  
How King Gradasso laughed at his call!  
For, fully armed, he entered on the field  
To win Baiardo, and see this jester fall.  
He spoke courteously, disinclined to yield:  
'I know not who you are; have asked of all,  
Concerning your name, and your condition.  
Gano tells me you adopt the fool's position

At their court; yet as brave, full of ardour,  
Others speak of you, more generously,  
One chivalrous, free, a man of valour;  
And yet what is said matters not to me,  
I shall ever seek to treat you with honour,  
And say this to you, most politely,  
For brave you may be: I'll have you know,  
In winning, I seek naught but Baiardo.'

'Not host as yet, and you present the bill!  
Cried Astolfo, 'let's try the thing once more;  
I'll have you from your saddle, at my will.  
But since you speak so well, I'll ask no more  
Than that you free your prisoners; that fulfil,

And you may safely seek some foreign shore,  
I shall let you and yours depart the kingdom,  
And sail you may for furthest Pagandom.'

'By Allah, I'm content,' replied Gradasso,  
And so, I swear.' And then he wheeled around,  
Lowering his great lance, as he did so,  
That was strong, and solid, and iron-bound,  
Such that he thought to lay high towers low,  
Not merely spill Astolfo on the ground.  
Astolfo readied himself, for his part;  
Lacking strength, but neither spirit nor heart.

### **BOOK I: CANTO VII: 56-63: ASTOLFO DEFEATS GRADASSO, AND TEASES CHARLEMAGNE**

Gradasso spurred on his Arab mare,  
While Astolfo was no mere spectator;  
In the midst of the ground, they'd chosen there,  
With thunderous force, they met together.  
Astolfo, seeking to end the affair,  
Struck the tight-clasped shield of the other,  
Down low, a mere touch of the (magic) lance,  
And swiftly brought a halt to his advance.

Gradasso, finding himself on the ground,  
Could scarcely believe the thing was true.  
He'd thought himself the stronger, yet he found  
The duel was done, and he'd lost Baiardo too.  
He rose, then the mare's rein he wrapped around  
His fist, and turned towards Astolfo: 'You,  
Sir knight, it seems, have conquered me, with ease;  
Come, set free the prisoners, as you please.'

They clasped hands, and then returned together;  
King Gradasso showing him much honour  
Nor King Charlemagne, nor any other,  
Knew yet of the outcome; in a whisper,  
Astolfo asked that Gradasso smother  
The news, and let him tell the emperor  
What had occurred (he wished for the task;  
He'd tease Charlemagne, when he did ask).

He soon stood before that king, with a wry face,  
Crying: 'See now, your sins have found you out,  
So haughty and so proud of your high place,  
That naught has your esteem; why, no doubt,

That of brave Orlando, we find no trace,  
And why Rinaldo we are yet without.  
And now you have lost his steed, Baiardo,  
To this bold warrior king, Gradasso.

You had me imprisoned, wrongly, solely  
That you might please the House of Maganza.  
Well, go ask Gano and his company  
To regain your realm of France, hereafter.  
The Count's whereabouts are a mystery,  
And Rinaldo's too, no cause for laughter.  
If you'd not treated them with such disdain,  
You'd not have suffered all this shame and pain.

To Gradasso has gone Rinaldo's steed,  
And we are in accord now, he and I.  
I'll stay with him, and be his fool indeed,  
Thanks to Gano's fulsome praise; for I'll ply  
That trade, and on that monarch's favour feed.  
He'll be pleased; I'll recommend, by and by,  
Yourself to serve, the Dane to carve his meat,  
Oliviero to cook, and all's complete,

But for Gano; for weighty things he's good,  
And, so his strength and prowess may be known,  
He can heft water-jars, and bear the wood.  
The rest of all those gossipers you own,  
He'll grant to his lords, so I understood  
Him to say, and if there's pleasure shown,  
By them, all at my jests, and foolery,  
I trust we'll prove a merry company.'

Astolfo uttered this without a smile,  
As if in all he said there lay no jest.  
Don't ask if Charlemagne he did beguile!  
He was in anguish, as were all the rest  
Of those nobles, and, in a little while,  
Bishop Turpin spoke, as one distressed:  
'Have you turned apostate?' 'Why yes, sir priest;  
I've quit Christ, on Mohammed's words to feast.'

## **BOOK I: CANTO VII: 64-69: HE CONFESSES TO THE JEST, BUT SETS TERMS FOR GANO'S RELEASE**

Now all were troubled, stunned, and pale of face,  
Oh, how they all lamented, wept and sighed.  
But soon Astolfo tired, and showed them grace,  
Confessed to his jest, and to his king he cried:  
'My lord, you are generous, if in this place  
I have distressed you, and your patience tried,  
For God's sake, let your mercy here be shown,  
Whate'er else I may be, I am your own.

Nonetheless, your court shall feel the lack  
Of my presence, nor shall I come there more,  
(Instead let those who render white as black,  
Gano, and his folk, praise you and adore,  
For I'll leave you to rule, till I am back,  
All of my lands, here and on England's shore)  
Till I find (I leave at dawn) Orlando,  
Spite heat or cold, and likewise Rinaldo.'

None knew if he jested still, or spoke true,  
Until that great and mighty king, Gradasso,  
Demanded that the peace they now renew;  
And so, they were released, and Count Gano  
Was the first to mount his courser anew,  
But seeing him about to leave, Astolfo  
Caught the reins, halted him, and said: 'Dear sir,  
The rest are free, you're still a prisoner.'

'Whose prisoner am I, sir? Gano cried.  
'Why Astolfo of England's!' came the answer.  
Gradasso then the terms of peace supplied,  
For the benefit of each ex-prisoner.  
Taking Gano by the arm ere he could ride,  
Astolfo, and he, knelt before their master.  
The former cried: 'My lord, upon my knees,  
I ask, that he goes free, yourself to please,

But on my terms, thus with this condition,  
That, with his hands twixt yours, he shall swear  
That he will pass four days in your prison,  
When and where I require it, and prepare  
To take an oath (for he breaks his word often!)  
By your knights, and your crown, to lie there;  
Surrendering himself, as duty bound,  
Whene'er and where'er he may be found.'

Charlemagne replied: 'I will that this be done.'  
 And had Count Gano, instantly, swear so.  
 The prisoners sped to Paris, every one,  
 Where the only cry heard was: 'Astolfo!'  
 Embraced by all, the gauntlet he did run,  
 Of vast acclaim, this conqueror of the foe,  
 For he had saved, his was all the honour,  
 The Christian faith, and their wise emperor.

**BOOK I: CANTO VII: 70-72: GRADASSO'S  
 ARMIES DEPART**

The king tried hard to keep him there, perforce,  
 Upon him Ireland seeking to bestow,  
 But he was set upon his chosen course,  
 Of finding brave Rinaldo, and Orlando.  
 To his wanderings I'll later have recourse,  
 But shall say no more here, and let him go.  
 That same night, evading the light of morn,  
 Gradasso and his men left, ere the dawn,

For Spain, where they found King Marsilio  
 With his noblemen and knights at his feet.  
 Aboard his flagship, went King Gradasso,  
 And departed with his vast and mighty fleet.  
 I'll say naught of the voyage they did go,  
 To those lands that bake in the sun's fierce heat;  
 Lest you grow weary of my verse, I'll seek  
 Rinaldo, rather, ere my strength grows weak,

And recount the tale of high adventure,  
 Of which he had the pleasure and the pain,  
 For the story's marvellous in nature,  
 While Rinaldo the brave, I would maintain,  
 Had encountered the like of it, never,  
 So cruel and harsh it seemed; but now, again,  
 I must rest awhile, ere the next canto,  
 Tells its wondrous story, of joy and woe.



# BOOK I: CANTO VIII: JOYOUS PALACE AND CASTLE CRUEL



**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 1-6: RINALDO REACHES  
PALACE JOYOUS**

Now Rinaldo had reached Palace Joyous  
(Such was the name of that magic isle)  
The first place at which the masterless  
Vessel had touched, and moored, in this long while.  
A garden twas, shaded and mysterious,  
Encircled by the sea, and many a mile  
(Quite fifteen or more) in circumference,  
Flat, and verdant; its trees both tall and dense.

Above the shoreline, and towards the west,  
A most beautiful palace could be seen,  
Formed of polished marble of the finest  
Quality, reflecting the island's green.  
Rinaldo, fearing to remain the guest  
Of that ship, leapt ashore, and had been  
Not a moment on land, ere a lady  
Showed herself, who greeted him politely.

The lady said: Sir knight, your destiny  
Has brought you to this isle, and so believe  
It was not for naught that, fearful, o'er the sea,  
You were led to the fair place you now perceive.  
A strange and distant land, of a surety,  
But though fate seems harsh at first, and you grieve,  
To a sweet and pleasant end, you will move,  
If you've a heart, as I think, fit for love.'

With this, she took Rinaldo by the hand,  
And, into that fair palace, led the knight.  
The portal was of marble, rich and grand,  
In hues of black, and green, pure red, and white.  
The pavement upon which they both did stand,  
Of that same stone, was varied to the sight.  
Here were loggias, of beauty untold,  
With reliefs, and ceilings in blue and gold,

Hidden arbours, adorned with fresh verdure,  
Showed above the roofs, and on the ground,  
And gold, and gems, and splashes of colour  
(Rare frescoes) in those pleasant courts were found,  
And there were crystal fountains, moreover,  
That sweetest shade-giving trees did surround,  
But more it was the fragrance of that place  
That to grieving heart might grant a joyous face.

Rinaldo was led by the fair lady  
To a loggia, rich beyond belief,  
Subtly adorned, where each wall and every  
Corner held enamellings in gold leaf;  
And slender snow-white columns, wrought finely,  
Held gold capitals, topping each gleaming sheath.  
All about, small trees, set to form a glade,  
Covered an open lawn with their sweet shade.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 7-9: HE IS LED BY  
MAIDENS TO A FEAST**

Entering this loggia our knight was met  
By a group of lovely maids, of whom three  
Sang, while one played an instrument, as yet  
Unknown to us, that wrought fair harmony;  
While other maidens danced; none did forget  
The measure of their steps, and thus, sweetly,  
The handsome knight within their court did bring,  
And, dancing still, drew round him, in a ring.

One, of kindly semblance, said: 'My lord,  
The table's laid, your dinner is prepared.'  
Then they led him past a fountain, to a board  
Set beneath a rose-trellis; naught was spared  
To adorn that place, with all it might afford  
Of beauty or delight, its pleasures shared;  
And each place was set in turn, while fold on fold  
Of white napkins lay upon the cloth of gold.

Four maidens were seated there, and they  
Drew our knight in amongst them, courteously.  
He marvelled at his chair, which did display  
Pearls of great size; twas wrought splendidly;  
Rare delicacies, on gold plates, about him lay,  
Wine-cups of great worth, most fine to see,  
Were filled with wine, of most rare bouquet,  
Served by three maids, each fairer than the day.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 10-14: BUT DISDAINS  
ANGELICA'S LOVE FOR HIM**

When this fine dinner was well-nigh complete,  
And the golden ware removed from the board,  
Harps and lutes could be heard, rare and sweet,  
And a maiden soft speech did him afford,  
For these fair words Rinaldo's ear did greet:

'These fine treasures and this palace, my lord,  
And whatever else that your eyes may please,  
(For much remains to view) are for your ease.

And all this place was brought about for you;  
Our queen constructed it for you, solely.  
Happy are you that, with a love that's true,  
You are beloved by our well-travelled lady,  
She's more blushing than the rose, to the view;  
And, than the lily of the field, more lovely,  
In her whiteness; Angelica her name;  
More than her heart she loves you, she would claim.'

When Rinaldo heard, in that joyful place,  
The name of the lady he hated so,  
A pained expression passed across his face;  
In all his life, he'd felt no deeper woe.  
Now he no longer prized the wealth and grace  
Of that mansion, it seemed a piteous show.  
But the maiden said: 'My lord, do not refuse  
Her love; surely a prisoner may not choose.

Your sword, Fusberta, has no power here;  
Nor would it help to possess Baiardo.  
The sea encircles us, its depths unclear,  
Here valour and courage but fail also.  
Your hard heart you must soften now, I fear;  
She seeks but a kind glance from you, I know.  
If gazing at her eases not your heart,  
How do you view those who take hatred's part?'

So spoke the lovely maiden in his ear,  
But her whole speech was wasted on the knight.  
He left her side, most troubled did appear,  
And fled through the garden, beyond their sight.  
His heart devoid of pity, proud, severe,  
Nothing he saw around him brought delight;  
He sought to stay within that isle no more,  
And made his way, thus, westwards, to the shore.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 15-18: THE SHIP BEARS  
HIM TO A WOODED SHORE; HE CONFRONTS A  
KIDNAPPER**

He reached the vessel upon which he came,  
And climbed aboard, again its only guest.  
E'en shipwreck were better than this shame;

Rather than remain, to voyage seemed best.  
Yet the ship appeared scarcely worth the name;  
She seemed held fast, increasing his unrest.  
He felt he'd rather drown there in the sea  
If she moved not, than linger there, unfree.

But the sails, in a moment, filled once more;  
She ran before the wind, towards the east;  
Faster than eye could follow, on she bore,  
From every constraint, it seemed, released;  
Until next day she neared a wooded shore,  
And, coasting to the land, her voyage ceased.  
Rinaldo disembarked; treading the bare  
Sand, he found an old man standing there.

The white-haired fellow wept, copiously:  
'Oh, desert me not,' he cried, 'sir knight,  
If honour moves you, of your chivalry,  
Support my cause, and so defend the right.  
A brigand snatched my dear daughter from me,  
And the false thief is scarcely out of sight,  
But two hundred paces off, on the road;  
Pursue, and he'll be hampered by his load.'

Pity moved the valiant Rinaldo,  
Who hastened, on foot, and in full armour,  
To follow the villain; nor was he slow  
To draw his sharp blade as he chased after.  
When he came upon the kidnapper, though,  
The vile fellow dropped the maid, and rather  
Than turn and fight, sounded a huge horn;  
To the heavens above its call was borne.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 19-24: HE FIGHTS A  
GIANT, AND IS CAUGHT IN A NET**

Rinaldo raised his eyes, and there, on high,  
Sited on a headland, looming o'er the sea,  
He saw a castle, framed against the sky.  
And while that great horn-blast echoed, loudly,  
A drawbridge descended, and, by and by,  
A fell and wicked giant emerged, slowly,  
Measuring a good sixteen feet in height,  
That, with spear and chain, threatened him outright.



A hook hung from the loose end of the chain;  
And who might guess the purpose of the thing?  
While, at once, the monstrous giant was fain  
To hurl his spear, that through the air did sing,  
To strike Rinaldo's shield, and not in vain;  
It passed through that and his breastplate, piercing  
Plate and mail, its passage ne'er denied,  
And wounded the knight, lightly, in the side.

Said Rinaldo to the giant: 'Let us see  
Which, of us two, is better with a blade.'  
He then attacked the fellow so fiercely,  
That the giant, who sought his charge to evade,  
Turned his heels, and disengaged swiftly;  
Towards the nearby river-bank he made.  
Once there, he crossed the bridge that spanned the  
flood,  
Formed of a massive stone, on which he stood;

With his hook and chain, he caught up a ring  
Set fast in the slab, and when Rinaldo,  
Who was close behind him, and nearing,  
Mounted the bridge, in pursuit of his foe,  
He twisted the chain, and hauled at the ring,  
And opened a hollow space carved below,  
Into which Rinaldo fell, calling, loudly,  
For aid, to God and the Virgin Mary.

Into the darkness he fell, nor could hear  
The river roar beneath him, as he fought  
Against the net concealed there, in his fear,  
An iron mesh, by which our knight was caught.  
Now the giant into that hole did peer,  
Extracted him, and the net pulled taught,  
And bound him on his back and said: 'My snares  
Catch all who'd interfere in our affairs.'

Rinaldo said naught; to himself he thought  
'Fate heaps one shameful thing on another,  
Other folks' disasters seem as naught,  
Compared to mine; woes on woes, forever,  
I experience, yet not a one I've sought.  
There's scarcely a moment to recover  
Betwixt them; tis but endless misery,  
Though why tis so remains a mystery.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 25-27: HE FALLS INTO THE CLUTCHES OF AN OLD CRONE IN CASTLE CRUEL**

Such were his feelings as they made entry  
O'er the drawbridge to the cruel castle.  
Severed heads on spikes showed, eyeless, gory,  
While corpses hung high on hooks of metal;  
And, further on, darkening our story,  
Some seemed to breathe, like disjointed cattle.  
Crimson the keep that on that headland stood,  
Like far-off flame; it shone with human blood!

Rinaldo now called on his God for aid;  
I must confess our knight was filled with fear.  
There came a crone, in dark garments arrayed,  
Wan of face, and white-haired; she did appear,  
Harsh and pitiless; her foul hand she laid  
Upon him, and then ordered, with a leer,  
The cruel giant to lower him to the ground,  
Still enmeshed; then, with a crowing sound,

She declared: 'Perchance you've heard a rumour  
Of the savage ways and customs that we strive  
To maintain, within this keep; however,  
If you have not, while you are yet alive,  
(And you shall die at dawn, like every other  
Brought here; forsake all hope, you'll not survive)  
I'll explain the origins of our custom,  
The means by which it's kept, and the reason.

### **BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 28-34: SHE TELLS OF THE MURDER OF GRIFONE**

There was one a knight of infinite power,  
Lord of this fortress, who ruled over all;  
He kept a noble court, at any hour  
Would welcome passing strangers to his hall.  
He honoured visitors to his high tower;  
Knights, ladies, worthy folk, on him would call.  
And, in his wife, owned to the fairest lady;  
She, beyond all others, shone with beauty.

The name of that brave knight was Grifone,  
And this keep was then called Altaripa;  
His wife, bright as a star, and as lovely,  
Was named, and quite rightly so, fair Stella.

Now in the month of May he, frequently,  
Would venture forth, in the summer weather,  
To hunt in the woodlands by the shore,  
Where you arrived this morn, to be sure.

Once, traversing the woods, he found a knight  
Hunting there and of his great courtesy,  
Invited him to his castle, for the night,  
Treating him with honour, and graciously.  
This other, who accepted with polite,  
And most eloquent speech, was wed to me,  
My lord of Aronda, named Marchino;  
And he was greeted by the lady also.

Marchino, having seen the fair Stella,  
Was seized by a love beyond measure,  
Adored that delicate face, and forever  
Thought of naught but that noble creature.  
And was possessed by the sole idea,  
(His heart, thus inflamed by his adventure)  
Of stealing the woman from Grifone,  
Not loving her, from a distance, only.

The wretched man departed, by and by,  
Changed in both looks and demeanour,  
And twas he alone knew the reason why.  
With a band of his men, he left Aronda,  
Clad like Grifone to deceive the eye,  
(He resembled him) and, in like manner,  
He dressed his force in a deceptive way,  
Concealing them midst the woods, that same day.

Then, unarmed, as if he were out hunting,  
He traversed the forest, sounding a horn,  
Till Grifone heard the echoes ringing,  
(For he knew he was hunting there that morn).  
Grifone, to that place, soon came riding,  
And found Marchino, seeming quite forlorn,  
Who, as if he thought the other far away,  
Cried: 'Devil take it, for I've lost the prey!'

Then he turned at once, as if catching sight  
Of Grifone for the first time, and said:  
'Tis vanished, and my hound was in full flight;  
He's vanished too! Perchance, the rogue is dead.'  
The pair rode on, Marchino and the knight,  
Until they reached the place, not far ahead,  
Where Marchino's men lay hid, and, briefly,  
Grifone was slain, most treacherously.

## BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 35-40: AND OF HOW SHE SLEW HER AND MARCHINO'S TWO SONS

Wearing his emblems, they took the fortress,  
And few were left alive in that sad place.  
Old and young, had no defence or redress,  
Especially the women, to man's disgrace,  
Except Stella; with many a fond caress,  
Cruel Marchino sought to win her good grace,  
But her high heart to him would never yield,  
And he was forced, awhile, to quit the field.

She dwelt only on the outrage he'd sought  
To perpetrate upon her, and on Grifone,  
Whom she had loved most dearly, and she sought  
Some path to vengeance, for his cruelty;  
Night and day, her husband was in her thought.  
Yet she found no means to avenge him truly,  
Until the cruellest creature in the world,  
Offered her aid, and a dark scheme unfurled.

For on earth there's no more vicious creature,  
None more feared, crueller than a raging fire,  
Than a loving wife once scorned; now a monster  
Of jealousy, consumed by dark desire.  
No wounded lion is ever fiercer,  
No trodden serpent is more filled with ire,  
As the wife that's abandoned by her lover,  
And sees her lord in love with another.

And such, in truth, was my state, I declare,  
For I have never felt a greater pain,  
Than when I was first told of that affair;  
The hearing of it left me scarcely sane.  
The cruelty I showed, what I wrought there,  
You may wonder at; if so, learn again  
That the well of mercy is oft drained dry,  
By jealousy; the innocent may die.

Two infant sons had I, by Marchino.  
I slit the first's throat with my own hand.  
The other cried: "For God's sake, mother no!"  
I took him by the feet, as I had planned,  
And struck his head against a rock; to know  
If my vengeance was complete, you demand?  
Why, these vile deeds were only just begun!  
Much more remained to do, ere all was done.

I quartered both; when they were well-nigh dead,  
I plucked the heart from out each little breast,  
And cut their limbs to pieces, while they bled.  
Conceive the madness of a wife distressed!  
I joyed in my revenge; preserved each head  
(No, not from love; no, not with pity blessed)  
For a darker purpose, spurred by vengeance still,  
Such was the savage fury of my will.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 41-43: AND OF THE EVIL  
DISH STELLA SERVED TO MARCHINO**

Next, I brought their remains here in secret,  
And then set the flesh to grill o'er a flame,  
Such spite can do, when upon vengeance set.  
First a butcher, then a cook I became.  
Their hapless father to the table did get,  
And so feasted happily upon the same.  
O wicked day! O cruel, unfeeling sun,  
That could gaze on this evil I had done.

My exit from the fortress I did win,  
(My hands and breast stained with blood) secretly,  
And sought Orgagna's king, for he was kin  
To Stella, and had long felt love for me.  
And told him all the details of my sin,  
And that of cruel Marchino, equally,  
And then led that lord, he in full armour,  
To seek revenge for Grifone's murder.

But we both came too late upon the scene,  
For after I had crept from the fortress,  
Feigning calm, Stella served up the obscene  
Conclusion to our vengeance, with no less  
Than his children's heads, both of which had been  
Concealed by me in a dish, with grim success,  
For though death their sad visages did blight,  
Their father knew their features, at first sight.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 44-48: AND OF  
MARCHINO'S CRUEL VENGEANCE ON STELLA**

Stella's hair was wild, as with altered face,  
Triumphant in mind, her revenge secure,  
She cried: "Your two dead sons your table grace.  
Bury their heads, the rest has passed your maw;  
Yourself their tomb, you their dead flesh embrace;

Vile murderer your punishment is sure!"  
Now that false traitor knew the depths of pain,  
As desire combined with cruelty in his brain.

The immeasurable outrage urged him then  
To have her cruelly racked and tormented;  
And yet her lovely form he viewed again,  
With the heat of desire nigh demented.  
He chose vengeance in the end, as often  
Fury will, but what revenge presented  
Itself, that was commensurate with the deed?  
None seemed cruel enough; yet he decreed

That Grifone's corpse be borne from the plain  
Where it lay, and to the blood-stained body  
He had Stella bound, the manner did ordain:  
Face to face, with both their hands clasped tightly;  
And then his pleasure on her did obtain.  
Was ever such abuse, or such vile cruelty?  
For the corpse was foul, yet the fair Stella  
Was raped thus, with the pair bound together.

At last, Orgagna's king, and I, came there;  
With him he'd brought a goodly company.  
Though Marchino saw us, he did not spare  
The woman, but slit her bare throat, swiftly,  
And then used her, dead; the worst he did dare;  
Treating her lifeless corpse as savagely  
As her living flesh, as if to prove that he  
Was as vile a creature as Earth might see.

We fought a bloody fight, and took the keep,  
And seized Marchino; his punishment  
Was fierce indeed, for he was prisoned deep  
In its heart, and flayed there, with harsh intent,  
Torn by hot irons that scorched flesh did reap,  
His bones shattered, till his last breath was spent.  
Stella was entombed within, and, rightly,  
Beside her, was laid her dear Grifone.

**BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 49-52: AND OF THE  
CREATURE IN THE TOMB**

Then Orgagna's king departed, while I  
Remained here in this darkened citadel.  
Nine months had passed already when a cry  
Came from the sepulchre, as if from Hell,

A cruel and dreadful screech to terrify  
All who might hear and, on the ears, it fell  
Of the three giants the king had left with me,  
Appalling and scaring them, equally.

One of the three, the boldest, undertook  
To open the tomb, and then peer inside,  
But soon regretted that one fearful look,  
For the creature, imprisoned there, defied  
His gaze and, with a claw used like a crook,  
Drew him near; in short, the giant died;  
For once dragged within, ere his plight was known,  
Torn to pieces, he was eaten, flesh and bone.

None was brave enough, within this hall,  
To make entry to that vault and its tomb.  
I encircled it with a strong and lofty wall,  
And, by artifice, oped that stony womb;  
A deformed creature, made but to appal,  
Came forth; a shape of misery and doom.  
Nor need I now describe that thing of woe;  
To meet it, as its prey, you soon must go.

For such is the custom that we keep here:  
One of our captives is set down each day,  
Inside the wall; the creature then draws near,  
And consumes the man, without more delay.  
We take so many prisoners each year  
Some we decapitate, their heads display  
Above the castle gate, through which you've been;  
While some we hang, or quarter, as you've seen.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO VIII: 53-64: RINALDO FIGHTS THE MONSTER**

Once Rinaldo fully comprehended  
The custom's immeasurable cruelty,  
And whence that evil creature descended,  
From which no prisoner could win free,  
He turned to the crone, lest undefended  
He should meet it, and said: 'Of your mercy,  
For God's sake concede that I may enter  
That place with my sword, and in this armour.'

She sneered, and said: 'Twill prove of no avail!  
Yet I'll allow the armour and the blade,  
The monster's fangs can pierce through plate and mail,

Against those claws, no defence can be made,  
Invulnerable its hide; within that pale,  
'Tis your place to die, although blows you trade;  
Yet I'll happily worsen what lies in store,  
'The creature makes armed captives suffer more.'

When the sun's first rays announced the dawn,  
Rinaldo was let down within the wall.  
From a gate within, the bolts were drawn,  
And a creature emerged, as at some call.  
Vile and disfigured, from pure evil born,  
It snarled, the many watchers to appal,  
That stood afraid, and insecure, on high;  
While some fled from the sight, or hid nearby.

Rinaldo, alone, showed no trace of fear,  
Fully armed, with Fusberta in his hand;  
But how the thing's outward form did appear,  
I believe you may wish to understand;  
So, concerning its birth, let us be clear,  
'Twas the devil's child, and his to command,  
Born of Marchino's seed, left in the womb  
Of the murdered wife interred in that tomb.

The thing was larger in size than a bull,  
Its long snout was like that of a dragon.  
The mouth was three feet wide, and overfull  
Of six-inch teeth; the whole a deadly weapon.  
The mask was like a wild boar's; so dreadful  
In appearance that none dared gaze thereon,  
And from each temple issued a great horn  
It could sweep about at will; keen, not worn,

For each sharp horn was like a two-edged blade.  
As it moved, it gave out a savage bellow.  
Its skin was an unpleasant greenish shade,  
Mottled with black, white, red, and yellow.  
A thick and bloodstained beard it displayed,  
Treacherous eyes, that fiercely did glow,  
And half-human hands, with nails like talons,  
Longer than the claws of bears or lions;

The nails and teeth so strong that the creature  
Could pierce through armour plate, and iron mail.  
Then, its hide was so hard, and dense in nature,  
That it thwarted every weapon, without fail.  
Bent on slaying the knight, that dread monster,  
Running upright on two feet, sought to impale

Rinaldo on its horns, while the latter  
 Stood his ground, swinging his sword, Fusberta.  
 He struck the beast in the middle of its snout.  
 The monster seemed to blaze with sudden fire,  
 Then, turning on Rinaldo, it reached out,  
 One great arm, with intent both dark and dire.  
 It barely touched him, yet it tore all about,  
 Sections of his plate and mail stripped entire;  
 And so sharp were those claws, beyond compare,  
 They left the knight defenceless, his flesh bare.

'Twas insufficient to deter Rinaldo;  
 He, despite his sore plight, was unafraid.  
 To its head he delivered a sharp blow,  
 Two-handed, but the beast ignored the blade.  
 At each stroke of his, it gave a bellow,  
 And greater the fierce anger it displayed,  
 It pounced, and struck at him, with its paws  
 A mere blur; while it opened wide its jaws.

Rinaldo was wounded in many a place,  
 Yet no man on this Earth possessed such heart.  
 Astonished he still lived, he yet would face  
 Its claws, and seek to tear the thing apart.  
 To die fighting seemed the lesser disgrace,  
 And was much the better choice on his part;  
 He might not slay the thing but, dead, at least  
 Would not feel himself the object of its feast.

By now the day was dark, the shadows grew,  
 And still they battled on, in fading light.  
 Rinaldo gainst the wall, sought strength anew,  
 Loss of blood had sorely weakened the knight.  
 But still he swung his sword, the blows yet true,  
 Though feeling that he fought a losing fight,  
 For he'd failed to draw a drop of its blood,  
 Though his sword struck home, be it understood.

His only hope was to render it senseless,  
 And so, he took a great two-handed swing.  
 It wrested away his blade, nonetheless.  
 What could he do? There seemed no escaping  
 The monster now, and no hope of success,  
 Lacking Fusberta, against this vile thing.  
 I'll tell you the tale of what did follow;  
 Not here, my lords, but in the next canto.



BOOK I: CANTO IX: DRAGONTINA'S ENCHANTED GARDEN



ARGOMENTO.

Da Angelica è Rinaldo liberato.  
Domanda Astolfo sullo a Sacripante  
Ma accorgendosi esser da lui burlato,  
Si parte, e nel camin con la sua Amante.  
Il forte Brandimarte hebbe incontrato  
Lo getta dal destriero. E in vn'istante  
Fa l'istesso al Cirasso. Indi veloce  
Per scior vâ Orlando da l'incanto atroce.



ALLEGORIE.

ANGELICA odiata da Rinaldo, e pur lo libera dádogli il modo  
di occidere il Mostro, & uscìr di prigione, ci dimostra che l'huo  
mo scordandosi ogni ingiuria, douerebbe giouare a ciascuno.  
SACRIPANTE che credendo guadagnare la donzella, perde il de  
strieri, & conuiene andar pedone, ne esorta a cõtètarfi di quello  
c'habbiamo, perche chi tutto vole il più delle volte non ha niète.  
ORLANDO, che per Dragontina va per occidere Astolfo suo cogi  
no, mostra quãto gli huomini pdono il sêso dietro alle dõne, che  
spesso non guardano ad offender anco i proprij amici, & parèti.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 1-8: MALAGISI TELLS ANGELICA OF RINALDO'S PLIGHT**

You've heard of the vile form of that creature  
The desolate and dreadful shape it bore,  
And how it attacked that man of valour,  
And his sole weapon hooked in its sharp claw.  
We must leave him in that place, however,  
For, of fair Angelica, I must tell more.  
I shall indeed speak further of Rinaldo,  
But first of the loving lady and her woe.

My lords, you will recall Angelica,  
And remember how that beauteous maid  
Had freed Malagisi, neath the water,  
And waited, day and night, to be repaid.  
And only one who waits can speak, thereafter,  
Of the pain waiting brings, the price that's paid;  
Waits, I mean, in expectation of love,  
When brief minutes like unending hours prove.

She would gaze at the waves, the scenery,  
The fields, the hills, and then the waves again,  
And, if she saw a vessel on the sea,  
Or a distant sail scouring o'er the main,  
The maiden would thrill to think that, surely,  
It bore Montalbano's lord; if o'er the plain  
She saw a steed, or a wagon did show,  
She believed she'd soon see her Rinaldo.

Malagigi returned but failed to bring  
The warrior with him; he still appeared  
Much as he'd left the dungeon, seeming  
Pallid and afflicted, with unkempt beard.  
He kept his eyes on the ground, dreading  
His reception, for the lady was afeared,  
Indeed, when she saw the mage, who sighed,  
'Woe is me, my Rinaldo's dead!' she cried.

'Nay, he's alive, at least as yet, my lady,'  
Malagisi reassured the lovely maid,  
'But not for much longer it seems to me;  
And may the day and hour be damned that made  
A heart so opposed to love and beauty.  
He'll soon pay for his latest escapade,  
His rebellious spirit quenched entirely.'  
And he told her the details of the duel,

Then being fought, within Castle Cruel,  
In which, indeed, he hoped the man would die,  
And the beast would devour him, completely.  
Ask me not if the lady gave a sigh,  
For she fainted away, her face was icy.  
She seemed dead, but recovered, by and by,  
When she did, she was nothing if not angry.  
And as her breath returned, and her vigour,  
She yelled, at Malagigi: 'You traitor!

O cruel, perfidious, and faithless man,  
How could you dare to stand here before me;  
And confess you dreamed up that evil plan,  
Leading your cousin where he'd die swiftly?  
If you don't aid him (and I know you can)  
Demons and enchantments will scarcely  
Save your skin, for I'll seize you; you shall burn;  
And the waves greet your ashes, in their turn.

Offer me not that lame excuse, you liar,  
That you performed all that you did, for me.  
If one must die, I, for my part, desire  
That I should make an end, and he go free.  
Let the wretched, cowardly woman expire,  
Not the flower of manhood, and chivalry.  
Far and beyond all this, think you that I  
Could live on, so, without him? Tell me why.'

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 9-10: AND EXPLAINS HOW SHE MIGHT RESCUE HIM**

'There's a way to grant him help, if you wish.  
But tis a course,' Malagisi replied,  
'That you yourself must follow and, in this,  
Must do as I now say, once you're inside.  
Though crueller than a bear, cold as a fish,  
He'll love, despite himself, and all his pride.  
Prepare at once, and then be on your way;  
He may be harmed, if you such aid delay.'

This said, a fair length of rope he gave her,  
With wide loops a foot apart, strong and light;  
And a file so sharp no sound would it offer,  
And a large gluey mass; and then, that night,  
(Once all that she must do he had taught her)  
Angelica, upon the wind, took flight,  
On a demon's back (black as coal, was he)  
And so reached Castle Cruel, o'er the sea.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 11-14: ANGELICA ARRIVES  
TO AID RINALDO**

Meanwhile, let me turn to brave Rinaldo,  
Who was indeed in a most sorry plight,  
Facing death, and deprived now, to his woe,  
Of his sword, and thus hampered in the fight.  
He searched for any means to thwart his foe,  
And behold, half-way up the wall, the knight  
Saw a wooden beam, ten feet from the ground.  
He leapt towards it, with what strength he found,

He clasped the beam tightly with his hand,  
And clambered upon it, as best he might,  
Till he was safe there, and could almost stand.  
The creature felt such anger at the knight,  
Such strength, despite its weight, it did command,  
That it leapt at his feet, attained some height,  
And often would well-nigh reach Rinaldo,  
Such that he almost felt its teeth below.

The night was already growing deeper,  
As brave Rinaldo clung fast to the beam,  
Though neither thought nor fortune could offer  
Any means of escape, so it would seem.  
Then behold, in the moonlight, high over  
His head, where the starry sky did gleam,  
He saw he knew not what, in gentle arc  
Descending (twas a maiden) through the dark.

Angelica it was, that now appeared,  
To grant him aid in his desperation,  
But on seeing her visage, as she neared,  
He nearly fell to earth, in consternation,  
His loathing for her such as scarce endeared  
That sight to him; the monstrous creation,  
Beneath him, he hated less, while to die  
He preferred to being rescued thereby.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 15-19: BUT HE SCORNS  
HER HELP**

She rested there, suspended in the air,  
(Though kneeling, above him) as she said:  
'What weighs the heaviest in this affair  
Tis my fault to this fortress you were led.  
I am so troubled, I confess, I'm in despair;

Half-mad with love, yet, to wish you dead?  
Perish the thought! I could never harm you,  
For, indeed, I only thought to charm you.

'Twas my intention to cause you delight,  
And see you, wholly happy and at ease,  
Once brought to my presence, valiant knight.  
Yet I find you where a monster might seize  
Your body, and in such desperate plight  
That your danger my very heart doth freeze.  
But banish thoughts of woe and misery,  
For I have learned how I might set you free.

Don't hesitate to leap to my embrace,  
So that I might, thus, carry you away.  
The wide earth below, the breeze in your face,  
You may pass, in a trice, from night to day.  
If you've desired to rise, and flee this place,  
In my arms you may yet do so, I say.  
Come, my valiant knight, and mount above,  
As fine as your Baiardo such may prove!'

Rinaldo was so angered, now, and grieved,  
The knight could hardly bear to hear her speak.  
He replied: 'No worse fate could be conceived!  
By the blessed Lord, my death I'd rather seek,  
Than have the threat of dying thus relieved;  
My mind is not so troubled, nor so weak.  
Choose to stay, and I'll choose to leap below;  
As may seem best to you then, stay or go.'

Believe me, there's no greater injury,  
Can be done a loving woman as to scorn her.  
She loathes the man who treats her cruelly,  
That throws in her face her heart-felt offer.  
Yet his disdain, his show of savagery,  
Had scant effect on fair Angelica,  
Who was now so committed a lover,  
That all his offences seemed but minor.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 20-25: NONETHELESS SHE  
TRAPS THE MONSTER, WHICH RINALDO SLAYS**

She replied: 'As you wish, so shall I do;  
Though I'd wish to do more than you say.  
And, if I thought my dying would please you,  
I would take my own life, this very day.



Though, men and gods be my witness, tis true  
That a hatred beyond words you display,  
E'en so, you can hurt me and reject me,  
But my love for you, no man can deny me.'

With this, she descended to the ground,  
Where that merciless creature held the field,  
Whirling her length of rope all around,  
While the gluey mass she did deftly wield.  
The monster bit thereon, and quickly found  
Its teeth and jaws soon were tightly sealed,  
And as, snarling, this new prey he pursued,  
At the first step he found himself lassoed.

Angelica left the beast roped and tied,  
And then departed again, through the air.  
By now the morning star could be espied,  
Ere the sun the eastern heavens did share.  
Rinaldo, gazing down on its fell hide,  
Could observe the creature racked by despair,  
Its fierce jaws held tight by the gluey mass,  
While from out the noose it could not pass.

Our knight swiftly dropped to the floor.  
While the monster tried to utter a cry,  
Seeking to terrify its victim once more,  
Though what issued forth was but a stifled sigh.  
It seemed the rope would come untied for sure,  
For the creature, with all its strength, did try.  
Rinaldo meanwhile retrieved Fusberta,  
And then he prepared to slay the monster.

Not a breath would he let the creature take,  
With swift blows to the skull, or the belly,  
Now its left flank, now the right, yet could make  
No headway; his sword cut steel like jelly,  
But that hide it could neither pierce nor break.  
The knight was at first dismayed, twas well he  
Thought of a different method of attack:  
Leaping, swiftly, upon the monster's back.

He grasped the creature's throat with both hands,  
And likewise clasped its torso with his knees.  
The monster gripped as if by iron bands,  
No rougher ride was e'er seen; by degrees,  
The knight's limbs wearied with the fierce demands  
Made upon them, but he pressed without cease.

Though his face crimsoned, he showed all his strength,  
Choking the beast, and strangling it at length.

### **BOOK I: CANTO IX: 26-31: RINALDO BREAKS THROUGH THE GATE AND IS ASSAILED**

Though he'd slain the vile creature, he now sought  
A means of quitting the field, behind this wall  
That loomed, on high, o'er the place where they'd  
fought,  
Though, at first, he saw no exit at all.  
Yet he found a gate to the castle court,  
Of steel bars, the gaps between too small  
For him to clamber through; hard and long  
He beat upon them, but the bars were strong.

Rinaldo found himself imprisoned there,  
Without a thought as to how to proceed.  
He could see the end of the whole affair  
Was that he'd die of hunger, though, indeed,  
He searched, all around the monster's lair,  
For something or other that met his need,  
And found – the file Angelica had brought;  
'Tis sent by the Lord above', was his thought.

He employed the file against the steel bars;  
Little remained to do but force the gate.  
Dawn was breaking in the east, and the stars  
Had faded from the sky; such was his state,  
When behold, a giant appeared; yet, no Mars  
Was he, for he feared to approach, or wait;  
Instead, once he'd clapped eyes on the knight,  
He cried out for help, and then fled in fright.

Rinaldo now pushed hard against the steel,  
Broke through the gate, and left it standing wide.  
By then, drawn by the giant's loud appeal,  
A cruel band of men had formed outside.  
Finding himself not done with his ordeal,  
He raised Fusberta, and the mob defied.  
The enemy force grew swiftly in size,  
Six hundred men their squadron did comprise.

Our knight cared not how great their quantity,  
He was valiant, and commanding, in a fight.  
They were led by the gigantic enemy  
That first had captured him and bound him tight;

And none was more treacherous or cowardly.  
Rinaldo swung Fusberta, which, in flight,  
Caught the giant, cut through the flesh with ease,  
And severed both his legs below the knees.

Our knight left him to die, and chased the foe,  
Plying his sword with marvellous effect,  
And soon found himself alone, to their woe,  
For few remained alive amidst that sect,  
Some lacked arms, some their head, as a flow  
Of crimson blood ran o'er the ground, unchecked.  
The old crone had locked herself in the keep,  
And hid there, behind walls both high and steep.

### **BOOK I: CANTO IX: 32-36: HE DEFEATS HIS FOES AND MEETS A MAIDEN ON THE SHORE**

Rinaldo ran to the keep, and struck the door,  
Broke its frame, and shook it with his hand.  
A second giant was within, but seemed unsure;  
The portal was Rinaldo's to command.  
Fear and shame had gripped the foe; now once more  
He hammered on the door, then used his brand,  
And Fusberta soon had it yawning wide;  
When the giant, now finding heart, ran outside.

With some courage, he struck brave Rinaldo  
On the head; the valiant knight simply smiled:  
'I'm content to honour you, for that blow;  
The Lord of Montalbano I am styled,  
And you'll be welcomed, there, down below,  
Midst the hosts of the cruel, and the reviled,  
In Hell I mean, where you'll be together  
With all those despatched there by Fusberta.'

And, so saying, the knight, at once, replied,  
With a mighty swing, fierce beyond compare,  
That cleft the giant's skull, and more beside.  
The rest fled; like a hound upon the hare,  
Rinaldo entered, slaying men, far and wide,  
But not that vile, pitiless hag, waiting there  
On a balcony, who, when she saw the knight,  
Leapt from its outer edge, in downward flight,

For that ledge was a good hundred feet high.  
So, ask me not if that foul creature died;  
Viewing her dark shape against the sky,

'May the Devil take you!' Rinaldo cried.  
The fortress ran red with blood, by and by,  
But still the valiant knight his weapon plied.  
To pen the conclusion of this affair,  
Not a living soul was left that place to share.

Our knight departing, now made for the shore,  
Yet, not wishing to board the ship again,  
He walked along the sand, a mile or more,  
Where he met a maid; loud she did complain:  
'Ah, woe is me, my heart is troubled sore;  
No longer this sad life I would maintain!'  
Bishop Turpin, in his tale, leaves off here,  
To speak of Astolfo, the English peer.

### **BOOK I: CANTO IX: 37-41: ASTOLFO REACHES SACRIPANTE'S CAMP**

Now, Astolfo had left the realm of France,  
In search of Rinaldo and Orlando,  
His armour was gold, gold his magic lance,  
And he rode alone, mounted on Baiardo.  
O'er the Rhine at Mainz he did advance,  
All through Germany and Hungary did go,  
Crossed the Danube to Transylvania,  
And reached the Don by way of White Russia.

He then rode south and west, entering  
The land of Circassia, where he found  
The countryside in arms, for their king,  
Sacripante, had summoned all around  
To fight against the foe now approaching.  
This was Agricane, the Tartar lord;  
Each of them commanded a mighty horde.

The cause that had brought about this war,  
Was not ancient hatred, nor lust for land,  
Some border dispute, grave dishonour, nor  
Desire for the fame victories command.  
Love was the reason that these two kings bore  
Their armour, and a weapon in their hand.  
For Agricane sought Angelica,  
As his wife, while she'd declared she'd rather

Wed herself to death, and everywhere  
Had sent, to every country far and near;  
Of humble lords and mighty kings, the fair

Maid sought help; many a sword and spear,  
Many a thousand fighting men were there,  
To defend her cause, many would yet appear,  
But Sacripante was the first to answer  
Her call, for long had that monarch loved her.

He was enamoured beyond all measure,  
With a woman whose love for him was slight.  
And tis Love's curse (perchance his pleasure)  
To see the unrequited love on, despite  
Discouragement; to be brief however,  
Such was the situation with this knight;  
Thus, he had levied troops against the foe,  
And, to him, the guards now led Astolfo.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 42-45: HE BOASTS OF HIS  
WORTH BEFORE THE KING**

For King Sacripante had commanded  
That in every pass, and on every road,  
All strangers that an entry demanded  
To his land, or those of no fixed abode,  
Should be brought there, to be reprimanded,  
Or, if, indeed, their brave appearance showed  
They might serve him, would be allowed to stay,  
If they agreed, or could go on their way.

Sacripante assumed that Astolfo  
Must be a valiant warrior, or lord,  
Since he rode a noble horse (Baiardo)  
And fine armour that few men could afford.  
His leopard emblem he'd removed, although  
His golden shield, and surcoat, none ignored,  
And in that land, where he acquired some fame,  
The Knight of the Golden Shield was his name.

'My valiant lord,' said King Sacripante,  
'What role, if you served, would you demand?'  
Astolfo answered him: 'All the many  
Soldiers you rule I wish at my command.  
I'd accept no less a rank, certainly;  
Accept my terms, or let me quit your land,  
I will not serve; tis as much as to say:  
I'd much rather issue orders than obey.

And to show that, of that role, I'm worthy,  
(And lest you think tis a madman you view)  
I'll present firm proof of my bravery;  
Behind my back tie my left arm, then you,  
And all your men, indeed, your whole army,  
May attack me, your dogs and servants too.  
I'd not have you wonder another day,  
Let us put it to the test, at once, I say.'

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 46-49: WHO DETERMINES  
TO GAIN HIS HORSE AND ARMOUR**

The king turned towards his knights, and said:  
That this fellow was truly most annoying,  
And had scarcely a sane thought in his head,  
Yet that it would seem a most simple thing,  
To restore his senses, if the man were led  
To understand he was less than nothing.  
But the lords and knights cried: 'Oh, let him go,  
For there's naught to gain from a madman so.'

Thus, Astolfo was released, and off he rode,  
With not a care in the world, on Baiardo.  
On that horse, the king a sharp glance bestowed,  
And on the gold armour, and its brave show,  
And decided to catch him when he slowed,  
For whether this strange knight was mad or no,  
It seemed to him an easy thing indeed  
To acquire Astolfo's arms, and the steed.

From his helm, the king thus removed the crown,  
Since he wished to travel incognito,  
And, free of all that signalled his renown,  
He set out in pursuit of Astolfo.  
The king was large, and strong, and hard to down  
In single combat, wise in war also.  
Of the deeds he performed I'll tell, later,  
In that great conflict, fought at Albracca.

He now followed Astolfo, as I've said,  
Who was travelling alone, down the road,  
Though the latter was now a day ahead;  
Astolfo ne'er a thought on him bestowed,  
He came upon a Saracen instead,  
That had crossed the sea. Right nobly he showed,  
For no better a knight bestrode the earth;  
In that same conflict he would prove his worth.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 50-52: ASTOLFO MEETS BRANDIMARTE WITH A LADY, AND CHALLENGES HIM**

This Saracen's name was Brandimarte,  
And he was Count of Rocca Silvana,  
And in Pagandom, in every country,  
Was known as a most perfect warrior.  
He knew all the arts of joust and tourney,  
Of chivalry, and courtesy moreover,  
And his gentle heart forever did prove  
To be lit by the noble flames of love.

Now Astolfo, as he drew near, perceived  
A lady who was travelling at his side,  
As dear to him as fair, twas believed,  
And beauty she possessed, none e'er denied.  
The duke's challenge Brandimarte received,  
When the former saw the courser, he did ride.  
'Take the field, if you please!' cried Astolfo,  
Or choose to leave the lady, here, and go'

'By Allah!' Brandimarte now replied,  
'I'd rather lose my life than the lady.  
And, since you have no lady by your side,  
When I win, I'll take your steed, and slowly  
You may follow us on foot, while we ride.  
Though twere best to seek other company;  
I'll hardly be wronging one who, in fine,  
Lacking a lady himself, would take mine!'

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 53-57: HE DEFEATS BRANDIMARTE BUT EXACTS NO PENALTY**

Now, Brandimarte rode a mighty steed,  
And had the advantage, he felt certain.  
Yet, after they had courteously disagreed,  
Ridden a distance, turned, and come again,  
Meeting in the midst, violently indeed,  
As they clashed, head-to-head, mane to mane,  
Brandimarte fell, downed by the collision,  
And the magic lance, aimed with precision.

His mighty courser was killed instantly,  
While Baiardo scarce seemed to feel the blow,  
Brandimarte was more pained that the lady  
Was no longer his; he cared for her so,

And now grieved for the loss, desperately;  
She was far dearer to him, you should know,  
Than his own heart, and, losing his delight,  
He drew his sword to slay himself outright.

Astolfo, now realised Brandimarte  
Was indeed close to ending his despair,  
So dismounted from Baiardo swiftly,  
And, with kind speech, to his side did repair:  
'Do you deem me so devoid of chivalry,  
That I would steal your lady, or would dare?  
I jousted with you in the name of valour;  
To you the maid, then; to me the honour.'

The knight, who was still sprawled upon the ground,  
Whose deep shame and woe had urged him to die,  
Such reassurance, in these words, now found,  
He wept with joy, quite rendered mute thereby,  
Clasped the duke's knees, and wept without a sound;  
Then, with a sob, gave a convulsive cry:  
'My shame's redoubled; twice you conquer me,  
At first by force, and now by courtesy.

And yet I am content to suffer shame,  
If my defeat but adds to your honour;  
Upon this life you save, you may make claim,  
As my tribute to your noble valour.  
Beyond others, indeed, should be your fame;  
I am not worthy to deserve your favour,  
Nor can I express my thanks; you have fought  
So skilfully, spared me, and asked for naught.'

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 58-63: SACRIPANTE ARRIVES AND ASTOLFO DEFEATS HIM**

Whilst they were conversing in this manner,  
King Sacripante arrived midst the trees.  
When he saw the lady, then gazed upon her,  
His thoughts of his quest did well-nigh cease.  
'Twas she he wished to win, not gold armour  
Or a steed. 'What a sight the heart to please,'  
He thought, 'I wished to gain a horse and gear,  
But there's a finer prize, to garner here.'

In a strident voice, the bold monarch cried:  
'Whoever keeps that maiden company,  
Leave her to me, go mount your horse, and ride,

Or stay, and prove yourself by fighting me!  
 Brave Brandimarte caustically replied:  
 'No knight, but some assassin you must be,  
 While I'm on foot, to challenge me, like a thief.  
 You're a villain, sir; such is my belief.'

Brandimarte then knelt before Astolfo,  
 And asked him, in a most courteous way,  
 To lend him his courser, to fight the foe.  
 Astolfo smiled, reluctant to say nay,  
 But replied: 'I'll not grant you Baiardo,  
 Yet I'll win his for you, if he but stay.  
 I'll do it for love of you, for indeed,  
 I'll attain fresh honour, and you the steed.'

Then he said to Sacripante: 'Sir knight,  
 Ere you may seek to acquire the lady,  
 You are obliged to turn about and fight.  
 If I can hurl you to the ground, clearly  
 I can force you to leave, a courser light.  
 If you should win, I'll suffer equally;  
 I'll depart, and you can have my horse,  
 And seek to win the lady, in due course.'

'Oh, Allah,' cried Sacripante, 'your favour  
 You bestow; you foresaw this, and aid me!  
 Here I've chanced upon this lovely creature,  
 Though I sought horse and arms, not the lady;  
 And now I may gain all three, the armour,  
 The steed and the maid!' and, smiling broadly,  
 He rode some distance off, turned, and cried:  
 'Take your position; I'll not be denied!'

They both charged, at speed, to the encounter,  
 And, as he rode, each man lowered his lance.  
 For each thought he was the better fighter,  
 And like the whirlwind hastened to advance.  
 Yet Sacripante fell, and not the other,  
 And struck his head on the ground by mischance.  
 Astolfo left him lying there and, smartly,  
 Gave the monarch's rein to Brandimarte.

### **BOOK I: CANTO IX: 64-68: THE LADY ISSUES A WARNING**

Astolfo smiled, and said: 'What cause of laughter  
 Is richer than the tale of this poor knight,

That though to unseat me and, hereafter,  
 Must go on foot himself...a sorry plight!  
 They rode on calmly, post the encounter,  
 Till the lady said: 'We should soon catch sight  
 Of the deep River of Forgetfulness;  
 Take thought to our safety, as on we press.

If we are not prudent and cautious, all,  
 Then we shall be lost by evening-tide.  
 Courage and arms, on those we may not call,  
 For but three miles away, as we do ride,  
 Lies the river that affects what men recall;  
 They know themselves not, on the other side.  
 I think we should choose a different trail,  
 For by doing so less danger we'll entail.

There is no way to simply pass it by,  
 For there's a steep cliff on either shore,  
 And a bridge that connects them, set on high,  
 While a guard-tower, above the gate doth soar;  
 And there a maiden, vigilant of eye,  
 Watches the way, and all who stand before  
 That bridge she beckons to her; at the brink,  
 They must take the cup she offers, and drink.

And once they sip the water, they forget.  
 They e'en fail to recall their names, alas,  
 And if one, proud and arrogant, would yet  
 Attempt, by force, that arching bridge to pass,  
 He cannot do so, for that knight is met  
 By some great lord, to act as an impasse,  
 (Held by that lady in an enthralled state)  
 That takes revenge, if he'd evade his fate.'

With such words the lovely lady sought  
 To alter course, and ride another way,  
 But her companions treated it as naught,  
 Felt no fear, and delighted in such play.  
 It seemed a thousand years, to their thought,  
 Ere, the evening overtaking the day,  
 They reined in, high above the water's gleam,  
 And could view that bridge arching o'er the stream.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 69-71: THWARTED AT THE BRIDGE THEY GO ANOTHER WAY**

The maid who was its guardian, stood there.  
She came to meet them and, gently, said  
That now the river's water both must share,  
And so asked each knight to drink, but instead,  
Astolfo cried: 'False creature, now beware!  
Your powers of enchantment, here, are dead;  
Your deception is revealed; you must die,  
For who lives by fraud must perish thereby.'

The maiden on hearing this, alarmed,  
Dropped the crystal cup, where she did stand.  
The bridge caught fire, as if strangely charmed.  
Now, none could cross; the fierce flames held  
command.

The lady troubled not; to both those armed  
Warriors, swiftly, she reached out a hand,  
(I mean Brandimarte's lady) a way  
She saw to escape all malice; would not stay,

But guided the knights to a hidden road,  
That ran behind the cliff; down this they sped,  
Reached a vale where the magic river flowed,  
And, spanning it, a second bridge, that led  
To Dragontina's garden, her abode;  
Then, by a path along which none did tread,  
They reached a gate of which the lady knew,  
(She, wise to all enchantment) and passed through.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 72-74: THEY ENTER DRAGONTINA'S GARDEN**

Brandimarte swiftly shattered the gate,  
And the magical garden was revealed.  
Many a captive in a charmed state:  
Was there; Orlando, with his sword and shield;  
King Ballano, whose skill in war was great,  
Oberto dal Leon (both in the field);  
Grifone and, with bold Chiarone,  
Aquilante, brother to Grifone.

There too was that strong king, Hadrian,  
And Antifor of Albarossia.  
They wandered there, enthralled to a man,  
Not knowing themselves, or one another,

Nor knowing Saracen from Christian,  
For necromancy their minds did alter,  
Worked by that sorceress, well-known to fame;  
Dragontina was the enchantress' name.

Now a battle began, for Astolfo  
And Brandimarte fought Chiarone;  
He was supported by King Ballano,  
Both armed by Dragontina, clearly;  
King Hadrian and Antifor also,  
And all the others, robbed of memory.  
But not Orlando, in the loggia,  
Admiring the art, if you remember.

**BOOK I: CANTO IX: 75-79: ORLANDO ATTACKS ASTOLFO, NOT RECOGNISING HIS COUSIN.**

Orlando, as I said, was armed as yet,  
Since he'd only arrived that very morn,  
And Brigliadoro (lest I forget)  
Was tied to a rosebush; flower and thorn.  
Orlando, by forgetfulness beset,  
Had not a thought in his head, I'll be sworn,  
When Dragontina came, and said: 'Sir knight,  
For love of me, will you not join the fight?'

He now thought of nothing else, and so,  
He leapt on his steed, and closed his visor,  
Drew his sword, and towards the noise did go.  
Fighting, mounted and on foot, in full armour,  
Ballano had yielded to Astolfo,  
Chiarone to Brandimarte; nearer  
Count Orlando approached and, at first sight,  
The duke knew Durindana, and the knight.

And cried aloud, astonished and amazed:  
'O flower of knights, O champion of France,  
O forever may the Lord above be praised!  
Do you not know me? With sword and lance,  
My cousin, upon many a land I've gazed,  
In my search for you. By what strange mischance,  
Were you led to this garden?' But twould appear  
The Count knew not the duke, or would not hear.

For, ignoring Astolf's speech, instead  
He swiftly launched a great two-handed blow.  
Indeed, the duke might well have lost his head,  
Were it not for that clever steed Baiardo,  
And might have lain there in the garden, dead,  
Slain by his own cousin, Count Orlando.  
But his dextrous mount saved him from a fall,  
And from vile death, by leaping o'er the wall.

Orlando clattered o'er the bridge, behind,  
Intent now upon catching his foe.  
Although Brigliador was so inclined,  
His speed was less than that of Baiardo.  
That's enough for this canto, to my mind;  
Of the boundless daring of Astolfo,  
I shall, in the next canto, tell you more,  
If you will deign to listen, as before.

BOOK I: CANTO X: THE FIRST BATTLE OF ALBRACCA



ARGOMENTO.

Fugge dauanti Orlando il Duca Inglese.  
 V'è ad Albracca ou'è'l Re di Tartaria  
 Con sua gente era, e con tutto suo arnese,  
 Per Angelica hauere in sua balia,  
 Fu da la Dama, com'era cortese  
 Ben visto. Esce a combatter sù la via.  
 V'ien preso. Con sue genti il Rè Circa sso,  
 Giunge, e fa gli nemici ire in fracasso.



ALLEGORIE.

ANGELICA che temendo l'assedio propinquo, riceue Astolfo con molte accoglienze, e insegna ad accomodarsi, in tutte le cose, secondo il tempo.

La proue da esso fatto con la lancia d'oro, e poi al fin restar prigion de' nemici, ci ammaestra; che non doueressimo inalzarsi per buona fortuna, perche spesso alza vno al colmo d'ogni diletto, & poi in vn subito lo abbassa al fondo di ogni miseria.



**BOOK I: CANTO X: 1-6: BRANDIMARTE DRINKS  
THE WATER, AND LOSES HIS MEMORY**

Orlando followed Astolfo, at speed.  
He spurred hard, but his efforts seemed in vain  
For still Baiardo proved the swifter steed.  
And, as if winged, his distance did maintain.  
The duke continued eastwards, sad indeed  
That he'd left Brandimarte there; twas plain  
He would, now, though his comrade for a time,  
Suffer worse than one prisoned for a crime;

Yet he himself feared Durindana so,  
He'd thus have abandoned his own brother.  
When, chasing him in vain, Count Orlando,  
Felt that he'd pursued the fleeing other  
Through the woods as far as he should go,  
(On the flat he'd fall behind e'en further)  
With a sigh, he reined in his steed hard, then  
Returned, at the gallop, to the garden.

There the conflict was still raging fiercely,  
For Brandimarte had clung to his saddle,  
And was facing Ballano and Chiarone,  
While both hammered at his armour's metal.  
His weeping maid begged him, piteously,  
To quit that vile and impious battle,  
To make peace with the two knights he fought,  
And do what Dragontina willed of her court.

For he could not maintain his life intact  
Unless he drank that enchanted water,  
He must lose his memory by that act,  
Yet should wait till she returned thereafter,  
For she would bring the help that he lacked;  
Then, without delaying any further,  
She turned her palfrey towards the plain,  
Until the gloomy woodland she did gain.

At that moment, the sound of fighting ceased,  
Twas the end of that whole cruel tourney.  
Dragontina took her cup, and was pleased  
To offer a draught to Brandimarte,  
Drawn from the river; all dismay it eased,  
All memory erased; he knew naught, simply  
Forgetting how he'd come there; by her art  
She'd formed that stream, that changed the very heart.

Twas a sweet and felicitous liquor  
That could, thus, draw memory from the mind.  
Brandimarte forgot the love, that ever  
Made him suffer such pain; for left behind  
Were his hopes, all his fears lost forever  
Of dispraise or shame; all such he resigned.  
All his thoughts now were of Dragontina,  
For he remembered naught ere he'd seen her.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 7-16: ASTOLFO AT THE  
MUSTER OF AGRICANE'S ARMY**

Meanwhile Orlando, on his return, paid  
Homage to Dragontina and, humbly,  
Every excuse that he could find he made  
As to why he'd failed, so miserably,  
To capture his foe; and well-nigh displayed  
The aspect of a child, he spoke so meekly.  
We must turn though, once more, to Astolfo,  
Who thought himself pursued by Orlando,

For he galloped ceaselessly, night and day,  
And saw nothing in that cruel, barren land.  
Twas unwelcoming, all that round him lay,  
Inhospitable that place, on every hand.  
But on the second morn, as he plied his way,  
He found an army encamped, a mighty band,  
And, meeting a herald, he sought to know  
What folk were there assembled, friend or foe?

The herald pointed out a wide banner,  
Sited in the midst of the encampment,  
And said: 'There lodges a great warrior;  
Agricane, King of Tartary, tis his tent.  
His ensign, as you see, is black moreover,  
Yet the work overall most opulent,  
For, on its field, a white horse you behold,  
And tis bordered with gems, and pearls, and gold.

Now, that white banner with a golden sun  
Is Saritrone's; he's Mongolia's king,  
And a most free, and most courageous one.  
The white lion on a green field, fluttering,  
Is Radamanto's, a mighty champion,  
For twenty feet in height is he, ruling  
Realms in the north, that mighty foe,  
King of Moscow the Great, and Comano.

That red ensign, with the moons in gold,  
Is Poliferno's, he's king of Orgagna,  
Who a wealth of lands and treasures doth hold;  
In the field, he's a mighty warrior.  
I tell you of all these flags you behold,  
So, you will know them from every other,  
And may point them out, you understand,  
Should you view them in another land.

That one marks the great king of Gotia,  
Pandragon is the puissant monarch's name,  
And there you see King Argante's banner,  
Russia's giant emperor, well known to fame,  
Lurcone's, and Santaria's (the former  
Bears Norway's crown, the other, next that same,  
A second crown, of Sweden) while nearby  
The banner of Normana's king, doth fly,

The name of that monarch is Brontino,  
A heart his emblem, on a field of green;  
His neighbour is the Danish king Uldano  
One of the boldest warriors e'er seen.  
To India all these great lords now go.  
Commanded to adorn the warlike scene,  
By this king who leads them, Agricane,  
They go to fight, and punish, Galafrone.

In India, Galafrone holds power  
Over a mighty land, they call Cathay,  
And he has a fair daughter, at this hour,  
That is fresher than is the rose in May.  
Agricane longs for that sweet flower;  
Such is the ache that pains his heart, I say,  
That he desires to win that maiden fair,  
For crowns and kingdoms doth no longer care.

Last night the aged Galafrone  
Sent his ambassador to the king,  
To explain that the former was wholly  
Unable to yield his daughter, seeing  
That she had fled to, and seized, a city  
Of his in which she now was dwelling,  
Fair Albracca, and had proclaimed beside  
Within its walls she'd remain, till she died.

Now this host will lay siege to Albracca,  
And subject the place to prolonged assault,  
Though that his daughter loathes the attacker,  
Agricane, is scarce the father's fault.  
But I would judge the truth of the matter  
Is that his campaign she'll find hard to halt;  
She scarce can match him in a lengthy war,  
And twere best that she yielded long before.'

### BOOK I: CANTO X: 17-21: HE GOES TO THE AID OF ANGELICA

Once Astolfo had learned the reason why  
This army had gathered in vast array,  
He mounted his courser that stood nearby,  
Took to the road, and spurred hard each day,  
Until he reached Albracca, where did lie  
The fair Angelica and, I may say,  
When she first caught sight of Astolfo's face,  
She greeted the knight with a warm embrace.

'Welcome, a thousand times, sir knight!' she cried,  
You bring me aid, and thus my hopes renew;  
Would that brave Rinaldo were at your side.  
I'd forfeit this keep, and the whole realm too,  
Without a thought, if forth the knight would ride;  
For that lord is so excellent, and true,  
That I'd have not a care in all the world,  
If, in my sight, his banner was unfurled.'

Said Astolfo: 'Lady, I can't deny,  
That Rinaldo is a mighty warrior.  
Yet I'd have you remember that my  
Own record in combat's superior.  
And we have fought together, he and I,  
In contests where indeed I pressed him sore,  
For the man was drenched with sweat to the bone,  
And heard him cry: 'I yield, to you alone!'

And I may say the same of Orlando,  
He that bears the banner of gallantry;  
But take his steed from the Lord Rinaldo,  
Durindana, from the Count and, trust me,  
That neither, boasting, through the world would go,  
Thinking themselves the flower of chivalry.  
They are not so to me; in every battle  
I've downed them, and heard their armour rattle!'

The lady challenged not his assertion,  
Knowing him for a jester, after all,  
Nor defended from his accusation  
Rinaldo; nay, on deaf ears it did fall,  
Since she had learned the name and condition  
Of every knight, and she could well recall  
Having seen that pair in Paris, and knew  
Of the deeds and high renown of those two.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 22-26: ASTOLFO GOES FORTH TO FIGHT**

The lady showed Astolfo great honour,  
And lodged him within the citadel.  
It was now there rose a sudden rumour,  
For a messenger had arrived, to tell  
Of dire news, whom dust and sweat did cover,  
News of war. 'To arms! To arms!' rose the yell.  
As the bells rang out, those in the city  
Seized weapons, and armed, in fear and fury.

Three thousand well-armed knights there were inside  
The fortress, and a thousand infantry,  
A strong force, assembled from far and wide,  
And the lady in consultation, swiftly,  
With Astolfo, and her lords, did now decide  
How best those troops might defend the city.  
Its walls were high, their strength admirable,  
And, under threat, well-nigh impregnable.

They felt the place was sound, and had in store,  
Weapons and supplies for many a year.  
Astolfo said: 'I'd rather die than endure  
A single day, cowering here in fear,  
Without challenging the enemy in war.  
Let those kings all, one by one, now appear.  
And let me be plunged straight to Hell,  
If I linger, armed, here in this citadel.'

With that, well-armed indeed, on Baiardo,  
He spurred to meet the foe upon the field,  
Where he uttered cries of such bravado  
All were amazed, their wonder unconcealed.  
'I'll soon make you strike your tents and go,  
And do so alone!' Loud his challenge pealed.  
'None shall survive, all die, at my command  
I'll slay every knight here with my own hand.'

Twenty-two hundred thousand knights in all,  
Such was King Agricane's fighting force,  
(So, Bishop Turpin writes) beneath the wall  
At Albracca, where Astolfo sat his horse,  
Disdainfully. 'Pride goes before a fall,'  
They say; and the duke learned so, in due course,  
Such that he somewhat altered his opinion,  
And was well-nigh ruled by sense and reason.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 27-31: HE DEFEATS EMPEROR ARGANTE OF RUSSIA, AND ANOTHER**

But now he challenged both Radamanto  
And Saritrone, and summoned Argante,  
And then called for Poliferno, Brontino,  
And brave Pandragon, mocking them loudly,  
Treacherous Lurcone, and Uldano,  
And scorned their leader King Agricane.  
And next taunted Santaria, Sweden's king,  
Berating them all, shouting and jeering,

Until the whole camp had armed in fury.  
Never was viewed so threatening a scene  
As that angry host, roused completely,  
By one knight's taunts, mocking or obscene.  
So loud was the outcry, and so mighty,  
The hills echoed and the plain between.  
Ten kings unfurled their banners there, on high,  
And rode to battle neath the sounding sky.

Yet, meeting with but the lone Astolfo,  
They felt it shameful to attack together.  
Twas Emperor Argante, that harsh foe,  
That was the first to rise to the encounter.  
The ugly dog had beady eyes, although  
He was six palm-widths across the shoulder,  
And no head was ever so large and fat;  
His chin was pointed, while his nose was flat.

He rode a sorrel steed, its neck outstretched,  
As he galloped forth to challenge Astolfo.  
The bold duke with his magic lance soon fetched  
Him from the saddle, with a skilful blow,  
While on every face, amazement was etched.  
A bold cousin of the Dane, Uldano,  
A noble lord, strong and brave, was next  
To lower his lance (so says Turpin's text).

Astolfo merely touched him with his spear,  
And, thus, he sent him head-first to the ground.  
The sovereigns marvelled, eager to appear  
More durable, and now their voices found,  
A cry they gave, as one, and not of fear:  
'On! On!' echoed from the skies around.  
A single band, they sounded the advance,  
And charged together gainst Astolfo's lance.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 32-35: BUT IS UNHORSED  
AND TAKEN CAPTIVE**

Astolfo held his ground, and faced the foe,  
Awaiting them, firm as a castle wall,  
Set to perform great deeds, on Baiardo,  
As from the sky dark clouds of dust did fall,  
Raised by the flying hooves, while there below  
Those fearsome knights willed the man to fall,  
As they charged: Pandragon, Saritrone,  
Radamanto, and King Agricane.

Saritrone reached him first, and was downed,  
Hard hit, his feet uplifted to the sky,  
But Radamanto, as the king struck the ground,  
Caught the duke in the ribs, while, close nearby,  
Agricane's lance the other flank soon found;  
Pendragon's sword descended from on high,  
And struck Astolfo's helm; and those three blows  
Unhorsed him; while, adding to his woes,

Their force was such he lay there unconscious,  
A moment, for all three were fiercely dealt.  
Radamanto, first of the victorious  
Royal trio to dismount, swiftly knelt,  
And took Astolfo captive, delirious  
With joy at a success most deeply felt,  
Though Agricane used his wits aright,  
And seized Baiardo, ere the steed took flight.

I know not, my lords, why that courser  
Was not fiercer amidst those pagan foes,  
Now that he had lost his former master;  
The unknown terrain, I might suppose,  
Discouraged him from fleeing, thereafter;  
Like a gelding he was led by the nose,  
And the king, with the voice of command,  
Had that wondrous steed, instantly in hand.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 36-41: SACRIPANTE'S ARMY  
NOW ARRIVES BEFORE ALBRACCA**

Now Astolfo had been captured, and lost  
His gold lance, his armour, and Baiardo,  
Those in Albracca, having viewed the cost  
Of boldness, felt no urge to fight the foe,  
For they raised the mighty drawbridge that crossed  
The moat, barred the gates, and high and low  
Manned the ramparts and walls, until one day  
A second army came, in vast array.

If you would seek to know what troops those were,  
They fought for Circassia's mighty lord,  
Those soldiers that so great a noise did stir;  
Sacripante had brought that endless horde.  
With seven kings in council he did confer,  
And an emperor, all skilled with the sword  
And the lance; there to aid Angelica,  
And I will tell you their names, in order.

The first one had been raised a Christian,  
But had become a heretic thereafter,  
Varano, a brave and vigorous man;  
And that monarch ruled in Armenia.  
Thirty thousand men he led, in the van,  
Neath his ensign, and each a skilled archer.  
The second host that marched to the war,  
Was led by Trebizond's great emperor,

Brunaldo by name, and neath his banner  
Came twenty-six thousand fighting men.  
The third of Roaso's crown was bearer,  
And another fifty thousand again  
He brought to the field, to show his power.  
Next came a pair of kings worth any ten,  
For each held a swathe of territory,  
One governed Media, and one Turkey.

Media's king was named Savarone,  
With thirty thousand troops at his call,  
Torindo was the ruler of Turkey,  
With another forty thousand overall.  
You've heard of Baghdad, of a surety,  
And Babylon the Great, and its high wall,  
And from that region came a host also,  
Led by the treacherous Truffaldino.

He'd brought an immeasurable army,  
A hundred thousand soldiers, and more.  
While Damascus had a giant lord, and he  
Led twenty thousand neath his flag, to war;  
Bordacco was he; while Sacripante  
Commanded the rear-guard; strong and sure,  
That prudent ruler of Circassia;  
And eighty thousand men followed after.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 42-46: VARANO LEADS AN  
ATTACK ON AGRICANE'S CAMP**

They came to Albracca in the morning  
Of the day after Astolfo's capture,  
And attacked Agricane, without warning,  
Though his host was there in full measure,  
In the first hour, as the day was dawning.  
They advanced, at first, at their leisure,  
But then his mighty army came in play,  
In that battle that brought both such dismay.

Who could tell a fifth part of the struggle;  
Seen in that perilous and bloody war?  
Each wondrous deed, every savage duel,  
The plaintive cries, that mercy did implore,  
Of those about to die, the deaths so cruel?  
Who could describe the wounds, the gore,  
The noise of weapons, the foiled advances,  
The tattered banners and the broken lances?

That first assault was led by Varano;  
The king urged on his men silently,  
His command signalled deftly, to and fro,  
'Take no prisoners; slay all, mercilessly!  
He struck, momentarily, startling the foe;  
Some were resting, some seized weapons swiftly,  
Cried: 'To arms!' and then counter-attacked,  
Some hid, some panicked at his sudden act,

But none were required to stand for long,  
For the enemy now raced from tent to tent,  
As Tartars fell before the sword's fierce song,  
Nor did those Armenian blades relent.  
Across the open fields, and all along  
The woodland's edge the fugitives now went,  
Overwhelmed by their foes, and sped beyond.  
Twas then the might lord of Trebizond,

Entered Agricane's camp, Brunaldo,  
And he was joined by that great champion  
And master of warfare, Ungiano.  
Many a fleeing Tartar was undone  
By bold Savarone, or Torindo,  
While Sacripante waited on the sun,  
And made Bordacco of Damascus stay,  
And Truffaldino, for the light of day.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 47-50: AGRICANE LEADS A  
COUNTER-ATTACK**

The battle was a convoluted mass  
Of men; near and far, they fled the field.  
The dust was raised, the ground was shorn of grass;  
None knew whom to fight, or to whom to yield.  
Such a state of affairs had come to pass,  
That Agricane, possessed of sword and shield,  
Saw not how his own strength or bravery  
Could prevent his men dying, miserably.

In despair, seeking death amidst the foe,  
He rode before his troops, paced up and down,  
Calling out his captains' names, Uldano,  
Brave Pandragon, so worthy of renown,  
Argante, Saritrone, Radamanto,  
Lurcone, Santaria, Sweden's crown,  
And Brontino, and bold Poliferno;  
He summoned all, their prowess, now, to show.

Then, upon Baiardo, went forth the king,  
Grasping his lance, leading his brave squadron;  
On that mighty steed he went galloping,  
Raged o'er the plain, and left no deed undone.  
He charged Varano, and sent him sprawling,  
Drove his lance through his crown, and then rode on,  
Leaving that king to lie there on the ground,  
And, likewise, downed every enemy he found.

Poliferno unseated Brunaldo,  
While Argante's lance struck Savarone,  
Radamanto unhorsed Ungiano,  
In the sand, and twas then Sacripante  
On viewing the advances of the foe,  
Recognised, and that indeed most clearly,  
That unless he himself brought them aid,  
His best knights might all be, thus, dismayed.

**BOOK I: CANTO X: 51-53: SACRIPANTE SAVES  
THE SITUATION, TO AGRICANE'S FURY**

Then he forsook the ranks; filled with valour  
He spurred his courser, and lowered his lance,  
Toppled Poliferno, then another,  
Twas Pandragon, and, in his swift advance,  
Brontino and Argante downed with honour;  
None could halt his weapon's lightning dance.  
The Tartars when they saw him draw his sword,  
Ceased their counter-attack, with one accord.

Agricane meanwhile fought on alone,  
Performing wondrous deeds on that field,  
But on seeing his men nigh overthrown,  
Bound for the hills, and shorn of blade and shield,  
He bit his hand in rage, uttered a moan,  
And chased the fugitives; men's fates were sealed,  
For he sliced every last man to the bone,  
Whether he was Circassian, or his own.

As, after winter, in more clement weather,  
A torrent cuts the snowy mountainside,  
Then overflows its banks, altogether  
Swollen by thawing snow from every side,  
So Agricane raged in like manner,  
Gripped by fury, while round him victims died.  
Soon a great test that king would undergo,  
Of which I'll tell you, in the next canto.



BOOK I: CANTO XI: AGRICANE WITHIN THE CITY

ARGOMENTO.

Combattono Agrican, e Sacripante  
Da fier Circassi la pugna è partita.  
Ne la città fuggon con cor tremante.  
Và la nemica gente seco vnita.  
Fiordiligi a Rinaldo del suo amante;  
Narra, e d'Orlando la crudel disdita  
Gl' insegna il loco, e quel che più gli pare,  
Che per lor libertà possi giouare.



ALLEGORIE.

LA Battaglia di Agricane, & Sacripante sturbata da Circassi ne dimostra che i sudditi douerebbono, per aiutare il lor Prencipe virtuoso, mettere la propria vita in pericolo.

SACRIPANTE, che ferito in camiscia si oppone al furor d'Agricane; ne dipinge l'huomo innamorato, che senza curarsi della propria vita si espone à strani pericoli.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 1-6: AGRICANE  
CHALLENGES SACRIPANTE**

You've heard before of the rage and fury  
Of King Agricane, that fearsome knight.  
Like some great river entering the sea,  
Or a cannon that cleaves the ranks outright,  
His sword like a scythe, he ploughed on fiercely.  
The foe's standards and banners fell from sight,  
He downed his enemies, his own men too,  
Quite indifferent as to whose troops he slew,

Those of Tartary or Circassia;  
Caring not whether they were foe or friend,  
Wishing ill on all, neath every banner,  
That delayed his passage, till, in the end,  
The mighty monarch, on his great courser,  
Reached the place where Sacripante did send  
Many a man to earth; Tartars screaming,  
As they fled before the Circassian king.

'Begone, worthless dogs!' cried Agricane,  
'You're no vassals of mine! Away, with you!  
I'll not play king to a craven army;  
To Hell with all the faithless and untrue!  
Go, leave me here alone! I'm more likely  
To win this thing myself than with a crew  
Of cowards; my sword shall gain the battle;  
Go your ways, base herd of useless cattle!'

With that, he cleared an open space around,  
And challenged Sacripante to advance,  
And, be assured, my lords, he quickly found  
Himself about to meet the latter's lance.  
First Sacripante had sent o'er the ground  
A messenger, to enquire if, perchance,  
The lovely lady would watch; the mere sight  
Of her would grant him fresh heart for the fight.

The maid thus climbed the steps to the wall,  
While a sword, to the Circassian king,  
She sent, sharp, and well-proven above all.  
Agricane was aggrieved, but still smiling:  
'What of it? In the end, the man will fall.  
Of that same blade I'll have the winning;  
I'll trounce Sacripante, gain the fortress,  
And capture that vile, yet fair, enchantress!

She shows no shame, and feels for another  
The very love that she should bear for me,  
Yet might share my realm, and govern over  
Half the known world, if she had eyes to see.  
Indeed, men say, of such women, ever,  
That they oft choose the worst, as does she.  
The king of kings would have her to wed;  
Yet she seeks a Circassian oaf instead!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 7-II: AND THE TWO  
MONARCHS ENGAGE**

With this, enraged, the monarch turned away,  
And rode some distance from Sacripante.  
He lowered his lance, and would not stay,  
But charged, in a sudden fit of fury;  
While on the other side, to win the day,  
The Circassian met his enemy.  
Twas as if (the noise and dust so blended)  
The skies had fallen; the world had ended.

Each had struck the other's helm in fact,  
And with the full weight of his mighty lance.  
Three palms round, neither weapon was intact,  
Yet they fell not, despite their wild advance.  
Their lances split, they drew their swords, and backed  
Their chargers; for a moment stunned, perchance,  
And then returned, to the fight, by and by,  
For both knights wished to conquer or to die.

Those who've seen two bulls in a meadow,  
Driven by their frenzy for a heifer,  
Battling, head-to-head, with many a bellow,  
Each seeking to disable the other,  
Might understand those knights, as blow for blow,  
Careless of life, lover fought with lover,  
Hurling away their stout shields, the better  
To meet in desperate battle together.

Now Sacripante, relinquishing caution,  
Using both hands, swung at Agricane,  
And struck the crown (his crest), sliced a portion,  
And yet failed to pierce the helm entirely,  
(Twas charmed); at which, with a quick contortion  
Of his shoulders, that king cut him deeply,  
On his flank; then both brave knights sought vengeance,  
Rendering like for like, and chance for chance.



No rain descends as swiftly from the sky,  
 No hail e'er falls as thickly to the ground,  
 As in that contest, dreadful to the eye,  
 Where blows fell fast, and tempered steel did sound.  
 Blood bathed both those warriors, by and by,  
 Head to saddle; twenty wounds, I'll be bound,  
 Each received, for ne'er was seen such a fight,  
 While the battle grew in fury and in might.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 12-15: SACRIPANTE  
 APPEARS TO WEAKEN**

Sacripante endured the worst, tis true,  
 For his flank turned a deeper shade of red,  
 But careless of his life, he kept in view,  
 That fair flower, Angelica; in his head  
 The words sounded: 'Lord above, all I do  
 May she see; oh, let me stand in good stead  
 With my lady; all is done from true love,  
 I'd be content to die, should she approve.

Yea, gladly I would perish on this field,  
 If I could please that lovely creature;  
 If she would but these words of comfort yield:  
 "I have been too harsh towards him, ever;  
 I've brought about his end, and so revealed  
 His wish to please me, his loving nature!"  
 If I knew for such speech she might find breath,  
 I'd be blessed in life, and as blessed in death.'

Such reflections did his mind so inflame  
 No heart has ever been so overwrought.  
 With each blow he called out the lady's name,  
 And swung his blade for her sake as he fought,  
 For naught so possessed his heart as that same.  
 He ignored wounds and blood; twas her he sought,  
 Yet, little by little, strength and spirit failed,  
 While, unknown to himself, his visage paled.

The other kings stood round, and viewed the fight,  
 But not without fear and apprehension.  
 To each it seemed a shame if such a knight,  
 Daring and bold, were to face extinction.  
 While Torindo, could scarcely bear the sight  
 Of the danger presented, yet what action  
 He might take to end the duel he knew not,  
 For it seemed all caution they'd long forgot.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 16-21: TORINDO THE  
 TURK SEEKS TO INTERRUPT THE DUEL**

He spoke then, to the other lords, and said,  
 What a sin it was to watch while their king  
 Was weakening thus, and might soon be dead.  
 'Ungrateful folk, who see, yet do nothing,  
 But merely gaze on your saviour instead,  
 One who rescued you from rout and ruin.  
 He preserved both your life and your honour,  
 You merely stand by, while he must suffer.

Oh, rid yourselves of that cowardly hue,  
 Though our enemies seem beyond measure,  
 Let us assail their serried ranks anew;  
 We can slay these weaklings at our leisure,  
 Nor think there's treachery in what we do,  
 Should we interrupt this duel, for our pleasure.  
 Treachery is not the word, be assured,  
 For actions aimed at rescuing our lord.

If there is blame to come, the blame be mine,  
 And let yours be the complement of praise.'  
 With this, he executed his design,  
 And spurred to where he yet cast his gaze,  
 Lance lowered to pierce the enemy line.  
 As fiercely as the lightning bolt doth blaze,  
 He downed the first, and second, of his foes,  
 The third, and fourth; and a great cry arose.

The forces of Turkey and Circassia,  
 With those of Syria and Trebizond,  
 And others of their host, without number,  
 Charged with Torindo, eager to respond,  
 Driving against the ranks of the Tartar,  
 And of Russia, and Mongolia, beyond.  
 Behold the dust on high, the fray below,  
 As others joined, led by Truffaldino,

He of Baghdad, a most powerful knight,  
 As an immeasurable brawl began.  
 A hundred thousand he brought to that fight,  
 In close formation, eager every man.  
 Agricane saw his troops recoil in fright,  
 Scattering o'er the battlefield, e'er they ran,  
 And facing Sacripante cried: 'Beware,  
 Tis an error to disturb our sole affair,

And the reward I shall grant you is this:  
To fight against my whole army, instead.'  
Knights engaged on every side; with a hiss  
The swinging blades cut the air overhead,  
Wreaking destruction, seldom did they miss  
Their target, adding ever to the dead.  
More men they slaughtered, there, than in a day  
Thirty scythes could reap, in their gleaming play.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 22-25: AGRICANE'S  
TROOPS PRESS TOWARDS THE CITY**

Agricane encountered Truffaldino,  
Who, on perceiving no means of retreat,  
Faced the latter, and demanded to know:  
'What honour will you gain by my defeat,  
And by toppling me to the ground below,  
When you ride a steed so strong and fleet?  
None on earth can compare! I challenge you,  
To fight me on foot, as you ought to do.'

King Agricane who ever sought fame,  
Dismounted swiftly and gave his courser  
To a lord nearby, to protect that same.  
At that moment, indifferent to honour,  
As if the art of war were but a game,  
Truffaldino seized the chance to scarper,  
Swung his heels and, with a flick of the rein,  
Was long gone, ere the king could mount again.

The action now turned towards the city.  
The Bagdad hounds, and the Circassians,  
Fled before Agricane, with the weary  
And woeful remnants of the Syrians,  
Jettisoning their shields, mail, and every  
Weapon they yet gripped in their hands;  
All fled the Tartars, none sought to respond,  
The Turks turned heel, with those of Trebizond.

'Twas not long ere they reached the city wall,  
But had, first, to cross the encircling moat,  
For the drawbridge had been raised against all;  
The gates were barred, the foe was at their throat.  
What could Angelica do to forestall,  
Their destruction? For few could keep afloat,  
That leapt or fell; the portals were thrown wide,  
The bridge was lowered; the troops fled inside.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 26-31: KING AGRICANE  
ENTERS BUT IS TRAPPED WITHIN**

Once the bridge was down, the gate unbarred,  
Damned was the warrior that lagged behind;  
Yet those Tartars who were pursuing hard,  
Entered in, midst those to defeat resigned.  
A portcullis was lowered by the guard,  
Trapping Agricane (now a king confined),  
With three hundred of his Tartar army,  
All shut tight, with him, within the city.

He rode the caparisoned Baiardo,  
Never was seen so proud a warrior.  
The ruler of Damascus, Bordacco,  
Knew his face; he'd entered a while before,  
And viewing Agricane, that fierce foe,  
Called out: 'Now we'll prove your strength, for tis sure  
Baiardo will not save your skin this day;  
You'll die, sir knight; here you came, here you'll stay!

Though you may defend yourself with valour,  
It weighs not; for death you'll find, in the end.'  
Agricane laughed, this speech did utter:  
'Rather than war with mere words, my friend,  
Why not seek to kill me? 'Twould be better,  
If on this battle your thought you did spend.  
Try your best; you'll be first to sink below,  
And walk, there, where I've sent many a foe.'

Now, King Bordacco's weapon was a flail,  
A great ball of lead, on the end of a chain,  
And, two-handed, he whirled it, to assail  
Agricane, and deal him a weight of pain,  
But his mighty effort proved of no avail,  
The latter's sword cut the steel links in twain,  
And it fell to the ground; Agricane  
Cried: 'Come then, let's see who fights most bravely!'

And, with that, he struck a two-handed blow  
Hard against Bordacco's helm, cutting through,  
Slicing, from the crown of his head, below,  
Both jaw and neck, to the chest, straight and true.  
Those about, who saw the strength of this foe,  
With frightened faces, began fleeing anew,  
King Agricane, now, threatening their rear,  
As he hunted them, and they ran in fear.

His was a proud, and most impulsive, heart,  
Thus, one that often carried him away.  
If he'd but stopped to reflect, at the start,  
And had won the gate, he'd have gained the day.  
With but a little more thought on his part,  
He'd have held the city; none to tell him nay;  
And gained Angelica, alive or dead,  
Yet, in senseless wrath, pursued those that fled.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 32-38: THE WOUNDED  
SACRIPANTE ROUSES HIS MEN**

Beyond the wall furious contests raged,  
Cruel, dreadful, and yet diverse in kind.  
Each force regrouped, then once more re-engaged.  
Some men drowned neath the bridge, others lined  
The moat, and died, their vengeance unassuaged.  
So many were the dead, their blood combined  
In crimson streams, to fill that castle moat  
To the brim; there, many a corpse did float.

But the war was as vicious in the city,  
Where a crueller sight could yet be viewed,  
As that great king on Baiardo, in his frenzy,  
Terrified that crew, hounded and pursued.  
No war e'er saw the death of so many,  
None was greater; he slew a multitude.  
No man dared face Agricane that day;  
Midst the dead, Baiardo scarce made his way.

Before he was confined thus, in Albracca,  
The Tartar king, and wrought as you have heard,  
King Sacripante, who had fought with honour  
In the duel, had sought the city, nor had stirred  
From his bed, while striving to recover,  
(As yet obeying the surgeon's every word)  
Still lacking the strength to stand upright,  
So profusely had he bled in the fight.

Agricane seemed like some great storm at sea,  
As he raged in his fury through the city,  
Two-handed blows of his sword, frenziedly,  
Dealt wounds, death, and ruin, without pity.  
On his bed, still in pain, King Sacripante,  
Heard the sounds of lament, cries for mercy,  
As the Tartar slew his men, far and near,  
And sought to know the reason for their fear.

A squire, weeping, brought his lord the news:  
'King Agricane fights within the gate;  
That cursed knight our soldiers doth abuse;  
Death, and desolation will prove our fate!  
Sacripante rose, every cut and bruise  
Bringing pain, and, despite his present state,  
Issued forth, with naught but his sword and shield,  
And, bare but for his nightshirt, took the field.

Everywhere he met hordes of frightened men,  
So dismayed that they knew not what to do.  
He cried loudly: 'Dull wretches! Turn again!  
'Tis but one knight alone seeks to pursue!  
Will you burrow in the mud? Find some den  
To hide in? Make no stand, fight not anew?  
Throw down your weapons! 'Tis no coward's game,  
To be played by gross fools, devoid of shame!

See how I go, unarmoured, to the fight,  
Half-naked to seek the field of honour!  
The fleeing host stood gazing at the sight,  
Full of wonder, now roused from their stupor,  
All suddenly arrested in their flight.  
The high renown of that man of valour  
(For true deeds tell no lies) gave men such heart  
Even cowards were roused to play their part.

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 39-46: AGRICANE IS  
FORCED TO RETREAT**

Behold King Agricane, midst the street,  
Who had routed those who would block his way,  
Yet encountered, now, resistance to defeat,  
As Sacripante sought to save the day.  
Here began another fight, and at red heat,  
The cruellest yet, the fiercest, I may say,  
For though the Tartar forces were but few,  
Their mighty leader roused them all anew.

On the other side raged the countrymen  
Of Sacripante, their Circassian king,  
Who believed they'd indeed be shamed again,  
If they held not firm, whate'er fate might bring.  
The bolts and darts fired swiftly and often,  
The clash of arms, and armour, resonating  
Enough to fill the bravest heart with dread,  
Appalled the mind; the streets filled with the dead.

Sacripante, beyond all others, showed  
 Proof of his character and reputation.  
 Though lacking armour, at their head he strode,  
 Yet survived, to the foe's consternation.  
 And such was his pace, which barely slowed,  
 Such his strong right arm, war his vocation,  
 He not only shielded himself, but he  
 Saved many another from the enemy.

He'd hurl some great rock, or launch a dart,  
 And then pursue the missile, spear in hand,  
 Or, covered by his shield, would split apart  
 The hostile ranks, forge on, and make a stand.  
 So much so, that Agricane, for his part,  
 Found naught that he attempted worked as planned;  
 His men fought on, in vain, though fierce and brave,  
 Three hundred strong, to gain a common grave.

Nor could he prevail against so many,  
 Darts and arrows now fell on him like rain;  
 (Sacripante dealt more blows than any,  
 While the rest their fierce assault did maintain).  
 His royal crest was shorn away, wholly,  
 His shield broken on his arm, and, again,  
 From his armour, a cloud of darts did hang,  
 While, against his bright helm, the slingshots rang.

As a raging lion issues from the glade,  
 When flushed thence by the clamour of the hunt,  
 And, seeking to show itself as unafraid,  
 Paces slowly, shakes its head at the affront,  
 Roars, and thrashes its tail and, undismayed,  
 Halts and turns, at every shout, to confront  
 Its assailants, so the king, forced to flee,  
 Showed his fierce disdain for the enemy.

At every thirty steps, he turned around,  
 And threatened them, in a scornful voice,  
 But was closely pursued still o'er the ground,  
 While at his plight all the city did rejoice.  
 Men arrived from every side, and he found,  
 As fresh troops emerged, he had little choice  
 But to drive onward while, forcing the gate,  
 His troops yet scorned to leave him to his fate.

Dreading naught, Agricane forged ahead;  
 He raged in fury, downing many a knight.  
 Two-handed blows he dealt, to chest and head,  
 Seeing the means, thus, of escape in sight.  
 And there I'll leave the monarch, and instead,  
 Turn to Rinaldo (I'll resume the fight  
 Hereafter) who was walking on the shore;  
 Having quit Castle Cruel not long before.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XI: 47-50: RINALDO SEEKS TO AID A LADY IN DISTRESS**

I'm sure that I've told you, previously,  
 How he encountered, there, a lovely maid.  
 She sought to die, weighed down by misery.  
 He called to the lady gently, and displayed  
 Signs of pity, begging her, courteously,  
 By all that she most loved, and here obeyed,  
 By Allah, by the Lord in Heaven above,  
 To tell him what so irksome, thus, did prove.

Disconsolately, the fair maid replied:  
 'I shall do as you request of me, sir knight.  
 Indeed, I wish I'd ne'er been born, or died  
 At birth, my joy is lost! In dreadful plight,  
 I've searched the world, search yet, on every side,  
 But find no aid, cannot my loss requite,  
 For tis my task to find a lord who will  
 Fight nine great warriors, yet conquer still.'

Said Rinaldo: 'I cannot claim I'll gain  
 The victory gainst two, let alone nine,  
 But your sweet speech, your flowing tears, your pain,  
 Have moved my heart to pity and, in fine,  
 Though I may fail your honour to maintain,  
 My ardour makes me boldly thus opine,  
 That the help you seek is thus found nearby,  
 For I will either down those nine, or die.'

The maid cried: 'To your God, I commend you!  
 And, for your kind offer, thank you deeply,  
 Yet yours are not the means I should pursue;  
 Such a man will ne'er be found, believe me;  
 For Orlando's among those nine; you too  
 Have heard of him, perchance; not only he  
 But all the rest are, likewise, known to fame;  
 Small honour's won in fighting those same.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XI: 51-53: FIORDELISA YIELDS  
NEWS OF ORLANDO**

Hearing her speak of the Count Orlando,  
Brave Rinaldo addressed the maid once more,  
Seeking to learn of aught that she might know,  
As to his location, where and on what shore.  
And so, she told him where that stream did flow,  
The River of Forgetfulness, and more,  
For she explained how the Count, and the rest,  
By a wicked enchantment were oppressed.

And he learned that she was Fiordelisa,  
And of how she'd abandoned Brandimarte.  
Rinaldo then strove hard to persuade her  
To lead him to that place, swearing, truly,  
By God, he'd free them from Dragontina,  
By strength or art, by fighting or by simply  
Feigning love, and so break the spell, perforce,  
And set those captives on a truer course.

The maiden looked the knight up and down,  
And saw he was well-formed in his person,  
And fit enough to seek such brave renown,  
While armed with not too feeble a weapon.  
Yet this canto with its ending I'll crown,  
For the next, as you'll find, will prove a long one;  
Its purpose being to relate the story  
Told to my lord Rinaldo, by the lady.



BOOK I: CANTO XII: THE TALE OF TISBINA, IROLD, AND PRASILDO



**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 1-4: FIORELISA RETELLS A STORY**

Now, I have told you of that savage fight,  
The sound of which yet echoes in my head,  
Twixt Sacripante, that most fearless knight,  
And Agricane, whom we've learned to dread.  
Yet those violent strains I must put to flight,  
And sweetly sing of gentle love instead.  
Return in thought, my lords, then, to that place  
Where I left the brave Rinaldo for a space.

Fiordelisa descended, and then sought  
To see the brave knight mount astride her steed.  
Rinaldo cried: 'You do me wrong, in short,  
To invite me to so villainous a deed.'  
She replied a knight should ride, as he ought,  
While she could walk quite as well, at need.  
At last, to be brief about the matter,  
He took the saddle, and she the crupper.

The lady rode along, somewhat fearful  
That her honour might, in some manner, prove  
To be at risk, but when an uneventful  
Day had passed, and he'd uttered naught of love,  
Reassured, she said: 'Sir knight, a dreadful  
Expanse we must traverse, trees, rocks and moss,  
And the whole is a hundred leagues across.

So, to render the road less tedious  
As we journey through the waste on either hand,  
I shall tell you a tale most curious,  
A history, and if you would demand  
Further proof, if you think it spurious,  
Then go to Babylon, that far-off land;  
Tis well-known there, all I shall tell to you,  
And they will confirm the thing is true.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 5-8: OF IROLDO, HIS LADY TISBINA, AND THE LORD PRASILDO**

There was a knight; Iroldo was his name;  
And he had a lady called Tisbina,  
And he was loved as deeply by that same  
As Tristan was by Iseult his lover.  
And he too kept for her a constant flame.  
From morning, to night he thought about her,  
From dusk to dawn, she was in his mind,  
While to all others but her he was blind.

Now, a nobleman dwelt not far away,  
Thought to be the greatest in Babylon,  
And he was worthy of his rank alway  
For he was a courteous man, and none  
Were braver there, and all the wealth, that lay  
In his well-filled coffers, he spent upon  
All manner of things that brought him honour;  
A fine guest, bold knight, jouster and lover;

And the name of this lord was Prasildo.  
He was present in a garden, one day,  
Where Tisbina and her friends would go,  
And he joined in a game they used to play;  
Unfamiliar to him, twas ordered so:  
One had to hide their face in her lap, I say,  
And hold out an outstretched palm, behind,  
Then guess who tapped it (of those she assigned)

Prasildo watched the game, till Tisbina  
Selected him to touch the person's hand,  
And then he took his place (as a stranger,  
His name was quickly guessed, you understand).  
One his head was in her lap, however,  
A sudden flame his hot heart did command,  
And he hoped he'd not guess who next did tap,  
Afraid he'd then be forced to quit her lap.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 9-12: PRASILDO FALLS IN LOVE WITH THE LADY**

When the game was over, the party done,  
The flame still remained within his heart.  
It troubled him by day, beneath the sun,  
And at night a greater heat would impart.  
Troubled thoughts filled his mind, and every one  
Made the colour from his visage depart,  
And deprived him of sleep; ever-burning,  
They left Prasildo tossing and turning.

His feather pillow seemed as hard as stone,  
While the ache in his heart grew more intense,  
It pierced far deeper than any he'd known  
Clouded his mind, and robbed him of sense.  
Day and night, he was wont to sigh and groan,  
Indescribable his longing; though immense,  
Love cannot be conveyed, its pain, delight,  
To those whose loveless hearts feel not its might.

The handsome courser, or the eager hound,  
The employment of which had brought pleasure,  
Were almost absent from his thoughts, he found.  
Sweet company, entertained at leisure  
Was his great joy; his banquets were renowned;  
He recited poems, or sang a measure;  
Or some rich tourney, to display his steed  
All adorned with fine trappings, he decreed.

Though he had been courteous before,  
He was at least a hundred times more so,  
Since virtue strengthens, ever waxes more  
In the man who is in love; this I know,  
For in all my life, on whatever shore,  
I've ne'er seen love's good turn to evil; though  
Prasildo was drowned deep in love, in brief,  
His courtesy was nigh beyond belief.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 13-17: HE EMPLOYS A GO-BETWEEN WITHOUT SUCCESS**

He found a loyal go-between, a maid;  
She was a close friend of this Tisbina,  
One that might speak to her, all unafraid,  
On his behalf, and would praise him ever,  
With small effect; scant attention was paid,  
By one unmoved by pity for a suitor,  
As oft happens, denying him success;  
Beauty is oft allied with haughtiness.

Time after time, the maid said: "Fair lady  
Recognise the hour of fortune; this lord  
Loves you far more than himself, and then he  
Has those looks only Heaven may afford.  
You'll regret the lost opportunity;  
Happy days are soon gone, and ne'er restored.  
Seek happiness, while you're yet in your prime,  
Lose not delight, use well the passing time.

Oh, our years of youth are the years of joy,  
And should be spent in pleasure, Heaven knows,  
For, howe'er our sweet springtime we employ,  
The years vanish in the sun, like passing snows,  
Or like the hues, that fleeting hours destroy  
Rendering pale and wan the crimson rose.  
Youth is gone, in the twinkling of an eye,  
Can't be grasped, lacking reins to seize it by."

Tisbina was assailed by this and more,  
But the maiden's fair speech was all in vain.  
As the frost, on wintry days, cold and hoar  
Turns a bank of violets pale, or as, again,  
Panels of ice in the sun their droplets pour,  
So that noble lord paled, dissolved in pain,  
Reduced, poor man, to such a wretched state  
He longed for cruel death to ease his fate.

He had been one to feast, but no longer.  
He was pallid and thin; his face was gaunt;  
He hated himself, all thoughts of pleasure,  
Scenes of merriment, instead, would haunt  
Places far from the city, hours would measure  
Walking where none might meet him, or vaunt  
Their overt happiness; he'd find some grove,  
And there lament his own unhappy love.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 18-23: HIS LAMENT IS OVERHEARD BY TISBINA AND IROLDO**

Now, it chanced that, as the day was dawning,  
Iroldo was out hunting o'er his land,  
And Tisbina was at his side that morning,  
And they both heard, from a place close at hand,  
A sorrowful voice, sighing and moaning.  
Twas Prasildo's lament, you understand,  
In such sweet words, pierced by many a groan,  
Twould, it seems, have wrung pity from a stone.

"O trees and flowers of the forest, hear me,"  
He cried, "Since that cruel one listens not.  
Give ear to my misfortune, and show mercy,  
O sun, for whom the stars are swift forgot;  
O bright stars, O moon departing swiftly,  
Cast your gaze on the harshness of my lot.  
These my last words, on darkness I attend;  
By dying my cruel martyrdom I'll end.

Then she may rest content, that other,  
She that my poor life so little pleases.  
Heaven above a harsh heart did cover,  
With a pleasing form, thus to deceive us.  
She delights in seeing some fond lover  
Perish; denies pity that might ease us,  
And so, I shall die, to grant her pleasure,  
To yield her delight in greatest measure.



But, may my corpse, for God's sake, be concealed,  
Amidst these woods, nor the truth be known  
That by love my unhappy fate was sealed,  
May no trace of my sorrows e'er be shown.  
Let the cause of my death ne'er be revealed,  
To the lady; to no blame must she own.  
I was wrong to adore that cruel one so,  
Yet I love her still, though to death I go."

In that same sad voice, he yet lamented,  
As from out its sheath he drew his blade.  
His face turned pale, to death he consented,  
Yet called aloud through the forest glade,  
To name his Tisbina; half-demented,  
He felt, thereby, his deep love was displayed;  
Paradise was his, it seemed, so close was death,  
In naming her he loved with his last breath.

Tisbina and Iroldo heard his plaint,  
His sorrowful lament, his pain-filled cry.  
Iroldo felt such pity and constraint,  
Tears covered his whole face, he gave a sigh,  
Then he made his lady swiftly acquaint  
With a plan but now conceived, one whereby  
They might aid the man; thus, he hid from sight,  
While his wife feigned to chance upon the knight.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XII: 24-28: THEY CONSPIRE TO SET PRASILDO A CHALLENGE**

She gave no sign of having heard his cry,  
Nor that he called her cruel in his lament,  
But seeing him, upon the grass, nearby,  
She stopped, as if upon a thought intent,  
And said: "Prasildo, if for me you sigh,  
As you seem to do, and on love are bent,  
Abandon me not, in my present plight,  
For if you do, I'll not survive, sir knight.

And were I not, now, in the very throes  
Of losing both my life and my honour,  
I would never the sad fact to you disclose.  
Indeed, there is no greater shame ever,  
Than asking help of, seeking to propose  
A challenge to, the one we've made suffer.  
You showed me love, and I proved merciless;  
Yet, soon, you shall win greater success.

For I swear, by my faith, you may be sure  
Of my love, should you fulfil my request.  
Come, serve me now, your aid I thus implore,  
Nor is what I ask of you too harsh a test.  
Beyond the forests, past Barbary's shore,  
Lies a garden, with iron walls tis blessed,  
And strong gates, through which one may enter;  
Of these Life guards one, and Death another,

Poverty the third; the fourth Wealth doth hold.  
Choose a gate; by its opposite depart.  
Within there is a tree with boughs of gold,  
Its crown as high as you can send a dart,  
Shot from the bow; it grants riches untold;  
When in bloom, rich pearls from its flowers start,  
Emeralds are its fruit, fair beyond measure.  
The name it bears is the Tree of Treasure.

I must have a branch from that same tree  
Or I shall find myself in dreadful plight.  
If you perform the task, for love of me,  
I shall know your heart indeed, sir knight,  
And greater than your love, my own shall be,  
And you shall come to me, then, in the night,  
For, with my body, I'll reward your deed,  
And this I swear is true, by our fair creed."

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XII: 29-31: PRASILDO SETS OUT ON HIS QUEST**

Once hope had been offered Lord Prasildo  
Of gaining a love that matched his desire,  
Filled with ardour, he swore that he would go  
Devoid of fear, his heart and soul on fire.  
He'd have promised, for he loved her so,  
To win the stars, and all the globe entire,  
The Earth, its countless lands, the air, the seas;  
For doubtless he'd have promised all of these.

After he'd dressed himself in pilgrim's gear,  
He departed from her presence, the next day.  
Know this, Iroldo and his wife, his dear,  
Had sent the Lord Prasildo, on his way  
To Medusa's Orchard, their object clear,  
That with the passage of time, day by day,  
He'd put the fair Tisbina from his mind,  
While, if he reached the garden, he'd find

That, there, Medusa dwelt, who sat below  
The boughs of the lovely Tree of Treasure,  
Midst the pool of shade it casts. Those who go  
To that place, and view her, at their leisure,  
Forget why they have come, in doing so.  
Those who speak to her, or seek their pleasure  
By her side, or touch her, lose every trace  
Of memory, which her presence doth efface.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 32-36: AN AGED PILGRIM  
IN SYRIA (MOUNT BARSABA) SPEAKS OF MEDUSA**

He rode forth alone, that ardent lover,  
Though truly Love went with him at his side.  
The Red Sea, under sail, he crossed over,  
The rest of Egypt, and then Syria beside.  
When he reached the foothills of Mount Barsa,  
A white-haired aged pilgrim he espied,  
And, in conversation with that time-worn man,  
He told him of his journey and his plan.

“Good fortune led you to speak with me,”  
The old pilgrim said: “for I shall aid you.  
I’ll help you win that branch from the tree,  
Hearken now, for what I tell you is true.  
Take care to be alone on your entry  
To the garden, though you’ll have much to do.  
Shun the Gates of Life and Death completely;  
For Medusa, take the Gate of Poverty.

You seem to know naught of that lady,  
At least you’ve failed to say aught about her,  
But she’s the one that doth ever glory  
In guarding the golden Tree of Treasure.  
Whoever sees it loses their memory,  
And remains confused in mind thereafter;  
Yet if she should view her own fair face,  
She’ll forget her riches and quit that place.

Therefore, you’ll need a mirror for a shield,  
So, she may gaze therein, at her beauty,  
But go unarmed, your limbs bare, to the field,  
For you must pass the Gate of Poverty.  
That portal’s cruel aspect stands revealed,  
Harsher than aught on Earth the eye might see,  
For all ills, there, with Poverty reside,  
And the worst is: worth there is cast aside.

But, at the gate by which you must depart,  
The portal opposite, there Wealth is found,  
Hated, though none say it for their part;  
Though she cares not, mocking all around.  
A branch, a twig, pleases her harsh heart,  
And then you may pass by her, safe and sound,  
For Avarice sits silent by her side,  
Ever seeks more, though with Wealth she doth abide.”

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 37-43: HE ENTERS HER  
GARDEN, ACHIEVES HIS TASK, AND RETURNS**

Having learnt of the garden, Prasildo,  
Thanked the aged man, and went on his way.  
He crossed the wastes, in thirty days or so,  
And found the valley where the garden lay.  
Through the Gate of Poverty, he did go,  
The pilgrim’s counsel led him not astray;  
That same path all are urged to enter on  
For the Gate of Poverty is closed to none.

That garden seemed a flowering Paradise,  
Filled with blossoming trees and greenery.  
Behind a mirror he concealed his eyes,  
So, Medusa might admire her beauty,  
(Doing as he was counselled, being wise)  
And, by good chance, he found the golden tree.  
Against its trunk the lady was leaning,  
She looked up, into the mirror’s gleaming.

How she wondered, when she gazed therein!  
For she found herself other than she’d thought.  
The white and crimson of the face within  
A wreath of fierce and writhing snakes did sport.  
Her dread image bade her swift flight to win,  
And, in fear, a passage through the air she sought.  
Prasildo, once he’d heard the maid depart,  
Raised the mirror from his eyes, for his part.

Now that Medusa, the false enchantress  
Afraid of her own reflection, had fled,  
Abandoning her wealth, in her distress,  
Bold Prasildo grasped a branch overhead  
Tore it away and, pleased at his success,  
Turned about, and then traced the path that led  
To the fair Gate of Wealth, who guards the way,  
And cares naught for virtue, only for display.

That gate was adamantine, closed and barred,  
And only opened with a mighty noise;  
(Tis tight shut, most of the time, under guard,  
Unless fraud or great effort one employs;  
Sometimes, by chance, one fortunately-starred,  
Finds it open, one that endless luck enjoys!)  
Prasildo passed on through the gate that day,  
By yielding half his branch, along the way.

He left, and retraced his prior journey.  
Just imagine, my lords, his happiness!  
He longed for his home, his love, and surely  
Each day seemed like a century, no less.  
He passed through Nubia completely,  
Crossed the Sea of Araby, with success,  
Then, day and night, Prasildo hastened on,  
Till he entered the gates of Babylon.

One there, he swiftly informed the lady  
That he'd carried out the task that she had set.  
When did she wish to see the branch, but lately,  
Plucked from the golden tree, and with him yet?  
She'd but to name the place and time; while she  
Might recall the need to discharge her debt,  
For if she chose her promise to deny,  
She needs be aware he must surely die.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XII: 44-47: TISBINA'S LAMENT**

She felt great heartache, and a weight of pain,  
When she heard that he'd returned from his quest,  
Took to her bed, like not to smile again,  
And wept hard, both day and night, sore distressed.  
"Woe is me, why was I born?" she'd complain,  
"That my grave was my cradle, had been best.  
Death answers every ill yet, it proves strange,  
One feature of mine, death could not change.

For if I killed myself, and broke my word,  
I could not erase, through that, my deceit.  
How foolish that I seemed not to have heard  
Love conquers all; true Love knows no defeat.  
Wisdom and courage are on those conferred  
That love; the world's forever at their feet.  
Prasildo faced Medusa, and made good;  
Yet whoever would have thought that he could?

Unhappy Iroldo, what will you do;  
When your poor Tisbina is dead and gone?  
Yet you have caused the error I now rue,  
You set me on the course that I am on,  
And drown me in this wretched sea I view.  
Say, why did my foolish tongue dwell thereon?  
Why could I not have taken back once more,  
Or mangled, twisted, those ill words I swore?

Iroldo was witness to her lament,  
For he'd arrived unnoticed. On listening,  
To her woes, and expressions of intent,  
He approached her, silently regretting  
That promise, of which both did now repent,  
Clasped her, and held her, deeply grieving,  
While neither spoke a word; they could but sigh,  
And, there, embraced, as if about to die.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XII: 48-51: IROLD MAINTAINS SHE MUST KEEP HER PROMISE**

They seemed two icicles beneath the sun,  
So many tears flowed down from their eyes.  
No words came forth, no, not a single one,  
Till at last Iroldo uttered, midst his sighs:  
"What grieves my heart, indeed, I have done  
To myself; though both must pay for our lies;  
You can do naught that works in my despite,  
Nor harm me, who are ever my delight.

Though you well know, my dear, being wise  
And understanding, that no greater pain  
Is there than that which jealousy supplies,  
No greater passion can the mind so strain,  
Yet I have brought this woe, I realise,  
Upon us both; tis my fault, I maintain;  
Alone I made you promise, mine the blame,  
And, alone, should, thus, lament that same.

Alone, I should endure the pain; twas I  
That made you swear all against your will,  
Yet I pray you by your gentle face, and by  
The love you bear for me, to honour still  
The promise made, though both, indeed, must sigh.  
Grant Prasildo his reward; your oath fulfil.  
Great peril he's undergone, for your sake,  
At your request; your word you may not break.

Yet wait until I work my death; delay;  
For I must slay myself ere it is done.  
Let false Fortune do with me as she may,  
But yet not shame me before everyone.  
To the world below I'll go, this very day;  
My solace is that you, alone, I won.  
If I heard you'd been taken from me,  
I'd die a second time, if such could be."

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 52-56: SHE PROPOSES  
THEY BOTH DIE ONCE IT IS FULFILLED**

He would have uttered a longer lament,  
But his voice failed, stifled by his sorrow.  
He stood dumb, and devoid of sentiment,  
As if his heart had fled the breast below.  
Tisbina suffered to no less extent,  
Her face as pallid as a ghost's did show,  
But, as he now turned his gaze upon her,  
In troubled speech she gave him answer:

"Think you that if you, who yet are mine,  
Were no more, I could live on without you?  
Where is the love you bore for me, in fine;  
And the passion that made you claim as true  
That if you ruled Venus' sphere, or all nine,  
You'd dwell with me there, as one not two?  
Do you seek to sink below; and leave me here,  
To lament eternally, my only dear?

I was, and am, while yet alive, your own,  
And, after I am dead, still yours shall be.  
If love exists beyond the flesh and bone,  
If the soul retains its earthly memory,  
Let none e'er say or write (such I disown)  
"Tisbina bore Iroldo's death but lightly."  
Though, indeed, tis true I'll scarcely mourn,  
For soon, to the grave, I too will be borne.

I must delay my end till I fulfil  
The promise that I made to Prasildo,  
The oath that means that, despite my will,  
I must yield to him, ere death I may know.  
Into the other world, to love you still,  
Our bodies resting in one tomb, I'd go.  
I pray you now, as if with my last breath,  
Come, let us embrace, as one, our death.

A phial of poison will achieve our aim,  
And let the dose be tempered with such art,  
That our spirits will be led to the same  
Sweet place; in five hours, thus, from life, we'll part.  
Ere that, Prasildo his reward may claim,  
And all will be fulfilled; be still my heart,  
For death will see an end to life's short lease,  
And quench the ills that have so marred our peace."

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 57-60: THEY DRINK OF  
THE SAME POTION**

Thus, their own death that loving pair ordained;  
And, faithful in misfortune, leant together,  
Gazing at the other's face, and so maintained  
Their lament, more choked with tears than ever.  
They wondered how to part, as they complained,  
Tightly clasped, fond lover bound to lover.  
Then Tisbina, despite their deep emotion,  
Had one she knew brew the fatal potion.

Learned in medicine, he served her wish,  
Gave a tempered cup, and asked no question.  
Iroldo then, seemingly with relish,  
Cried: "We lack the means, in our condition,  
Other than this path, not wholly selfish,  
To ease the soul, against Fate's opposition;  
For only death can overcome her power,  
Conquer that proud one, and our woes devour."

Yet, once he had swallowed half the potion  
Without a qualm, he jibbed at handing it to  
Tisbina, with his hand made a motion  
Of despair, not at his own death tis true,  
But he was sore dismayed by the notion  
That she must die; his face be-teared with dew,  
He gave the cup to her, cast down his eye,  
Afraid that very moment he might die,

And not from the potion, but from his grief,  
Which might indeed complete the potion's work.  
Tisbina, chilled at heart (tis my belief),  
Took the cup with trembling hands, nor did shirk  
Her task; but Love, she cursed, and Fate, the thief  
That had brought them to that end; death must lurk  
Within the liquid, yet she raised her eye,  
Gazed at the vessel, and then drank it dry.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 61-67: TISBINA MEETS PRASILDO AND CONFESSES ALL**

Iroldo chose then his eyes to cover,  
Not wishing to see his dear one leave.  
Tisbina, whose trials as a fond lover  
Were scarcely done with, began to grieve.  
To die seemed naught to her; twas another  
Matter to seek this lord; without reprieve  
Now in sight, that deep anguish surpassed all  
The fears of death that pain us and appal.

Obliged to act as promised, secretly,  
She took herself to Prasildo's dwelling,  
And asked to speak with him, privately,  
For twas day, and he was now receiving.  
Prasildo scarce expected her, and he  
Met her in the hallway upon entering.  
As fair a welcome, as he knew, he gave,  
Ashamed now, and unsure how to behave.

But once they were completely alone,  
In a private place, softly and quietly  
She addressed him, his courtesy did own,  
In speech as pleasing as hers could be,  
Accompanied by a smile, in gentle tone,  
Although her eyes shed tears openly.  
He thought that Tisbina wept for shame,  
Not yet knowing of death's prior claim.

At last, Prasildo conjured her to say  
By all she loved on Earth, what pained her so,  
And what upon her heart now did weigh;  
For indeed he saw the depth of her woe,  
While he himself was troubled, and did pray  
Her to believe that, for her sake, he'd go  
Through fire and water, unafraid to die;  
Yet was astonished by her calm reply.

She said: "That which you've worked so hard to gain  
Will be yours for but four brief hours longer.  
Though the pledge that I made I will maintain,  
I lose my life, and have lost my honour,  
And what is more, what brings the deepest pain  
Is to leave him I love, lost forever  
From this world, while you, you who love me so,  
Will behold me no more; to death I go.

If I had been free to love you in return,  
And you had loved me as you say you do,  
Shame and discourtesy were mine in turn  
Had I not shown affection for you too.  
But I could not, nor such was my concern.  
One cannot be the faithful wife of two.  
I bore not love for you, sir, though, indeed,  
I felt compassion, knowing your great need.

My pity for you, when I viewed your fate,  
Has brought upon me all this wretchedness.  
For I was pained to see your woeful state,  
When I heard your lament, saw your distress,  
In that grove; now is my sorrow great,  
For death ere evening shall this frame possess."  
Then Tisbina told him of their action;  
How with Iroldo she'd drained the potion.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 68-72: PRASILDO RELEASES HER FROM HER PROMISE**

At this, Prasildo's heart was wounded so,  
Pierced to the depths, by all that she had said,  
He stood in silence, quite stunned by sorrow,  
Having dreamed of happiness, and instead  
Found misfortune was his, and endless woe.  
She whose face and form his hopes had fed,  
Whose sweet glance was his life, his very breath,  
Here, in his presence, was yet doomed to death.

"Tisbina," he cried, "neither God nor you  
Should have tested my love and courage so.  
Now shall our age Love's cruel actions view,  
How joy and ardour may yet turn to woe.  
And yet the death of lovers is not new  
To this world, where all oft turns to sorrow;  
Now three, together, to vile death must go,  
And seek their place among the shades below.

Oh, you of little faith, why did you not  
Ask me to release you from your promise?  
You say that you felt pity for my lot,  
When you heard my lament; and is this,  
In truth, your pity? Know that I cannot  
Remain alive; all now are robbed of bliss;  
You might at least have slain but me alone,  
Deprived me, thus, of life, yet spared your own.

Did my love so displease you, cruel one,  
That you have sought out death, to fly from me?  
God knows I could not cast off the burden  
Of love and passion, ease my misery.  
There, in that grove, you should not have spoken,  
If you grieved at the thought of loving me.  
What made you offer, in a moment's breath,  
That prize, and thereby led us both to death?

I had no wish to displease you ever,  
No more do I wish to displease you now.  
I wished you to love me, as a lover,  
Nor did I seek for more than that, I vow.  
If it seemed that I asked something other,  
Then learn the truth for here, to fate, I bow.  
I release you from your promise; now stay  
If you so choose, or simply go your way."

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 73-77: SHE RETURNS TO IROLD, AND FALLS INTO A DEEP SLEEP**

Tisbina heard his speech with many a sigh,  
"Your courtesy has conquered me", she said.  
"And, for your sake alone, I would not die,  
But Fate, it seems, prefers to see me dead.  
I may not stay long with you, time slips by,  
Brief are the hours, and are swiftly sped;  
Though I have little time in which to live,  
Yet I'll give to you, now, what I may give."

Prasildo, grieved that all had gone amiss,  
Determined upon death, in his deep woe,  
Understood her to mean a parting kiss,  
His mind quite numbed by misery, and so  
Freed her from her promise; 'twas his wish  
Not to see her burdened with more sorrow,  
And then they parted, she to go her way,  
While, weeping hard, upon his bed he lay.

Tisbina sought out Irold swiftly,  
On her return, and found him in despair.  
She told him of Prasildo's courtesy,  
And how but a single kiss they did share.  
Irold rose from his bed and, humbly,  
Knelt, and lifted up his face in prayer,  
And asked for God's pity, and His mercy,  
Overcome by that true act of chivalry.

He prayed the Lord would reward Prasildo  
For his graciousness and his charity,  
But while engaged in the task of doing so  
Tisbina fell to the floor, and swiftly  
Sleep seemed to overtake her; the slow  
Progress of the potion worked more quickly  
On the wife it appeared, perchance the heart  
Of a woman was more swayed by its art.

Irold felt a chill creep o'er his face,  
When he saw her fall, helpless, to the ground.  
Her eyes were veiled, in some darksome place,  
And yet it was not death; her slumber sound.  
He called God cruel, Heaven without grace,  
To torment him so, and small comfort found.  
Fortune he called harsh; harsh Love's deeds also,  
That he was yet alive, filled thus with woe.

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 78-84: PRASILDO LEARNS OF THE POTION'S NATURE**

But let us leave the desperate man to suffer,  
For you can well imagine how he grieved,  
Meanwhile Prasildo, locked in his chamber,  
Wept profusely over being, thus, deceived:  
"Had true lover such misfortune ever?"  
He cried: "or ever such sad news received?"  
Should I seek to join my lady in death  
I have but a moment, ere her last breath,

How joyful, pitiless one, you must be,  
That are so bitter, and whom we call Love!  
Come, take pleasure in my misery,  
In this deep anguish, that you e'er approve!  
And yet, despite your actions, I'll win free,  
For naught more painful shall my poor heart move.  
The suffering is far less in Hell below,  
Than in your lawless realm of lies and woe."

Now while that loving lord moaned and sighed,  
Behold, he arrived who'd mixed the potion.  
He asked to see Prasildo; when denied  
Entry by the doorman, with emotion,  
"I must speak with him now;" the man replied,  
"He'll gain from it; there's a plot in motion,  
If I do not, then your master must die,  
This very night; indeed, I tell no lie."

The chamberlain, sensing the gravity  
Of the situation, unlocked the door  
(For, of his master's room, he kept a key;  
He could readily come and go, therefore);  
And begged Prasildo, eloquently,  
To hear the fellow's news; then, once more,  
Despite the resistance he encountered,  
Returned, and led him swiftly to the bed.

The man declared: "Lord, I've ever loved you,  
And revere you, and now suspect, nay fear,  
That you're betrayed, and by a woman too;  
Oft they show jealousy, prove insincere,  
Are fickle in their passions, change anew,  
Without rhyme or reason, and thus they  
Are easily induced to go astray.

I say all this because, this very morn,  
I was asked to mix a certain potion.  
Tisbina's chambermaid sought me, at dawn,  
Most secretly, and such was her mission.  
Her lady you may know; I come to warn  
You, my lord, to guard yourself from poison.  
Forsake the sex, my scorn they ever earn;  
Forget them all, and let the witches burn;

But be assured, the potion that I brewed  
Contained no poison; yet if, by some chance,  
You swallowed some, no ill has e'er ensued  
By doing so; your sleep it would advance;  
Five hours or so you'd slumber; tis imbued  
With such a virtue, rest it doth enhance.  
That woman should be drowned, all treated so!  
One's good, a hundred wicked, here below."

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 85-87: IROLDO INSISTS  
THE PLEDGE MUST BE HONOURED**

Once Prasildo understood the matter,  
The welcome news revived his failing heart.  
As violets, after wintry rain, recover,  
As roses, and such, through Nature's art,  
Bent low beneath a swift summer shower,  
Glow afresh, as the bright sun plays his part,  
So Prasildo, as at some act of grace,  
Smiled once more, and showed a joyful face.

He thanked the man profusely, then he went  
To Tisbina's home, and found Iroldo  
In despair, of this knowledge innocent,  
And told him all that he had come to know.  
Conceive Iroldo's joy; yet his intent  
Was to insist that the promise, even so,  
Should be fulfilled; the other should attain  
She whom he loved, and his reward obtain.

Prasildo raised many an objection,  
Yet could not deny she was his passion,  
But still he questioned such a decision;  
Each of them was stubborn in his fashion.  
Iroldo held firm to his position,  
Arguing, although his hue was ashen,  
That Prasildo had a right to his prize;  
A man of honour (and yet scarcely wise).

**BOOK I: CANTO XII: 88-90: AND ABIDES BY  
HIS HARSH DECISION**

He chose to leave Babylon, would never,  
Return again, in all his life, he declared.  
When Tisbina woke, and found her lover  
Had thus departed, she once more despaired.  
For many an hour she was wont to suffer,  
Stunned by the decision he had made;  
Yet she understood there was no cure,  
The thing was done; her marriage was no more.

Women are oft softer and more tender  
Than a man, in mind, and body also.  
Like the frost such melt in warmer weather,  
Like flowers scarce endure the winter's snow.  
Tisbina was no different to another,  
Wished not to fight against an absent foe.  
She yielded swiftly to Prasildo's wooing,  
And they were wed, in the month ensuing.'

So, ended Fiordelisa's tale; a cry  
Sounded, suddenly, from amidst the trees.  
That loud and piercing roar, so close nearby,  
Made the lady tremble, in great unease,  
Though Rinaldo declared, she need not sigh.  
Long is this canto; those it may displease,  
By seeming overlong, I would suggest,  
Are free to read but part, and leave the rest!

BOOK I: CANTO XIII: THE TALE OF ALBAROSA

ARGOMENTO.

*Li fier Grifoni occide il buon Rinaldo,  
L'un di quai al Gigante morte dona.  
E monta la donzella (d'honor caldo)  
L'endicav giura contra ogni persona.  
Si acquista Rabican. Ne vi di saldo,  
Per trar Orlando da l'incanto. Suona  
Un gran rumor. Fiordiligi è rubbata,  
Da un fier Centauro, e via ne vien menata.*



ALLEGORIE.

- I L Gigante, che flegati i Grifoni credendosi che lo debbino  
aiutare lo uccide, ne dimostra, che quei che uogliono offen-  
dere altri spesso essi son causa del mal proprio.  
I L giuramento di Rinaldo contra Trufaldino, c'insegna quan-  
to ogni uno dourebbe esser capital nemico de' vitiiosi.  
L A continenza di Rinaldo, c'insegna quanto douereffimo guar-  
darfi dalla lussuria.



**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 1-5: RINALDO  
ENCOUNTERS THE GIANT GUARDING  
ARGALIA'S STEED**

I have told you of the terrifying roar  
That Fiordelisa and Rinaldo had heard.  
The latter, unafraid, leapt to the floor  
And left his steed to her, with a word  
Of comfort; she was fearful as before.  
He gripped his shield, and moved ahead.  
Twas the howl of a giant caused her dread,

There he stood, obstructing the narrow lane,  
Before an opening, cavernous and deep.  
The giant was vast in size, with tangled mane.  
Fierce to behold, a monster seen in sleep.  
Rinaldo was undaunted, such he'd slain,  
Fearlessly, all his life; he gave a sweep  
Of his sword, advanced, and flourished the blade,  
Though the giant, in turn, seemed undismayed;

He was covered in a strong suit of mail,  
And he gripped an iron club in his hand.  
On each side, a gryphon with a lion's tail,  
Sat chained to the cliff, by an iron band.  
If you'd know why he was there, then the tale,  
I'll tell you: twas his place, you understand,  
To take care of and to guard the courser,  
That splendid steed owned by Argalia.

The horse was created by enchantment.  
Its mother was an insubstantial creature,  
A mare of fire and flame, that, by intent,  
Was fashioned beyond the bounds of nature.  
She bore the foal; fast as the wind he went,  
For indeed the storm-wind was his father.  
And the foal grazed on neither oats nor grass,  
But ate the air, wherever it did pass.

When Ferrau released it (as you'll recall)  
The steed had returned to this very place,  
Where it was birthed, and ever had its stall  
Till it was fully grown, and for a space  
Was enclosed; then Argalia forth did call  
It from the cave, by a spell, to outpace  
All others, and be his, till his last morn.  
It had returned, now, to where it was born.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 6-11: HE WOUNDS THE  
GIANT, WHO FREES A PAIR OF GRYPHONS**

The giant remained there, as its guardian,  
His aspect cruel, stubborn, full of pride.  
He'd chained the gryphons there, sharp of talon,  
Fierce, rapacious creatures, on either side,  
Fastening them both in subtle fashion;  
They could be freed, if he did so decide.  
Each of those beasts was so strong in flight  
It could easily snatch away a knight.

Rinaldo now approached him, cautiously,  
Glancing all around, with close attention,  
Yet think not that he did so fearfully,  
Though his pace was slow, I might mention.  
This fellow seemed, to the giant certainly,  
A knight with some dubious intention,  
Brave not weak, for such things he could tell,  
As he had slain a thousand, strong and fell.

That place was white with dry bones, all around,  
The remains of all those the giant had killed.  
The arduous fight began; each held his ground,  
Silently (each was stalwart and well-skilled).  
As they let the blows from their weapons sound,  
Neither smiled nor was idle, anger filled  
Their hearts; both knew they must, without fail,  
Lest they die, slay the other, and prevail.

Rinaldo was the first to land a blow,  
Striking the giant fiercely on the head,  
But the latter wore a solid helm, and so  
It had scant effect; it roused him instead.  
With pride and anger, he struck Rinaldo,  
Who swiftly raised his shield, in sudden dread;  
It was shattered by that club from on high,  
And that bitter blow saw steel fragments fly;

Though it did little damage otherwise,  
While Rinaldo hit back with great valour,  
Dealing a cruel and vicious blow, likewise,  
Which wounded the left flank of the other,  
Near his heart. Rinaldo, scenting the prize,  
Seemed to put on wings, and with another  
Fiercer swing that pierced the giant's mail,  
Sliced the right flank, and did the guts impale.

At this, the giant was anguished and undone,  
 For he knew, from the wound, that he must die.  
 The pain was such, although a breath he won,  
 That he could hardly stand, yet, with a sigh,  
 He drew another breath, then a third one,  
 And, seeking Rinaldo's death, painfully  
 Loosed the gryphons' chains, and, so, set them free.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 12-16: HE BEATS ONE  
 AWAY, BUT IS ATTACKED BY THE OTHER**

One of the two grasped the giant in its claws,  
 And flew so high that it was lost to sight;  
 The other sprang upon him, without pause,  
 As if it sought to carry off the knight.  
 Though a thing alien to Nature's laws,  
 It beat the air with eagle's wings in flight,  
 Swooped upon Rinaldo, talons outspread,  
 While he scythed with Fusberta, in his dread.

He made no error with his next great blow,  
 Slicing both the gryphon's limbs away,  
 Bringing that strange bird both pain and woe,  
 For it took to the air without delay.  
 Yet, a piercing cry met his ears, below,  
 For the second gryphon now joined the fray,  
 And dropped the giant, who was like to die,  
 For he fell nine thousand feet from the sky.

With a rush of air, the giant downwards sped;  
 Rinaldo thought the heavens were falling.  
 The mass appeared to be aimed at his head,  
 And to die in such a way seemed most galling,  
 For death felt near (the giant dropped like lead)  
 Yet to fall in war his proper calling.  
 Whether he ran here and there, or stood still,  
 That was the place the corpse was like to fill.

Faster and faster, it approached the ground,  
 And then it landed, a mere foot away,  
 From where Rinaldo stood, and gazed spellbound,  
 As that mass of flesh and bone struck the clay.  
 The giant's skull split, with a dreadful sound,  
 The earth shook, and dust hid the light of day.  
 And then the threat had vanished like a dream,  
 Though, God help Rinaldo, he heard a scream,

As the gryphon stooped, with folded wing.  
 Such its power the air seemed to tremble,  
 The sun's splendour, in an instant dimming,  
 While the scene mere twilight did resemble,  
 The woods and fields about him darkening.  
 Naught greater did Nature e'er assemble,  
 Than that creature (Bishop Turpin's my guide)  
 For its wingspan was full twenty yards wide!

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 17-24: THOUGH HE  
 EVENTUALLY SLAYS IT**

Rinaldo, standing firm to meet the beast,  
 But little time was granted to prepare;  
 Like a lightning-bolt, suddenly released,  
 The gryphon stooped upon him from the air.  
 He struck it ere its downward passage ceased,  
 On the throat, and slightly wounded it there,  
 Robbing it of breath and, ere it could rest,  
 He struck a backhanded blow at its chest,

Which landed awkwardly, with scant effect,  
 For the thing flapped its wings and retreated,  
 While its vicious assault he'd barely checked,  
 For it wheeled and returned, undefeated.  
 His helmet's crown it chose to select  
 For its next attack, the helm, well-seated,  
 Resisted the claws of his monstrous foe,  
 For, charmed, it once was owned by Mambrino.

It soared again, and revisited the fight,  
 Nor could Rinaldo divine its track;  
 It landed a single blow on the knight,  
 While Fiordelisa, watching the attack,  
 Felt that she was like to die of fright.  
 All concern for her safety she did lack,  
 Her thought was for Rinaldo and his cause,  
 His beleaguered form, and the gryphon's claws.

The light grew dim, with oncoming night,  
 And yet the battle still continued fiercely.  
 Rinaldo had but one fear, that in its flight  
 The creature might deceive him utterly.  
 Thus, he sought an end, ere they lost the light.  
 Yet the means eluded him, entirely,  
 For, unless he could soar himself, he knew  
 He quite lacked a winning course to pursue.

At last, he fell down flat upon the ground,  
As if he'd collapsed; and then played dead.  
The gryphon was upon him like a hound,  
Not perceiving his state, which it misread,  
And, swooping, clasped its talons all around  
The knight, but to its horror found, instead  
Of a body, the error it had made,  
For the knight struck it fiercely with his blade.

As over his shoulder he swung the sword,  
Keen Fusberta sliced through tendon and bone,  
And cut a wing away; the beast was floored,  
And yet held our knight fast, as it lay prone.  
It gripped his trunk tight, with its claws, and scored  
His breastplate, tore his mail; he gave a groan,  
For each talon clasped so fiercely, he thought  
He must surely die, and so he thrust and fought,

Piercing the beast in its belly and side,  
And, working free, continued his attack,  
Wounding the creature till it writhed and died.  
Then he rose to his feet, deep in its back  
Planted his sword in triumph, and sighed,  
Giving thanks to God; the maid sought the track,  
Retrieved her palfrey and prepared to go,  
Thinking the whole affair done with; but no,

For Rinaldo now went towards the cave,  
(In which the wondrous steed had its stall)  
For he longed to look within that enclave  
Disinclined to pass by that gloomy hall.  
The cavern was a trial for e'en the brave,  
For its depths were as if made to apall,  
Yet he entered and, in a hundred feet,  
Came to a marble doorway, carved complete.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 25-29: THE SECRETS OF THE GIANT'S CAVE**

The door set there was glazed with enamel,  
Decked with pearls and emeralds untold,  
(Such concentrated riches no mortal  
Had ever seen) while above, dead and cold,  
A maiden's corpse, hung from the portal,  
And, beneath, a sign, its letters all in gold:  
'He that passes herein, shall not live long,  
Unless he has sworn to avenge my wrong;

Though, if he swears that vengeance he will take,  
For I was, indeed, wretchedly betrayed,  
He may own the steed within, for my sake,  
For tis swift as the wind; and be repaid.'  
Rinaldo his stride did scarcely break,  
He swore to God he would avenge the maid,  
Nor an ounce of strength or life would deny  
To the cause of one wrongly doomed to die.

He passed the portal then, and saw the steed,  
Tethered to the rock by a golden chain,  
And all equipped to serve its master's need,  
Caparisoned in silk, white, without stain.  
The horse was black as coal (of charmed breed,  
As I have told you) though with white, again,  
Dappling the coat near the tail, twixt the eyes,  
And adorning the left hind leg, lengthwise.

No horse on earth e'er equalled it, indeed,  
Without exception, not e'en Baiardo,  
Sung of throughout the world, I will concede,  
Quick, and strong, and brave, yet, even so,  
That strange courser was of no mortal seed,  
So swift it flew faster than an arrow,  
A spear, a stone, a falcon on the wing,  
Or any other sight-deceiving thing.

Lord Rinaldo was delighted to have found  
His way to so noble an adventure.  
And now he came upon a book, richly bound,  
Its pages writ in blood not ink, moreover.  
It was tied fast to a chain, set in the ground,  
And declared, when read beyond its cover,  
The secret history of that poor maid,  
Of her murder, and how she was betrayed.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 30-34: THE CASTLE OF MONTEFALCONE**

The text within spoke of Truffaldino,  
Baghdad's false, and accursed, king,  
Whose neighbour was a count, Orrisello,  
Brave and true, and excellent in everything.  
He was praised by all about, high and low,  
Such that he aroused the monarch's loathing.  
The count held a fortress, kept it nobly;  
The castle's name was Montefalcone.

Then, he had a sister, Albarosa,  
One that brought honour to every lady.  
Her face and her form were fair, moreover,  
Filled with delicacy, grace and beauty.  
She was perfect, beyond every other,  
And this peerless lady loved, most deeply,  
A noble knight, who that same love did share;  
He was handsome and brave, beyond compare.

The bright sun as it shone upon the Earth,  
Had never seen a pair to equal these,  
So lovely, praised, and renowned from birth.  
One heart, one will, saw their love increase,  
Every hour of the day, in scope and worth.  
Now Truffaldino battled without cease  
To take that keep of Montefalcone,  
So strong it could be held against any.

On a stony cliff, a mile above the vale,  
There ran a track, a narrow path, that led  
To its mighty walls; and none could prevail  
Who assailed it, for a moat, dark and dread,  
Encircled that great keep, so runs the tale,  
And barbicans, triple-towered overhead,  
Protected the gates, from direct attack,  
And defended the stronghold at their back.

Thus, Orrisello had taken every care  
For his safety, for King Truffaldino  
So hated him, that he would often dare  
To assault the place, yet that cruel foe  
Had forever been repulsed from there.  
However, the monarch came to know  
Of the love that Orrisello's sister  
Held for Polindo, past any other.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 35-40: TRUFFALDINO'S TREACHERY**

Polindo was the name of that brave knight  
I spoke of who, in turn, loved the lady,  
And he and Albarosa, day and night,  
Both longed for one another, equally.  
Now, this warrior oft hoped to alight  
On some adventure, born of chivalry,  
And he roamed throughout the realm, as he sought,  
And so arrived at Truffaldino's court.

That malevolent and treacherous king,  
One who knew well how to dissimulate,  
Showed him honour, and was right welcoming,  
With fine words, and gifts of worth and weight,  
And promised him his aid in obtaining  
Albarosa, for his power was great.  
Love's truly strange, and easily undone;  
Fearing all, it yet trusts in everyone!

Who, would have believed, but Polindo,  
In that man; a king, whom all folk knew  
As perfidious, and cruel, and their foe?  
Yet the foolish knight thought the promise true,  
Eager to accept the help to follow,  
Looking to the hour when he might view  
The fair Albarosa, and embrace her,  
And giving not a thought to aught other.

As the lady could not be persuaded  
To allow entry to her brother's fortress,  
She made him a promise that, unaided,  
She would come to him, nonetheless,  
And from this she could not be dissuaded,  
By descending the cliff, to his distress,  
And would elope, do his will, all her life  
Obey him – he, that she would be his wife.

This plan they performed, Truffaldino  
Having offered Polindo previously,  
A castle on a rock, where they might go,  
A day's distance from Montefalcone.  
There the knight, unsuspecting of his foe,  
And free from every care, brought his lady;  
There they joyed, with many a fond caress,  
Yet Truffaldino marred their happiness.

O Fortune, that to joy e'er sets a bound,  
Changing ever with your wheel's rise and fall!  
He came, like a snake, from underground,  
For a tunnel ran beneath that castle wall.  
The evil wretch, long before, had found  
Its use, twas why he'd gifted them that hall.  
They were dining, the love-light in their eyes,  
When he appeared, and took them, by surprise.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 41-45: THE SAD FATE OF THE LOVERS**

Polindo, fearing lest the maid be slain,  
Dared not speak, and yet he seethed with anger,  
And a desperate silence did then maintain.  
The king would have her write to her brother,  
Telling him to come to her; and explain  
That to the woods Polindo had led her,  
And that she was now confined there by force,  
While he himself was now her sole recourse.

She was to say: three of Polindo's men  
Now guarded her full closely, but that he  
Might come upon them in their cavern  
And overpower them, and thus set her free.  
He would learn why she'd left, as and when;  
She would speak, once she gained her liberty,  
But twas enough for him to understand  
She'd saved him from Truffaldino's hand.

Yet Albarosa claimed she'd rather die  
Than act so as to harm her own brother,  
And despite every threat would not lie,  
Or take the pen and write, as he'd discover.  
The king gave his commands, by and by,  
And his men brought instruments of torture,  
Heated irons, cruel tongs to tear the flesh;  
He gripped her face, and threatened her afresh.

She refused to do as he demanded,  
With fiery pincers he tormented the maid,  
And other means of torture he commanded,  
Though she uttered naught, but silently prayed.  
Polindo fell to the ground, as if branded  
Himself now by her pain, all trust betrayed;  
For, though firm and courageous for his part,  
He could not bear the anguish in his heart.

Of all these cruel events, the pages told,  
In detail and at length, in many a word,  
Speaking, with pity, of those deeds of old,  
And in a sweet tone that full oft was heard  
From loving lips, now silent and grown cold.  
For twas writ that Polindo's heart was stirred  
Far more by grief for her, than his own state,  
While she likewise but mourned her lover's fate.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 46-51: FIORELISA DESIRES RINALDO**

The knight read all that bitter history,  
And many a tear glided from his eye;  
His face was a portrait of true pity,  
And, as he read, he gave many a sigh;  
Then he swore on the book again that he  
Would avenge Albarosa or would die,  
And then he left the cavern, full of woe,  
Leading forth the steed, named Rabicano.

The warrior then mounted, and rode on;  
Fiordelisa journeying at his side.  
Before they'd travelled far the light was gone,  
And they dismounted; their steeds they tied  
To a tree, neath which Rinaldo lay, upon  
The ground, the maid nearby, open-eyed.  
The enchantments of Merlin's fountain  
Had changed the nature of our paladin,

For though the maiden lay beside the knight,  
Yet Rinaldo revealed no emotion.  
There was a time, when his passion was alight,  
It was thought of as a heaving ocean  
Of flame; he'd have laid low, in the night,  
High walls, a mountain, in valiant fashion,  
To have had her near, and yet now he slept;  
To her, I think, twas a strange code he kept.

At last, the air was brightening all around,  
The sun had not yet risen, many a star  
Still decked the sky; the maiden heard the sound  
Of birds amidst the branches, near and far,  
Twas neither night nor day; upon the ground  
Rinaldo lay, and naught his sleep did mar,  
While she breathed, softly, in the half-light,  
Viewing the form and features of the knight.

He was still young, and handsome indeed,  
Full of life, and strong and sinewy,  
Slim-hipped, full-chested, of a noble breed,  
With a fledgling beard, soft and curly.  
She gazed with delight, prepared to cede  
Her heart, and well-nigh stricken mortally  
So great the joy, the sweetness, that she found  
In that fair sight, and in naught else around;

The maiden felt transported in mind,  
As she observed the sleeping warrior.  
Now, midst those woods, there roamed, unconfined,  
A most fearsome, and ferocious centaur.  
His hybrid form was strange, like all his kind,  
For he seemed a stallion to the shoulder,  
Yet where the neck springs upwards from the chest  
A human form (from the waist) topped the rest.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 52-56: RINALDO FIGHTS  
A CENTAUR**

He had naught to eat but what he caught  
In that vast, strange, uncultivated land,  
Where sundry other creatures he sought,  
With a shield, spears, and a club, in hand.  
He had captured a lion he had fought,  
And was bearing it alive, as he'd planned,  
Roaring and struggling, while the sound  
Had carried to the maid, o'er the ground,

Else they had been taken by surprise,  
For he'd have come upon them, suddenly,  
And perchance all had ended otherwise,  
For Rinaldo, who'd have perished swiftly.  
Instead, the maiden woke him with her cries.  
'O celestial Lord, come, aid us quickly!  
She called, loudly; the knight rose to his feet  
As the centaur appeared, and to complete

His defence, raised his shield overhead,  
That the giant had damaged, while the centaur  
Threw down the lion, which now lay there dead,  
For he'd strangled the life from the creature.  
Rinaldo charged; the centaur quickly sped  
Some distance away, turned, faced the other,  
And then hurled a swift, and a deadly, spear,  
As Rinaldo looked on, yet showed no fear,

While the missile failed to strike its target.  
When another was hurled, aimed at his skull,  
His life was saved by his weighty helmet,  
For the aim was true, the length was full,  
While a third throw fell short, the weakest yet.  
Yet the centaur pawed the earth like a bull,  
Grasped his club, then galloped at the knight,  
Leaping here and there, to maintain the fight.

He was so swift, and dextrous in action,  
Rinaldo found himself in some bother.  
He exerted himself, to gain some traction,  
But so quickly his foe the ground did cover  
He failed to reach his steed; for a fraction  
Of a second, he was stunned by the other,  
Spun around, and grasped the nearest tree,  
Then backed against it, leaving his arms free.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIII: 57-58: WHO SEIZES  
FIORDELISA AND BEARS HER AWAY**

That strange form of a man pranced about,  
Here and there, but the knight stood his ground.  
With Fusberta in his hand, he gave a shout,  
While the centaur retreated at the sound,  
And, of winning the fight, was so in doubt,  
For the blade was good and sharp, he had found,  
That he turned from the knight, suddenly,  
So as to carry off the frightened lady.

Abandoning Rinaldo, he grasped her,  
And lifted her to his back, in a trice.  
The fair maid felt a deep chill all over,  
As if her flesh and bone had turned to ice.  
More of this, the next canto will offer,  
Here I say no more (lest I say it twice),  
Then we'll turn to the war twixt Agricane  
And Circassia's King Sacripante.



**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: FREEDOM FOR ORLANDO**



**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 1-5: THE CENTAUR  
HURLS FIORELISA INTO THE RIVER**

I've told you of the cruel battle fought  
By Rinaldo, that brave and skilful knight,  
And how that unnatural creature sought  
To bear the lovely maid far from his sight,  
While our Rinaldo himself could do naught.  
Ask me not if she nearly died of fright,  
Indeed, she trembled, numb, and yet she cried  
To him, to hasten swiftly to her side.

The centaur fled, though turning his fierce face  
Now and then, to the fair one, on his back,  
And held her tightly clasped in his embrace,  
In case the knight should launch an attack.  
Rinaldo had mounted and, once in place,  
Pursued, though swift Baiardo he did lack,  
Thinking that the centaur he now chased  
Was quite fast enough not to be outpaced.

But once he held the reins of that fair steed,  
Rabicano, that mount beyond compare,  
He felt as if he rode the wind indeed,  
For he seemed to fly onwards through the air.  
Never was horse of such wondrous breed  
Viewed by human eye, as was gazed on there,  
While valleys, hills, and plains, in its track,  
Approached, and then vanished at its back.

It scarcely bent a single blade of grass,  
So lightly did it gallop o'er the ground,  
And none could perceive where it did pass  
O'er the morning dew, for not a trace was found.  
Now Rinaldo reached a river, yet, alas,  
Though he'd followed the trail like a hound,  
Was still behind; and, though his steed was fast,  
He saw the centaur o'er the flood had passed.

The savage foe had chosen not to wait,  
But had fled, on his way, pitilessly  
Leaving the lovely maiden to her fate,  
Hurling her to the stream, that ran swiftly.  
What happened next, and the fair one's state,  
I'll speak of in this same canto, shortly,  
But having freed her weight from his back,  
The centaur turned once more to the attack.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 6-10: RINALDO KILLS  
THE CENTAUR, AND THEN PURSUES HIS QUEST**

They commenced to duel in the water;  
A violent and pitiless affair.  
True, Rinaldo was clad in his armour,  
And the centaur's body completely bare,  
But the latter was skilful; moreover  
He used his shield to defend with care;  
And while Rabicano was a nimble steed,  
He had still to be commanded, at need;

The water reached the saddle, and its flow  
Was rapid, and the depths stony and murky.  
The centaur swung his club, dealt many a blow,  
But scarcely hurt the knight, who, skilfully,  
Wielded sharp Fusberta, piercing his foe,  
Swiftly delivering a good thirty  
Deep cuts, till the shield was shattered, and red  
Was his foe's wounded hide, whence he bled.

The wounded centaur emerged from the flood,  
Rinaldo following with Fusberta,  
But could scarce travel far, drenched with blood,  
Ere Rabicano arrived; his master,  
Slaying the centaur ere he reached the wood.  
Rinaldo remained a while to ponder  
What course to pursue, and where to go,  
Lacking the maiden, who the paths did know.

He gazed around at the endless forest  
Whose extent was beyond all estimate,  
Sighed, and well-nigh abandoned his quest,  
Yet, reflecting on the lady, and her fate,  
And the Count's situation, thought it best,  
If he were to rescue either, soon or late,  
To complete the task, he'd set out to do,  
Or die in the attempt; such was his view.

He therefore took a northerly direction,  
Following the stream that bore the lady;  
And, behold, by a fount, prepared for action,  
He met a mounted knight, grieving sorely.  
Bishop Turpin pauses his description  
Here, to tell us more of Agricane,  
The Tartar king, who, though the attacker,  
Was at war within the walls of Albracca.



**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 11-19: THE TAKING OF ALBRACCA**

Agricane was trapped inside but, boldly,  
He continued to battle on, alone,  
Routing the populace completely.  
You should know that Albracca had grown  
Round its keep, on a cliff that fell, sharply,  
To the river below, while rings of stone,  
Encircling battlements, girded it around,  
From the high summit to the level ground.

Great towers were set above the water,  
Where the wall flanked the plain, and the name  
Of that mighty river was the Drada;  
Unfordable, at all seasons, was that same.  
Part of the wall had collapsed; however,  
Such was the stronghold's might and fame,  
The populace had little need to care,  
So, they thought; swift and deep the current there.

Now I told you how the king, Agricane,  
Was left, battling, within the city gate,  
And was challenged there by Sacripante,  
And the militia, defending the state.  
Many a deed was done, fine and worthy,  
By both, as you have heard me relate,  
Although I paused, there, in my narration,  
As a fresh contingent took their station.

That man of valour, though, was unafraid  
Bold Agricane, who turned and slew the foe,  
With two-handed blows of his blood-stained blade.  
This new squadron was led by Torindo;  
The Turk had returned, and this foray made,  
Against the mighty king, who, blow by blow,  
Was slaughtering all who faced him in the street,  
Striving to make his victory complete.

The Tartar King now spurred on Baiardo,  
Trampling the Turkish troops underfoot;  
And yet King Sacripante was not slow  
To chase Agricane as he slashed and cut  
His way among them; no stag e'er did show,  
Or leopard, such a turn of speed, and but  
For the arrival of troops from the plain,  
Agricane might have been caught and slain.

The defenders had descended from the wall  
To block the streets with many a barricade,  
And had hastened to take part in the brawl,  
While some sought to work an ambushade,  
Thus, none were left to hold the gates at all,  
As the gathered ranks their swift entrance made,  
O'er the ramparts and battlements, their cry  
'Death! Death!', prepared to conquer or to die.

The bitter onslaught drove brave Torindo,  
And Sacripante, to the keep above.  
Angelica was there, and Truffaldino  
First to that place of safety to remove.  
Every man of hers fell before the foe,  
So bloodily I can scarce speak thereof;  
Varano fell, as did Savarone,  
King of Media, the first of many.

Those two were slain before the gate,  
Where fierce conflict raged o'er the plain.  
Brunaldo died elsewhere; he met his fate  
At Radamanto's hand; twas he again  
Who killed Ungiano, while soon or late,  
All that champion's company were slain,  
For not a single one survived that day,  
Born but to die, their spirits snatched away.

The city of Albracca was taken,  
With a depth of suffering not seen before.  
On every side, the populace was shaken  
And now endured the miseries of war.  
All was burned but the keep, nigh forsaken;  
High on its cliff, its banners still it bore,  
Though every house was in flames below,  
All destined to fall to their fiery foe.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 20-24: ANGELICA DEPARTS TO SEEK AID**

Angelica, amidst this grave disaster,  
Was most unsure as to what she should do.  
The keep held little food or provender,  
Scarce enough to last for a day or two.  
Any man who saw how she did suffer,  
And weep, and beat her face, then weep anew,  
Would ne'er have failed to show her compassion,  
Though his heart was the heart of a dragon.

Three kings had sought safety in the fortress,  
 With thirty other knights, and the lady,  
 Full many half-dead, or in sore distress,  
 And the rest were wounded, some quite gravely.  
 The walls were high and strong, the gate no less,  
 So, they agreed to kill the horses; bravely  
 Seeking to hold out against the Tartar,  
 Till God should aid them, in the matter.

Angelica pondered how she might bring  
 Help, meanwhile, to the beleaguered castle,  
 For, upon her finger, she wore the ring,  
 That, in the mouth, rendered her invisible.  
 The sun, on the horizon, was setting,  
 Its light departing from all things mortal,  
 When the maid summoned to her Torindo,  
 King Sacripante, and Truffaldino.

By her faith the maiden swore she'd return,  
 In twenty days, no longer, and then prayed  
 Those three to stay, and thus true honour earn,  
 By holding fast, till she could bring them aid;  
 For it might be that Allah would discern  
 Their plight, and show mercy, and be swayed,  
 While from every realm, she'd seek to obtain,  
 Such help; from every true king that did reign.

With that, the maiden mounted her palfrey,  
 And departed the castle, in the night,  
 Alone, beneath a sky of tranquil beauty,  
 For the full moon shone, with a gentle light.  
 None saw her go; she escaped completely,  
 For both sides were wearied from the fight;  
 The near-victorious army, drowned in sleep,  
 But an imperfect watch thought fit to keep.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 25-32: SHE ENCOUNTERS AN OLD MAN WHO DECEIVES HER**

She scarcely needed to employ the ring,  
 For when the sun rose brightly in the sky,  
 She was fifteen leagues away, still sighing,  
 As she gazed at the fortress there on high,  
 Thinking of all those still remaining,  
 Hoping to bring them succour, by and by.  
 She rode on, and passed through Orgagna,  
 And then continued, reaching Circassia.

There she came to the very same river  
 Which had swept Fiordelisa away,  
 While Rinaldo was slaying the centaur;  
 And there, as she rode upon her way,  
 A white-haired old man she did encounter.  
 He, with mournful face, begged her to stay  
 And grant him aid; humbly, he knelt there,  
 Seeking her pity, as if bowed with care.

He said to her: 'I have a little son;  
 The true solace of my sad existence;  
 He is my pride and joy, the only one.  
 He, in my dwelling, at no great distance,  
 Lies abed with a fever, nigh undone,  
 And naught I can do proves of assistance.  
 If you fail to help me, he's like to die,  
 And I shall follow,' he ended with a sigh.

Angelica pitied his mournful state,  
 And set to comforting the aged man.  
 She knew of herbs that would palliate  
 The effects of fever, and now began  
 To speak of them. Oh, the unfortunate  
 Maid! 'Twas hidden, all his evil plan,  
 It would need a miracle to save her.  
 She, innocently, followed the traitor.

Now, you should know, that this aged fellow,  
 Who dwelt amidst the woods, not far away,  
 Haunted every nearby field and meadow,  
 Seeking fair maidens who might serve to pay  
 The tribute of one hundred, Poliferno  
 Orgagna's king, demanded; 'twas his way  
 To deceive, and then capture each lady,  
 As many as would meet the need, yearly.

Scarce five miles distant was his prison keep,  
 A tower on a bridge that spanned the river.  
 'Twas marvellously strong, the water deep,  
 And those who ventured near he did capture.  
 And, indeed, a fine harvest he did reap,  
 Many a fair maid was his prisoner.  
 All were snared in the very same manner,  
 All, that is, except for Fiordelisa,

Brandimarte's lady, who, as you know,  
The centaur had hurled into the river,  
Though she swam, and was carried by the flow,  
Downstream, as if she were but a feather,  
Never sinking to the dark depths below,  
But swept on, by the force of the water,  
Until the current brought her to that place  
Where, beneath the villain's bridge, it did race.

There, he dragged her half-conscious from the flood,  
And had her cared for by his physician,  
And by servants, till her health was made good.  
Then, once satisfied with her condition,  
He led her (still concealing his falsehood)  
To join the other maidens in his prison.  
Let us turn, again, to Angelica,  
Who'd followed that devious old traitor.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 33-36: FIORDELISA TELLS  
HER OF THE CAPTIVE KNIGHTS**

The old man remained on the bridge, while she  
Entered the tower; then the door swung to,  
And locked and barred itself, instantly,  
(Free of human hand, as far as she knew).  
When she realised his cunning trickery,  
She wept, grieved, beat her hands, then wept anew,  
Tore at her hair, and scratched her lovely face,  
Then became aware of others in that place.

These ladies sought for sweet words to say  
That might bring comfort to the grieving maid,  
And as one does, to counter such dismay,  
Each maid her own experience relayed.  
While heaviest her woe appeared to weigh,  
On Fiordelisa, who her grief allayed,  
(Brandimarte's lady she) and told her,  
Of the tribulations of her lover.

She sighed, as all the tale she recounted  
Of how that brave knight, whom she loved deeply,  
And she, and bold Astolfo, had entered  
That garden where amidst the greenery  
And the flowers he had been enchanted,  
And was thereby robbed of his memory,  
Through Dragontina's arts, while Orlando,  
Still captive in mind, had chased Astolfo.

And she related then how she had sought  
For help, and had encountered Rinaldo,  
Telling her of how that knight had fought  
The gryphons, and the giant, his fierce foe;  
Of Albarosa, the pain that tale brought,  
(Of his vow, to avenge the maid, you know);  
And, lastly, of that strange hybrid creature,  
And how she'd well-nigh drowned in the water.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 37-42: ANGELICA  
ESCAPES AND REACHES DRAGONTINA'S  
GARDEN**

She was weeping, as she told the story,  
Remembering her noble love, now lost;  
When lo, they saw the door opening slowly,  
And to the tower another captive crossed.  
Angelica employed the ring, swiftly  
And invisibly, to that traitor's cost,  
For its enchantment now concealed her flight,  
Ere the portal closed, she was out of sight!

None saw her, such the power of the ring,  
And, having escaped the tower unseen,  
She found her palfrey, while deciding  
To follow her heart, and seek that green  
Enchanted garden, and that dark river,  
That one's memory of all that had been  
Erased at a draught, where Dragontina  
Held Count Orlando, as her prisoner,

With many another, in sweet servitude.  
She rode hard, and reached the garden at dawn.  
The ring kept her from being pursued,  
And from vile Dragontina's sight, that morn.  
She hid the palfrey outside, to preclude  
Its being seen by the witch; o'er the lawn,  
She walked till she found the brave Orlando,  
Fully armed, lying by a clear stream's flow.

Because the Count was on guard all that day,  
He was resting, in his armour, by the spring.  
A pine tree branch held his shield on display,  
As Brigiadoro circled him while grazing  
(That best of steeds); a few paces away,  
Another mounted knight was seen idling,  
Beneath a palm-tree in the shade, calmly.  
That knight was Oberto dal Leone.

I know not, my lords, if you've heard tell  
Of the exploits of that same Oberto.  
A man of great renown, full wise, as well,  
And brave, and skilful, as his deeds did show.  
Every land he'd travelled, midst the infidel  
And in Christendom, meeting friend and foe,  
And he too was on duty in the garden,  
When Orlando was found by the maiden.

King Hadrian, and the bold Grifone,  
Were talking of love in the loggia.  
Aquilante sang beside Chiarone,  
The one sang alto, the other tenor,  
The counter-tenor was Brandimarte.  
While Antifor of Albarossia,  
Was speaking with King Ballano, quietly,  
Their subject ever war and chivalry.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 43-44: SHE RESTORES  
ORLANDO'S MEMORY AND SEEKS HIS AID**

Angelica took the Count by the hand,  
And upon his finger she set the ring,  
The ring that every spell did command.  
He was restored and, recalled everything,  
(And, thus, the fair visage, you'll understand,  
Which, long before, had won his loving heart)  
He knew not, and was still as yet unsure  
If that face was hers; yet twas hers he saw.

The maiden told him all the tale, swiftly,  
Of how he'd come to the garden, and how  
Dragontina had trapped him, cunningly,  
Stolen his memory, and made him bow  
To her vile demands. Then, passed on quickly  
To the war, and begged him to aid her now,  
In fighting this Tartar, Agricane,  
Who'd attacked, and then laid waste, her city.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 45-49: THE OTHER  
KNIGHTS ARE RESTORED AND SWEAR TO HELP**

But, from her palace heights, Dragontina  
Had observed Angelica in the meadow,  
And had summoned all her guardsmen to her,  
But the ring left them unarmed, once below.  
The Count mounted Brigliador, his courser,

And then upon Oberto did bestow  
The charmed amulet (who saw not a thing),  
As, upon his finger he slipped the ring.

Then those two warriors swiftly agreed  
To restore the other knights, friend by friend,  
And there's surely, on my part, little need  
To say how the fight in the park did end.  
Oliviero's two sons they soon freed,  
Aquilante and Grifone; depend  
Upon it, now knowing them, Orlando  
Was happy neither one was still his foe.

With a shout of joy, brother knew brother;  
They clasped each other in a warm embrace,  
While the enchantress, Dragontina,  
Saw her garden disappear before her face,  
Lamenting wildly; twas the ring as ever  
Broke her spells; there was merely empty space  
Where her palace had been; bridge and river,  
Had vanished, and left but woodland cover.

Their minds filled with wonder and surprise,  
All gazed at each other, and sought to know,  
Who was there, for some each could recognise,  
Others not, with many a 'Yes!' and 'No!'  
Then the Count spoke, and did each man apprise  
Of Albracca's state, and of the Tartar foe,  
And exhorted each to aid, in her distress,  
The guiltless maid, who'd freed them all, no less.

He told them of the harm that Agricane  
Had wreaked upon that city, once so fair,  
And how he now laid siege with his army  
To the fortress, having laid the township bare.  
The knights swore they'd seek the remedy:  
Once they'd their swords again, they'd soon repair  
To Albracca, and drive the Tartar thence,  
Or die in the attempt: such was the sense.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 50-56: THE  
TREACHEROUS TRUFFALDINO SEIZES THE  
CITADEL**

The company went swiftly on their way,  
Galloping upon roads that they knew well.  
To Truffaldino, I'll turn, if I may,

As yet guarding Albracca's citadel.  
A malevolent child he'd, day by day,  
Grown worse, and worse to come one might foretell.  
He worked treacherously to gain the keep;  
For while, suspecting naught, they lay asleep,

He took Torindo and Sacripante,  
Despite, indeed, the former's fiery heart,  
And the latter's great strength and bravery;  
For the pair, having played a leading part  
In the battle, were both wounded sorely,  
And, weakened thus by loss of blood, apart  
From the fact that he took them by surprise,  
And bound them ere they opened their eyes.

Next, he sent a messenger to Agricane,  
To speak in his name, and inform the king  
That he held the stronghold, securely,  
Had the pair in chains, and his men would bring  
Them both to the monarch, and promptly.  
But the Tartar was affronted on hearing  
Of his deed, and proudly, anger in his eye,  
Gave the messenger a caustic reply:

'May Allah curse the fellow, for never  
Let it be said, by any known to chivalry,  
That I conquered with help from a traitor;  
I seek to gain my triumphs openly,  
By strength and courage, and with honour.  
Your master will regret his treachery,  
And you, that you dared to say a word,  
Of this to me, this evil I have heard.

I'm told and believe that this mighty keep  
Cannot be long defended; then we'll see.  
I'll hang him by one foot above the deep,  
Tied to the edge of some high balcony,  
With you hanging from his neck! Go weep!  
For he, and all who worked his treachery,  
So, he might rise the higher, soon will fall,  
And be seen, swinging from the nearest wall.'

The messenger, who'd watched the monarch's face  
Grow, alternately, pale and fiery red,  
Was delighted to vanish from the place,  
And, caught between two masters, swiftly fled.  
When he saw the king move away a pace,

He scuttled backwards, ere he turned his head,  
And ran, as if pursued by some demon,  
In a state of fear far beyond what's common.

Trembling, he returned, with the king's reply,  
And repeated it to Truffaldino.  
However, I must once more cast an eye  
On the company led by Orlando.  
They had ridden night and day, and, by and by,  
Had reached the heights, from which, below,  
They could see the ruined city, and there,  
Opposite, the keep (Truffaldino's lair).

### **BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 57-60: ORLANDO'S COMPANY PLAN THEIR ATTACK**

They viewed the endless host on the plain,  
The lines of tents, with banner after banner.  
Angelica was fearful, since, again,  
She must seek to pass them in some manner,  
Before Albracca's fortress they might gain.  
But the noble-minded knights assured her  
They would enter by the force of swords alone,  
So, quenching the doubts that sight had sown.

They yet knew nothing of the treachery  
That Truffaldino had perpetrated,  
But on the mountain height they, carefully  
Reflected on their task; then created  
A plan by which the maid could be safely  
Escorted through the lines of that hated  
Tartar horde; there, fully armed and mounted,  
They spoke, with no suggestion discounted.

At last, they agreed the means and manner  
Of their passage through the ranks of the foe.  
At the forefront, in the place of honour,  
Would ride Brandimarte and Orlando.  
Behind them four knights would guard her,  
Chiarone, Aquilante, Oberto,  
With King Hadrian, thus forming a ring,  
A man behind, in front, and on each wing.

These four were to defend and guard the maid,  
With all the strength and skill at their command;  
The last three in the rear would be arrayed,  
And would act as circumstance might demand:

Albarossia's Antifor, with his sharp blade,  
Grifone, and Ballano, formed that band;  
While, in sum, that whole daring company  
Thought all the world too slight an enemy.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIV: 61-66: HE ISSUES THE  
CHALLENGE TO AGRICANE AND HIS ARMY**

They rode, confidently, down the slope,  
With Angelica secure amidst them all,  
Though the maiden lived in fear (more than hope)  
That over her sweet face had cast its pall.  
They reached the plain, without cry or call,  
None, there, aware of the intent or scope  
Of their plan; yet Orlando, that brave knight,  
Sounded his war-horn, as they came in sight.

His challenge pealing out, he rode ahead,  
Blowing that famous instrument of war,  
An elephant's great tusk; then on he sped,  
And down upon the Tartar camp he bore,  
Rousing that host, none there did lie abed.  
King Agricane, Poliferno, he swore  
To drive from the field, and then defied  
Them to fight, that he might humble their pride.

Across the plain that mighty challenge rang,  
Then the peals of the horn rose to the sky,  
Scarce a king or knight but felt an inner pang  
Of dread, as they sought for a bold reply.  
Yet Agricane feared not, his blade sang  
As he practised his blows with a calm eye,  
For he showed as the crown of valour there,  
Whilst he ordered his warriors to prepare.

Nonetheless, he armed swiftly, and applied  
His mail to his body, dense plates of steel,  
Strapped his sword, Tranchera, to his side,  
Tied his helm (wrought magically, I'll reveal),  
Till all the world his armoured form defied.  
No stronger helm did any face conceal,  
(Solomon had employed a subtle spell,  
For it was forged deep in the fires of Hell.)

The king believed that a mighty army  
Had arrived, for word had come to his ear,  
That a host has been raised by Galafrone  
(Angelica's father) from far and near.  
The place was his by right, and his only,  
And that he'd seek to regain it was clear,  
Thus Agricane, with the keep at his back,  
Thought twas he who'd inspired the attack.

His own banners now spread to the breeze,  
Agricane's trumpets cried out for war.  
He rode Baiardo (clad in mail to the knees),  
And not only led his troops, but went before.  
His warriors poured forth, without cease.  
In the next canto now, you may be sure,  
I'll tell of our nine knights, brave and bold,  
For a finer martial tale was never told.



BOOK I: CANTO XV: THE COMPANY OF NINE



ARGOMENTO.

*Fra Tartari fa Orlando gran fracasso,  
Ne stan tra tanto i compagni a dormire.  
Salua' conducon la donzella al sasso  
Ma il falso Trufaldin non volse aprire.  
Giura ciascun, che mai si vedrà lasso  
Per lui pagnar, se douesser morire.  
Con questo lassa entrarli. Escon poi fore  
Mostrando ne i Pagani il suo valore.*



ALLEGORIE.

ORLANDO che per amor di Angelica fa preue stupende ne mostra quanto si trauaglia l'huomo per guadagnarli la gratia della cosa da se amata, e quanto il desio di essa lo sproni à mettersi ad ogn'impresa benchè sia pericolosa.

IL giuramento che fanno i Cavallicci di difender Trufaldino, mostra il potere, che h'ò vno huomo tristo nel tirar con inganno, ò con forza gli altri nel suo peruerso camino.

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 1-7: ORLANDO  
CONFRONTS AGRICANE, BUT THE REST JOIN  
THE FIGHT**

Listen, my lords, if it gives you pleasure;  
For the tale of that battle, I'll recount.  
Of the Tartar numbers, beyond measure,  
I spoke in my last canto; a true count  
Of that host, would, if taken at leisure,  
Have set two million curs to its account.  
With horn and drum, trumpet-call and yell,  
It seemed Earth opened, and the heavens fell.

As when raging storm-winds blow on high,  
And, from the north, deliver rain and hail,  
Blackening the waves, darkening the sky,  
Such that against them few ships can prevail,  
So, with as great a fury, by and by,  
A shout arose that rang, from cliff and vale.  
Orlando grasped his shield, and aimed his lance,  
Then, on the Tartar king, made his advance.

Thus, those two mighty lords met together,  
With immeasurable power and force,  
Though neither triumphed o'er the other,  
Nor gained advantage, reeling, in his course,  
But, with a lion's roar, fought to recover,  
Drew his sword, and wheeled about his horse.  
They began a bitter duel, till the rest  
Rode to join them, though not at their request;

Upon which they were forced to draw back,  
And cease the contest they'd embarked upon,  
Though each hated to turn from the attack  
For an instant, convinced that he'd foregone  
A certain triumph; though each found no lack  
Of aid; the Count combining thereupon  
With Brandimarte, and Chiarone,  
Oberto, and the bold Aquilante.

The latter rode beside King Hadrian,  
Followed by Antifor, and Grifone,  
King Ballano between them; now began  
An attack on the knights of Agricane  
(From every side, bands of others ran,  
To harass them, from hill and valley,  
With loud cries) by the company of nine;  
The scene a challenge to this pen of mine.

Orlando's band called out: 'Mindless rabble,  
Your cries and shouts, and fury all in vain;  
A fire of mere straw, a wordless gabble!  
Come to the waiting field now, and be slain!  
Then a fight commenced, amidst the babble,  
Twixt noble knights, who honour would maintain;  
For Orlando charged towards the citadel,  
As, before his sword, those lesser mortals fell,

Till but King Agricane blocked his way,  
With his like company, while, galloping  
Behind the Count, with his sharp blade in play,  
Rode Brandimarte, and the others, slaying,  
Till there were none left about them to slay,  
While a line of dead led towards the king.  
They were but a bow-shot from the city,  
When they met the king and his company.

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 8-14: VARIOUS DUELS  
COMMENCE**

A giant of a man, Radamanto,  
King of Comano, bold and valorous  
Fought for King Agricante; head to toe  
He measured twenty feet, one enormous  
Mass (I told you how he caught Astolfo,  
Earlier) yet skilful, and courageous.  
Now, lance lowered, he advanced on the foe,  
And on the field encountered King Ballano.

Treacherously though, the baleful knight,  
Struck Ballano on the back, from the rear,  
Whose skills were of no aid in that fight,  
For he landed in a ditch, though thrown clear.  
Grifone witnessed this disgraceful sight,  
And turned on Radamanto, without fear,  
And so, the pair commenced a bitter duel,  
Both full of hatred, their intentions cruel.

Ballano rose, and showed his valour.  
Maintaining himself boldly in the field,  
But was unable to mount on his charger,  
For a band of men sought to make him yield.  
He attacked them all, on foot, however,  
With blood-stained sword, and dented shield,  
Protecting his friends and, upon the plain,  
Left behind a gory mound of the slain.



The King of Sweden, that great champion,  
Who went by the name of Santaria,  
His lance a stout sapling, poised for action,  
Charged Antifor of Albarossia,  
But did that knight little harm to mention,  
Due to the strength of arm of the latter;  
He, parrying the blow, with ample force,  
Shattered the former's lance in its course.

Argante of Russia, stood to one side,  
Watching the progress of the encounter,  
While Brandimarte often he espied,  
Performing wondrous deeds on his courser,  
Slaying the lesser rabble far and wide,  
Like to a hero from some past era;  
Bathed in blood, he cleft many a skull,  
With two-handed blows, in that swift cull.

On his huge and fearsome steed, Argante,  
With his lance, attacked the dented shield  
Of the ardent and powerful Brandimarte,  
That scorned his size and strength in the field,  
Caring naught for his renown, but, simply,  
Gripped his trusted sword, as quickly he wheeled,  
And faced the Russian emperor, his foe,  
(Bishop Turpin, here, describes every blow).

But I leave that fierce pair for the moment,  
(Imagine that each fought hard, with skill)  
To speak of the eight who now were bent  
On reaching that great fortress on the hill;  
For, though they fought on with fierce intent,  
More foes arrived, and harassed them still,  
As if Hell had replaced the heaps of slain,  
So great a host now filled the heaving plain.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 15-16: THE KNIGHTS FIGHT THEIR WAY TOWARDS THE CITY**

Thus, the company delayed not; all nine  
Sought to carve their path to the citadel,  
Clearing the way, man by man, line by line,  
As before them a countless horde now fell,  
Though of Ballano there was little sign,  
And, thus, his fate was not theirs to foretell.  
The remaining eight regrouped, and boldly sought  
Sanctuary, though the path was fraught.

Now, once again, they faced the nobler foe,  
Those mighty lords renowned for bravery.  
Pandragon, Lurcone, Radamanto,  
Brontino, Uldano, Saritrone,  
Alongside Argante, Poliferno,  
Santaria, and King Agricane,  
Together with Sweden's Santaria,  
Downed Antifor of Albarossia.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 17-18: ANGELICA IS UNDER THREAT OF CAPTURE**

The band of four I spoke of earlier  
Still defended the fair Angelica,  
With many a deed arousing wonder,  
But in a most one-sided encounter.  
Agricane fought hard; that warrior,  
Thought the lovely maid now his to capture.  
And his knights about him fought so fiercely  
The four were forced to part from the lady.

She, on viewing the advance of the king,  
Knew not what to do, consumed by dread;  
Thus, neglecting her possession of the ring,  
That would have served her escape had she fled;  
Yet, chilled in spirit, she forgot everything,  
Every stratagem from her mind had fled,  
She only thought to call Orlando's name  
And, weeping, cry for succour, to that same.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 19-26: ORLANDO PERFORMS HEROICS**

Orlando was not far from the maid,  
And heard the voice of her he loved.  
His heart, his face, on fire, as was his blade,  
Twas as if his helmet a furnace proved.  
He ground his teeth, his wrath displayed,  
Pressed his courser's flanks, so deeply moved,  
That the steed, Brigliador, tight bound  
Twixt his knees, well-nigh fell to the ground.

Yet the brave mount recovered and arose.  
Now hear my account of bold Orlando,  
That, in high wrath, delivered wondrous blows,  
Which, in the telling, speaks of fear and woe.  
He hurled his shield away, and faced his foes,  
Counting them men of straw, a worthless show,

Rolled his eyes, in wild abandon, to the sky,  
Then raised glittering Durindana on high.

He swung at those who stood in his way,  
And spied Radamanto, whose great height,  
Beyond his own, his crest did thus display  
Above the rest; he sliced apart that knight,  
Who fell, his guts bared to the light of day,  
Yet the Count seemed but refreshed for the fight.  
Through Saritrone's helm, the skull below,  
And downwards to the saddle, sank his blow.

Then Orlando thundered on, without cease,  
Striking hard with Durindana, all around;  
With great power and skill, wielding with ease  
That fierce blade, sending men to the ground.  
Normana's mighty lord did little please;  
He, through ill-fate, his mortal end had found;  
For the Count pierced him deeply, in the thigh;  
His shield, steel plate, and mail, apart did fly.

Behold, Pandragon King of Gotia,  
Facing the wrath of Count Orlando;  
Behind him rode the Russian emperor,  
Whom he though would protect him from the foe,  
For of the two Argante was the taller,  
And topped him by a good two feet or so.  
Orlando came towards them in full flight,  
And struck at the shoulder of the knight.

His fierce blow cut through Pandragon's shield,  
And swept beneath, cutting him in two,  
While Argante, so close, though part-concealed,  
Felt the force of the sharp blade, passing through.  
It struck him in the gut, as he revealed,  
(The emperor was so tall, a giant to view,  
Pandragon's shoulders only reached his waist,  
And twas there Orlando's stroke was placed)

For, with a cry of pain, he turned his steed,  
Innards spilling o'er the saddle below,  
And then retreated from the field, at speed,  
While on sped the relentless Orlando,  
To cries for mercy giving little heed,  
Lost the compassion he was wont to show,  
For he slaughtered every man he could find,  
So angered that, to pity, he was blind.

No sight on earth terrified men more  
Than that of Count Orlando, in his pride.  
No weapons, no armour that they bore,  
Protected them; upon the field they died,  
The heaps of dead drenching it with gore.  
None the sheer power of his sword defied,  
Nor his face and helm, afire; none did dare.  
The host fled crying out: 'Beware! Beware!'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 27-29: HE FIGHTS AND STUNS KING AGRICANE**

While the Count wrought havoc, as ever,  
Agricane was fighting Aquilante,  
As, trembling like a leaf, Angelica,  
Watched the struggle twist the two, anxiously.  
There, behold, brandishing Durindana,  
Came Orlando, the Count of Anglante,  
Trampling men, downing many a knight,  
While he kept the mighty Tartar in sight.

For, glancing from afar, he'd seen the king,  
(He was near to overwhelming Aquilante)  
And had heard the maid loudly lamenting.  
How riled was he? I know not; but fiercely,  
Standing tall in his stirrups, proclaiming  
That he'd send this king to Hell, he swiftly  
Swung his sword, to strike the monarch dead,  
The blade landing on the crown of his head.

'Twas a violent and immeasurable blow,  
As merciless and fierce as one could be,  
And had the helm not been charmed (as you know)  
He'd have split the shining steel, easily.  
King Agricane, stunned, turned from his foe,  
His valiant steed bearing him to safety,  
As its master now swayed from side to side,  
Borne, senseless, half a league, in that wild ride.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 30-33: ANGELICA IS SNATCHED AWAY BY THE ENEMY**

Count Orlando pursued him o'er the field,  
Giving his mount, Brigliador, free rein,  
While Norway's Lurcone, with sword and shield,  
And Santaria of Sweden, again  
Sought to force those round the lady to yield.

Her four guards a stout defence did maintain,  
Until so great a host now barred their course  
That she was lost; they, left without recourse.

Santaria bore her off, upon his steed,  
His strong left arm clasped tight about her waist,  
Lurcone went before, lest she was freed,  
While Uldano and Poliferno raced  
Behind them. How the maiden wept! Indeed  
Twas a piteous fate that she now faced,  
Dishevelled, and lamenting, midst the foe  
Snatched away, crying out for Orlando.

Oberto, and the valiant Aquilante,  
Pierced the enemy ranks, each brave knight  
Performing mighty deeds, with Chiarone,  
(He was at least their equal in the fight)  
As they strove to rescue the fair lady,  
Though lacking the essential skill or might,  
To prevail, while Agricane awoke,  
And regained the battlefield, at a stroke.

Gripping mighty Tranchera, his keen blade,  
Seeking vengeance, towards the Count he rode,  
Who, in turn, saw the capture of the maid,  
And sped towards her, as he yet bestowed  
Many a blow, while she called to him for aid.  
And such furious strength and rage he showed  
Not all the world could have held him back;  
He ground his teeth, and swept to the attack.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 34-36: ORLANDO SLAYS LURCONE, KING OF NORWAY**

He first encountered Norway's Lurcone,  
Who, as you've heard, rode ahead of the rest,  
Striking him on the helmet so fiercely  
(Though with the flat, the stroke not his best,  
For the sword turned in his hand, awkwardly)  
That the blow was mortal; then on he pressed,  
While Lurcone's broken helm hit the ground  
Spraying bone and brains, and blood all around,

And what was strange and new was that his head  
Had vanished in a thousand fragments there,  
For the helm was emptied, as he fell dead,  
Naught left within but shreds of flesh and hair;

Durindana had shattered it, as I said.  
Santaria, stunned by the whole affair,  
Shook with fear; twould have been his fate to yield,  
But for the fact he grasped a human shield.

Orlando reached him; he could only flee,  
While the other could hardly strike a blow,  
For fear he might harm the maid, while she  
Cried as loud as she could, despite the foe:  
'If you love me, Orlando, hear my plea,  
Slay me with your own hand, mercy show;  
Rather than let this cur bear me away,  
Twere better, in truth, to die this very day.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XV: 37-40: HE KILLS SANTARIA OF SWEDEN, AND FREES ANGELICA**

At this the Count was so troubled in mind  
He scarcely knew what action he should take,  
But, skilled in battle, a fresh course did find,  
Sheathed his sword, lest he make a mistake,  
And charged at King Santaria, resigned  
To employing fists alone, for the maid's sake,  
While the king, seeing him without a blade,  
Thinking to slay him, now seemed unafraid.

He clasped the lady to his left-hand side;  
His right hand grasped the hilt of his sword.  
But the thrust at Orlando that he tried  
Failed to pierce the charmed hide of that lord.  
The Count, scarce hesitating, veered aside,  
Then struck out fiercely with his fist, and scored  
A sharp blow to the head, that slew the king,  
Who fell, but released the maid, in falling;

Blood and brains from his nose and mouth did flow,  
While streams of crimson blood ran down his face.  
Yet a greater task lay before Orlando;  
He gathered up the maid, and off did race.  
A turn of speed Brigliador did show  
Wondrous to behold; at lightning pace,  
They passed the wall, and reached the citadel.  
Angelica felt safe there, for a spell,

But twas Truffaldino who held the keep.  
He saw the knights draw near, and barred the gate.  
He taunted them; the walls were high and steep;

He swore that he'd defend them, soon and late.  
Sharp spears and stones he launched into the deep,  
While Angelica trembled at their fate,  
Like to die of grief, fearful and dismayed,  
To find that she, alas, was thus betrayed.

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 41-46: SHE AND THE  
KNIGHTS ARE ASSAILED ON ALL SIDES**

Agricane's dense ranks now drew closer,  
Led by that king, with the fierce Uldano,  
A mighty force that all the plain did cover,  
And the slopes above. As for Orlando,  
Who could now describe his plight; his anger;  
His fear? Not for himself; none did he show,  
But for the maid he clasped with his left hand,  
While with the right his sword he did command.

The Count's fears were only for the lady,  
For his own safety he cared not a jot;  
Though pinned, indeed, between Agricane  
And Truffaldino, death would seem their lot.  
The assault grew fiercer, for the ruined city  
Was filled with foes, all weariness forgot.  
Such a cloud of spears and darts filled the sky,  
That the light of day seemed to fail, and die.

King Hadrian, and bold Aquilante,  
With Chiarone, faced the Tartar king,  
While the lion-hearted Brandimarte,  
Afire, amidst their foes, his aid did bring.  
Meantime, Oberto and brave Grifone  
Performed as great a task, both resisting  
The barrage from above; while Orlando  
Yet sought to petition Truffaldino.

He prayed him to have pity on the lady,  
Now exposed to so desperate a plight,  
Yet Truffaldino, devoid of mercy,  
Refused to listen to the courteous knight,  
For no man ever showed such treachery,  
Neath the moon, or took such cruel delight  
In others' suffering; the Count begged in vain,  
His anger grew, till his eyes blazed again.

He pressed closer to the towering keep,  
Protecting Angelica with his shield,  
A hard look in his eyes, his colour deep,  
And sought Truffaldino, his wrath revealed,  
For though, with the sword, he'd rather reap  
Great renown than with threats make weak men yield,  
Yet he roared with such power, there below,  
The skies shook, not merely Truffaldino.

Orlando ground his teeth, crying: 'Traitor!  
There'll be no escape for the likes of you!  
Four hours, and the walls will seem lower,  
For they'll fall to my sword sharp and true.  
I will seize the keep; and then I'll slaughter  
You, you wretch, and all your treacherous crew,  
For I'll see you hang before me, and, say I,  
You'll bow your head and weep, ere you die!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 47-52: A PACT IS MADE  
WITH TRUFFALDINO**

Since the Count shouted, in a voice so loud  
That it seemed far beyond human power.  
Truffaldino's timid spirit was soon cowed,  
Like many a traitor's; close to the tower  
He'd seen Orlando, standing tall and proud  
In the saddle, bring ruin, in an hour,  
On seven kings (count them!) there below,  
Each pierced or broken by a single blow.

Thus, Truffaldino saw before his eyes,  
Or seemed to see, the citadel brought low,  
And its shattered stones tumbling likewise  
On King Agricane, the Count's great foe.  
Now, peering from the tower, he thought it wise  
(The Count's eyes were ablaze, all did show  
His wrath) to speak humbly, and replied:  
'Sire, hear me, though it cannot be denied,

And I deny it not, that I deceived  
Angelica; by God above, I swear  
Twas not a thing I'd ever have conceived,  
But for my two comrade's folly; who'll dare  
No doubt, to say the treatment they've received  
Proves my treachery; a thing most unfair,  
For I but seized them, locked them in a cell,  
And, by doing so, saved the citadel.

Those two, Torindo and Sacripante,  
Have wronged me, and yet neither will forgive,  
And, if allowed, they'll murder me surely,  
Being the stronger; yet tis right I live.  
I say this, for you'll not enter freely,  
Unless your word of honour you now give  
That you'll seek to defend me if you do,  
By force if needed; and I ask this, too,

Of all the others of your company  
That would enter upon the fortress here.  
You must, one and all, swear to protect me,  
And be my champions, and so appear  
In the field, to fight all who challenge me,  
So, that none upon this Earth I need fear;  
And, fully armed, with your banners unfurled,  
Be my true defence, against all the world.'

Orlando cried he'd not swear such an oath,  
But rather glared, and threatened the traitor,  
But the maid clung to his neck (nothing loathe)  
And begged him to yield, and thus save her,  
Till, in the end, the Count conceded both  
To her prayer and the base villain's offer,  
Which all the other knights likewise agreed  
To honour fully, in both word and deed.

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 53-55: THE KNIGHTS  
ENTER THE KEEP; ORLANDO SOUNDS HIS  
CHALLENGE**

Truffaldino, skilled at arranging peace,  
Having thus achieved what he desired.  
The drawbridge and portcullis did release,  
And allowed them to enter as required.  
There was naught left to eat except a piece  
Of hard, dried, salted horsemeat, it transpired.  
Orlando who was attacked by hunger,  
Though it scarce sufficed him, ate a quarter,

The remainder was shared amongst the rest.  
There was clearly a need to seek for more;  
Brandimarte, at Hadrian's behest,  
Joined with him, while Chiarone swore  
With Oberto, and Orlando, that their quest  
Would bring the better fare to their door.  
Meantime, with his brother, Aquilante,  
Grifone had the gates closed securely,

Then ordered fresh guards to man the wall,  
To act as sentries, and observe the foe,  
For as to trust, the pair placed none at all  
In that evil creature Truffaldino.  
The dawn was breaking; Night drew back her pall;  
The glowing sun had not yet risen though,  
When Orlando, having armed, blew his horn,  
His mighty challenge welcoming the morn.

That shrill war-cry threatened death, by its sound,  
To his enemies scattered o'er the plain,  
Scaring every cowardly wretch around;  
Their faces paled, as the call arose again.  
They beat their hands, wept, or fled o'er the ground,  
For the previous day they'd felt the pain  
Of fatal wounds inflicted on some other  
That had felt the weight of Orlando's anger.

**BOOK I: CANTO XV: 56-60: AGRICANE  
SOUNDS HIS OWN WAR-HORN IN REPLY**

That great host, or at least the larger part,  
Ran for the nearest place where they might hide,  
As their angry leaders sought to impart  
An ounce of courage, while the king supplied  
Threats enough for the craven horde to start  
Once more, arming themselves; the noise defied  
Description; Agricane, there did stand,  
Ordering the ranks, naked sword in hand;

If he saw a man unarmed, or gone astray,  
He'd lay him dead or stunned on the ground.  
When the troops had re-gathered, it was day;  
He could gaze at his army massed around.  
From the hill-slopes to the river, and away  
O'er the plain, a good four leagues, rose the sound  
Of weapons, shouts, and armour, on each side,  
While its ranks did that space completely hide.

Bold Agricane marvelled at the sight,  
Wondering how such a host could fear  
The deeds of a single Christian knight,  
For pale and trembling many did appear.  
Alone on his courser, that man of might,  
Swore he would slay, with sword or lance or spear,  
The Count Orlando, and then take and bind  
His company, mere children to his mind;

And he, alone, would maintain the field  
Against whoever issued from the keep.  
To proclaim his skill with sword and shield,  
His horn he blew; the tone rang loud and deep.  
In the next canto, all will be revealed,  
As to how that pair fresh honours did reap,  
Each man dealing many a mighty blow.  
And there, again, I'll speak of Rinaldo.



BOOK I: CANTO XVI: GALAFRONE ROUTED



ARGOMENTO.

*Il sir d'Anglante, e'l Re Agricane il fero  
Fanno crudel battaglia a Galafrone,  
Con l'esercito suo feroce, e altiero  
Giunge, e combatte, e'n fuga al fin si pone.  
Doglioso stassi vn gentil Caualliero.  
Gli sopraggiunge il buon figliuol d'Amone,  
E gli domanda, e gli fa gran richiesta  
Che gli racconti il duol che lo molesta.*



ALLEGORIE.

LA cortesia che vfa Orlando ad Agricane lasciandolo andare in soccorso de' suoi, ne ammaestra che anco coi propri nostri nemici doueressimo esser cortesi, perche da quella giamai ne può nascere male alcuno.

MARFISA, che non si degna entrar nella battaglia, mostra quanto habbi potere sopra noi il peccato della vanagloria, che spesso si gloriamo di fare vna cosa, la qual forse è dimaggior peso che le nostre spale possino sopportare.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 1-4: THE FORTUNES OF WAR**

All things beneath the Moon, both good and ill,  
Great riches, earthly kingdoms, monarchs, all,  
Are subject, endlessly, to Fortune's will.  
She views their rise, and she observes their fall,  
Darkening when light her shining orb doth fill,  
And in war, where she holds the world in thrall,  
Ever showing the most fickle, dangerous  
Of faces; of all things, the most treacherous.

Such is seen with regard to Agricane,  
Whose power in this world was so immense,  
Who, as the Emperor of Tartary,  
Ruled so many realms, yet lost all sense  
Of proportion, pursuing a lady,  
Waging war at most profligate expense,  
For there the lives of seven kings were lost,  
To the Count, and that but part of the cost.

In his camp, feeling desperate, he blew  
His great war-horn to summon up the foe,  
Challenging the warrior, and those few  
That followed the most valiant Orlando.  
He proclaimed he would face them anew,  
In the field, alone, and deal with them so.  
Twas not long ere the mighty drawbridge fell,  
And the Count emerged from the citadel.

He was followed by Oberto dal Leone,  
And Brandimarte, chivalry's fair flower,  
Then King Hadrian, and bold Chiarone,  
All scorning the emperor's show of power.  
Angelica gazed from a balcony,  
Thus, her beauty shone out from the tower,  
For Orlando's sake, as, with lowered lance,  
Those five towards the plain did now advance.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 5-8: AGRICANE BERATES HIS TROOPS**

The emperor gazed towards them, fiercely,  
Almost disdainful at facing so few.  
His mood was wrathful, his colour fiery,  
His mind, filled with anger, raged anew.  
He turned a moment to his craven army,

Devoid of virtue, their ranks did review,  
Not deigning to commend a single one,  
But threatening them aloud, till he was done.

'Let none of you cowards seek to aid me,  
For I seek no help from the likes of you!  
Come a million foes, come all who might be  
Upon this Earth, in arms, Achilles too,  
Samson, Hector, Hercules, that army  
I would conquer, and the field I'd bestrew  
With the dead. Once these knights are no more,  
Guard yourselves, you'll hear my lion's roar!

And ere the sun has set, you wretches, I  
Will drench your craven ranks in blood and gore,  
And leave the wounded, in the field, to die,  
So, Tartary shall know your seed no more,  
Nor your progeny assemble neath the sky,  
Where many finer men have stood before,  
To bring shame and disgrace upon your land,  
As you curs have done, beneath my command.'

That fearful mass of men was all aquiver,  
Like the poplar leaves in a gentle breeze.  
They breathed not a single word however,  
So great was their dread, their deep unease.  
Then Agricane rode, alone, as ever,  
Forth from the ranks, and his great horn did seize,  
And blew a blast, with one vast endless breath,  
That spoke aloud of war, and blood, and death.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 9-12: ORLANDO AND AGRICANE FACE EACH OTHER**

Orlando who knew the boundless ardour  
And strength and vigour of the emperor,  
Made request of Jesus Christ, his Saviour,  
Of His grace, to convert that warrior  
To His faith, then prayed to God as ever,  
Made the sign of the cross, as the Tartar  
Charged, and then attacked him furiously;  
His steed swift as fire, or wind o'er the sea.

Like two thunderstorms that meet together,  
From the east and west, with a lightning-flash,  
These two met, and were flung back on the crupper,  
In that fierce encounter, midst a mighty crash.



Each broke his solid lance on the other,  
While such force was delivered, in that clash,  
That all who witnessed it, beneath the wall,  
Thought that the heavens were about to fall.

Each addressed his God, and asked for aid,  
In this hour of need, and yet neither fell.  
Brigliador a sudden stumble made,  
(Orlando hauled on the reins for a spell)  
But held upright, while Baiardo stayed  
On a course aimed towards the citadel,  
Then, in a cloud of dust, wheeling again,  
Leapt six feet in the air, above the plain,

And sped to meet the Count, who likewise soared  
As Brigliador approached the enemy,  
Gripped Durindana, once Almonte's sword,  
And prepared to confront Agricane,  
Who'd drawn Tranchera. Each valiant lord  
Had few equals in this world, certainly;  
For that day they gave proof of just how rare  
It is for Earth to witness such a pair.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 13-19: THEY FIGHT BUT FAIL TO CAUSE MUCH HARM**

Neither warrior sought to dodge a blow,  
But redoubled their strokes, ceaselessly  
Striking hard; as upon the grove below  
Falling hail strips the leaves from every tree,  
So those brave knights, so beat upon the foe  
With their great swords that both, relentlessly,  
Split shield and plate but for the helms alone;  
All torn away, while sparing flesh and bone.

Thinking one stroke might end the whole affair,  
For the fight had continued far too long,  
Orlando sought the other's head to bare,  
But his blow to the helm, though true and strong,  
Saw his sword rebound, sparks flew; for his share  
His foe muttered: 'Wait, and you'll find you're wrong,  
If you think yours the better helmet here;  
For you'll find that the matter's far from clear.'

So, saying, with both hands, he swung his blade,  
Thinking Orlando would be sliced in two  
From his crown to the saddle, and so laid

On the earth below, yet naught could he do.  
Tranchera failed to pierce that helmet, made  
By Albrizac the enchanter, which, when new,  
Was gifted by that wizard to Almonte,  
The warrior son of King Agolante.

He'd lost it at that fount where Orlando  
In King Charlemagne's armour took his life.  
But no more of that; the resounding blow  
The Count had felt; the pain was like a knife,  
And he was sweating now from head to toe;  
Yet, undamaged, he returned to the strife,  
Seeking for revenge, as his anger grew,  
Swinging his sword with both hands, fired anew.

The cruel blade across the helm did slide,  
And travelled on to strike the left shoulder,  
Then downwards, to split the shield, did glide,  
Slicing a third away, with cloth and armour.  
The skin showed white along his naked side;  
The blade spared his flesh but, passing over  
The hip, tore his mail coat; though, unharmed  
As such, it seemed the monarch's life was charmed.

Agricane felt the full weight of the blow,  
And, to himself, said: 'Tis a breathing space,  
Yet if I hasten not to thwart the foe,  
I'll not live beyond the eve, at this pace;  
Great is the prowess this brave knight doth show,  
A swift passage to hell, though, he shall face,  
For there's no armour thick enough, no mail  
That against Tranchera's blade can prevail.'

And, with that, he swung the sword through the air,  
Striking, likewise, at the Count's left shoulder,  
The stroke cleaving the shield and laying bare  
All beneath, thus, shattering the armour,  
Ripping the hauberk from his body where  
It struck, and sliding dangerously lower,  
Taking plate and mail together in its fall,  
Though the bare flesh it scarcely touched at all.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 20-25: THEY TEMPORARILY STUN EACH OTHER**

Orlando's four companions watched the fight,  
And, viewing the ferocity of each blow,

Declared, as one, that there was ne'er a knight  
As strong as either of those two, and no  
Such duel e'er compared to that brave sight,  
So fiercely did they battle to and fro;  
While their Muslim foes cried aloud: 'By Allah,  
Each of this pair's a match for the other!'

They criticised the moves that each man made,  
As folk will do whose lives are not at stake,  
While that brave pair their own successes weighed  
Measured in deeds not words, gainst each mistake.  
After six hours employment of the blade,  
(For neither tempered sword was like to break)  
They seemed as fresh and strong, or even more  
So, than that mighty pair had seemed before.

As when the demon, deep beneath Mount Etna,  
Hammers great bolts of lightning, wreathed in flame,  
Following one huge blow with another,  
In swift succession, so from those two came  
A like infernal noise, as both together  
Swung their sharp blades, while taking careful aim,  
Such that the sparks flew upwards, furiously,  
As sword met sword and rang out endlessly.

The Count, with a two-handed backhand blow,  
Struck Agricane neath his helmet's crown,  
So fiercely that his head rang; in his woe  
The king, bowed on Baiardo's neck, slumped down  
In the saddle, small sign of life did show,  
Stunned utterly; that warrior of renown  
Would have been cleft in two by that sharp blade,  
But for the helm that Solomon had made.

His valiant steed now bore the king away,  
And, in a brief while, his confusion cleared,  
He returned on the Count, to make him pay.  
Like a vicious snake, wrathfully, he reared  
And swung his gleaming sword, without delay,  
To strike Orlando on the helm as he neared,  
So forcefully, with such a show of ardour,  
It struck the very centre of the visor.

The Count, in turn, was dazed by the attack;  
The blow had been struck with so much force,  
The warrior was laid flat upon his back,  
Head ringing, on the crupper of his horse.

He knew not if twas day; for all seemed black.  
Though the sun was now high upon its course,  
And the sky was bright; Orlando saw stars,  
Or, perchance, the flickering of scimitars.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 26-30: GALAFRONE'S ARMY ARRIVES, INCLUDING MARFISA**

There rose in him an excess of fury,  
His eyes crossed, he gripped Durindana tight,  
But, at that moment, a bell sounded loudly,  
From the tall keep, interrupting the fight.  
The noise of war-cries increased, and swiftly  
O'er the plain, an endless horde came in sight,  
With great standards, and bright pennants, on high,  
As trumpets, drums, horns, echoed from the sky.

These were the troops of King Galafrone,  
(Angelica's father) each division  
Of the three larger than the last; rightly,  
Albracca was his, his now the mission  
To regain the place from the enemy;  
And so, he'd drawn men from every region.  
Half India was in arms; some fought for gain,  
Some from fear; rich and powerful his reign.

These warriors came from the Sea of Gold,  
On India's border. Archiloro,  
A giant, led the van, fearsome and bold;  
The second force, a warrior-maid, and no  
Armed knight, in all the East, if truth be told,  
Could match her in the saddle, gainst the foe,  
For she was brave indeed and, certainly,  
As fair as she was brave; nay, twice as lovely.

She, of whom I speak, was named Marfisa,  
And the maid was so eager for the fight,  
Five years in arms, clad in steel plate ever,  
From the break of dawn to the fall of night,  
She remained, and she had sworn to Allah  
To go thus armoured, as a valiant knight,  
And ne'er leave off her breastplate and mail,  
Till o'er three kings her valour might prevail.

Those three were the King of Sericana,  
The mighty Gradasso; Agricane,  
The northern emperor, the Tartar;

And Charlemagne; later in our story,  
Her vast pride, her strength, and her character  
Will be shown; for she was bent on glory.  
Such matters for the moment I'll retain,  
And return to tell of those upon the plain.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 31-35: ULDANO AND  
POLIFERNO ATTACK ARCHILORO**

With vast commotion, and many a cry,  
The army now crossed the swollen Drada,  
While the sounds re-echoed from on high,  
As if the sky might fall; marching after  
Marfisa's force, the king's own men passed by.  
Galafrone led beneath his banner,  
A golden dragon on a sable ground.  
To Archiloro we return, the Devil's hound.

For he was a mighty giant in stature,  
And showed respect to neither God nor man,  
Cursing Mohammed, blaspheming Allah,  
Threatening both; this demon led the van,  
Thus, the first attack was his, as ever.  
Though twas a wild assault, devoid of plan,  
He fell, like an imp from Hell, upon the foe,  
And slaughtered an enemy at every blow.

For Archiloro wielded a great hammer,  
No anvil ever weighed as much, and he  
Swung it oft, at one man then another,  
Laying the Tartars low, mercilessly.  
Uldano moved against him, however,  
And King Poliferno, angered, swiftly,  
With two squadrons that occupied the field,  
Thousands in each, little disposed to yield.

From two different sides came their attack.  
And neither, at first, perceived the other.  
They aimed at Archiloro's front and back,  
Who swayed but then managed to recover,  
Being saved by their blows, dealt with no lack  
Of force, one counteracting the other,  
Knocked in one direction by Uldano  
Then righted again by Poliferno.

Held upright by their lance strokes, he plied  
His hammer still, an instrument of dread,  
Swinging the huge weapon from side to side,  
Then pounding Poliferno on the head.  
Another blow, another, some fell wide,  
In the end he left the warrior half-dead,  
And gave Uldano's cheek-guard a rattle,  
Driving that warrior from the saddle.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 36-42: AGRICANE  
ADDRESSES ORLANDO**

The pair of kings were left upon the field,  
While Archiloro displayed his prowess;  
Like a dragon, struck sparks, as helm and shield  
He splintered, strong steel plate, and mail no less.  
Those who tried to counter, were forced to yield,  
Though he slew them, one by one, midst the press.  
All ran, few could evade his serpent's eye;  
King Agricane watched them turn and fly.

Then he addressed the Count, courteously:  
'Of your good grace, sir knight, I ask of you,  
If you have ever loved a maiden deeply,  
Or if you love one now, to her are true,  
That we postpone our duel (by her lovely  
Sweet face; and may Love sway her heart anew)  
That, by deferring our battle slightly,  
I may grant fresh succour to my army.

Although I know you not, but for the fact  
Than you are a brave and a noble knight.  
I shall grant you fair Moscow for that act;  
Its realm extends to the Ocean; twould be right,  
For in Hell's darkness its last king is racked,  
Whom yesterday you banished from the light,  
The giant, Radamanto, whom your blade  
Cleft to the waist, your prowess thus displayed.

His realm then I shall grant to you, freely,  
Nor could it be ruled by a finer knight,  
For none, in all your sphere of chivalry,  
Shows greater skill and valour in a fight.  
And I promise, and will swear, equally,  
To seek another chance to prove our might,  
So that we may know for sure, and be clear,  
Of us two, which is the lord without peer.

To more than human strength, I thought I owned,  
Till I encountered the power of your blade.  
I had never thought, since I was enthroned,  
That any could my lance or sword have stayed;  
And hearing of Orlando, I but groaned  
To hear the endless tales that men relayed,  
Of his prowess in the West, in fair France,  
Believing I would down him at a glance.

Yet this contest between us, your assault  
The bitter blows, the valour you have shown,  
Revealed to me that I was then at fault;  
I find I'm but a man of flesh and bone.  
At dawn then let us fight, nor call a halt,  
And make a final proof, we two alone,  
Of strength and skill; then you or I shall be  
The flower, and the crown, of chivalry

But now, that you let me go in safety  
Is all that I request of you, sir knight,  
And, if you have ever loved a lady,  
By her I conjure you to aid my plight;  
For you view the ruin of my army  
At the hands of that giant whom they fight,  
And should I rescue them, I'll not forget  
That I shall owe, to you, a mighty debt.'

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 43-45: THE TARTAR EMPEROR GOES TO ENCOUNTER ARCHILORO**

Though the Count was troubled by the pain  
Of the blow he had suffered, and indeed  
Would have sought revenge and fought again,  
He could not scorn the king, and so agreed.  
For a noble knight in love must maintain  
A lover's courtesies in thought and deed,  
And so, Orlando released the king, and made  
Him an offer of assistance; but his aid

The king refused, as a man full of pride,  
And, in doing so, showed his arrogance,  
For he swiftly turned Baiardo aside,  
And took, from a squire, a proffered lance.  
His appearance gave new heart to his side,  
For they shouted, and began to advance,  
Their cries echoing from the hills around,  
While those who'd fled returned at the sound.

Thus, Agricane of the golden crown  
Re-ordering his ranks as best he might,  
Seeking ever to swell his own renown,  
Spurred swift Baiardo on towards the fight.  
He thought to bring this Archiloro down,  
This bold giant afoot, who faced the knight  
With shield on arm, and hammer in his hand,  
Drenched in blood, to make a final stand.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 46-51: AND DEFEATS HIM**

That great shield was a palm-width in thickness,  
Made of elephant-hide and solid bone,  
Though Agricane pierced it, nonetheless,  
With his brave lance, his skill and power shown.  
Yet the giant was unmoved by his success,  
Yielded not a single inch, but stood, alone,  
Hammering at the lance-shaft till it broke,  
Sending sharp splinters flying at each stroke.

Agricane esteemed all this but little,  
Despite the giant's massive show of force,  
And had scarcely lost his lance in that battle,  
Ere he'd unsheathed his sword, and wheeled his horse,  
Circling his foe, revealing his true mettle,  
Maintaining a close guard but, in his course,  
Still striking, ceaselessly, with bold attack  
Upon the giant's front, and sides, and back.

The giant yet stood firm, on planted feet,  
Like a tower rooted in the rock below,  
And never shifted his ground, in retreat,  
As he swung his great hammer to and fro,  
While the Tartar circled, his passage fleet.  
Like a hawk on the wing, flew Baiardo,  
The steed so agile in veering aside,  
That Archiloro's blows ever fell wide.

Both armies were watching the battle,  
That of India, and that of Tartary,  
Pausing in their harsh and bitter struggle,  
As if this duel would end it, finally.  
They gazed on, at metal striking metal,  
Praising their own champion quietly,  
And as the weapons swung to and fro,  
Saw Archiloro deal a mighty blow.

With a two-handed stroke (he'd dropped his shield)  
He might have slain Agricane, but no,  
His hammer was half-buried in the field,  
And he was fully exposed to his foe.  
His vulnerability thus revealed,  
The Tartar emperor was scarcely slow  
To swing sharp Tranchera, grasped in both fists,  
At those hands, so severing both the wrists.

The hands yet gripped the hammer as before,  
But now the soldiers sought revenge, in full,  
For their friends those hands had slain, score on score.  
They dragged him down, battered at his skull,  
And he was quickly bathed in blood and gore,  
From a host of wounds, stranded like the hull  
Of a shipwrecked vessel, while Agricane  
Not deigning to slay him, rode on swiftly.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 52-54: GALAFRONE'S  
VAN IS ROUTED**

At the hands of cowards Archiloro died,  
For the weakest attacked their fallen foe.  
While Agricane turned Baiardo aside,  
And then shattered the ranks, blow by blow,  
Till those of India ebbed like the tide,  
Or were sent to join their comrades below.  
Poliferno and Uldano joined the king,  
As death, and destruction, he did bring.

For a long while those warriors had lain  
Senseless and half-dead upon the ground,  
For each had felt that hammer, though not slain,  
As I said before; recovered, they now found  
The emperor, and charged across the plain,  
As, fleeing like the hare before the hound,  
Ran each coward before them; thus, they gained  
Their revenge, as the field of war they stained.

The fugitives were as powerless to defend  
Themselves as straw before the angry blaze.  
Agricane gazed on, and scorned to send  
Men in pursuit; he let them go their ways.  
Meanwhile, our tale to Marfisa must wend,  
For that warrior-maid, avoiding the rays  
Of the sun, was resting in a grassy glade,  
Two leagues off, by the river, in the shade.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 55-57: MARFISA  
DISDAINS TO JOIN THE BATTLE**

So arrogant at heart was that proud maid  
That she disdained to fight with any there  
Upon whose head a crown was not displayed,  
And so had turned aside from that affair,  
And walked by the stream, and found the glade,  
Where she now rested, in the cooler air  
Beneath a pine, though, ere that, she had told  
The squire her wishes, that her horse did hold.

(This squire was, in truth, her chambermaid)  
Marfisa said: 'Now listen, and give heed;  
If you should see our army flee, dismayed,  
Galafrone slain, captured, or, indeed,  
His banner toppled, then be not afraid  
To wake me, and to bring me my good steed.  
Until that time, speak not a word to me:  
I am all they'll need, then, for victory.'

With this, the fair warrior-maid, once more,  
Lay down to rest, fully armed, on the grass,  
And slumbered by the river, as secure  
As if resting in her keep; let us pass  
To the shattered forces, hastening from the war,  
Those troops of India who fled en masse,  
Streaming, in fear, without regard to aught,  
Past the royal banner, where men yet fought.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 58-60: ANGELICA SEEKS  
ORLANDO'S HELP**

Galafrone foamed at the mouth to see  
His forces so readily put to flight,  
Then spurred on his brave steed, despairingly,  
Seeking to conquer, or die in the fight.  
His daughter watched from the wall, and she  
Seeing him in grave peril, felt it right  
To send a message to Count Orlando  
Requesting his prompt help against the foe.

Thus, she sent a messenger without delay,  
To ask that the Count might aid her father,  
And to show his strength and valour that day,  
If he would seek their goodwill thereafter.  
That she could view his efforts, midst the fray,

She begged that great warrior to remember,  
And that if he craved love from such as she,  
His labours would be judged by his lady.

The Count, deeply enamoured, lingered not,  
But drew Durindana and, with fury,  
Fought a harsh and bitter fight, on that spot,  
That you shall hear far more of, from me.  
Now, however, lest Rinaldo be forgot,  
I'll leave Orlando there, and turn swiftly,  
To the former, who had come upon a knight,  
As I've told, by a spring, in sorry plight.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVI: 61-64: WE RETURN TO  
RINALDO AND THE MOURNFUL KNIGHT**

This knight was weeping so piteously  
That a dragon might have felt compassion.  
Lord Rinaldo's approach he'd failed to see,  
His head being in an inclined position.  
The cause of his distress and misery  
Rinaldo sought to earn, to his question,  
So soft in tone was the sad knight's reply  
It could scarce be distinguished from a sigh.

So, Rinaldo dismounted from his steed,  
And, greeting the knight most courteously,  
Asked him what might such depths of sorrow breed,  
What the cause of such sore lament might be.  
The wretched man now raised his face, indeed  
He gazed at Lord Rinaldo mournfully,  
In silence, and then, sighing, said: 'Ill-fate  
Will drive me to slay myself, soon or late.

Yet, by the true God, and my faith, I swear,  
That such is not the cause of my distress;  
To say true, I should find that death as fair  
As ever pleasure was, void of duress.  
No, the matter that drives me to despair,  
Is what is bound to follow, I confess,  
If I die; since a brave and courteous knight  
Must die with me, for his defence is slight.'

Rinaldo said: 'By God above, I pray,  
That you'll tell me the tale of what occurred,  
For I wonder at the cause of your dismay,  
Seeing you languish, and at what I've heard.'  
The knight, who upon the grass yet lay,  
Raised his head, at this gentle tone and word,  
And offered the reply, midst sighs of woe,  
Which I'll repeat, in the very next canto.



BOOK I: CANTO XVII: RINALDO'S QUEST



ARGOMENTO.

Si espon Prasido à voluntaria morte  
 Per liberar Iroldo di prigione.  
 Poi Fiordiligi, & egli: O buona sorte  
 Vien liberati dal figliuol d' Amone.  
 Che col gentil Iroldo, il guerrier forte  
 La turba vil, e inerte a morte pone  
 Trouar Marfisa la franca Donzella  
 Qual combatter con ambedui vuol ella.



ALLEGORIE.

RINALDO, che cerca liberar Prasido dalla morte, c'insegna quanto douerebbe ogn'huomo esser pronto per giouare altrui, non curando se bene speso ui andasse del suo.

MARFISA, che si crede prender per forza Rinaldo, & Iroldo, è la Superbia, che spese fiute ci conducono a far cose, che riusciscono in contrario.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 1-5: IROLDO BEGINS HIS  
REPLY**

I promised, in the previous canto,  
To give the answer of that mournful knight,  
Whose soul was so disposed to sigh with woe,  
He, of whom Rinaldo had first caught sight,  
In that green grove, beside a fountain; so,  
Listen now, as I bring his tale to light.  
With many a tearful word, he replied  
To the warrior's question, as he sighed:

'A good twenty days distant from this place,  
There stands a great and noble city,  
A past queen of the Orient for a space,  
Its name is Babylon and, there, a lady  
Dwells called Tisbina, and her lovely face  
Is fairest of any in that country,  
Fairer than those in all the lands around,  
That the sun warms, and the seas surround.

In the sweet flowering days of my youth,  
I was possessed of her favour, she was mine,  
My sovereign will wed fast to hers, in truth;  
My heart to her fair breast I did consign.  
And yet I yielded her elsewhere; with ruth,  
Conceive the pain of that loss for, in fine,  
It hurts more to lose a thing forever  
Than to desire it, and yet lack it, ever.

'Twas as if a portion of my spirit  
Had been wrenched, by force, from my beating heart,  
Thus, leaving death, and not life, within it.  
Imagine such; one's soul nigh torn apart!  
The sun his heavenly course twice has writ  
On the sky, while the bright moon, for her part,  
Four and twenty times has waxed and waned;  
While this sad, wandering path I've maintained.

The slow passage of time, the many woes  
That I have endured in distant places,  
Have lessened my despair you may suppose,  
Though my scorched soul still bears the traces.  
Prasildo, the lord with whom she chose  
To dwell, is possessed of such fair graces,  
Such virtues, I was pleased to lose to one  
So fine, and will be, till my days are done.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 6-9: FALERINA'S  
GARDEN**

To continue, I roamed the whole world through,  
In my despair and, as Fortune desired,  
Who ever sends us on those paths we rue,  
Reached the realm of Orgagna, sore and tired.  
That domain a fair lady rules, in lieu,  
Of Poliferno, its lord, who is required  
To help Agricane win the daughter,  
Of Galafrone, in some far quarter.

Now the lady whom he left in command,  
Is a mistress of fraud and dark deceit.  
She welcomes every traveller to that land,  
Whom fair words, yet a false face, ever greet.  
But should they seek to depart, out of hand,  
They seek in vain, tis a prison all complete;  
For they will find no means whereby to flee,  
And are condemned to die, most cruelly.

Now know, that the wicked Falerina  
(For such is the name of the enchantress  
That calls herself the Queen of Orgagna)  
Owns a noble garden, nay, a fortress,  
Though free of a moat, or hedge, or other  
Means for its defence; a sheer cliff, no less,  
Rings it all about, towering to the sky,  
And none can enter there, unless they fly.

A door of stone faces the rising sun  
Where there's an opening in the cliff on high,  
And a dragon (other guard there is none)  
That feeds on flesh and blood, hovers nigh.  
That fierce serpent consumes everyone  
That enters their realm whom they espy,  
For they send those they catch, all those that do,  
To the beast, that dines on the ill-starred few.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 10-16: HOW PRASILDO  
WON IROLDO'S FREEDOM**

Now, in that kingdom, I too was deceived,  
Prisoned, in chains, and guarded closely,  
And spent a good four months, sorely grieved.  
There, too, lay many a knight and lady.  
Such distress must be felt to be believed,



Beyond description was our misery,  
For, as chance and fate determined, each day,  
Two were sent to the dragon as its prey.

The names were writ and drawn by lot, a pair,  
A man and a woman and, of those caught,  
The earliest were taken first, as fare  
For that creature; twas human flesh it sought.  
Now, while I was confined in prison there,  
Of my being saved, I had scarce a thought,  
And yet ill-fortune's workings never ceased  
To dog my fate, for, lo, I was released!

'Twas through Prasildo's endless courtesy.  
He to whom I'd, sadly, left Tisbina,  
Quitting Babylon, my native city.  
He had heard, I know not how, earlier,  
Of my unhappy plight and, secretly,  
Had journeyed day and night to Orgagna,  
Bringing treasure with him and, unknown  
To all, made entry to that place, alone.

Once there, he tasked himself to obtain  
My freedom; he would bribe the prison guard  
With gold coin, and his object thus attain.  
But the plan failed, the execution marred,  
And, finding no other way he might gain  
My safe release, he had my cell unbarred  
By agreeing that he would take my place,  
And die to save my life, of his great grace.

So, I was freed, and he chained there instead.  
He faces death, so I might, thus, live on.  
Behold, true chivalry! He's as I've said.  
Yet he dies this day, slain by the dragon.  
He will be dragged to where the beast is fed,  
Tis human flesh the creature dines upon,  
And here I wait, for they must soon pass by,  
And that is why I grieve at heart, and sigh.

Though tis true I can't rescue him alone,  
I'd have the world know of his chivalry,  
All the grace and kindness he has shown,  
And would repay all he has done for me,  
And thus, I wait, my presence yet unknown,  
To quit myself of debt, and, willingly,  
Seek now to fight with those who do him wrong,  
Though they might be a mob a hundred strong.

And if that leads in turn to my demise  
Why then, my death will prove a joyous thing,  
My soul will wing its way to Paradise,  
And with Prasildo's, there, rejoice and sing.  
O'er the manner of his death, I agonise,  
And am grieved that, even by my dying,  
I have no way to save my friend from pain  
Nor ease his path; but prove an evil bane.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 17-22: RINALDO OFFERS TO FIGHT PRASILDO'S CAPTORS**

With this, Iroldo bowed his head once more,  
While Rinaldo, moved by his sad story,  
Grieved with him for the burden that he bore,  
And thought upon Prasildo's chivalry,  
While the manner of his death he must deplore,  
Then offered his services, courteously,  
And his comfort too, saying: 'Yet, sir knight,  
Your friend may still be rescued from his plight.

However large the band that lead him here  
E'en though they were twice the number, yet I  
Care not, for men of straw they must appear  
And, by my oath of chivalry, they'll die.  
I'll cut him free so swiftly, have no fear,  
That none will think themselves, though they may fly,  
Safe from my sword, and dying at my hand,  
Till they reach Orgagna, and make a stand.'

Iroldo merely gazed at him, and sighed,  
And then said: 'Ah, sir knight, go on your way.  
There's no Orlando here, in all his pride,  
Nor Amone's son, his cousin; no, I say,  
Tis work enough for others, when allied,  
To fight but one or two; we must obey  
Fate's dictates, for you are but one alone,  
These are but words, and you but flesh and bone.

Go, of your courtesy, I would not wish  
You to remain here on my sole account.  
You have no cause to play a part in this,  
Tis a grave matter that I, here, recount;  
To fail to speak my thanks would be remiss,  
For your offer, nor do I thus discount  
Your courage, for tis a brave heart you show;  
May God bless you, and all good men treat so.'

The knight replied: 'I am no Orlando,  
But, nonetheless, my offer yet holds true.  
I seek not for glory, by acting so,  
Nor ask for any recompense from you,  
But tis because I deem that, here below,  
No pair of friends has ever been as true  
As you two now are to one another;  
Thus, to make a third would prove an honour.

You yielded him the lady that you loved,  
And so, you were deprived of your delight.  
He seeks to die for you, and therefore, moved  
By his sacrifice, you seek death, sir knight.  
Such friendship, by the Lord above approved,  
Will endure in life and death; if you must fight,  
And he be murdered thus, why, once again,  
I say: I stand with you, though we be slain.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 23-31: HE AND IROLDO DEFEAT RUBICONE AND HIS MEN**

While they were conversing in this manner,  
A great band of men now came in sight,  
Bearing before them a mighty banner,  
And leading, bound, a lady and a knight.  
Some came lacking mail, some free of armour,  
Some bare-legged, unknowing, to the fight.  
They were the tavern dregs, that company,  
Led by the worst of rogues, Rubicone.

His two thick legs resembled heavy beams;  
Six hundred pounds at least the fellow weighed;  
He was proud, strong, and bestial, it seems,  
A devil in truth, and by the Devil made.  
He'd a beard as black as coal, hair in reams,  
A scar across his nose; his eyes displayed  
A crimson hue, through but one could he see;  
Yet ne'er a day passed when he went hungry.

This vicious wretch was leading a palfrey,  
That bore a lady in chains, tightly bound,  
And then a knight, of seeming courtesy,  
Likewise held, his mount stumbling o'er the ground.  
Rinaldo viewed them, for a moment happy,  
For the maid was Fiordelisa, he now found,  
That fair, yet most unfortunate, lady  
She who'd told him of Iroldo's story,

And had been abducted by the centaur,  
That hybrid creature, in the gloomy wood.  
He leapt on Rabicano, full of anger,  
And was ready in an instant to make good;  
While that sorry crew devoid of armour,  
A hundred cowards at least, simply stood  
And gazed, as Rinaldo took to the field,  
Then charged them, till they sought to flee or yield.

Iroldo had now mounted his own steed,  
And drawn from its sheath his gleaming blade.  
Our knight fought Rubicone, who, indeed,  
Was the only one that seemed unafraid.  
Yet the duel swiftly ended; fate decreed  
That Rinaldo with the stroke that he essayed,  
Sliced that mountainous heap of flesh in two,  
At the waist; then commenced to cut and hew

At whichever of the others he could find,  
Though he had little heart for the slaughter,  
And often paused from his attack, resigned  
To merely watching, as they fled in terror.  
He decapitated four, and consigned  
Two more to death, whose waists he did sever.  
He grimaced, without pleasure, as he fought,  
Forced to shear legs and arms, from those he caught.

The prisoners were obliged to remain,  
For the moment, still bound, for that crew  
Had abandoned them there, upon the plain,  
While Rinaldo and Iroldo still flew,  
After the fugitives, till all were slain  
Or had escaped them, leaving, to the view,  
Shields, flags and spears, and Rubicone  
Lying dead on the ground, stained and bloody.

But Iroldo, who had grieved by the fount  
At the plight of his friend, soon left the foe,  
With a pile of dead set to his account,  
And rode to free the maid and Prasildo.  
He clasped the latter; both could now dismount,  
Iroldo speechless as when, after woe,  
One rejoices yet cannot say a word;  
He offered tears, though not a sound was heard.

Rinaldo was as yet two miles away  
Still chasing that fear-stricken rabble,  
While the knights, overjoyed to win the day,  
Gazed at the aftermath of the battle,  
And especially at where Rubicone lay,  
Cut in two, through flesh, cloth and metal,  
And said it was no man, but Mohammed,  
That had thus appeared, or they'd now be dead.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 32-37: RINALDO  
CONVERTS THE THREE TO HIS FAITH**

Rinaldo rode back from the hill-slope swiftly,  
Having wrought great destruction on that crew,  
And the pair of knights knelt to him, humbly,  
Hands conjoined, as if he were a god; those two  
Seemed to think him sent by the deity.  
'O Mohammed,' they cried, 'you that pursue  
Our enemies, here, in this world below,  
Aid us ever, in our trouble and our woe.

You have descended from the gleaming sky,  
And, for our sake, have thus revealed your face,  
Bringing aid to Humanity; whereby  
You extend towards us your endless grace,  
And make it known that, if we live thereby,  
And render ourselves worthy in this place,  
We shall gain a reward beyond all price,  
Entering your eternal Paradise.'

Rinaldo was dismayed to, suddenly,  
Become an object of adoration,  
And yet found it intriguing, certainly,  
To view their simplicity and passion,  
In taking him for Mohammed, truly,  
So, he answered humbly, in this fashion:  
'Reject that same belief; naught such is true;  
For I am as much of this Earth as you.

My flesh and bone, like yours, will turn to dust,  
Yet not the soul that Christ has granted me.  
You should not wonder at my strength, but trust  
To the evidence of His great mercy.  
He grants such powers to the true and just,  
And, thus, the faith that claims my loyalty,  
Which derives from a right and pure belief,  
Calms my every fear, and quells all grief.'

Rinaldo made the knights to understand  
That he was the Lord of Montalbano;  
Then preached the Holy Creed, with sword in hand,  
And told how Christ took on our form below.  
In short, such eloquence he did command,  
That they embraced the Faith, they loved him so.  
Iroldo and Prasildo, shunned their error,  
And renounced the Prophet altogether.

Then the three of them addressed the lady,  
And explained the several reasons why  
She should accept their Faith equally,  
Claiming Islam was founded on a lie.  
She was as wise as fair, and, contritely,  
And with true devotion, and ne'er a sigh,  
Was, by Rinaldo, confirmed a Christian,  
As were the knights, at that nearby fountain.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 38-46: FIORELISA'S  
DESCRIPTION OF FALERINA'S GARDEN**

Then he described, with equal eloquence,  
His quest to find Falerina's garden,  
The which had caused so many such immense  
Suffering, and then he sought to question  
Them as to the way. Being full of sense,  
Fiordelisa soon condemned the mission:  
'God keep you from such thoughts; there every breath  
Is enchanted, and naught is gained but death.

I have a book; within, tis illustrated,  
That garden entire, all drawn to scale.  
For now, I'll but say what's indicated  
As to the gate, and what it doth entail.  
The garden, by her magic arts created,  
Is bounded by cliffs, nor would it avail  
A thousand masons, with sharp picks of steel,  
To try to pierce them and that place reveal.

There is a tower, where the sun doth rise,  
Where is set a marble door for a gate;  
A dragon, at the entrance, blinks its eyes,  
For it never sleeps, be it soon or late.  
It guards the way, and any man that tries  
To enter there must fight, whate'er his state,  
And yet, if he overcomes the dragon,  
New trials await him as he journeys on.

The door locks swiftly, of itself, and none  
That entered can return that way again.  
And any man who that path has won,  
Must win a second duel, or remain.  
For a gate opes where hangs the midday sun,  
A bull, that guards it, rises from the plain,  
With one sharp horn of iron, one aflame,  
That pierce through shield and plate, to wound and  
maim.

And if, by chance, the savage bull is slain,  
(For twould need a stroke of fortune, indeed)  
That portal, as the first did, shuts again,  
While another door, to the west, is freed.  
Against its guard a knight might toil in vain,  
Tis a wild ass, of strange and vicious breed;  
Its tail's a blade, its massive ears enfold  
Any man whom that beast desires to hold.

In truth, its hide is made of solid metal,  
Quite unpierceable, and shining like gold.  
While it yet lives, all open is the portal,  
Should it be slain, that door none can behold.  
Yet soon, should the metal beast prove mortal,  
There's a fourth door (in my book, the tale's told)  
To the north, which quickly opens, yet, there,  
Strength and courage garner naught but despair.

A fierce giant guards that northern door,  
With a sharp glittering sword in his hand,  
And if a knight should slay him, then two more  
Arise at the same spot where he did stand.  
And if they are slain, they give rise to four,  
And every one a sharp sword doth command,  
And from four eight arise, from eight sixteen,  
Born of the blood-drops scattered there, I ween.

And so on, endlessly, the count would grow;  
The book declares it, and contains no lie.  
For God's sake, refrain from venturing so,  
You'll win but harm, and shame, and woe, thereby.  
The facts are as I say, naught else to know,  
Or gain by thinking on them, so say I.  
Many a knight has sought to enter there;  
All are dead; none return from that affair.

If you still seek to reveal your valour,  
And delve into a different mystery,  
Then, indeed, you could do nothing better,  
Than attempt an act of mercy, with me,  
That which I spoke of; on your honour  
You have sworn, that you'll bear me company,  
As my champion, and free Orlando  
And the rest, from captivity and woe.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 47-50: THE PARTY OF FOUR FIND DRAGONTINA'S GARDEN HAS VANISHED**

Rinaldo mused upon all she had said,  
Without replying, while the very thought  
Of Falerina's garden ran in his head.  
To enter there was all that he now sought;  
He was untroubled by all she had read,  
For the greater the danger that it brought,  
The greater that task, the need for valour,  
The more pleasing, and worthy of honour.

On the other hand, he'd promised the lady  
To accompany her and, on reflection,  
Was tightly bound; twas an act of mercy  
Towards his cousin and companion,  
Whom he truly loved, and, moreover, he  
Could, at some other time, seek that garden,  
Travel there alone, and his entry gain,  
And conquer it, and issue forth again.

And so, at last they set out on their way,  
He, Fiordelisa, and the other two,  
And they journeyed swiftly, by night and day,  
O'er hills, through vales, on paths both strange and new,  
Till they reached the wildwood where the fey,  
Dragontina, had caused that river to pursue  
Its course though the garden, at her command.  
Naught now remained. All was but empty land.

I have told you how the garden was un-made,  
The splendid palace, the bridge, the river;  
How the captives were freed; how all did fade.  
Fiordelisa had left, by then, however.  
She, knowing naught of Angelica's aid,  
Had thought to find Brandimarte her lover,  
And, with the assistance of Rinaldo,  
Free all there, including Count Orlando.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 51-57: THEY GAIN NEWS FROM A KNIGHT**

They rode on through the dark and gloomy wood,  
And the hour of noon had already passed  
When they reached a plain in its neighbourhood,  
And beheld an armed knight approaching fast,  
As if in fear, while spurring, hard as he could,  
His poor steed, which with his whip he harassed,  
Striking fiercely at its flanks on either side.  
The man was shaking; pale as one who'd died.

They all called out to him for news, but failed  
To extract a reply, he trembled so,  
Glancing often behind him; yet prevailed,  
For, at last, in a tone quivering and low,  
The cause of his terror he, thus, detailed:  
'Curse love's ardour, tis the cause of woe,  
And tis King Agricane's that has sent  
So many men to death, through his intent!

I was encamped with many another.  
Fighting at the whim of Agricane,  
We had taken the castle of Albracca,  
And driven away King Sacripante.  
The keep we'd not captured however,  
When the maid who governed the city  
Returned from her mission to seek aid;  
Nine valiant knights had her wish obeyed.

Among them I saw King Ballano,  
Oberto dal Leone, Brandimarte,  
But one great lord, that I did not know,  
Peerless in skill, of matchless bravery,  
Though alone, routed us and, to our woe,  
Slew Radamanto and Saritrone,  
And five kings more, involved in that fierce fight,  
He cut in two, as a token of his might.

I saw (and see it yet before my face)  
How he sliced Pandragon, at a stroke,  
Hacking through his chest and arms, apace.  
While, on viewing it, from the ranks I broke.  
I fled two hundred miles from that place,  
And would have leapt in the sea, twas no joke  
To think him ever at my back; I say  
God keep you, for I would no longer stay;

I'll not feel safe till, at Roccabruna,  
Behind its high wall, I find sanctuary,  
And raise the drawbridge; there, to recover.'  
And, with that, the knight departed swiftly,  
Galloping neath the deep woodland cover,  
Down that dark trail, into obscurity,  
Leaving the knights there, and the maiden fair,  
To consider all he'd thought fit to share.

Conversing among themselves, they cried  
That Orlando must have been the knight  
Who'd delivered that great stroke, nor denied  
That the captives must be free of their plight,  
Not knowing how; yet, clearly, none had died,  
Since it seemed they were involved in the fight.  
And for the same thing, now, they all yearned,  
To ride there, and so find what might be learned.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 58-62: THEY ENCOUNTER MARFISA**

They left the wilds, and took a direct road  
Beyond the Caspian Sea, whence they came  
To where the mighty River Drada flowed,  
And there they spied a knight, and that same  
Was in full armour, and a brave sword showed,  
And there a maid, as squire, had, as her aim,  
To hold a steed, gripped tight by the bridle,  
While the knight was mounting to the saddle.

Turning to the others, Fiordelisa  
Said, quietly: 'If I am in the right,  
For that device I surely remember,  
No man is this, bravely clad as a knight,  
But the warrior-maiden, Marfisa.  
Search all the world entire, day and night,  
Follow every path through every land,  
No fiercer doth a lance and sword command.

Therefore, be warned, tis at your peril  
If you should choose to joust with her.  
Believe me, for I give you good counsel,  
Twere best that we retreat, and then confer.  
We can evade her, and that would be well,  
For neath her savage talons we'd suffer  
If she seized us, doomed then to die in pain.  
For gainst her power none can their guard maintain.'

Rinaldo laughed, though he thanked the lady  
For her counsel, for he wished to try a course  
Against this Marfisa, and that shortly.  
Grasping his shield tight, urging on his horse,  
The sun was halfway up the sky when he  
Drew near; each was as brave and strong, perforce,  
As the other, when bent on survival,  
Such that neither feared aught from their rival.

Marfisa gazed straight at Amone's son;  
He seemed a most valiant knight indeed.  
She considered his mount already won,  
Though she might have to sweat to gain the steed.  
They settled in their saddles; then, as one,  
Wheeled about, and prepared to charge at speed.  
Twas now, ere they set spur to either flank,  
A herald shouted, from the river-bank.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVII: 63-66: SHE IS  
SUMMONED BY GALAFRONE, BUT FIGHTS  
REGARDLESS**

The king's messenger was aged, and he  
Was escorted by as many as a score.  
'We were well-beaten by the enemy,'  
He told Marfisa, 'routed in this war.  
For Archiloro swung his hammer idly,  
He is dead, and will wield the thing no more.  
Agricane slew that giant of a man,  
And the rest of our army, turned and ran.

All our king's hope now rests in your hands,  
You are our last recourse, says Galafrone.  
Prompt aid from you that monarch demands,  
Trusting that your great skill and bravery  
Will bring you renown, thus he commands:  
Capture this aggressor Agricane,  
That thinks to seize the world, and slay us all;  
Slay him, in turn, or make the tyrant crawl!

Marfisa cried: 'Wait there a while longer,  
I'll not be slow, in hastening to the field,  
After each valiant knight here I conquer,  
For these three, to captivity must yield.  
Then, by the will of Allah as ever,  
This proud Agricane's fate shall be sealed.  
I'll take him alive; he'll wish himself dead;  
Immured in the keep, he can spin my thread.

The headstrong warrior maid said no more,  
But turned to face the waiting Rinaldo.  
In a fierce voice, a lioness's roar,  
She challenged all three knights, that haughty foe.  
Their contest, by the river's sunlit shore,  
Was most dreadful to view, a cruel show,  
For Rinaldo was strong, and strong his steel,  
As our very next canto will reveal.



BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: TWO DUELS

ARGOMENTO.

*Marfisa abbatte dal destriero al piano,  
Prasildo, e Iroldo. Indi fa pugna atroce,  
Col valente Signor di Mont' Albano.  
E non meno essa lui, ch'egli lei noce.  
Orlando manda il popolo pagano  
A l'altra vita ne l'Infernal foce,  
Con Agrican fa poi battaglia tale,  
Che resta in dubbio, chi di lor più uale.*



ALLEGORIE.

**MARFISA** che ha abbattuto da cavallo Prasildo, & Iroldo, & non può gettar Rinaldo, ci dimostra esser molta differenza ne gli huomini.

**AGRICANE**, che fingendo fuggire, conduce Orlando lungi dall'esercito, per combatter seco, ne dimostra che molte cose sono fatte, che se bene a prima vista paiono vergognose, nel fin poi si veggono esser honorate.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 1-3: MARFISA UNSEATS PRASILDO AND IROLDO**

You have heard, in the preceding canto,  
How Marfisa, that fierce warrior-maid,  
Her challenge, in the flowering meadow,  
To those three valiant knights, had proudly made.  
Prasildo was the first his skill to show,  
His speed and bravery he now displayed,  
Charging o'er the grass (though Rinaldo  
Was more famed), he sped against the foe.

When he, thus, encountered the damsel,  
His lance was shattered; she moved not a pace,  
As that knight departed from the saddle,  
Falling with a mighty thud upon his face.  
The maiden cried: 'Come now to the battle  
You two, so I may swiftly leave this place,  
For you see the herald hurries me along;  
Agricane waits to fight, midst his throng!'

Iroldo, seeing his companion fall,  
Stunned, to the ground, in that first encounter,  
Sped to the joust, pausing not at all,  
While Prasildo was taken prisoner;  
Yet he fell too, as if he'd struck a wall.  
She'll find it harder to down the other,  
My lords; be pleased to hear ere you go,  
Each fierce and valiant charge, each bitter blow.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 4-6: HER ARMS AND ARMOUR**

Marfisa bore a long and massive lance,  
All wrought of polished bone; 'twas immense.  
Her shield, of blue, her device did advance,  
A gold crown split in three; a brave defence.  
Her surcoat bore the same and the expanse  
Of her steed's caparison, at rich expense,  
While a dragon in green formed her helm's crest,  
Standing on high; red flames it there expressed,

The fiery flames so wrought that, in the breeze  
They made a roaring sound; while, in a fight,  
The noise increased and, like to stormy seas,  
Added to her foe's nervousness and fright.  
The steel-plate, the mail, she wore without cease,

Was created by magic, in the night;  
In that armour, which fitted her so well,  
She felt safe, and protected by the spell.

Marfisa rode a massive charger  
By far the largest Nature ever made.  
It was a roan, with russet in its colour,  
The head, and tail, and legs, a darker shade.  
Though not itself an enchanted creature,  
Yet boundless strength and fierceness it displayed,  
And, high upon that mighty steed, the queen  
Passed swiftly and smoothly midst the scene.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 7-25: SHE AND RINALDO DO BATTLE**

On the other side, the brave son of Amone,  
Lowering his wondrously weighty lance,  
Charged, with the heart of a lion, fiercely,  
And struck her visor, in his swift advance.  
He might as well have struck at some lofty  
Well-built tower; for at that blow, by mischance,  
His lance shattered, and scattered o'er the land  
Many a splinter smaller than a hand.

At the same time, the bold warrior-maid,  
Struck his helm, forcefully, on the front,  
While the knight fell backwards, sorely dismayed,  
His head ringing, though his helm bore the brunt.  
Marfisa lost her lance though, for the blade  
Was driven back, now harmless as a blunt,  
While the stout shaft split lengthwise, that she bore,  
Though unbroken a hundred times before.

It shattered now, in that fierce encounter,  
While the warrior-maid was sore amazed,  
Yet, even more so, was filled with anger,  
For Rinaldo kept his seat, though somewhat dazed.  
She called Allah unjust, and that other,  
The horned and beaked Trivigante, dispraised,  
Crying: 'Why do you leave him in his place,  
And not render complete his sad disgrace?'

Descend, show yourselves, come, choose your weapon!  
I'll guarantee to make an end of all,  
And leave but a scorched field, like some dragon;  
'Tis on you above, Marfisa doth call.



You fear not my strength, for tis certain  
I cannot climb the sky to work your fall,  
Yet be warned, if I find a way, I'll rise  
To scorch and lay waste your Paradise!

While the proud warrior-maid menaced so,  
Threatening to destroy the peace of Allah,  
She faced, once more, the half-dazed Rinaldo,  
Who had swayed for a short while before her,  
But now shook his head, and re-sought his foe.  
She was ready for the fresh encounter,  
And when he turned to charge at her again,  
She laughed aloud at him, in high disdain.

'You foolish wretch, go now, and quit the field,  
While I give my mind to something better!  
Is this some joy-in-pain, you've revealed?  
Well then, pursue it with someone other!  
By my faith, and by the sword that I wield,  
I tell you plainly you're in peril, brother:  
Once I've despoiled you of your armour,  
I'll beat you with the flat, by my honour!

With such proud words she spoke, but no answer  
Gave Rinaldo; no, he uttered not a word;  
Not wishing to indulge in idle chatter,  
For he found her banter quite absurd.  
His sword was his reply, as he met her  
Face to face, while feigning he'd not heard.  
He aimed Fusberta, but mistimed his swing,  
Such that Marfisa scarcely felt a thing,

While the maid retreated not at the blow,  
But repaid in kind the valiant knight,  
Striking the beaver and the chin below,  
Then splitting his shield in two, outright.  
Piercing his flank, most cruelly, also,  
Despite hauberk and mail; fierce it did bite.  
When Rinaldo felt the blood drench his side,  
It but increased his courage, wrath and pride.

The Lord of Montalbano had never  
Experienced a battle such as this.  
He abandoned his shield altogether,  
And swung his sword, seeking not to miss.  
He knew that the contest would be bitter,  
Yet felt no fear, her skill sought to dismiss,

As, with a double-grip, he struck her shield  
And sent the pieces flying o'er the field.

That powerful blow caused the warrior  
To drop her horse's reins, while his attack  
Annoyed her, as much as it amazed her.  
She stood tall in her stirrups, fighting back,  
Raising her face, now scarlet with anger,  
And launching a savage counter-attack,  
With another huge, and two-handed, swing  
As the knight performed the exact same thing.

Like her, he waited not, but launched his blow;  
Thus, each mighty weapon struck the other,  
As they sought to land a hit on the foe,  
Raising sparks, as the blades clashed together.  
While both were razor-sharp, honed to bestow  
A mortal wound, yet, here, his Fusberta,  
Proving stronger, broke the maid's blade in two,  
As an axe cuts wood; to the ground part flew.

When Marfisa saw her fine blade trimmed short,  
Which she had previously so esteemed,  
She rained blows on Rinaldo, for she sought  
To disarm him, nonetheless; though it seemed  
But a desperate cause for which she fought,  
For a master swordsman the knight was deemed,  
While he simply kept an eye on each wild swing,  
To attack, or defend by parrying.

Marfisa launched a tempestuous blow,  
Believing she had found an opening,  
And if she'd landed it upon her foe,  
He'd have lost his life but, receiving  
That bold stroke upon Fusberta, held low,  
He attacked her, it seemed, in defending,  
Striking the broken weapon from her hand,  
So that upon the ground the sword did land.

When she saw her broken blade fall to earth,  
No frenzy in the world could equal hers.  
She urged on her steed, straining at the girth,  
And, unarmed, charged the knight, with flailing spurs,  
Aiming to strike, for all she was worth,  
As a wild-boar charges, headlong, midst the furze,  
While the blow from her fist was scarcely light,  
For it made the former ones seem but slight.

I marvel at that maiden, and her blows,  
 Though I but say what Bishop Turpin wrote:  
 'The red blood spurted from Rinaldo's nose,  
 And from his ears, and filled his mouth and throat.  
 Though the magic helm, that was Mambrino's,  
 Saved the knight from death (I simply quote)  
 For, if he'd worn another helm that day,  
 That fierce blow would have torn his head away!'

Rinaldo was dazed, but kept the saddle,  
 Though that fist had rattled him indeed.  
 His charger now bore him from the battle,  
 Leaving Marfisa behind, on her steed;  
 For his horse was of so fine a mettle,  
 That its hooves flew o'er the flowery mead,  
 Without stirring a single blade of grass,  
 Nor a petal, so swiftly it did pass.

It ran silently, its flight could scarce be seen.  
 Marfisa raised her eyebrows in surprise.  
 She retrieved her broken sword from the green,  
 Then sought to mark his passage with her eyes.  
 By now, Rinaldo was far from the scene,  
 But, once recovered, that fact did realise,  
 And he galloped back to see if he could find,  
 Bold Marfisa, with a swift revenge in mind.

For he felt the blood flowing down his face,  
 And reproved himself fiercely, in this way:  
 'What a deal of cowardice, in this place,  
 Your base spirit has thought fit to display;  
 'Tis a maiden pursues you in the chase!  
 What, in truth, would the Count of Brava say,  
 If he could see you battling gainst a maid,  
 Yet failing to ensure your debt's repaid?'

With that painful thought, the bold Rinaldo  
 Gripped Fusberta hard, in his fury.  
 Yet I must speak of bold Count Orlando,  
 While that other seeks vengeance and glory.  
 For the Count, who loved Angelica so,  
 Had obeyed her plea (you've heard the story)  
 To assist her father, Galafrone,  
 Who gazed now, upon his fleeing army.

## BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 26-30: AGRICANE SEEKS TO LURE ORLANDO FROM THE FIELD

Any man that saw the Count in the field,  
 At once, recognised that valiant knight,  
 Whose sword slew one, and made another yield,  
 Felling the flags and their bearers, outright.  
 A fierce struggle was at hand, with sword and shield,  
 Though the men of India were in full flight,  
 (For they'd abandoned all thought of attack,  
 The hordes of Tartars ever at their back).

Confused, and then routed, the fools had run,  
 (Or had galloped on their steeds) o'er the plain,  
 And the king too, when all was said and done,  
 Had sought the safety of his camp to gain.  
 But now a breathing space was swiftly won,  
 Those who'd fled turned to face the foe again,  
 For Orlando had arrived, and stopped the rout;  
 With King Hadrian, he turned the men about,

Helped by Chiarone, Brandimarte,  
 Each, willingly, committed to the war,  
 And, there too, Oberto dal Leone.  
 Attacking fiercely; slaying many a score,  
 They fell on the astounded enemy,  
 Turning red the field and the river-shore.  
 Brandimarte with his lance downed Poliferno,  
 And then, wheeling, unseated bold Uldano,

While Orlando engaged Agricane,  
 And so resumed their uncompleted fight.  
 No fiercer was e'er seen, for, viciously,  
 Each hacked at the other, while the sight  
 Of his brave ranks now in ruins, cruelly  
 Afflicted the king, for this other knight  
 Kept him so tied he'd no way to send aid,  
 But must face the foe, and counter his blade.

A sudden thought he had, which was to lure  
 The Count away from the battlefield,  
 To deal with him, in some place more obscure,  
 And then return, swiftly, the act concealed;  
 For then he might, more readily, ensure  
 That the fate of the enemy was sealed,  
 For he thought their troops not worth a straw,  
 And King Galafrone worth little more.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 31-37: HE AND THE  
COUNT CONVERSE**

With this in mind, he broke from the fight,  
And spurred his valiant steed o'er the plain.  
The Count, not knowing what he had in sight,  
Thought Agricane fled from fear, or pain,  
And sped in pursuit of the other knight,  
Until both reached a more wooded terrain,  
And, in its midst, entered upon a glade,  
With a fount at its heart, that gently played.

Agricane halted by this woodland spring,  
Dismounted, yet still gripped his shield, firmly,  
Nor sought to doff his helm, and then the king  
Awaited his pursuing enemy.  
When Orlando arrived, and saw him standing  
By the stream, he called out to him, loudly:  
'You fled from me, sir knight, which scarcely shows  
A man of fortitude or daring! Heaven knows

How you can bear the shame, and the disgrace,  
Of seeking to evade one man alone?  
Perchance, you merely thought, thus, to save face?  
You were in error, as you now must own.  
None can escape; to meet one's death with grace  
Is best; cling to the life that one has known,  
And one may lose at once life and honour;  
One must die well to win heaven's favour.'

The king remounted, and gave his reply:  
In a calm voice: 'You are the boldest knight  
I have ever met; that, I can't deny;  
And you shall live, and in life delight,  
Due to the courtesy, and skill, say I,  
That you displayed before when we did fight,  
When I was forced to quit the encounter  
That I might save the army, thereafter.

I would have you live, if you'd but stay  
Far from my presence, and annoy me not.  
For my flight was but to lure you away  
Or you'd have been struck dead upon the spot.  
Choose to duel, and you'll but go astray;  
Fight with me, and death must be your lot;  
But let sun and sky be witness to the fact  
Your death would offend me; I shun the act.'

Orlando answered him, graciously,  
Pitying him, despite all that he'd said:  
'Noble as you are, it pains me, truly,  
That midst the damned you'll be, once you are dead.  
Tis ill that you scorn Christianity,  
And embrace a lesser path instead.  
Save your body and your soul, I say,  
Be baptised, and you may go on your way.'

Agricane answered, gazing at his face,  
'It seems then, that you must be Orlando!  
Though I were heaven's king, I'd change place  
With any knight in this world, here below,  
To duel with you, and life or death embrace.  
And yet let me advise you, so you'll know,  
You preach about your God in vain to me.  
Sword in hand, defend yourself, and bravely!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 38-40: THEY  
RECOMMENCE THEIR DUEL, BUT CEASE WHEN  
NIGHT FALLS**

Without more ado, he drew Tranchera,  
And attacked Orlando, with ardour.  
A fierce contest now began, moreover,  
As, with cut and thrust, both men sought honour.  
Each was a shining light of true endeavour;  
While (the book says) they fought together,  
From the height of noon till the fall of night,  
Their courage waxing the longer the fight.

But once the sun dipped beyond the mountain,  
And the stars appeared, adorning the sky,  
The weary Count addressed the king again:  
'What now?' he said, 'It darkens there, on high.'  
'We must rest here in the meadow, tis plain,'  
Came the courteous monarch's swift reply,  
'And then tomorrow, with the morning light,  
We may rise together, and resume the fight.'

On this matter, the pair were in accord.  
Each tethered his brave charger as he pleased.  
Then the green grass did each a couch afford,  
They, like neighbours between whom war has ceased,  
As if bound by ancient peace, graced the sward.  
The Count beside the stream his tired flesh eased,  
While the king lay nearer to the trees,  
Beneath a pine, stirred by the evening breeze.

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 41-44: ORLANDO  
TALKS OF FAITH AND LEARNING**

They talked together for a goodly while,  
Of noble things, conducive to their state.  
The Count gazed at the sky, mile on mile,  
And declared: 'What we behold, soon or late,  
Is all the work of the Lord; the silver dial  
Of the moon, the stars that tell of our fate,  
The shining sun, its light upon our face,  
God made them all for the human race.'

'I see,' the king replied, 'that twould please  
You to reason concerning faith, and such.  
In the field of science, I lack expertise,  
Not inclined to it in youth, overmuch.  
I broke my teachers' heads; by degrees,  
I turned from learning, and its tiresome clutch,  
Till none was there to teach me to write,  
Or show me books; for they all ran in fright.

And so, I spent my early years in arms,  
In riding, hunting, jousting and the like.  
I think a nobleman should shun the charms  
Of reading all the day, and learn to strike  
The targe, gain strength and speed for war's alarms,  
And learn the use of lance, and sword, and pike,  
All that a knight may need; oh, learning's fine  
For priests and scribes; the art of war is mine!

Orlando answered: 'With much I agree;  
Yes, in arms a man should first seek honour;  
Yet learning is not lesser in degree,  
As flowers a field, it adorns the bearer.  
An ox, a stone, a log, it seems to me  
Is one that fails to praise the Creator.  
Without knowledge how savour the sublime  
And majestic heights, noble and divine?'

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 45-48: HE DECLARES  
THAT HE LOVES ANGELICA**

'You have the advantage', said the king,  
'So, to argue would seem discourteous.  
I've told you of my nature and, seeing  
That you are the better-read betwixt us,  
I'll not deign to respond to your preaching.

If you choose to sleep rather than discuss  
Aught with me, then so do, but I implore  
You to talk, else, of naught but love or war.

Now, I pray you, to aught I ask of you,  
Speak the truth, on your honour, as is right  
If you're Orlando, that brave warrior, who  
Is known through all the world for his might.  
Come, say what it may be that you pursue,  
In coming here, and if you've loved, sir knight,  
For the lord that scorns love, he lacks a heart;  
Though he may seem alive, but plays a part.'

Said the Count: 'I am indeed Orlando;  
He who slew Troiano and Almonte.  
Tis Love has made me wander to and fro,  
And journey, now, to this far-flung country.  
And, since I speak true, then you shall know  
That the daughter of King Galafrone  
Holds my heart, that maiden and no other,  
She who rules the keep, yet, at Albracca.

You have made fierce war upon her father,  
Seized his lands and his castles by force.  
Love brought me here to help the daughter,  
Because she needs my aid, her last recourse.  
Full often I've ridden to the slaughter,  
For faith, or honour, or simply to enforce  
The right; and now I fight to win the maid,  
Nor seek in other ways to be repaid.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 49-52: AGRICANE ASKS  
THAT ORLANDO RENOUNCE HER TILL DAWN**

Once the king heard he loved Angelica,  
He was enraged, far beyond all measure;  
His face, indeed, was suffused with anger,  
Though the dark of night hid his displeasure.  
He wept and sighed (inwardly, however)  
That this knight now coveted his treasure,  
Stirring jealousy's dark flame, its fierce fire,  
So stricken he near died of desire.

He said to the count: 'Prepare your thought,  
For as soon as daylight shows in the sky,  
The two of us must battle, as we ought,  
And in that fierce duel, one of us shall die.

Yet I pray of you, ere the fight be fought,  
Let the love that you proclaim be set by,  
Renounce the woman that your heart desires,  
Let the maid seem mine till the night expires.

For, while I am alive, I'll not endure  
That another man should love the maid.  
At dawn one of us must breathe no more,  
And lose his life, and the lady, in this glade.  
Renounce her, all will seem as before,  
None will know; it will ne'er be betrayed,  
By the trees about us, that you did so  
For a time; tis but little you'll forego.'

Said Orlando to the king: 'I have kept,  
Every promise that I have ever made.  
If I were so unwise as to accept,  
I'd be forced to renege. If some sharp blade  
Cleft my flesh, or blinded me while I slept,  
Yet I could live sans eyes, sans limbs, dismayed,  
Without a soul, without a heart, but never  
Without my love for fair Angelica.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XVIII: 53-55: ORLANDO  
REFUSING, THEY FIGHT ONCE MORE**

Agricane was angered past belief,  
Unable to endure that proud reply,  
And in the darkness, full of ire and grief,  
He seized Baiardo, and mounted on high,  
His sudden action bringing some relief.  
Challenging the Count, loud came his cry:  
'Renounce the maiden now, or mount and fight;  
Forgo her, or defend yourself, sir knight!'

The Count leapt to the saddle in a trice,  
For when he'd heard the mighty monarch stir,  
He'd feared some treachery, some foul device,  
And so was ready for what might occur.  
And, once mounted, his answer proved concise:  
'No, I'll ne'er renounce my love for her,  
Nor would not, if I could, by night, or day.  
If you'd attain her, seek another way!'

As a storm begins that looms o'er the sea,  
So that duel re-commenced, by the light  
Of the bright moon above, rising swiftly,  
As they spurred their mounts o'er the field of night.  
The strokes they exchanged (twas no mere tourney)  
Were landed ruthlessly, by knight on knight,  
For both were strong, and ardent, to be sure.  
This canto is complete. I'll speak no more.



BOOK I: CANTO XIX: THE DEATH OF AGRICANE



ARGOMENTO.

Il Re Agrican dal figliuol di Milone  
Presso a la Fonte è ucciso la mattina,  
Contre giganti combatte vn Barone,  
Che menan presa vna gentil fantina.  
Fuggon Tartari. Astolfo è di prigione  
Solto. Rinaldo pugna, e la Reina.  
Mandono il popol Nero a' Regni Stigi.  
Si trouan Brandimarte, e Fiordiligi.



ALLEGORIE.

**A**GRICANE, che essendo vicino alla morte si fa Battezar da Orlando, ci ammaestra che al tempo della morte dobbiamo cercar con ogni potere di pregar Dio che ci perdoni i nostri errori.

**R**INALDO, che assalito da Galafrone uien soccorso da Marfisa, allaquale esso poi porge aiuto, ci dimostra di tenir per nemici chi cerca offendere altrui ingiustamente.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: I-II: ORLANDO IS  
STUNNED BY A BLOW, BUT FATALLY WOUNDS  
AGRICANE**

All you who are in love, lord, or lady,  
Or maiden, both gracious and courteous,  
Pray come now, and listen to my story  
Of high adventure, and the amorous  
Deeds that knights of old wrought for glory.  
Full many were splendid and courageous,  
But Orlando, above all, and Agricane,  
Performed, for love, things noble and mighty.

As I was saying (in the last canto),  
Each man made a fierce and cruel attack  
On the other, to win the maiden so.  
The moon shone fitfully, the night was black,  
Each was forced to be wary of his foe,  
And guard himself, at both front and back,  
And to left and right, and above, on high,  
Far more than if the sun were in the sky.

Though the king fought with greater fury,  
The Count saved his strength, being wise.  
They'd fought for five hours (such the story)  
And the dawn glow had touched the eastern skies,  
As they battled hard for life and glory,  
When Agricane, feeling that the prize  
Was now slipping from his grasp, struck his foe,  
Upon the left, with a despairing blow.

That desperate stroke swept from side to side,  
And cut Orlando's shield as if twere straw.  
He was charmed, thus his flesh the blade denied,  
But it cracked the plate and mail, and full sore  
The brave Count was bruised, and winded beside,  
And, though Tranchera did nothing more,  
The blow was so mighty the force alone  
Numbed the arm, and shook the Count to the bone.

Nonetheless the Count was not dismayed,  
Rather he struck back with greater force,  
Piercing Agricane's shield with his blade.  
His sword tore plate and mail in its course,  
And so great was the opening that it made,  
The blow as weighty as the kick of a horse,  
That it broke three ribs in the monarch's chest,  
Ripped off half his shield, and tore the rest.

As a lion roars in wrath, midst the sand,  
When the hunter's wounded it with his spear,  
So Agricane roared, where he did stand,  
Then swung with greater force, it would appear,  
For upon his foe's helm the blade did land,  
And flew so swiftly in its brief career,  
And so stunned the man, that Count Orlando  
Knew not if he still had his head, or no.

Naught could he see, his ears were ringing,  
His charging courser was so terrified  
It carried him about the field, careering  
Till he near lost his seat in that wild ride,  
And would, in truth, have been sent tumbling,  
If he'd remained half-conscious; side to side  
He swayed, but, when just about to fall,  
He awoke in time, though close was the call.

Once he'd revived, he felt a sense of shame,  
Realising he'd been well-nigh overcome.  
'How can you hope Angelica to claim,  
If you're deaf and blind, half-dead and numb?'  
He cried, dismayed, 'recall you not that same,  
That fair maid who sought you as her champion?  
He who's asked, but is slow in obeying,  
Though he serves, his reward goes a-begging.

Nearly two whole days I've wasted, here,  
Attempting to defeat a single knight,  
And yet I am no nearer, twould appear,  
Than at the start, to ending this good fight!  
If I can't win within an hour, I fear  
I must forgo the shield and lance outright,  
Become a monk, and be damned indeed,  
If I seek to wear a sword or ride a steed.'

These words of his could barely be heard,  
For he ground his teeth, in a furious manner,  
And he nigh-on spewed flame at every word,  
So hot, and so fiery, was his anger.  
His steed gainst Agricane he now spurred,  
And, with both hands, he whirled Durindana,  
And, with a backwards stroke, he struck the king  
On the shoulder, with power behind the swing.

The cruel blade sliced deep along his chest,  
 Splitting the breastplate, and the mail below  
 Though close-wrought of fine steel links, and  
     progressed  
 To the hip, a bitter ruin to bestow.  
 Never was greater seen; twas like to rest  
 On the saddlebow, yet such was the blow  
 It cut through, though it was bone, iron-bound,  
 Sending both horn and pommel to the ground.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 12-15: THE MONARCH  
 WISHES TO BE BAPTISED AT THE FOUNT**

From the shoulder to the groin, Agricane  
 Was all one wound, but yet did death defy.  
 His face was pallid, his sight but murky,  
 He knew himself a man about to die.  
 Though his spirit was failing, he called, clearly,  
 To Orlando, then gazed up into his eye,  
 Said calmly, 'I believe', and gently sighed,  
 'In your God, who was scourged and crucified.

Baptise me at the fountain there, sir knight,  
 Before I lose the power to speak again.  
 If my life has been sinful in God's sight,  
 May I not lose His grace, and may He deign,  
 He who came to save humankind outright,  
 To receive my soul, and so end my pain.  
 That I have sinned greatly I confess,  
 Yet He may grant me mercy, nonetheless.'

The king, who had been so fierce before,  
 Now wept and raised his face to the sky,  
 Saying: 'You have gained from me far more  
 Than a steed, yet this charger here, say I,  
 Is the best to be found from shore to shore,  
 The greatest ever bred, none could deny.  
 I took him from a prisoner of mine,  
 A valiant lord in my camp; yet, in fine,

Since I can scarcely breathe, of your good grace  
 Come, lift me from the saddle to the ground.  
 Let not my soul be lost; before the face  
 Of God, baptise me; for the grave I'm bound.  
 Leave me, and a sorry path you'll trace,  
 One of pain and distress, the way unsound.'  
 All this the king said, and a little more,  
 As the Count grieved, and did his death deplore.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 16-18: HE IS BAPTISED,  
 AND THEN DIES**

Orlando's eyes were filled with tears as he  
 Dismounted, and then hastened to the king,  
 Caught him up, in his arms, and, tenderly,  
 Laid him down on the marble surrounding  
 The fountain, and wept with him, quietly,  
 While the king asked pardon for ill-doing.  
 He baptised him with water from the fount,  
 Joined his hands, and prayed for him. Then, the Count

Finding the monarch's face grow cold, likewise  
 The body, knew his spirit must have passed.  
 He lingered not, closed Agricane's eyes,  
 And left the king, sword in hand to the last,  
 In shattered armour, yet in regal guise,  
 For his crown he still wore. Orlando cast  
 His gaze upon the horse: twas Baiardo,  
 He believed; yet where then was Rinaldo?

Not quite certain it was so, for indeed,  
 Its caparison concealed the creature,  
 From neck to fetlock draping all the steed,  
 But for the head, hiding every feature.  
 'I would the secret of this business read,'  
 Thought Orlando, 'tis him by his stature.  
 Yet, if he's Baiardo, I can but wonder  
 As to the whereabouts of his master.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 19-22: RIDING BAIARDO,  
 LEADING BRIGLIADOR, ORLANDO HEARS A  
 NOISE**

Orlando now wished to know for sure,  
 And began to approach the horse, quietly,  
 But the steed knew the Count from before,  
 Greeting him with a neigh, as formerly.  
 'Tell me, brave steed,' he said, 'that ever bore  
 Rinaldo to the fight, where then is he?  
 Tell me no lie.' So spoke Orlando,  
 Though the steed gave no reply for, although

He was born of enchantment, yet he lacked  
 A human voice, and so could utter naught.  
 Orlando, who had ridden him, in fact,  
 Many a time before, mounted, then caught



His Brigliador's reins, and o'er the tract  
Of meadowland, with both steeds, he sought  
The depths of the forest, where, as he rode,  
Hearing warlike sounds, in a trice, he slowed,

Then tethered Brigliador to a tree  
(It was a mighty oak quite close at hand).  
Now I would have you know that here were three  
Great giants, bearing treasure o'er the land,  
Leading a maid on a camel, for she  
Had been snatched away, you should understand,  
From the Distant Isle; and a valiant knight  
Was engaging these three in furious fight.

The knight, whose strength was great, was battling  
To free the maiden, and he fought with two  
Of the giants, while the third was guarding  
The lady. All the tale I'll tell to you,  
For I'll resume, with the Count advancing,  
But first I must relate a deed or two.  
Be patient, and all things will be revealed,  
But now I tell of slaughter on the field.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 23-26: GALAFRONE AND  
ANGELICA FREE THE CAPTIVES**

That field where the Tartar army, I mean,  
Was scattering in a thousand directions.  
No more disastrous rout was ever seen.  
Death was everywhere, in countless actions,  
Nor could I describe that blood-drenched scene.  
Hadrian's and Brandimarte's factions  
Pursued the foe; from the river and the sky,  
Sounded many a loud and dreadful cry.

Agricane's troops, lacking their master,  
Since that great lord of theirs was slain, and they  
Would see such a king returning never,  
Ran in noisy flight, for lost was the day;  
While a host died, damned in Hell forever.  
The aged Galafrone, did display  
Not a trace of mercy for that fleeing horde,  
For all that were caught he put to the sword,

He desired that none should escape the field,  
Viewing their swift slaughter as he rode by,  
To reach the king's tent, where he'd concealed

His captives, hidden there from human eye;  
And Astolfo, tight-bound, was thus revealed,  
While King Ballano, there, one could espy,  
Still full of vigour, and, midst many more,  
There lay Albarossia's Antifor.

Still in their chains, they were dragged before  
The fair Angelica, who set them free,  
For she knew these brave knights, and therefore  
Honoured and praised them now, courteously;  
With sweet words, their suffering did deplore,  
And, in a fine speech, gave thanks, profusely,  
For their valiant deeds wrought in her honour,  
And their bold attempts to bring her succour.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 27-32: ASTOLFO BOASTS  
OF HIS PROWESS AND TAKES THE FIELD**

Astolfo cried: 'Here, shall I not remain,  
But rather take revenge upon the foe,  
That band of traitors, fleeing o'er the plain,  
Who knocked me flat, and from behind, and so,  
Drove me from the ground I would maintain,  
Where I'd have slain a hundred more, you know,  
But was tricked by that vile Agricane,  
Whom I'll slay yet, midst his scattered army;

Though armour I must borrow, and a steed,  
That I may hasten now unto the field,  
I, whose first stroke will see a wondrous deed,  
For I'll cut a score to pieces, ere they yield.  
And I'll capture Agricane, hear him plead  
For mercy, though his fate is firmly sealed,  
For, whirled about my head, he'll rise so high,  
That he'll take three full days to fall and die.'

Antifor and Ballano heard this claim.  
Unaware that he was prone to boasting,  
Or that he was otherwise known to fame,  
And thought him a fool, and merely raving,  
But being brave, and possessing a name  
For valour, they also set to arming,  
For the fortress was well-stocked with supplies,  
And they were soon clad in martial guise.

All three mounted, and rode to the fight,  
Astolfo first, who blew upon his horn,  
The very image of a fearless knight,  
Joyful and handsome, and most nobly born.  
Now hear of the encounter God, outright,  
Had ordained for him that self-same morn,  
For he came across a fleeing soldier,  
Bearing away his lance, and his armour.

This latter was worth a fortune, all told,  
And as a spoil had fallen to the Tartar,  
The shield and lance, which was adorned with gold,  
Had once belonged to young Argalia.  
Astolfo, in his anger waxing bold,  
Struck the soldier down (a simple matter)  
Piercing between his shoulders six palms through,  
Then dismounted, and claimed the spoils anew.

Clad now in that armour, he took up his lance,  
And did deeds valiant beyond measure,  
(Though none could resist his swift advance  
Since the lance slew the foe at his pleasure).  
The Tartar ranks now grasped at every chance  
To flee, but were chased and slain at leisure;  
Though a different fight raged by the river,  
Where Rinaldo battled brave Marfisa.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 33-34: MARFISA BATTLES WITH RINALDO**

The two of them had jousting all that morn  
Yet neither had progressed a single jot.  
Rinaldo's armour was cracked, his mail torn,  
His shield and helm dented in every spot.  
The shame he felt could scarcely be borne,  
Surely scorn and disgrace must be his lot,  
For twas the maid led him a merry dance;  
He yielded what he gained, to her advance.

On her part, too, Marfisa felt dismay,  
But showed it more than did Rinaldo.  
She wished she'd never seen the light of day,  
Since she'd singularly failed to down her foe.  
Her shield was torn, her blade shorn away,  
Her arms, legs, and body, weary also.  
The maid was quite unscathed, however,  
Protected by her enchanted armour.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 35-38: GALAFRONE RECOGNISES ARGALIA'S STEED, RABICANO**

As those two fought with one another,  
With small advantage to either party,  
The Tartars that fled along the river  
Were overtaken by King Galafrone.  
His heart filled with rage, his mind with anger,  
The king, though in pursuit of their army,  
Halted to observe the vicious fight,  
Recognising Marfisa at first sight.

He knew not the Lord of Montalbano,  
Who fought so fiercely against her,  
But thought he seemed a most worthy foe,  
And mighty, judging from his blade's power.  
But then he caught sight of Rabicano,  
The steed owned by his son, Argalia,  
The knight whom, in France, Ferrau had slain,  
Midst the Ardennes, and his helm had ta'en.

The aged father wept to see that same,  
For he recognised the horse, Rabicano,  
And shouted out Argalia's name,  
And cried: 'O star of virtue, here below,  
O fair flower of chivalry and fame!  
More than my own self, I loved you so!  
Is this the traitor; that, through treachery,  
Stole your life, and brought me misery?

Now, quarter my flesh, feed me to the pack,  
Grind my body to dust, if this foul traitor  
Shall boast more of his pitiless attack  
Upon my son, next that foreign river!  
And with this, he gripped his sword and drew back,  
Then charged at Rinaldo, in pure anger,  
Striking the knight, and to such good effect,  
The latter, stunned, his courser's neck now decked.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 39-43: MARFISA UNSEATS ANTIFOR AND BRANDIMARTE**

Marfisa, witnessing the aged knight  
Interfere in a duel that was her own,  
Was affronted, and felt it only right  
To avenge the contempt thereby shown.  
She charged the king, advancing in full flight

Upon Rinaldo, as, to aid the throne,  
Brandimarte appeared with Antifor,  
Neither knowing aught of the maid before.

They imagined that she must be some knight  
Of Agricane's, who had sought the foe;  
And, seeing her so valiant in the fight,  
They thought to involve themselves also.  
The proud warrior-maid, with rage alight,  
Had unhorsed Galafrone, and the blow  
Had slain him if her sword had been intact;  
For the point would have pierced him; tis a fact,

That Galafrone would have died, though he  
Was merely toppled by the warrior-maid,  
And might have died yet, had Brandimarte  
And Antifor not arrived, bringing aid.  
In truth, their involvement cost them dearly,  
For, Antifor a swift descent now made,  
Marfisa striking that lord so fiercely  
He lay silent on the ground, stunned wholly;

Now, though Brandimarte would task her more,  
Since he well-nigh equalled her in skill,  
And was practised in all the arts of war,  
She possessed the greater strength of will.  
As they were infidels, beyond God's law,  
Rinaldo drew aside, for the thought did fill  
His mind that, as both warriors lacked His aid,  
Fate favoured neither knight nor warrior-maid.

And watching that bold and furious fight  
To see who hammered best with the sword,  
He judged them both worthy, as of right,  
But that she did the greater skill afford.  
Antifor arose, upon his mount did light,  
And, quite recovered now, that noble lord,  
Attacked Marfisa, as did Galafrone  
Who drew his blade once more, and charged, fiercely.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 44-46: SHE FIGHTS GALAFRONE'S KNIGHTS EN MASSE**

He was joined by Oberto dal Leone,  
And by the mighty King Ballano;  
Then by Hadrian, and Chiarone.  
Those four thus united gainst the foe,

In swift support of King Galafrone.  
Three kings then, and three lords, opposed her so,  
That bold warrior, that glorious maid,  
Lunging at Brandimarte, unafraid.

Like to a wild-boar the mastiffs assail,  
That circles round, while arching its forehead,  
As the pale foam wets its tusks, nor turns tail,  
Its tiny eyes like hot coals, fiery red,  
Its bristles risen, seeking to prevail,  
And swivels, lightning-fast, its fierce head,  
And so, charges the pack, with burst on burst  
Of speed, the nearest hound suffering worst,

So, thus, and not otherwise, the lady  
With many a thrust, and backhanded blow,  
Did battle, most fiercely and cruelly,  
While striking fear in more than one bold foe.  
By now, a large group, of more than thirty,  
Had chosen to attack her, to her woe;  
Many were they, yet she fought ruthlessly,  
And dealt with them, indeed, courageously.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 47-50: RINALDO JOINS HER IN DEFYING THE ATTACKERS**

As he looked on, it seemed to Rinaldo,  
That the lady was wronged, most perversely,  
So, he called out: 'I'll aid you, even though  
I may die for it!' then joined her swiftly.  
This, Marfisa was much comforted to know,  
And in reply called out to him, loudly:  
'Brave knight, though it be but you and I,  
Together the whole world we might defy!'

And with that, the furious warrior-maid  
Advanced, and struck hard at bold Oberto,  
Beating hard on his helm until he swayed;  
Then sent the halves of his shield, at a blow,  
Left and right of his saddle; she delayed  
But a moment, before gripping Ballano  
By his helmet; his prowess was no aid,  
For flat, upon the hard ground, he was laid.

Many a fine deed Amone's son wrought,  
Though I've little to say about those same,  
For of all the opponents that he fought

Bishop Turpin knew not a single name.  
He wounded five in the body, in short,  
And cut away the heads (such is the claim)  
From seven, and sore bruised a dozen more.  
All feared this master of the art of war.

Many another was drawn to the fight;  
More joined, as each passing moment sped by,  
For those behind lacked a view of the knight  
And the wounds those at the front won thereby.  
'You'll not shift us, for we are in the right!'  
'Twas Marfisa who uttered that fierce cry.  
'All my land and fortune I'll leave to you,  
Should you gain a yard, or are like to do!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 51-52: MARFISA'S MEN  
ARRIVE IN SUPPORT**

Now, a strong force swept along the river,  
With the power to bring death and destruction,  
(The broken crown, their queen's insignia,  
Adorned their shields) and then joined the action.  
Marfisa's men were they (and bore her banner)  
In numbers that must change the direction  
Of the contest; they had feared, in the strife,  
Lest she was captured, or might lose her life.

An even fiercer battle then commenced;  
None more savage was to be seen that day.  
For Marfisa hacked and cut, lunged and fenced,  
Whirling round in fury, no more at bay,  
While Rinaldo many a blow dispensed,  
Destroying all those lingering in his way,  
Sending arms and heads flying through the air,  
While his opponents sent up many a prayer.

**BOOK I: CANTO XIX: 53-58: FIORELISA  
SEEKS BRANDIMARTE ON THE FIELD**

Meanwhile bold Iroldo and Prasildo  
Gave an ear, with the fair Fiordelisa,  
(Two miles from the battlefield or so)  
To the serving-maid and squire to Marfisa.  
She informed the three of the ebb and flow  
Of the conflict, and of how, earlier,  
She had watched her lady face many a knight,  
And of how she had performed in that fight.

Fiordelisa, terrified for Brandimarte  
Lest he sought to try Marfisa's skill,  
On hearing this, departed hurriedly,  
And sped to where the knights were fighting still.  
There she found the remnants of an army,  
Retreating now towards the lofty hill  
Where stood the mighty keep; and none were slow  
To fly from the Lord of Montalbano.

But twas Brandimarte alone she sought,  
The others were of no concern to her.  
She roamed about the field till she caught  
Sight of him, apart from every other;  
For he'd quickly withdrawn from where they fought,  
When the fight began, reluctant to suffer  
The shameful sight of a warrior-maiden  
Under attack from so many noblemen.

And had therefore waited, and looked on,  
With oft a crimson stain on his face,  
Though not for himself, but some companion  
Fighting there, he felt the shame and disgrace.  
Yet Fiordelisa he now saw, and, thereupon,  
He hastened to clasp her in his embrace,  
For he had not viewed her for many a day,  
And had thought her lost, and gone astray.

He felt such great and sudden happiness,  
That all else vanished from his mind,  
Forgot Rinaldo, Marfisa no less,  
To the distant battle instantly blind.  
He set aside shield and helm, to caress  
His maid a thousand times; they entwined,  
And kissed and embraced, till, by and by,  
The lovely maid gave a protesting cry.

For she was modest, this Fiordelisa,  
And liked not to be open to display,  
And so, with sweet words, begged her lover,  
To hide a little from the light of day,  
In a glade, upon its grassy cover,  
At the edge of the woods not far away,  
Where, on a bank of violets, they might  
Untouched by war or woe, take their delight.

He agreed and, after riding for a while,  
They halted within a flowering grove,  
On a meadow formed as if to beguile;  
A pretty bower, a many-hued alcove,  
Betwixt two hills; and, through that verdant isle,  
Midst its shade, many a cool stream did rove.  
There, the ardent warrior and his lass  
Swiftly dismounted on the glowing grass.

The maiden, with a sweet gaze, began  
To remove the armour that clad her knight,  
Though she'd a thousand kisses from the man  
Ere a single piece did on the turf alight.  
He embraced her before her pretty plan  
Was complete, impatient at the sight  
Of her loveliness, and, still in his mail,  
He drew her down to the grass, in the dale.

That pair of lovers were entwined so close,  
Not a breath of breeze could pass between.  
Each clasped the other till, you might suppose,  
None could part them (though, indeed, none was seen);  
And how they groaned and sighed, Heaven knows,  
With delight I can't describe, sweet the scene)  
Let them say; they may tell you all the rest,  
Each being of two tongues there possessed.

Their first encounter was as nothing,  
For it all happened with far too much haste.  
But, a second occasion venturing,  
They attained to pleasures that few do taste,  
Till, little by little, gently recovering,  
Sighing with love, they eased the pace,  
And lay there with their faces pressed tight  
Together, breathing mutual delight.

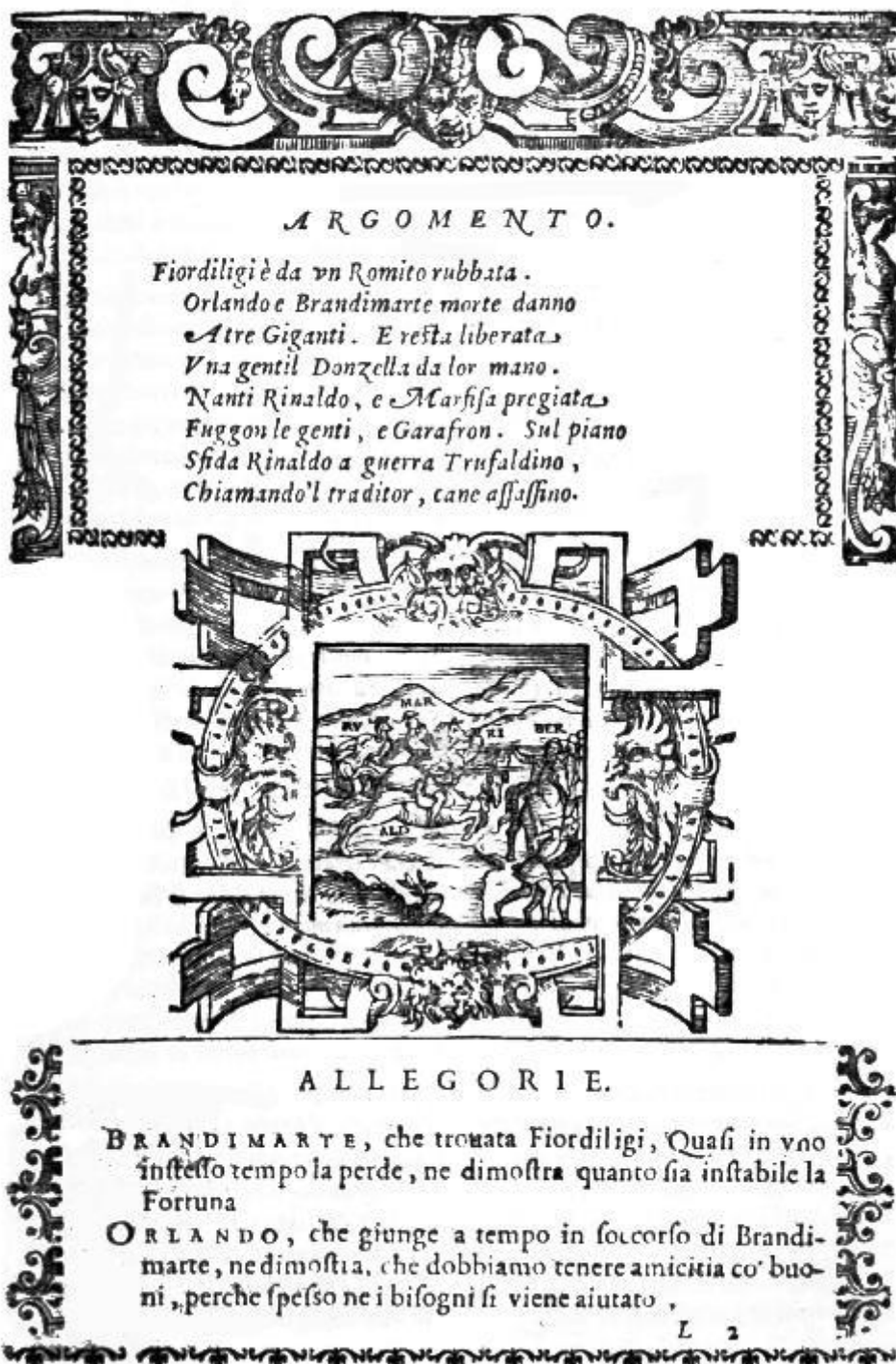
Then they eagerly returned to the dance,  
Before their passion was entirely spent,  
And talked softly afterwards; every glance  
Still of love, though they spoke of past torment,  
The cool streams, in their glittering advance  
O'er the grass, murmuring, as if intent  
On beckoning them to rest, while the breeze  
Stirred the leaves midst the concealing trees.

By a sparkling spring that crossed the meadow  
Brandimarte lay, exhausted from his labour,  
And fell asleep to its babbling, soft and low,  
With those thoughts that a lover's dreams favour,  
While beside the knight lay Fiordelisa, so  
Enamoured not a moment passed by her  
Without her gazing gently on his face,  
Until she too slept, lulled by that fair place.

High on a hill (two, I say, flanked the vale)  
Stood a hermit, and may God grant him ill!  
He did Brandimarte wrong (such the tale)  
All through working his malevolent will.  
Yet this canto's long enough; I'll regale  
You with far more, if you'll but listen still,  
Another day, to my history; till then,  
God preserve you, fair lords and gentlemen.



BOOK I: CANTO XX: BRANDIMARTE AND MARFISA IN ACTION



**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 1-8: FIORDELISA IS  
ABDUCTED BY THE ENCHANTER**

My good lords, I believe you may recall  
The pleasure that the lovers savoured there,  
Where they lay, in that meadow, blind to all  
But the sweet delights that they chose to share  
Beside the fount within that verdant hall,  
While, above, a malign old man did glare,  
From the entrance to his hillside cavern,  
On the shaded grove, below, I mention.

That aged man was a vile enchanter,  
Full of malice and of an evil seed,  
One, of Mohammed's flock, that ever  
Sought to reach true Paradise, such his creed.  
He was learned in herb-lore, and clever  
In the use of powerful gems and, at need,  
Could halt a stream or river in its flight,  
Or move a towering mountain overnight.

Now, while praying to Allah, he had seen,  
Our two lovers dallying within the glade,  
And, while they embraced upon the green,  
He was tempted to watch, his book down-laid.  
There he pondered a means by which, unseen  
By the knight, he might carry off the maid.  
Choosing a powerful root, the enchanter  
Sped down the hill, to their hidden arbour.

The innate virtue of that root (culled fresh)  
Was to render a person unconscious  
When it was touched to the naked flesh  
That flesh concealed from the light, among us.  
In its net it would that person enmesh,  
Yet it was harmless if not employed thus;  
For if touched to the head, neck, or hand,  
Twas applied all in vain, you understand.

When the hermit reached the open glade,  
And took a good look at Brandimarte,  
And saw how strong he seemed, and well-made,  
He fell back a dozen feet, fearfully,  
And, regretting being there, sought the shade,  
Unsure of what to do, being cowardly.  
He nonetheless took heart, approached the maid,  
And, lifting her gown, her limbs displayed.

The enchanter scarce dared to breathe, for fear  
Lest the sleeping Brandimarte might stir.  
The maiden's flesh pale marble did appear,  
Polished smooth, or like ivory, all over,  
Now exposed to view, as I've made clear,  
By that evil old man, the false enchanter.  
He bent down, took the root and, by and by,  
Pressed it, silently, to the maiden's thigh.

She was rendered unconscious for an hour  
In this manner, and he, without delay,  
Having the girl now within his power,  
Scooped her up, and went swiftly on his way;  
Climbing the hill, though turning back to scour  
The view, lest Brandimarte might display  
Signs of waking, and then follow in pursuit,  
For he'd not dared to touch him with the root.

The enchanter carried off the maiden,  
And took her deep among the forest trees,  
Long and far enough for her to waken  
With a shock, feeling desperate unease.  
Although it might seem she was forsaken,  
I'll explain (a little later, if you please)  
How she was freed; meanwhile, suddenly,  
The sound of cries awoke Brandimarte.

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 9-11: BRANDIMARTE  
WAKES AND ENCOUNTERS THREE GIANTS**

On opening his eyes, he was horrified,  
For he not only heard those sounds of woe  
But his love was no longer at his side,  
And he thought to die, on finding it so.  
He armed and loosed his steed, and then applied  
The spurs and towards the noise did go,  
For it seemed to him that the cries he heard  
Were hers, without distinguishing a word.

When he arrived, he found three giants there  
With a string of camels, amidst the trail.  
One led a lady with dishevelled hair,  
Seated high upon a beast; sad and pale,  
Was her face, yet the maid seemed young and fair,  
And, from a distance, hearing her wail,  
He thought twas Fiordelisa who did cry  
Begging Allah, above, that she might die.

Brandimarte himself cared not to live  
 If the maiden, whom he thought his, was lost.  
 He vowed to Allah he would ne'er forgive  
 Any harm to her, nor would he count the cost  
 Of a fight; yet if Allah did not give  
 Prompt assistance, when he sought to accost  
 These huge and hideous giants he would die.  
 Now, two, on seeing the knight, gave a cry:

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 12-16: HE ATTACKS THEM,  
 THINKING TO RESCUE FIORDELISA**

'Where go you, wretch! Throw down your useless blade',  
 The pair called loudly, 'or you're like to die!'  
 Brandimarte, angered, no answer made,  
 But attacked them outright, his sword on high.  
 One giant a vast and monstrous club displayed,  
 Strong, iron-bound, and weighty, and let fly,  
 Swinging it fiercely, at Brandimarte,  
 Who, with skill and timing, evaded neatly,

For his courser flew upwards like a bird,  
 While he, untouched, let the club swing by.  
 The other a much greater blow conferred  
 Thinking to strike him dead, but his eye  
 Being in, ere any danger he incurred,  
 He, as he'd done before, soared to the sky;  
 From one side to the other, leapt his steed  
 As if equipped with wings, at lightning speed.

He struck the first giant with his blade,  
 Before he could swing his club again,  
 Slicing away his armour; he displayed  
 A great gash in his thigh, and howled with pain.  
 This giant, fierce, and powerfully made,  
 Was named Oridante, I should explain,  
 While the second was called Ranchiera,  
 Uglier than the first, and crueller.

Ranchiera swung the like club he bore,  
 Across Brandimarte's front, at speed, but found  
 That the latter's mount yet again did soar  
 Through the air, and the blow but met the ground.  
 Oridante's stroke was harder to ignore,  
 For he hit the steed's crupper, with a sound  
 Like a bough cracking, so great was the force  
 Its backbone snapped, and earthwards went the horse.

And yet the valiant knight sprang to his feet,  
 Though his courser lay dead upon the earth.  
 Determined never to concede defeat,  
 He parried and lunged, for all he was worth,  
 And yet was sure a speedy death to meet,  
 Unless Allah to deliverance gave birth  
 For, the giants hemmed him in, by and by,  
 And at the next blow he seemed bound to die.

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 17-22: ORLANDO  
 APPEARS, BRANDIMARTE FIGHTS ORIDANTE**

At that dread moment, Orlando appeared.  
 I've said (I know not if you remember)  
 How he'd entered the forest and had neared  
 That very place, once his duel was over  
 With Agricane; and had eyed those feared  
 Giants, the camels and the maid; moreover,  
 He saw they would soon slay Brandimarte,  
 Whose plight affected him most deeply,

For he'd recognised the knight, in a trice,  
 From the arms, and insignia, he bore,  
 And needed not to gaze upon him twice,  
 Ere he spurred brave Baiardo on to war.  
 Ranchiera, that monstrous well of vice,  
 Perceived the Count and, with a mighty roar,  
 Ran at him while the valiant Brandimarte,  
 As the clamour grew, battled Oridante.

Their contest was much fiercer than before,  
 Progressing in a quite different manner.  
 Oridante's thigh poured blood all the more,  
 While he sought revenge upon the other;  
 Count Orlando, meanwhile, landed a score  
 Of blows on the vicious Ranchiera.  
 The air seemed on fire, the heavens rang,  
 And the forest echoed to their weapons' clang.

The third giant stood there guarding the maid,  
 And the gold they'd stolen by force and guile  
 From a great lord, in a malicious raid,  
 On that place that they called the Distant Isle.  
 Now hear the progress Brandimarte made  
 In his duel with Oridante this while;  
 Since now he was aided by Orlando,  
 He scorned the evil giant's every blow.



Brandimarte's blade struck the monster hard,  
And caught his hip on the left-hand side,  
And sliced the plate that was his stomach-guard,  
And left a gash in his right flank beside  
And travelled through the air another yard.  
Brandimarte, now, swiftly leapt aside,  
As the giant raised his club to the sky,  
Then, roaring, swung it down, from on high.

The knight had, thus, deftly dodged the blow,  
But their confrontation continued still,  
While Oridante, weakened by the flow  
Of fresh blood, sought his enemy to kill,  
And, angered, ignored the wound, although  
His great strength was ebbing, if not his will.  
The knight, with more experience of war,  
Circled round him, cautiously, as before.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XX: 23-30: ORLANDO SLAYS RANCHIERA**

Not far away, there raged the greater fight,  
Between Ranchiera and Orlando.  
The fierce giant swung his club at the knight;  
He, with his gleaming sword, answered the foe.  
The pair fought for hours with all their might  
Each landing, on the other, blow on blow,  
Till bold Ranchiera threw down his shield,  
Raised his club, and his monstrous power revealed.

For, at Orlando, he launched a mighty swing,  
And, had it been despatched with truer aim,  
None could have imagined how the thing  
Could have failed to kill or sorely maim,  
Yet it struck a tree, against the trunk did ring,  
And, from crown to foot, the club split that same,  
Smashed the roots, and was buried in the ground.  
None ever heard so thunderous a sound.

The Count had witnessed the astounding force  
The brute possessed, a power beyond belief;  
Yet he feared only for his valiant horse,  
So, he quit Baiardo, lest he come to grief.  
When Ranchiera saw him thus change course,  
And watched him tread the ground, in brief  
He was joyful. 'Trivigante, be praised!  
He'll not escape me now!' he cried, amazed.

'Before you mount again in that saddle,  
You'll wish you were a thousand miles from here.  
You fool! What counsel makes you seek battle  
On foot? For sheer madness it must appear.  
You hardly reach my waist, e'en astraddle  
Your horse, you ugly dwarf, one now, I fear,  
With my foot in your face, fated to fly  
Above the earth, a hundred yards on high!'

Thus, he spoke to Orlando, arrogantly,  
Who answered not a word, but swung his blade,  
And cut away the other's armour, slowly,  
Piece by piece, all he could reach, as he made  
Attack upon attack, and pressed him closely.  
One swung his club, the other man displayed  
Durindana's worth, though both, constrained,  
Could do little and scarce a wound sustained.

The giant towered high above Orlando,  
Whose head, indeed, but reached the other's waist;  
Yet the Count was far braver, even so,  
(None sell courage by the yard!) for he faced  
The giant, and then grasped his massive foe;  
On the other's haunches, his hands he placed,  
Gripped hard, and raised the giant in the air,  
Seeking to change the odds in that affair.

He held him high above his chest, and squeezed  
So tightly that he broke both plate and mail.  
His eyes seemed fiery coals; as he pleased,  
He swung the giant round (so runs the tale)  
And then letting go, as swiftly as he'd seized  
That monstrous form, allowed the giant to sail  
Through the air, and then strike the ground like lead.  
Ranchiera simply lay there, as if dead.

The giant wore a sturdy helm while he warred,  
But that was small defence against the knight.  
He swung the pommel of his mighty sword,  
And shattered both the helm and skull outright;  
From mouth and nose, the blood and brains now  
poured.  
Two souls departed for infernal night,  
For Oridante, enfeebled, soon fell,  
And his blood served the pool of gore to swell.

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 31-34: THE THIRD GIANT,  
MARFUSTO, FELS BRANDIMARTE**

Brandimarte severed head from body,  
And left the corpse lying on the ground,  
Then hastened to the Count eagerly,  
To thank him, for a true help he had found.  
The third giant (the fiercest one was he,  
And was named Marfusto) now swung around,  
And left the maiden, to attack the pair,  
Brandimarte asked to lead this affair.

Marfusto cried: 'Though it be Allah's wish  
That you survive, you'll soon grace the pot.  
I'll simply gut your comrade like a fish,  
Then trim you like a gelding; tis your lot  
To die; hand me your sword; a tasty dish  
You'll make, indeed, whether you fight or not;  
Though if you do, I'll roast you o'er the fire  
When I've caught you, and eat you both, entire'

Brandimarte to this gave no reply,  
But advanced upon him boldly, sword in hand,  
Behind his solid targe, upraised on high,  
That defence and attack he might command.  
Marfusto's swinging club fell from the sky  
And, where he'd aimed it, the weapon did land;  
His two-handed blow struck the warrior's shield,  
Destroyed his helm, and half his head revealed.

Brandimarte, shaken, dropped to the ground,  
And from his ruined visor blood ran down.  
The Count sobbed aloud, and made a bound,  
(On viewing Brandimarte's blood-stained crown)  
Towards the giant, once his voice he'd found:  
'Villainous wretch,' he cried, 'I'll see you drown  
In Hell's fiery stream, for the wrong done here;  
Death in this world; the flames below, that sear!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 35-37: BUT IS SLAIN BY  
ORLANDO, WHO REVIVES THE KNIGHT**

Shouting aloud, he ran towards the foe,  
Drew Durindana, and gripped his shield tight,  
The giant seeing his face and features glow  
His eyes afire, his angry brow alight,  
Gazed upon him, filled with fear and woe,

Then turned his back and fled from the knight,  
But Orlando swiftly caught him as he ran,  
And with his weapon disembowelled the man.

In a moment the monstrous giant was dead,  
The hot blood pouring from him to the ground.  
Let us leave the villain there, and turn, instead,  
To the Count who, hastening to him, had found  
That Brandimarte lived; he bathed his head,  
Splashed his face, till the warrior came round,  
And his colour returned that thence had fled,  
And his mind was quite clear, and naught to dread.

I'll tell you later how the captive maid  
Tended that knight, once free, and in what way;  
For he sought death, being sore dismayed  
In thinking Fiordelisa lost that day.  
Now, I'll turn to the tale, from which I strayed,  
Of Marfisa, embroiled yet in the affray,  
Leading Rinaldo, and the forces with her,  
Slaying Galafrone's men, beside the river.

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 38-42: MARFISA ROUTS  
GALAFRONE'S ARMY**

The Drada swollen, ran with blood that day,  
Its banks filled with those who fled, in pain,  
Before Marfisa's fury; every bay  
Trampled by horses; while, far o'er the plain,  
She scoured the field, clearing a bloody way  
Before her steed; King Galafrone's bane  
Was she, cleaving a space around, in ire,  
As through the bone-dry stubble speeds the fire.

Elsewhere Amone's brave son, Rinaldo,  
Struck down those wretched fugitives, at will,  
Seeking to escape from this deadly foe,  
Alone; in groups; like swallows from the kill,  
When the falcon stoops on its prey below.  
Galafrone led the flight towards the hill,  
With Hadrian, Antifor, Ballano,  
Spurring on to the keep, beside Oberto.

I know not why they all lost heart and fled,  
But twas a rout indeed; Astolfo too,  
That, in such situations, kept his head,  
Was among the first to disappear from view.

Chiarone turned his back, and well-nigh led  
The charge to safety, eager to pursue  
The coward's course with many another,  
Till they reached the gate, and there found cover.

Those lord and knights entered, in a throng,  
Then the drawbridge was raised, while the rest,  
The stragglers, fierce Marfisa rode among,  
And slew by the moat, her anger expressed  
That Galafrone, who had done her wrong,  
Had yet escaped her; fury swelled her chest.  
The king had fled and gained the fortress wall,  
Ere the bridge was raised, safe there from the maul;

And so, she circled round the citadel,  
Threatening to raze the place to the ground,  
Calling out that she'd send them all to Hell;  
Scarce worth her blade, mere cowards there were found.  
Many another scornful cry, as well,  
Came from her lips, yet, when nary a sound  
Was uttered in reply, she turned again,  
And rode down from the gate in deep disdain.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XX: 43-49: RINALDO AGREES TO DEFEAT TRUFFALDINO**

Reaching the plain, she spoke to Rinaldo:  
'Sir knight, within these lofty walls, there dwells  
A vicious and depraved witch, my foe,  
Versed in enchantments and evil spells.  
And a wicked traitor lies within, also,  
Whose deceits and crimes know no parallels;  
One whose very existence brings men woe,  
And that villain's name is Truffaldino.

The maid is called Angelica though she  
Is ill-described in bearing such a name,  
For she's lacking in faith and piety.  
My intent is that neither of those same,  
Neither Truffaldino nor this vile lady  
That safety behind those walls do claim,  
Shall escape my wrath; for I'll take that keep,  
Then all the world to war I'll stir from sleep.

First Gradasso I'll defeat, he is the king  
Of that great land they call Sericana;  
Then Agricane to his death I'll bring,

Who is the lord of Tartary; the other  
Will lead to my westwards journeying,  
For, in France, Charlemagne, the emperor,  
I shall seek; and not remove plate or mail  
Till over those three rulers I prevail.

For I've sworn an oath, by Trivigante,  
Never to doff this, my armour, till I  
Have captured every land, every country,  
Every town and castle that meets my eye.  
Come, promise to be of my company,  
Or speak your farewells, and pass on by;  
For I tell you, most clearly and plainly,  
He must be my foe that fails to aid me.'

Thus, Rinaldo learned he'd found Angelica,  
And the worthless traitor Truffaldino,  
And, truly, there were none that he'd rather  
Have within his power; the last was his foe  
And, as for the lady (Heaven scorn her!)  
She was but a cause of grief and sorrow.  
It was true indeed that he had loved her,  
But twas mere enchantment caused that error.

You know the way of it, and the manner,  
So, I've no need to tell it all again.  
The knight said, in reply to Marfisa:  
'I'm well-content to follow in your train,  
And fight neath your ensign and your banner,  
Till Truffaldino's capture we obtain;  
But to no other action I'll consent  
Till time and place both match my own intent.'

This agreed, Marfisa ordered her men,  
To make camp, and attempt no more that day.  
Naught occurred, till the next dawn broke, but then  
Rinaldo armed himself for the affray,  
And blew upon his horn, loud and often,  
Calling Truffaldino from where he lay,  
To answer the charge that he was ever  
A renegade; a vile, worthless traitor.

When Truffaldino heard the war-horn sound,  
Summoning him to battle there below,  
He left the battlements, and swiftly found  
The knights; his champions against the foe;  
Reminding them that they were honour bound

To defend him (his face was full of woe,  
And somewhat pale) for they'd sworn, one and all,  
To do so, ere he'd let them pass the wall.

**BOOK I: CANTO XX: 52-55: TORINDO LEAVES  
THE KEEP AND JOINS THEM**

Angelica was with Galafrone,  
In council, discussing Sacripante,  
And brave Torindo, as to whether she  
Should release the pair from captivity.  
All the arguments were heard, and every  
Knight and lord there was minded to agree  
That they should be freed, allowed to go,  
Whether or not they'd serve Truffaldino.

The matter was then resolved in this way:  
That Angelica would address the two.  
Sacripante, who had loved her alway,  
Consented to all she'd have him do,  
But Torindo, the bold Turk, he said nay.  
Nonetheless, since to their word they held true,  
He was told to leave the fortress, swiftly,  
Lest he prove a threat to them, once free,

And to ensure that dissent might not grow,  
Was instructed he must arm on the plain.  
So, loudly threatening Truffaldino,  
(A disloyal wretch, he would e'er maintain)  
They watched the departure of Torindo.  
He hastened down the slope, and was fain  
To bite his thumb and to swear, by Allah,  
He'd repay that miserable traitor.

He joined Marfisa's camp and, angrily,  
Related how they'd forced him to concede.  
But swore to her that, by Trivigante,  
He'd make Angelica repent the deed.  
He'd been held in close captivity,  
Though he'd risked his life for her, at need,  
And his only reward was now to find her  
Granting her vile betrayer shelter!

Torindo spoke of this with Marfisa  
Then armed himself, promising his aid,  
While Rinaldo yet challenged the other,  
Taunting Truffaldino, the base renegade.  
And now the evil battle drew closer,  
In which Rinaldo suffered, neath the blade,  
Which granted him much distress and woe,  
As you'll hear, in the very next canto.



BOOK I: CANTO XXI: LEODILLA'S TALE



ARGOMENTO.

Rinaldo atterra Oberto dal Leone,  
E dietro a lui il franco Re Adriano,  
Combatte poscia col gentil Grifone,  
Narra la donna a Brandimarte il strano  
Modo, che Folderico il mal Vecchione  
Tenne coi Pomi d'or, che rese vano  
L'amor del biondo Orlando. Ogn'vn si parte  
Per l'amata trouar di Brandimarte. 24



ALLEGORIE.

ICAMPIONI, che mal volentieri si mettevano a combattere per Trufaldino, è la coscienza, che del mal far ne rimorde, esortandoci à buone operationi.

IL modo con che Folderico ingannò la Donzella l'hebbe per moglie, ci dimostra, che spesso con astutia si acquista quello, che in altro modo non si potrebbe hauere.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 1-6: RINALDO  
CHALLENGES THE KNIGHTS DEFENDING THE  
KEEP**

As I related, in my previous canto,  
I left Rinaldo seated on his steed,  
Challenging that vile king, Truffaldino.  
He shouted many an insult indeed,  
At the canto's end; so, did that fierce foe,  
Sacripante who had lately been freed;  
Though, having refused to serve the king,  
He had then been forced into fleeing.

Now bold Rinaldo blew his horn once more,  
And shouted, as the echoes did resound:  
'You champions, who thus attempt to shore  
The defences of a traitor, choose your ground;  
For, hear this, lords; tis chivalry's true law,  
And in every true heart it should resound:  
Those who fail to punish crimes of treason,  
Are but accomplices; it stands to reason

That those who should do so, but do not  
Share the fault; for every nobleman  
Is obliged by chivalry (tis his true lot)  
To oppose it, while each true gentleman,  
Should ne'er allow the law to be forgot,  
And should avenge such evils if he can.  
Yet you disdain this same, for you are free  
Of all honour, shame, and nobility.

How dare you house a vile assassin so;  
A false dog, a devil cursed of Allah?  
I mean Baghdad's King Truffaldino,  
An ill-conceived and murderous traitor.  
Hear me, both great and small; come, view your foe,  
While I challenge you to take the field, and suffer  
For I wait upon you here, sword in hand,  
To prove you villains, should you flee or stand.'

With these and other threats, Amone's son  
Menaced the knights aiding Truffaldino.  
They scanned each other's faces, every one  
Smarting at that message from Rinaldo,  
Aware of the course they were launched upon,  
In supporting one who should be their foe,  
For they themselves thought that king a traitor,  
Unjust and evil; in no way their master.

But the promise they had made, the sworn vow  
Forced them to issue, armed, from the gate,  
And though brave men, and difficult to cow,  
Who for honour would embrace any fate,  
They were fearful of the consequences now,  
And not a knight but feared to contemplate  
An encounter with the furious Rinaldo,  
And felt his flesh grow cold, from head to toe.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 7-12: GRIFONE AND  
AQUILANTE ATTEMPT TO DETER RINALDO**

Six knights now issued from the keep, slowly,  
And descended from the cliff to the plain:  
Grifone, his brother Aquilante,  
(Enchanted steeds and armour had those twain)  
Hadrian, Oberto, Chiarone,  
With the vile Truffaldino in their train.  
Once they had reached the open ground below,  
Grifone acknowledged Lord Rinaldo,

Then turned to speak with Aquilante:  
'Brother, there's the Lord of Montalbano.  
Twould be a wise deed, so it seems to me,  
To address him sweetly, not as a foe,  
And find if we might end this peacefully.  
For it troubles me to fight with Rinaldo,  
If I'm truthful; our cause is less than strong,  
And tis ill to contend when in the wrong.'

'I was unsure if it were he,' said Aquilante,  
'For the steed he rides is not Baiardo,  
But, indeed, it is that warrior, and we  
Should approach as you say, not as the foe,  
But as friends, and speak most courteously  
And seek peace, an end to conflict and woe.  
Talk to him then, as it seems meet to you,  
Whether truce or not, peace or war, ensue.'

They rode on as they talked, in this manner,  
And met Rinaldo, and greeted the knight,  
And went aside, after this first encounter,  
To discuss the reason why they must fight,  
The what, why, and wherefore, of the matter,  
But the conversation brought scant delight,  
Since they could establish no clear reason  
Why their promises they should abandon.

Though of Mongrana and Chiaramonte,  
Two noble clans, and by blood related,  
Now, for others, and for causes wholly  
Alien to them, these three seemed fated  
To meet but to die. Now, courteously,  
Yet boldly, Grifone their case stated:  
'Ah, sir knight, twill be a sorry matter  
Should you defy us all in this manner;

For seven knights, and all of high renown,  
All praised in battle, are sworn to defend  
That Truffaldino, who yet wears a crown;  
And so are bound to do so till the end.  
Dear cousin, you see my troubled frown,  
It shows my thoughts; your death I apprehend,  
Slain in the field, for upon you we shall fall,  
One by one; nor can one man counter all.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 13-15: HE REJECTS THEIR ATTEMPT**

Rinaldo replied: 'Upon my honour,  
To fight with you weighs heavily with me;  
I say that not out of fear, however,  
For, indeed, I'll unseat you, readily.  
Since you all appear so proud in manner,  
Fit to challenge all the world, as I see,  
There's naught to wonder at, gentlemen,  
Should I seek to fight a mere seven men!

Yet we spend too long here, in vain debate;  
I'd rather not linger in full armour.  
All who fight for Truffaldino, I state,  
Have earned my defiance. On your honour,  
Take the field, and I'll surely demonstrate,  
Ere the sun moves from that hill, moreover,  
As I overcome you all, knight by knight,  
That tis you who assail the just and right.'

With this, he wheeled Rabicano around,  
And withdrew to a distance, head held high,  
Then turned and, having chosen his ground,  
Halted, lance in hand, their cause to defy.  
His opponents now saw that they were bound  
To fight, and blood their swords neath the sky,  
Rinaldo having closed his mind to aught  
But the battle, to which they now gave thought:

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 16-19: THEN DISPOSES OF OBERTO**

Since twas shameful for all to charge together:  
Oberto dal Leone would go first;  
King Hadrian would then make another  
If Oberto, in attacking, had the worst  
Of the joust; Grifone; then, his brother,  
That the former's loss might be reversed;  
And, if all that failed, their one and only  
Recourse would be the brave Chiarone.

The mighty Oberto, in swift advance,  
(No worthier knight could there be)  
Spurred his great courser, and gripped his lance.  
No joust was ever run so furiously,  
For never had two of such arrogance,  
Though to despatch each other so swiftly.  
They met, yet gained but slight advantage so,  
Though what there was accrued to Rinaldo.

Each returned, with a bared, flickering, blade,  
Like two snakes resolved that one should die,  
Striking desperately, strength and skill displayed  
In attack, landing great blows from on high.  
Deep slashes in each other's plate they made,  
Their shields split, their breastplates all awry;  
Though Rinaldo's abilities were such  
He gained ground with every single touch,

And, while dealing many a potent blow,  
Awaited a clear opportunity,  
And when he saw an error from Oberto  
Struck him on the helm, viciously.  
Fusberta shattered the visor below  
And the cheek-plates, and smote him cruelly  
In the face, with such measureless force,  
The dazed Oberto was swept from his horse.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 20-21: AND KING HADRIAN**

At this, King Hadrian made his advance,  
Having waited, fully armed, to bring aid,  
And, bearing his vast and weighty lance,  
Not a sign of hesitation now betrayed.  
Bold Rinaldo, lance-less through happenstance,

Could only respond with his naked blade,  
Yet revealed no inclination to yield,  
And took the blow on the boss of his shield.

Hadrian's spear sent splinters to the sky,  
While Rinaldo held fast like solid rock.  
They both turned and re-engaged, by and by,  
And sped together; while, stunned by the shock  
As the two coursers met, at chest and thigh,  
The king's steed fell, like a leaden block.  
Then Grifone, who was next in the field,  
Sallied forth to the fray with sword and shield,

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 22-30: GRIFONE IS THE NEXT TO FIGHT RINALDO**

The renowned Grifone chose not to bear  
A lance, ashamed indeed to join the fight,  
Thinking Rinaldo tired beyond compare;  
Yet he gripped his trenchant sword good and tight.  
His arms and steed were enchanted, the pair,  
Nor was he possessed by doubt, that knight,  
Except in knowing he would surely kill  
The brave Rinaldo, counter to his will.

So, he implored that lord to end the war.  
Rinaldo simply cried: 'Preach not to me!  
Defend yourself, or trouble me no more;  
Turn your steed instead, dear cousin and flee!  
Grifone, aflame, angered to the core,  
His eyes blazing, spurred on, furiously,  
Crying loudly: 'I never turn and fly;  
Nay, for that show of scorn, I'll see you die!'

With this he fiercely attacked Rinaldo  
And struck him so fiercely that the knight,  
Knew not, momentarily, if twere day or no,  
Or if twas the moon or sun glared so bright.  
'More than a white horse, against the foe,  
And fine armour you need for a fight,'  
Cried Rinaldo, 'you need the swordsman's art,  
A modicum of strength, and a brave heart!'

But Grifone, taunted by the warrior,  
Riled, beyond measure, by his sheer disdain,  
Gripped his sword, with both hands clasped together,  
And struck the other's shining helm again.

Though he could scarcely harm its armour,  
(For twas charmed, as you've heard me explain)  
The falling blade stunned the brave Rinaldo  
And rattled his brains, so harsh was the blow.

Yet Grifone paused not, but swung once more,  
More viciously than ever, and the knight  
Felt a sharper pain than he had done before,  
As the helm's crest was torn away outright.  
'I'll show you,' cried Grifone, 'you sad boor,  
'If I own naught but a white horse; now fight  
And find if I've strength and courage, or no!  
While the other, for an instant, bowed low.

That third blow had proved even fiercer,  
Was so swiftly dealt, and so venomous,  
Rinaldo had scarcely felt a greater;  
Nor could evade it, twas so furious.  
Yet as the Lord willed (the true Creator)  
It had struck that helm, charmed and wondrous,  
And if the binding spell had proved less strong,  
That brave contest would scarce have lasted long,

For Grifone would have sliced the helm away,  
Yet its steel had withstood his mighty blow,  
Though he was angered more than one can say.  
He'd never been more riled, yet, even so,  
Conceive Rinaldo's ire: he'd make him pay  
For those three knocks; he glared hard at his foe.  
Not Etna nor Vesuvius e'er burned hotter  
Than Montalbano's lord, while the warrior

Seemed to send from his lips a storm, a gale,  
And his eyes were like wells of glittering flame.  
He gripped Fusberta, of both hands did avail  
Himself, and the next bold stroke did claim,  
So great that seven thicknesses of mail,  
Could, I vow, scarcely have defied that same,  
Yet his enchanted armour was so strong  
It saved Grifone's life, though all along

His charger's neck he hung, while Rinaldo,  
Struck at him time and again, violently,  
Ere he recovered his wits; blow on blow,  
Landed on the stunned and mazed Grifone.  
Yet the young lord was fit and strong, and so,  
Soon regained his senses, rising swiftly,



And, furnished with such armour, taking heart,  
Gave a fresh display of the swordsman's art.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 31-36: THEY EACH SEEK  
AID FROM ON HIGH**

They commenced so furious a duel there,  
None other was as cruel; yet neither man  
Sought to rest, or appeared to give a care,  
Fighting fiercely from the moment it began.  
Their faces were inflamed, while both did share  
A wrath that rendered vain the slightest plan.  
A looker-on, as the swords rose higher,  
Might have thought the pair of knights wreathed in fire,

Nor advantage to either would have seen,  
Though Grifone wore the finer armour.  
The unending conflict was still as keen,  
Though a good five hours had passed, or longer.  
Rinaldo cried: 'O Christ above, serene,  
I, here, defend the right, by my honour;  
Let me not be forced to make amends, now,  
For past sins; but a moment's grace, allow.

That my present cause is just, Lord, you know,  
For you view the truth of every matter.  
Grifone fights for a Muslim here, while I,  
A Christian, seek to end that traitor.  
The evil king he defends, I defy;  
The man is cruel and inhuman ever.  
Show, Heaven's King, to this poor knight  
That you e'er defend justice and the right.'

So, Rinaldo prayed, while bold Grifone,  
Who never paused a moment from the fray,  
Looked to the skies, and spoke devotedly:  
'O Virgin, Heaven's noble Queen, I pray  
Look down upon a sinner, and have pity;  
Disdain not my worthless soul, this day.  
For though my errors I can scarcely hide,  
In this, I claim, the right lies on my side.

For I sought only peace with Rinaldo,  
While he has used me but scornfully.  
I like not this ill contest, here below;  
Against my will, I fight; his villainy,  
His scornful words, his vast pride have so

Riled me he himself provokes this folly.  
Ah, I long, Lady, for your aid indeed,  
You that succour bring to all in need.'

Thus did those brave warriors, as they fought,  
Lift up their heads, devotedly, to pray,  
While their glittering blades stopped for naught,  
As they fiercely set blow on blow in play.  
Neither showed an ounce of fear, but sought,  
Being skilful and bold, to win the day,  
For each with lance and sword, on horse  
Or foot, was equal to the other's force.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 37-42: WE RETURN TO  
BRANDIMARTE, WHO IS HEALED BY THE  
MAIDEN**

But the end of that furious tourney  
I'll wait, till a later time, to relate,  
For of Orlando and Brandimarte  
I would speak, that, from an evil fate,  
Had bravely rescued the captive lady,  
Slaying those three giants, at the forest gate.  
No doubt tis still fresh in your memory.  
So let me, now, advance their history.

Brandimarte lay there in the meadow,  
As I told you; all bloody from the fight.  
His shield shattered, from Marfusto's blow,  
And his helm in pieces. That gracious knight,  
Orlando, took him in his arms, in woe,  
Feeling pity for him in his sorry plight,  
While from the camel's back the lady  
Soon descended, and then hastened, swiftly,

To the spring amidst the flowery field,  
Cupped her hands, and brought a little water  
From its depths, her gratitude so revealed,  
And o'er the knight's face the drops did scatter,  
To revive him; then, that he might be healed,  
She told the Count a fresh herb she must gather.  
That she'd seen not far behind; twas a cure,  
That would his body, and his spirit, restore.

She started searching, nigh the forest trail,  
Among the trees, that circled them around,  
And it seemed but moments till she did hail

That herb of peerless virtue, which, when found,  
Seemed to gleam like gold; in the daylight, pale,  
While at night it shone gently o'er the ground.  
The flower of this wondrous plant was red,  
Its root like silver, when plucked from its bed.

Now the knight's head was wounded by a blow,  
As you have heard, but, in the wound, the maid  
Placed the herb and sealed it above, below,  
Her fingers o'er the gash the blow had made.  
At once it healed, with not a scar to show,  
As if he'd ne'er been touched by the blade.  
When he came to, and his mind grew clear,  
Brandimarte asked for her, and she drew near.

'See, here she is, the one,' the Count replied,  
'That, alone, has saved your life,' (he knew not  
Her name or origin) 'who would have died,  
For surely death were otherwise your lot!'  
Yet Brandimarte gazed on her, and sighed,  
For this was not his love, the ne'er-forgot,  
And his heart was filled with such deep distress  
That death itself would have pained him less.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 43-47: HIS COMPLAINT  
AT HAVING LOST FIORELISA**

He turned his tearful gaze upon the sky:  
'Why was I saved, from that mortal blow,  
To suffer a far greater pain, say I?  
Was it not better that I sank below?  
Sad shades, and you souls, death doth deny,  
While yet you suffer living death in woe,  
Take pity on my boundless misery,  
That now must seek your mournful company.

I would not wish to live without her love,  
For she's my only comfort, my delight,  
While, if I live, a thousand deaths I'll prove.  
Harsh Fortune, beholding my sad plight,  
You were wrong the last threat to remove.  
Who will amuse you when I seek the night,  
And end your power by dying? Cruel one,  
Who will you torture then beneath the sun?

'Twas you that took me from my native land,  
For since my youth you have but hated me!  
Snatched from my royal home, out of hand,  
And sold as a slave, to bow in misery.  
I forget my father, I no more command  
My country's name, for naught is left to me,  
But my mother's, that remains in my heart,  
Fixed firm within me by memory's art.

Pitiless Fortune, strange, iniquitous,  
You made me the servant of another,  
Yet seem benign the better to torment us,  
For he was Count of Rocca Silvana;  
And, like a father, kind and generous,  
Granted me freedom, and since he'd never  
Been possessed of a child, made me his heir,  
And left me his castle and possessions, there.

Fortune, that I might think you kind of heart  
You granted me the love of a fair maid;  
Yet, now, take back that gift, split us apart,  
Pain me cruelly, and drive home the blade.  
Deceitful creature, malice fuels your art,  
And though I cannot harm you thus, dismayed,  
Yet for eternity you'll bear the blame,  
As in Hell I weep, whom you wound and maim.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 48-53: THE MAIDEN,  
LEODILLA, TELLS HER OWN STORY**

So, he spoke, and so mourned, tis my belief,  
That the very stones could have wept for pity.  
Orlando too felt a nigh boundless grief,  
While the maiden, in human sympathy,  
Hoping to bring him comfort and relief,  
Said, gently: 'I feel for your misery,  
And ought, indeed, to display compassion,  
For I too grieve, and for a valid reason.

I would have you know, many another  
Must learn to bear such strange shifts of fortune.  
The King of the Distant Isle, my father,  
Gathers earthly treasure, late and soon.  
His hands are so full of gold and silver  
That none has a greater hoard, neath the moon.  
Nor does the sun view riches like to his,  
And I was the sole heiress to all this.

But none, in this sad world, can e'er divine  
What will best bring them true happiness.  
I was fair, and joyful, endless wealth was mine,  
And I was the daughter of a king, no less;  
Yet all my troubles, by some dark design,  
Stem from those riches, all my sore distress.  
Learn, if you can, from all the ills they bred,  
To count no mortal happy till they're dead.

It seems that the rumour lately spread abroad,  
That my father had a daughter most fair,  
And she was heiress to his golden hoard;  
The news brought two ardent suitors there,  
(Whether true or false, they were in accord;  
I was lovely) one sixty, old and spare,  
And that lover's name was Folderico,  
The other young, blonde, handsome: Ordauro.

Each was wealthy, and both of noble blood,  
But Folderico was thought to be wise,  
So subtle an augur that he understood  
The heavens, like a god in human guise.  
Ordauro was more manly, for he stood  
Tall, was strong of limb, fine, to my eyes.  
I spurned advice, rejected Reason's plan;  
I scorned the old, and chose the younger man.

The choice was not mine alone, however,  
And modesty reigned-in my fond desire,  
A party to the matter was my father,  
And, therefore, I restrained my inner fire,  
Certain that his mind, though, I could alter,  
And obtain consent from my loving sire.  
Ordauro would be mine, such I believed,  
Yet found my expectation was deceived.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 54-60: SHE DEMANDS A FOOTRACE AS A TEST FOR HER SUITORS**

The proverb in ancient times ran like this:  
That women e'er by cunning get their way.  
King Solomon says it in that book of his,  
Although tis surely not so in our day.  
Once my hopes were gone, my dreams of bliss,  
I learned, to my regret and deep dismay,  
That trusting in my cunning brought but pain,  
Losing both what I had and wished to gain.

For, ensuring my eyes looked red and sore,  
Adding tears to my seeming modesty,  
Speaking sadly, to rouse pity the more,  
I knelt before my father, pleadingly.  
"Sire," I said, if obedient to your law,  
As your daughter, I've ever bowed humbly  
To your will, which I set above my own,  
Grant me a gift, and let my fate be shown

By this sole trial: I'll only wed a suitor  
That has raced against, and beaten, me,  
And that man must be the swiftest runner,  
And let this be confirmed by your decree;  
Any I defeat must die, however,  
Every loser must pay the penalty.  
And let this be proclaimed as your command;  
He that races not must forego my hand."

Though the trial I set seemed harsh and cruel,  
My father yielded to me, nonetheless,  
And had the terms proclaimed, which were dual:  
The price of failure, and the prize for success.  
I was overjoyed, confident that in a duel,  
With any man, I would win the race (or, yes,  
Engineer the right result) for indeed  
Few living things could match me then, for speed.

I remember how I'd chase and catch a deer,  
And many another wild, or tame, creature,  
This was near our city of Damogir;  
As to running, I was blessed by Nature.  
Ordauro sought to race it would appear,  
Yet it seemed also Folderico's pleasure  
To compete, though the man was old and grey.  
While the other had an angel's face, I say.

Imagine, knight, how such a one could gain  
A young maiden's amorous attention.  
The young man occupied my thoughts, tis plain,  
While the older man I scorned to mention.  
The day came round; the one who proved my bane,  
Yet roused no feelings of apprehension,  
Arrived in time; he, on a mule, did ride,  
With a weighty purse hanging at his side.

The youth appeared in festive dress upon  
A courser he had decked out all in gold,  
And jumped to earth, all ready to be gone  
On his mission, his manner proud, and bold.  
Fingers were pointed at the other one,  
They cried: "He's lost his head, he's far too old,  
His cleverness won't help him here, he'll find.  
He may be wise, but love has mazed his mind."

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 61-64: FOLDERICO  
DEPLOYS GOLDEN APPLES**

We rode to a field beyond the city  
To race o'er the course, and Folderico  
Was wearing his ridiculous and weighty  
Purse, though the reason for it none did know.  
We reviewed the terms, summarily,  
Of our contest; we were agreed, and so  
We stood upon our marks, silently,  
While all there awaited a count of three.

Came the signal, and we three raced away,  
Folderico out in front while, lingering, I  
Was bent on teasing him, as if in play;  
But he, when I thought to pass him by,  
Took a golden apple, wrought to delay  
Me, from that purse of his, and off did fly,  
While I, enchanted by the precious fruit,  
Chased after it, abandoning my pursuit.

The sight of that metal is so tempting  
That it leads astray most of humankind.  
The bright polished apple swiftly rolling,  
Once I'd caught it, I was further behind.  
Yet when I drew near, and was closing,  
A finer apple he threw, and I, still blind  
To the consequences, chased it, once more  
Falling back, though he was tiring, for sure.

I reached him as we neared the winning post,  
Of that wearying, that exhausting race.  
We could see the finish, that a tent did boast  
Where we could rest; I was in second place;  
Ordauro, whom he'd tripped, seemed almost  
Beyond contention. So, I upped my pace,  
Determined not to swerve for glittering gold,  
Loathing the thought of wedding one so old.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 65-66: AND IN CHASING  
THEM LEODILLA LOSES THE RACE**

'Twas Ordauro I had hoped to run beside  
And then, falling back, allow the youth to win.  
Let that other have a view of my backside,  
That evil grey-haired brute; twould be a sin  
To marry such; I longed to be the bride  
Of sweet youth, and yet, much to my chagrin,  
Not a chance in a thousand years would see  
Him reach us, ere I snatched the victory.

All this was in my heart, as I raced on,  
And had almost passed that treacherous beast,  
When a third apple, finer still, now shone  
In his hand, for the race had nearly ceased.  
It tempted me (the youth passed by anon);  
I chased it while the others' lead increased,  
And, from pursuing that orb, was too slow  
To o'er-take the winner, Folderico.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 67-69: SHE DETERMINES  
TO CUCKOLD FOLDERICO**

Breathing hard, the old man reached the tent  
Where his retainers joyed at his success,  
While the others, who mocked my discontent,  
Cried: "The wily fox cunning doth possess."  
I wept blood in anger, my hair I rent,  
How I cursed that vile monster you can guess,  
Yet I swore, in my heart: "Let him gloat;  
If he's a fox I'll change him to a goat,

For no knight at tourney was ever seen  
To sport a helmet crest so great and tall  
As the horns I'll crown with him, I ween,  
And I'll ensure they're visible to all.  
He'll spend his time wondering where I've been,  
His precautions will fail, his food be gall,  
For, though on every finger he'd an eye,  
He'd still be deceived; I'll make him sigh!"

I made my plan and that same did effect...  
Yet I perceive other thoughts you pursue,  
For you both betray a troubled aspect,  
And your gaze wanders; I'll defer to you,  
And so, follow where you lead, though expect

Me still my sad history to pursue,  
If it pleases you to hear it. Come, ride on,  
For I shall prove a brave companion.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXI: 70-71: THE THREE  
COMPANIONS GO IN SEARCH OF FIORELISA**

Brandimarte answered her: 'My fear  
Regarding the fate of my fair lady,  
Has distracted me so, it may appear  
That you've lost my attention completely.  
I but wish to search for her, far and near,  
'Tis as if my heart were lost; so badly,  
I feel this long delay, in pain and dread,  
Though I heard nigh every word that you said.'

The three agreed to seek Fiordelisa,  
In the forest, and swore they'd never rest,  
Till they had found the truth of the matter.  
They rode on, and a leafy way addressed  
That passed amidst the dark woodland cover,  
Deep, and dense, and by tangled boughs oppressed.  
They listened to her tale, as they did go,  
Which I'll give, in the very next canto.



BOOK I: CANTO XXII: THE TWIN SISTERS

ARGOMENTO.

Da vn Leon morto è il Romito, che rubbata  
 N. porta Fiordiligi: E poi captiua  
 D'vn seluaggio riman, e a vn Pin legata.  
 Quel che piu teme al mal Vecchione arriuu  
 Che ad altri vede sua donna sposata.  
 L'ha di nuouo egli: e mentre lieto giua  
 Con la vita la perde. Via si parte  
 Seguendo vn uagò Cernuo Brandimarte.



ALLEGORIE.

**I** L Romito, che credendosi goder Fiordiligi riman morto da vn  
 - Leone, ci mostra il frutto, che si caua del mal fare.  
**L** A beffa fatta al Vecchion marito: ci dinota quanto siano scioc-  
 chi quei, che già vecchi col piede nella fossa pigliano moglie  
 giouane.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 1-6: FIORDELISA  
ESCAPES THE HERMIT**

Those three entered upon the sombre trail,  
As I've related and, once amidst the trees,  
Looked, and listened hard, but to no avail,  
For that Fiordelisa, whom (to reprise)  
The wicked hermit had sought to assail.  
He'd used a root, and borne her off with ease,  
Though she had woken, and had begged and prayed,  
And had cried aloud, though in vain, for aid.

Her Brandimarte was nowhere in sight,  
And unable, in truth, to help the maid;  
Instead, he was engaged in fierce fight  
With those two giants in that forest glade,  
Oridante, and Marfusto, while the knight  
Was supported by Orlando, whose aid  
Disposed of Ranchiera, as you know;  
Twas told to you, in a previous canto.

Without succour, therefore, the poor maiden  
Filled all the woods around with her cries,  
And never ceased; while, now and again,  
Beating her lovely face in grievous wise.  
The old hermit, swiftly, sought to attain  
His gloomy cave, afraid lest her allies  
Should follow them, nor thought himself secure  
Till he'd arrived at his dark, stony door.

The treacherous rogue plunged deep within,  
The damsel screaming loudly all the while,  
Till he was sure he could conceal his sin,  
Vent his lust, and the lovely maid defile.  
But a lion had concealed itself, therein,  
(Huge, and fierce, and terrible) meanwhile,  
And when it heard her cries of woe and fear,  
The creature chose that moment to appear.

The hermit met the lion face to face;  
Tis no wonder the fellow was afraid.  
He turned pale, and then exited the place,  
Leaving behind the sad and fearful maid,  
Who believed she must vanish without trace,  
Die of fright, and yet chance came to her aid,  
For the lion left her, to chase the man,  
Pursuing him, though like a deer he ran.

Pouncing, amidst the woods, it gave a roar,  
Then tore the vile enchanter, limb from limb.  
The lady, quite as frightened as before,  
Crept downwards, on a path, dark and dim,  
Along the hill-slope, from the hermit's door,  
Glad to flee from the lion, and from him,  
And pressed onwards until she reached the plain,  
Where she met with a deal of woe again.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 7-8: ONLY TO BE  
CAPTURED BY A SAVAGE**

She encountered a monstrous savage there,  
Huge, with straggling locks, and a long beard,  
All covered from head to toe in hair,  
Naught viler has e'er to maid appeared.  
An enormous wooden shield he did bear,  
And a ponderous mace, that he reared.  
He lacked a man's intellect and speech;  
An accursed thing beyond human reach.

On finding the maiden in the meadow,  
He seized her in his arms, and sped away.  
And, reaching a nearby oak, with willow  
(Cords of twisted bark) tied her, lest she stray.  
Then he listened to the maid's cries of woe,  
As, not far off, upon the grass he lay.  
She wept as she prayed her life be ended,  
Though the savage scarcely comprehended.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 9-11: LEODILLA  
CONTINUES HER TALE**

Let us leave the cries of that helpless maid,  
Who had fallen from one ill to another,  
Tied with willow-cord, in the woodland glade,  
To the oak-tree, mourning her lost lover,  
And let us turn to the trio who now made  
A search of the woods: fair Leodilla,  
Brandimarte and Orlando, those two  
That had saved her from the monstrous crew.

The Count had lifted her to the crupper  
Of his steed, and requested her to tell  
The rest of the tale, as they rode further,  
Whose beginning she'd related so well.  
She gave a little sigh: 'Should you ever

Hear of some trick that was played, to rebel  
Against an aged husband, deem it not  
A mere tale; for tis e'er their rightful lot.

Since I've heard of many a spouse deceived,  
And in many a strange and varied way,  
I've no vestige of shame that I conceived  
A means to trick my husband, on a day.  
No, I'm joyful that I myself achieved  
The like, and that I duped that old and grey  
Husband of mine, and in most subtle guise,  
A man whom all the world considered wise.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 12-19: OF FOLDERICO'S JEALOUSY**

As I've said before, beside the fountain,  
The old fool erred badly, in wedding me.  
I cursed at Fortune and railed at Heaven,  
But he would yet prove the sadder party.  
For he would have grief, and I'd get even;  
Despite all his wisdom he had, clearly,  
No idea what girls may do, what may befall  
Those who should take old wives, or none at all.

He led me home, with solemn courtesy,  
A deal of pomp, and a triumphant air,  
To Altamura's castle; twas the city  
Where he hid away his treasure, and once there,  
Quite consumed, from the first, by jealousy,  
He locked me in the keep, sparse and bare,  
In a chamber far worse than any prison,  
Fearing what, indeed, would shortly happen.

I was held there, deprived of all delight,  
Gazing sadly on the fields and the sea,  
Locked in a turret (and quite out of sight)  
Built on a barren shore, of features free.  
None, unless they had the power of flight,  
Could scale its stony heights, to visit me;  
While its door a path to all but him denied;  
Which a narrow stair led to, on one side.

'Twas encircled by seven rings of stone,  
Each with a single portal, and its door  
Bound with iron bands, and there, alone,  
Surrounded by those walls, and held secure,

I was a prisoner, left to grieve and moan;  
And, of death, night and day, to implore  
An end to my misery and sore distress,  
Hoping for naught but the grave's peacefulness.

With jewels, gold, and such useless treasure  
I was well-provided, and many a needful thing,  
Except the joys of love, and loving pleasure,  
Which I desired far more than wealth may bring.  
The old man was suspicious beyond measure,  
While, at his belt, hung his keys, on a ring;  
So possessed by jealousy, none could conceive  
The depths of it, or such mistrust believe.

On entry to my chamber, he would sweep  
From his outer clothing, in mad jealousy,  
Every insect he'd borne to my stony keep,  
While envying even the smallest flea;  
And sulk all day, if he saw a spider leap,  
Or viewed a fly's descent, and summon me:  
"Is this a male now, or a female fly?  
Say tis the former, for tis born to die."

Though I was prisoned, dogged by suspicion,  
Guarded ever, and without hope of aid,  
Ordauro made it his frequent mission  
To visit the place; about the walls he strayed;  
And tried every means to gain admission  
In secret, to the keep, though e'er dismayed.  
Yet Love, who is ever Hope's faithful friend,  
Fostered his boldness, and new aid did lend.

Now Ordauro was rich in his own right,  
(Brains without riches are not worth a bean).  
With his store of gold, he purchased, outright,  
A palace from which my tower could be seen;  
Less than two miles away, a brief crow's-flight.  
Ask not how Folderico viewed the scene.  
Ever upon that residence he spied,  
More jealous still, and more preoccupied.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 20-23: ORDAURO CONSTRUCTS A TUNNEL**

He was suspicious of the breeze that blew  
From the place where Ordauro was dwelling,  
The very rays of sunlight that shone true,



And with care, and diligence, and cunning,  
He had the walls and doors all sealed anew,  
And never left his fortress, morn or evening;  
And if he saw a cloud, a passing crow,  
Was convinced that it hid bold Ordauro.

Oft, distressed, he'd climb to my chamber,  
And, finding me alone there, would cry:  
"I fear you're rendering me a fool; whoever  
Knows what, or who, to this tower can fly?  
Yet though I feel the hurt and shame, I never  
Dare say a word, and must all things deny,  
For the husband who guards what's his, these days,  
Is called jealous, earning scorn, rarely praise."

Such his words; then he'd walk upon the shore,  
Consumed by his jealousy and anger.  
And, once, to view Ordauro, furthermore,  
He went to his palace, met the other  
And, in conversation, said: "To be sure,  
One early swallow makes not a summer.  
Folk scorn the man who wishes to be wise,  
But the last act repays, and justifies."

And then went away, like things muttering  
Between his teeth, thus showing his disdain.  
Ordauro, though his words seemed threatening,  
Paid no heed, but gave loving thought again  
To his mission, and built a tunnel running  
Deep underground, whereby he might attain  
The tower secretly; and so, one night,  
Crept neath Altamura's walls, hid from sight.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 24-27: THE LOVERS  
ENJOY EACH OTHER**

Though his visit was most unexpected,  
(For I'd known nothing of his secret plan)  
You may believe that he, scarcely rejected,  
Found a warmer welcome than the other man.  
I ever seem to Paradise elected  
Recalling kissing him, how we began  
Our dalliance with loving care and art;  
The sweetness of it still assails my heart.

I say to you now, for it is true,  
That I was yet a virgin, ere that night,  
For old Folderico could nothing do,  
And I was innocent of love's delight.  
He'd deceived me with words, sad and untrue,  
Claiming a kiss on the cheek, poor and slight,  
Or a moment's embrace, was all the joy  
That a lover could expect, or employ.

Now I learned the emptiness of his lies,  
And found a pleasure that enslaved my heart.  
Hand in hand, we attained the loving prize,  
Ordauro strong, and impatient for his part,  
While it seemed strange to me, the surprise  
Of it, like a sour apple at the start,  
To the taste, and yet so sweet in the end,  
That heavenwards I thought I did ascend.

The sweetness of it made me melt and die,  
And, from that moment on, I cared for naught  
But that; let others seek for wealth, say I,  
Or power, or fame, at some great prince's court.  
The wise seek their pleasure, and pass by  
Such things, and live a happiness well-sought.  
Those who sweat for riches find but dross,  
True joy eludes them; and theirs be the loss.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 28-38: LEODILLA  
FEIGNS TO BE HER TWIN SISTER**

Many a time we returned to our sweet game,  
And on each occasion the pleasure grew,  
But trapped in that chamber ever the same,  
I was oft annoyed and troubled anew.  
Too brief the hours of joy; for that I blame  
That cursed fool, jealous through and through,  
Who came so often to converse with me,  
He made my life a constant misery.

In the end Ordauro and I conceived  
A plan, by which we might be together;  
Though he'd not readily be deceived  
That maddening spouse of mine, who was ever  
Haunting the tower, and endlessly believed  
That I might be (as I was) with my lover.  
But Love gave good counsel in the end;  
To loving hearts and minds e'er a friend.

Ordauro sought out old Folderico,  
And asked my spouse to his palace, feigning  
That he was but newly married, and so  
Wished all to feast his bride, while explaining  
That his wife was my sister, he should know.  
The old fool locked the keep, complaining,  
And full of strange dread, he knew not why,  
And went to the marriage feast, by and by.

Before he could arrive, I had hastened  
Through the tunnel, beneath the castle wall,  
And then dressed myself as a newly-wed,  
In the privacy of Ordauro's hall.  
When Folderico to that place was led,  
He gazed at me, and seemed about to fall  
Down dead, and then cried: "As I suspected,  
A vile plot, and yet not unexpected.

You prove a cruel enemy to me,  
That never slew your kinsfolk, nor has burned  
Your castle to the ground; an enemy  
That fills my life with suffering, unearned.  
Oh, Allah, view Folderico's misery!  
Wise men, beware where women are concerned!  
Go hang, at my own cost, all you old men  
That would seek to guard young wives; think again!"

While he was exclaiming, in this manner,  
Fierce with anger, and yet filled with shame,  
Ordauro showed sympathy; however  
He feigned not to understand that same.  
Ho swore by sun and moon I was my sister,  
That, in truth, he felt he could rightly claim  
That, as ever, my good spouse could expect  
From him but honour and, indeed, respect.

Folderico screamed, in desperation:  
"Is this your respect! Is this your honour!  
To lure me here, for a wicked reason,  
Having stolen my wife, my dear treasure,  
The pretext being this fair occasion,  
You liar, base thief, and vicious traitor,  
So, I might plumb the very depths of woe,  
Feel endless shame, and die of sorrow so!"

Ordauro gazed, and feigned astonishment,  
And then said: 'Allah, you who rule the skies,  
Why have you imposed such punishment;  
By maddening a man once thought so wise?  
All sense lost, his wits completely absent,  
It seems he lacks the use of his own eyes!  
Look here, Folderico, this is my wife,  
That you never saw before in all your life.

She is the daughter of King Monodante,  
That rules the Distant Isle (tis far away);  
Perhaps tis her looks have fooled you wholly;  
Your wife and she are perfect twins, they say,  
So alike that their mother failed entirely  
To distinguish them from the very day  
She bore them, nor their father, thereafter,  
Could tell the one from the other daughter.

Go view your own wife, and judge aright,  
Before you further compound your error.  
Tis scarce my fault that you baulk at the sight  
Of my fair wife, or show such unjust anger."  
The old man cried: 'Don't tell me black is white!  
I see well enough. Do I not know her?  
There is my wife; yet I'm no stubborn mule,  
I'll go, but I'll be back; then who's the fool?

If she's not in the tower, why, then I swear  
You'll have not a moment's peace from me.  
For I'll pursue you, vile hound, everywhere;  
By our true God, I'll hunt you, endlessly.  
Yet, if she's there, by Allah, I'll declare  
That I've offended you; do this for me,  
Watch your wife, see she stays in that spot,  
While I go, and prove if she is mine, or not."

### BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 39-43: AND SUCCEEDS IN HOODWINKING FOLDERICO

With that, he sped off towards the tower,  
But I passed underground with greater speed,  
Changed, and waited till he came to my bower,  
Where I sat, head on arms, woeful indeed,  
As if I'd spent a melancholy hour,  
Without him, and to naught else had paid heed.  
When he arrived, he viewed me with wonder,  
And cried: "Allah aid me! What a blunder!

Yet who'd credit such a marvel as this;  
Or believe that Nature possessed such art?  
These sisters are alike, every blemish,  
Is the same, none could tell the two apart.  
In looks, proportion, manner, naught's amiss,  
Yet a strange suspicion still irks my heart,  
For, though there seems but little cause, I fear,  
That the lady there was the one who's here."

I conjure you," he cried, "by every comfort  
That you might hope to have, to tell me true,  
Were you beyond these walls in any sort?  
Did any ope the gate? Who aided you?  
Tell me no lie, nor deceive me in naught;  
You'll earn no punishment where none is due;  
But lie to me, and when I prove them lies,  
A world of tears will greet your sorry eyes."

Now conceive how convincingly I swore,  
By every planet in the skies above.  
Allah smiles at such oaths, for tis his law  
To countenance the sin that's done from love.  
Nor did I hesitate to claim, what's more,  
And on the holy Koran, that I could prove  
That, since I'd been confined in that sad place,  
I'd never ventured forth, nor shown my face.

Folderico, not knowing what to say,  
Locked all the doors and returned again,  
The while I sallied forth, without delay,  
And passed through the tunnel, to maintain  
The deceit, changed my clothes straight away,  
And my place in the palace did attain.  
I arrived the first: "By Allah," he swore,  
"Tis the maid I left standing here before."

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 44-48: SHE AND ORDAURO LEAVE THE CITY BUT ARE PURSUED**

And after quite a few like occasions,  
When I appeared to him in this way,  
He wholly abandoned his suspicions,  
And called me "sister-in-law", I might say.  
Twas simple to create the conditions,  
After this, to depart and, one fine day,  
Ordauro penned a note to Folderico,  
Claiming the coastal air annoyed him so,

That he had not passed a healthy hour  
Since he'd settled in the place, and must leave,  
And travel, while it still was in his power.  
To his own land, three days distant. Conceive!  
Folderico, though grieved to quit his tower,  
Volunteered (we smiled his news to receive)  
To escort us some way beyond the city,  
And then return; thus, we left that country.

He rode perhaps six miles with us, and then  
Turned round, in haste, and retraced his journey.  
No doubt he was amazed, once home again,  
To find I'd vanished, for he cursed greatly,  
So, I'm told, and tore at his beard, in pain;  
Then promised to find and catch me, swiftly,  
And, having sworn, a stratagem devised  
By which his promise might be realised.

Owning neither the strength nor daring  
To take me from bold Ordauro by force,  
He followed us, with a display of cunning  
Of which he'd plenty, and pursued our course.  
We were both content, the road traversing,  
Ordauro and I, quite free of all remorse.  
With my sweet love, I rode without a care.  
We were a company of thirty there,

We'd grooms and maids, with us on our travels,  
And went unarmed, ambling quietly along.  
While behind us followed a string of camels,  
Bearing treasure, for all that did belong  
To my spouse we'd stolen, precious metals,  
Gems and such, and Ordauro, being strong,  
Through the tunnel had borne many a load,  
Which those creatures now carried on the road.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 49-53: ORDAURO IS LURED AWAY AND LEODILLA CAPTURED**

Now, we had been travelling all the day,  
Without impediment of any kind.  
By my side, my love was singing away;  
In his full armour he rode, while behind  
Came a groom who led a steed (a bay)  
That bore the helm, and lance, and shield assigned  
To him by his good master, who beside  
His plate, and mail, wore his sword at his side.

A youth on horseback suddenly sped by,  
Who, as he galloped past, cried: "Woe is me!  
Allah grant me aid!" and then we did spy  
The assassin from whom he seemed to flee,  
At least the rogue appeared so to the eye,  
Armed to the teeth, advancing furiously,  
As he, without a glance, scoured o'er the plain,  
And now fell back a little, now did gain.

Down a track that led to the woodland shade,  
The pair of them had vanished, in a trice.  
Ordauro, who was naught if not dismayed,  
Afraid for the youth, without thinking twice,  
Spurred his courser towards the forest glade.  
The other two (whose aim was to entice  
Him away) both as swift as birds in flight,  
Wore no armour, thus their steeds' loads were light,

While Ordauro's steed bore one so laden,  
(Its heavy master) with full plate and mail,  
That the horse bore at least twice the burden  
Of those others, as it galloped down the trail.  
He followed the pair without suspicion;  
Twas Folderico's ruse, to the last detail.  
He had sent the youth, and the 'rogue' behind;  
To fool Ordauro, was that scheme designed.

Once he was gone, and vanished to our eyes,  
So distant he could grant no protection  
To us, unarmed, a troop sent to surprise  
Our band, sped from another direction,  
While Folderico followed, in disguise.  
Our people despite their strong affection  
For myself, fled in fear, some here, some there,  
Till my swift capture ended the affair.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 54-59: LEODILLA'S TALE IS INTERRUPTED**

You can imagine, sir knight, my distress.  
Along an unfrequented path he led me,  
Flanked by thorns; I was forced to acquiesce,  
Through the woods we journeyed, secretly,  
Midst a thousand thickets; flushed with his success,  
The coward yet feared Ordauro, clearly,  
Lest we be followed, till we reached a vale,  
Dark and gloomy, into which ran the trail.

I had been his captive for a good two days,  
When we rode deep into that valley's shade,  
I'd ceased not to call, midst those thorny ways,  
For aid, while his concern the wretch displayed.  
Twas then three giants, from the woodland maze,  
Emerged, armed with weighty clubs, and made  
To assail us, their leader, with a cry,  
Demanding: "Lay your weapons down, or die."

She'd have told Count Orlando all her tale,  
For she wished him to hear how those three  
Evil giants had seized her, midst that vale;  
How Folderico had tried, valiantly,  
To set her free, although destined to fail,  
Doomed to die, with all his men, uselessly;  
All the details of her pain and sorrow,  
Ere Brandimarte had fought that vile trio,

But at that instant something came to pass,  
That interrupted the maiden's story.  
For they saw a stag, midst the verdant grass,  
Revealed to them, in all his glory.  
All other deer his beauty did surpass,  
No other would make as fine a quarry.  
Massive antlers of gold he did display,  
For he belonged to the Treasure Fay.

He was as white as is the driven snow,  
And shed his horns six times a day, at least,  
And unless that Fay her aid did bestow,  
None that tried could ever capture the beast.  
She was rich, and supremely lovely, though  
She loved no man, north, west, south, or east,  
For they say that beauty and prosperity,  
But serve to swell a woman's vanity.

The stag grazed on, as they passed him by.  
Yet Leodilla paused now, in her tale,  
For Brandimarte gave a mighty sigh,  
Thinking to hunt the stag, and prevail,  
Though Count Orlando but cast a swift eye  
O'er the creature, and went on down the trail,  
Thinking little of wealth, though garnered so,  
And despite being mounted on Baiardo.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXII: 60-62: BRANDIMARTE  
CHASES AFTER THE WHITE STAG**

Brandimarte was astride Briador,  
And he spurred, now, in pursuit of the deer,  
Leaving Orlando behind, to be sure,  
Bent on catching it, as it fled in fear,  
Yet it was enchanted, and furthermore  
No man though he pursued it for a year,  
(Or a thousand!) could do so; o'er the plain  
Brandimarte chased it, all day, in vain,

Then lost it, midst the trees, at fall of night;  
And seeing his adventure had ended,  
For the sun had quite withdrawn its light,  
His chase of the creature thus suspended,  
For, any chance of finding it, was slight,  
In his armour, his body he extended  
On the grass, and slept, till in dawn's cool air  
He rose, and mounted; and how he did fare,

In facing that savage who had bound  
Fiordelisa fast with ties of willow,  
In the next canto all the tale I'll sound,  
And that of the duel, too, twixt Rinaldo  
And Grifone, the courageous and renowned.  
Return, by God's grace, to hear me though,  
Fair gentlemen, all you who love a fight;  
For my song will bring you joy and delight.



BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: RINALDO AT BAY



ARGOMENTO.

Da Brandimarte, il franco, e buon guerriero,  
Ucciso ne rimane il fier Seluaggio,  
Slega a sua Donna. Và ogni cavaliero  
Di Trusaldino traditor maluaggio.  
Contra Rinaldo. Fa Aquilante il Nero.  
Insieme col fratel pien di corraggio  
Con la valente Marfisa battaglia,  
Che ambi non cura, ò stima vna vil paglia.



ALLEGORIE.

BRANDIMARTE, Che non potendo prendere il Ceruo  
si abbatte nella sua Dama che era dal Seluaggio stata legata al  
la Quercia, & quella libera, ne mostra, che spesse fiate, men-  
tre cerchiamo fare una cosa, laqual non riuscisse secondo il  
nostro disio auuiene che inaspettatamente ne conseguiamo vn  
altra da noi piu cara.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 1-6: BRANDIMARTE  
FINDS FIORELISA**

To resume, noble gentlemen, our tale:  
Brandimarte had left Orlando's side,  
Had lost the stag, spent the night in the vale,  
And, on awaking, now away did ride  
To find his friend, yet, from a nearby dale,  
He thought he heard a voice that loudly cried.  
It seemed some maid was calling in distress,  
And so, the knight towards the sound did press.

He listened as he rode, and sought the source  
Of those cries, and when he'd gone a goodly way,  
And had drawn nearer to them in due course,  
Gazed round, cautiously, lest he go astray.  
In this manner he reached a patch of gorse,  
And saw the maid, in tears and disarray,  
Her arms bound to an oak-tree in a field.  
She, as she turned to him, her face revealed.

He saw that it was his Fiordelisa,  
His whole existence, the joy of his heart.  
Conceive, if you can, his change of colour,  
His emotions at odds, for he was part  
Filled with happiness, part with anger,  
As opposing thoughts through his mind did dart;  
Filled with happiness that she was found,  
Angered that she was captive there, and bound.

In a moment, he had leapt from his steed,  
Swiftly tied Brigliador to a tree,  
And hastened to her so she might be freed;  
But that savage, lacking all humanity,  
Seemingly of a strange and cruel breed,  
As Brandimarte approached, instantly  
Emerged from the woods, where he lay concealed,  
Toting his heavy club, hefting his shield.

That shield, whose solid wood the bark retained,  
Was wrought to survive the heaviest blow.  
Being a foot thick, at least, and close-grained,  
It would not warp or bend. This mighty foe  
Was strong as a giant, though quite untrained  
In any form of martial skill, even so,  
He looked to be a match for any knight,  
Unskilled, but equipped to stand and fight.

Amidst the greenwood he dwelt, this creature,  
Ate nuts and fruit, and drank from the river,  
While folk said, of this strange child of nature,  
That he wept great tears, in the tragic manner,  
Dreading a sudden change, in fine weather,  
For fear he might lose the sun forever;  
Yet, when it rained and the sky was stormy,  
Hoping the sky would clear, he was happy.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 7-15: HE FIGHTS THE  
SAVAGE WHO CARRIES HIM OFF**

The savage now drew closer to the knight,  
Not knowing the fine art of chivalry,  
But waving the club, gripping the shield tight.  
He approached Brandimarte, silently,  
From the rear, but nonetheless in clear sight  
Of the maiden, still fastened to the tree.  
He'd have caught the warrior by surprise,  
If the maiden had failed to use her eyes,

Though he was unseen by Brandimarte,  
The ardent girl cried out as he drew near:  
'Beware, my lord, look behind you swiftly!'  
Brandimarte felt no dismay or fear,  
The lady was more anxious than he,  
Not for her own danger, to be clear,  
But simply his; she loved with all her heart,  
Ignored herself, and took her lover's part.

The spirited knight turned about promptly,  
And adopted a proper fighting stance,  
But when he saw the creature, he scarcely  
Stirred, and merely watched its slow advance.  
Unsure if it was human entirely,  
Or some infernal spirit, perchance,  
Nonetheless he remained quite unafraid,  
Regardless of what powers it obeyed.

As he made towards him, the wild creature  
Raised his great club, and struck at the knight's shield,  
Which solidly resisted the encounter,  
And left him unharmed, while he revealed  
That in duelling he was e'er a master,  
And sent the club-head flying to the field.  
With a swing of his blade, though the other  
Clasped him tightly, ere he could recover

His stance, and drew him in so closely  
 Brandimarte was scarcely free to fight,  
 Though the latter struggled long and fiercely  
 Exerting his considerable might;  
 Yet he appeared but a new-born baby  
 In those great arms that held him good and tight,  
 With a strength so extreme, Brandimarte  
 Was restrained by that savage completely,

He bore the warrior off with great ease,  
 As a wolf does a lamb from the meadow.  
 If one might have heard the maiden's pleas,  
 As she cried to Heaven in her sorrow,  
 Naming God, and His saints of all degrees,  
 (Some of her new faith, some she did borrow)  
 One would have felt true pity for her tears,  
 Possessed as she was by her doubts and fears.

Snatched away by the savage, the brave knight  
 Gripped by those arms, struggled to win free,  
 Spurred on by anger, shame, pride; his might  
 Insufficient to gain his liberty,  
 For the savage was nigh a giant in height,  
 And nigh as strong, and held Brandimarte  
 High above the ground, and never slowed  
 As he sped onwards with his heavy load.

Grasping the knight, towards a cliff he raced,  
 Rising, sheer, from the river far below,  
 Which a winding course through the valley traced,  
 Having worn away the hillside long ago.  
 A lump of stone, from the summit displaced,  
 Would have had half a mile or so to go,  
 Ere it landed; and, there, upon the steep,  
 The savage hurled his foe into the deep,

Or almost did so; for his effort failed,  
 And left space for the knight to touch the ground,  
 Ere he fell; clinging on, he then availed  
 Himself of his grip to rise; with a bound,  
 The angry creature he, once more, assailed.  
 He'd retained his sword, as the savage found,  
 And, brandishing the weapon in his hand,  
 He yelled, and sought a further blow to land.

## BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 16-21: HE KILLS THE WILD MAN, AND FREES FIORDELISA

Possessing, now, neither club nor shield,  
 The one cleft in two, the other left behind,  
 The savage ran to an elm, in the field,  
 But failed to break a branch, as he designed,  
 Ere Brandimarte his sharp blade did wield.  
 The blow though imperfectly aligned,  
 Wounded his hip; pride he brought to the fight,  
 For he let go the branch, and faced the knight.

As he turned to reply, most furiously,  
 A great leap, towards the warrior, he made,  
 Though as he did so, the latter, instantly,  
 Sliced away a hairy arm, with his blade,  
 And pierced the enormous trunk, cleanly,  
 Such that the sword, in a lengthy glissade,  
 Swept down from the rib cage to the belly,  
 Eviscerating his foe, entirely.

The savage was undone, he screamed and fell,  
 And uttered, lacking speech, cry after cry,  
 Strange sounds as from the very depths of Hell,  
 Dreadful but meaningless, and so did die.  
 The knight left him there; now, all was well,  
 And, joyful, having swiftly passed him by,  
 He returned to rescue his fair lady,  
 Set her free, and embrace her, in safety.

He was so elated, when he reached her,  
 The warrior scarcely knew what to do.  
 He hugged her silently, with great fervour,  
 Unable to speak, next, clasped her anew,  
 Then, to make but brief work of the matter,  
 He released her, without too much ado,  
 And placed her on his courser, and mounted.  
 As they rode on, their tales they recounted.

Fiordelisa spoke of the enchanter  
 How he'd borne her off, through the gloomy wood,  
 And how the fierce lion had, thereafter,  
 Ended all his malicious deeds for good.  
 Brandimarte told her of his encounter  
 With the giant trio, their fate sealed in blood,  
 How he'd fought near the fount in the meadow,  
 And of the maid he'd left with Orlando.



While he told of his fears and sore travail,  
He looked about for the Count, but, ever,  
Found not a trace of him, midst hill and dale,  
For, indeed, he'd met with fresh adventure,  
And, in due course, I'll tell you all the tale;  
But I'd have us return, now, to the matter  
Of Rinaldo's duel with Grifone,  
Which had continued long and fiercely.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 22-27: WE RETURN TO RINALDO, DUELLING WITH GRIFONE**

I know not, gentlemen, if you recall  
The state in which I left that whole affair;  
How those two knights did strike and maul  
Each other; in the depths of battle, there,  
Gave no thought to their survival at all,  
Exposed to blows, to wounds gave not a care,  
Never hid themselves, struggling without rest,  
And ever giving of their very best.

All gathered round, each soldier, every knight,  
Pressed together in their efforts to see,  
Thus, little space remained to watch the fight,  
While friend and stranger there kept company.  
Marfisa, at the front, observed the sight,  
Her eyes alight, for she followed closely  
Every move, and behold, as she did so,  
Rinaldo landed an enormous blow.

It stuck Grifone's helm, which, as you've heard,  
Was enchanted; it might have downed a tower  
Had it struck a castle wall, or have stirred  
An earthquake underground; but the power  
Invested in it, by some arcane word,  
Saved Grifone from sudden death that hour,  
Though it rattled all the brains in his head,  
And left the knight half-alive and half-dead.

He had lost his stirrups, had dropped the rein,  
And, dangling from his courser's right-hand side,  
Now dragged his sword, through the dust, o'er the plain.  
The weapon, chained to his wrist, yet defied  
The battering it received; that he'd been slain,  
His brother Aquilante thought, whose pride,  
And despair, and anger sent him coursing,  
Mad with ire and sorrow, at the princeling.

Aquilante was Oliviero's son,  
And by the same mother as Grifone.  
Every bit as fierce as the other one,  
He, also, bore enchanted weaponry,  
His steed and armour second to none.  
Yet their shields distinguished them, certainly,  
For his was painted black, his brother's white.  
Each was a noble, and a splendid knight.

And thus, this second duel was no less  
Vicious or furious, but crueller still;  
Aquilante's intent proved merciless,  
Thoughts of his brother fuelled his fierce will,  
His strokes against Rinaldo pitiless,  
Two-handed blows, yet dealt with measured skill,  
As he sought for swift vengeance; in a breath,  
Wishing to hasten him towards his death.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 28-32: AQUILANTE, THE BROTHER, SEEKS VENGEANCE**

For his part, it seemed to bold Rinaldo,  
That the pair had wronged him terribly,  
And so, he fought more fiercely, gainst the foe,  
Than ever, stung to a greater fury.  
He felt himself alone, and doomed to woe,  
But for Fusberta, and his bravery,  
Yet fought on, with anger in his heart,  
Not only shrewdly, but with warlike art.

'Lay on,' he cried aloud, 'you worthless cur;  
From those wretches behind you, summon aid  
To end your blind assault, wrought in dishonour,  
Or charge together, gainst my single blade.  
Less than a straw I rate you, like your brother!  
How dared he raise his eyes, who prayer made,  
To Heaven, when disgrace and shame were his?  
How could he fight in such a cause as this?'

Aquilante said naught, though he had heard  
That proud speech, but merely clenched his teeth,  
Then, with all his strength, and nary a word,  
He struck Rinaldo's helm; his head beneath  
Set ringing from the blow, his vision blurred,  
He raised his hands, as if he might bequeath  
His spirit to the air, so fierce the pain  
And woe, that well-nigh addled his poor brain.

And if his trenchant sword had not been bound  
By a chain to his right wrist, as ever,  
It would have travelled swiftly to the ground.  
Yet he let fall the reins of his courser,  
And Rabicano leapt away with a bound,  
For Rinaldo had lost all sense, moreover,  
Of where he was, convulsed in agony,  
His heart, nigh stopped; his eyes could barely see.

Aquilante, full of pride and anger,  
Followed Rabicano's flight o'er the plain,  
Venom in his heart; as bent on murder  
As if Rinaldo were a hound of Spain,  
A mere infidel; yet he found the other  
Was as swiftly in his right wits again,  
And, now recovered, was once more ready  
To deal with this upstart Aquilante.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 33-36: RINALDO  
DOWNS AQUILANTE, BUT IS ATTACKED BY  
CHIARONE**

He gripped his sword again, and turned his steed  
Towards the knight, roused to utter fury,  
And struck his helm, so violently, indeed,  
That he needed neither judge nor jury  
To determine that the blow could but lead  
To Aquilante's fall, whose bravery  
And enchanted armour was all in vain,  
That could nor sense nor consciousness maintain.

Nor did Rinaldo delay a moment,  
Ere he cut the laces of the dented helm,  
And slowly raised his sword arm, now intent  
On despatching him to the other realm.  
But Chiarone, in a fresh encounter, meant  
To surprise Rinaldo, and so overwhelm  
The knight, unnoticed, made a swift advance,  
Charged from the side, and struck him with his lance.

Plate and mail proved now of little use,  
For the lance-blow had caught him on the hip,  
Chiarone his spear broken, the reins loose,  
Could but cling to his saddle, and let slip  
The steed, while Grifone, spite the abuse  
He'd suffered, woke, his sword yet in his grip;  
And once he'd shaken off his confusion,  
He set his mighty courser in motion.

He roused, as I said, just as Chiarone  
Was galloping away, and so knew not  
That he, and his own brother, Aquilante,  
Had been fighting Rinaldo on that spot,  
Or he'd have kept from the battle, surely.  
But the cause of his woe he'd not forgot,  
And his wits now regained, no more astray,  
Striking at Rinaldo, he made his play.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 37-40: AND THEN BY  
GRIFONE, AND DUELS WITH BOTH**

The Lord of Montalbano, was, as yet,  
Not quite firmly seated; that cruel blow  
From Chiarone had well-nigh unset  
The warrior, downed him, and laid him low,  
But he roused, and Grifone's charge he met,  
While, sword in hand, the latter, to his woe,  
Thought him unprepared, and struck at the knight.  
Who reared up, like a snake, in sudden spite,

As that creature will, when caught by the tail,  
Swollen with venom, opening wide its jaw;  
So, Rinaldo, full of rage, in deep travail,  
Turned, wickedly, on Grifone, as before,  
And would have downed the latter, without fail,  
So fiercely he swung his blade, yet once more,  
Chiarone attacked; he'd turned, incensed,  
And so disturbed the game that they'd commenced.

The warrior arrived without warning;  
He struck a blow at Rinaldo's right arm,  
Which jarred it so greatly in landing  
The knight well-nigh dropped his sword, in alarm.  
Conceive his fierce anger; my attempting  
To describe it would but fail; such was the harm  
He cried aloud, then swore, by God above,  
His cause was right, the which he'd surely prove.

Then he turned to battle Chiarone,  
Fully intending the latter should die,  
But Grifone was upon him swiftly;  
He'd little time to breathe, and then let fly,  
Ere he was assailed by Aquilante,  
Who'd recovered from his swoon by and by,  
Though not entirely, it seems, for, tis true,  
He had scarcely perceived the other two.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 41-44: HE IS WOUNDED  
BY AQUILANTE, BUT AIDED BY MARFISA**

The pair of them, fierce as each other,  
Had drawn closer to assail Rinaldo,  
But Aquilante outpaced his brother  
And Chiarone, resolved to slay their foe.  
He'd spurred to the gallop his great charger,  
And now with his sharp sword struck such a blow  
One so cruel and merciless it cut through  
Rinaldo's shield, and sliced the thing in two.

Though a wrapping of tough ox-hide was bound  
Tight about the metal of the shield's grip,  
And his arm was sleeved in mail, all around,  
Still Rinaldo's flesh was cut; blood did drip  
From the wound, and was scattered o'er the ground.  
As the hurt seemed great, of companionship,  
Marfisa joined the fight; that fierce maiden  
Having barely restrained herself, till then.

So, Rinaldo fought alongside the queen;  
She, for prowess, in this world, had no peer.  
What fierce storm, what tempest was ever seen  
That could match her fury? As if in fear,  
Mountains sank before her; streams, once serene,  
Plunged down to Hell; the heavens would appear  
On fire, as lightning, thunder, filled the air,  
When Marfisa took the field; as she did there.

Though her rage, so terrible and profound,  
Seemed enough to trouble those about her,  
Yet Grifone still sufficient courage found  
To challenge the maid, as did his brother,  
Yet the others were unnerved, though renowned  
Warriors themselves, when they first saw her  
Join the fight; she who had, but yesterday,  
Routed the troop, and sent them on their way.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIII: 45-53: WHO TACKLES  
THE TWO BROTHERS, AND DUELS WITH  
GRIFONE**

The two brothers now attacked Marfisa,  
But, gripping their shields, were beaten back,  
While Rinaldo, alone, fighting nigh her,  
Faced Chiarone's and Hadrian's attack.

Torindo and Oberto duelled each other,  
Though Oberto was soon taken aback  
By a blow to the cheek; Truffaldino  
Held apart, as if indifferent to the foe.

I'll speak of that first contest, since all three  
Were in progress at once; indeed, so great  
Were the fierce blows, the cries and the fury,  
The loud clash of shields, and swords, and steel-plate,  
Loud thunder had scarce been heard, or barely.  
To commence: in the first duel I'll relate,  
The pair of brothers, mounted, together,  
Opposed the warrior-maid Marfisa.

She was like to a savage lioness,  
Poised to attack, half-way between two deer,  
Who would slay both, nor settle for less,  
Yet both at an equal distance do appear,  
And bares her teeth, and gazes, pitiless.  
So that queen, glaring at the knights, drew near,  
Fixing each one in turn with her fierce eye,  
Debating which should be the first to die.

There was scant need to think, for Grifone  
Soon resolved the matter by attacking.  
A two-handed blow, delivered swiftly,  
Towards her helm, and almost landing  
On its crown, yet missed it completely,  
Except that the dragon-emblem standing  
Tall at its crest, was cut in two, and fell.  
She stirred not; although twas close, she could tell.

Angered, she struck Grifone with the blade  
Of her broken sword, but had scarce replied  
Ere Aquilante, at her head, a lunge had made,  
With such strength it could hardly be denied.  
Imagine how she chafed, as she was swayed  
To and fro, and felt the blow to her pride;  
Not just the sudden pain, but the disgrace,  
As her helmet was driven gainst her face.

The blood flowed, swiftly, from her mouth and nose,  
A thing that she had never known before.  
She straightened though, and cried: 'For all my woes,  
You'll wish you'd never ridden to this war!  
Rabid creature, though none but Heaven knows,  
You must die soon at my hand, and, be sure,

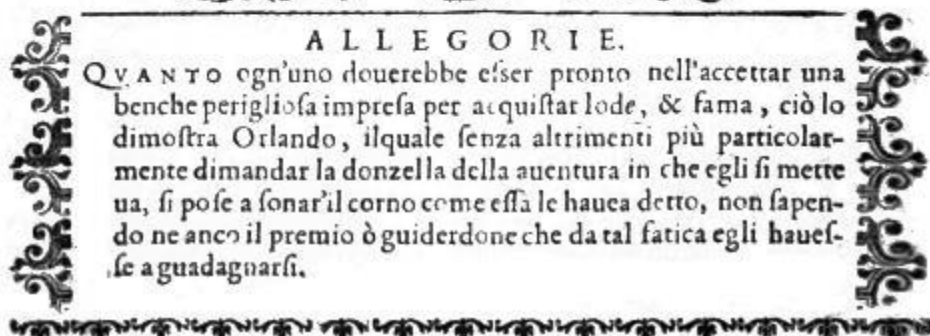
Naught above will help you escape my ire,  
Bound, as you are, for the eternal fire!  
Yet Grifone, while she gave her scornful cry,  
Delayed not, rather summoned all his might.  
Thus, a back-handed stroke fell, from the sky,  
Upon her brow, although the harm was slight.  
Disregarding it, she turned from the knight,  
Disdaining to deliver a reply,  
And threw herself at Aquilante,  
(With a blow whose description eludes me).

In her wrath, she hit the knight so fiercely,  
With such a show of force, if his armour  
Had not been enchanted, she'd have wholly  
Cleft him apart; twas designed to sever,  
And to slay. 'Evil witch!' cried Grifone,  
'You'll not boast of killing my dear brother,  
As you have sworn to do; tis but a lie,  
Mere empty words; for you, alone, shall die!'

And with that, he swung his mighty sword,  
Against her helm, with a thunderous blow.  
Yet, God save you all, each noble lord,  
For I must pause the tale, though you shall know,  
On your return (for fresh news I'll afford),  
Of those duels, in the following canto;  
And of those ardent warriors you'll hear,  
Delighting us with deeds of yesteryear.



BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: ORLANDO'S LABOURS



**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: I-II: THE PROGRESS OF THE DUELS**

If my memory does not deceive me,  
My lords, I promised to renew the tale  
Of that fierce duel, with whose history  
I sought my faithful listeners to regale;  
Of how that strong and fearsome lady  
Possessed of such pride, scorned every male,  
And thought herself but mocked (beneath his breath),  
By every man, unless she sought his death.

Aquilante and Grifone, for their part,  
Were proud knights too, for none upon this earth  
Whate'er his prowess in war's fiery art,  
Whate'er his courage, or his sense of worth,  
Not Rinaldo, nor Orlando that brave heart,  
Let alone all the rest of noble birth,  
Could handle them together; since each one  
Could meet the best that lived beneath the sun.

So never was there a finer duel fought,  
Than that between the valiant Marfisa  
And those two warriors, and hence I ought,  
To pen these events in their due order.  
I paused, as I recall, when having sought  
To fell Aquilante, his bold brother,  
Grifone, had struck her gleaming helm,  
Seeking that noble maid to overwhelm.

She turned upon him now, with such force  
That she believed she'd struck him dead indeed,  
For his shield flew to pieces, and his horse  
And he might have been cleft, I would concede,  
Head to foot, had his armour not, of course,  
Been enchanted, as the White Fay decreed,  
For so deft and merciless was her swift blow,  
T'would have brought one not thus protected low.

The brave Grifone answered her in kind,  
Striking, two-handed, at her helm again,  
Though the sharp blade but her hauberk did find,  
And slid across her steel-clad breast, in vain.  
Aquilante charged, to strike her from behind,  
But she turned, in anger, despite the pain,  
And struck at his face, with so harsh a blow  
His head bowed down to his steed's neck below.

She turned once more to meet Grifone,  
And then let loose so desperate a swing  
Of her fierce blade, that he was saved only  
By that faery-steel of which we poets sing.  
Meanwhile his brother, bold Aquilante,  
Now on her other flank, tightly gripping  
Her bright helm, as best he could, sought to show  
His strength, and drag her to the ground below.

But though he gripped the helmet good and hard  
Marfisa grasped the stout shield that he bore,  
And so, his sly attempt proved but ill-starred,  
While from his arm that brave defence she tore.  
Grifone brought him aid, advanced a yard  
And loosed such a vicious stroke once more,  
That his sword split the maiden's shield in two,  
While she freed his brother, and turned anew,

To engage the other warrior, in fury.  
They never ceased a moment from the fight,  
But swung their great blades, seeking glory.  
Like two conflicting storms in the night,  
Where the lightning-flashes tell the story  
Of the clouds on high, and the hail in flight,  
The thunder, and the rain that beats the grass,  
While the ash-trees shed their leaves, as they pass;

Such were their harsh blows, and such were they.  
Neither knight ceased to strike at the lady,  
One or the other's sword was e'er in play,  
While she was so bold, despite their fury,  
Slight was their impression, one might say.  
The bright blades rang in the air so loudly  
That twenty blacksmiths' hammers scarce could pound  
On their twenty anvils with a fiercer sound.

Not far away on that plain, one could view  
Another vicious struggle, for Rinaldo  
Fought a second duel, one blade gainst two,  
Chiarone, then brave Hadrian, his foe.  
With sore wounds to both hip and arm, anew  
He yet fought, that Lord of Montalbano,  
So fierce, so skilled in every sort of fight,  
He still prevailed against either knight.

While the third duel, between Oberto,  
And the King of Turkey, was in full flow,  
For that monarch, the mighty Torindo,  
Fought as hard; the skill of Oberto, though,  
Was superior, he the subtler foe.  
The fierceness of each combat seemed to grow,  
And yet, of the three, the fiercest, it's true,  
Involved Marfisa, and those valiant two.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 12-14: WE RETURN TO ORLANDO AND LEODILLA, SEEKING BRANDIMARTE**

Of how those three duels ended, I swear  
To tell you, tis a promise, but, for now,  
I must return to that dense forest where  
I left the Count (and Leodilla) to plough  
A way amidst the trees, thorns everywhere,  
O'er stony ledges, finding trails somehow  
Searching for Brandimarte, while twas light,  
And only ceasing with the fall of night.

For when the sun had set, and day was past,  
And many a star was gleaming in the sky,  
Having failed to find a trace of him, at last  
They emerged from the woods and, by and by,  
He dismounted from his steed, somewhat downcast,  
And lifted down the fair maid, with a sigh,  
The maid of whose history you have heard,  
And that of her foolish spouse, every word.

She wondered if he'd try to sleep with her,  
And wondered if she'd resist, if he tried;  
But she need not have pondered the matter,  
For, his inclinations he did ever hide.  
Bishop Turpin says that our Count of Brava,  
Was chaste, and was a virgin till he died.  
You may choose to believe what pleases you;  
Of what good Turpin says, not all is true.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 15-18: THEY ENCOUNTER A MAIDEN, BEARING A BOOK AND A HORN**

Orlando now stretched out upon the grass,  
And never stirred a limb until the dawn.  
Our valiant knight snored constantly, alas,

So, the maid lay there, waiting on the morn,  
Wondering greatly as the hours did pass,  
That such a valiant knight could be born  
With so hard a heart that but scant delight  
He took in love's affairs; she spent the night

Disappointed in our brave Count Orlando;  
And if, next day, ere they mounted again,  
The maid had known where she was, or might go,  
That disconsolate girl, I would maintain  
Might well have slipped away, alone or no.  
But they were lost, so she chose to remain,  
Though nursing, wordlessly, her discontent,  
Such that the Count asked what her silence meant.

She replied: 'I've not had a moment's rest,  
Since your endless snoring kept me awake,  
And, there's another reason I'm oppressed...'  
She was about to hint at his sad mistake,  
When a maiden appeared, richly dressed;  
From a verdant grove, her way she did make;  
On a palfrey draped in silk she was borne,  
And clasped a book; at her side, hung a horn.

The horn was richly-worked, ivory-white,  
And most marvellously wrought, and inlaid  
In the middle, and at each end, with bright  
Shining gold, fair enamel, and displayed,  
Many a precious gem that caught the light.  
It was a wondrous treasure; and the maid,  
Who bore it, was beyond all others fair,  
With a sweet manner, and most gracious air.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 19-24: WHO EXPLAINS THE SECRETS OF BOTH**

Dismounting she knelt before Orlando,  
And, in a voice both courteous and clear,  
Said: 'Sir knight, you have found, for weal or woe,  
An adventure this morn that will appear  
More marvellous than any here below.  
But you must bear a heart free of all fear,  
Such as a perfect knight ought to bear,  
For your aspect is both noble and fair.

This book will teach you all that you must do,  
But the manner of its use I will explain;  
First you must sound this horn, loud and true,  
Read then the book; and you will find, writ plain,  
The valiant deeds to be performed, by you,  
In response to what the horn sets in train;  
For, at the first note that sounds, high and clear,  
A fierce, and dreadful, creature will appear.

The book, then, will explain, as I have said,  
What you must achieve; yet anticipate  
No time for idling, for you'll find, instead,  
You'll need to use your sword, soon and late.  
And if you overcome that thing of dread,  
Don't delay a moment, don't hesitate,  
Or you'll be deprived of your liberty,  
But blow the horn, again; and you will see

Something else issue forth, bringing danger;  
So, ope the book once more, valiant knight,  
And follow its advice; do not linger;  
Though, if you are like to die of fright,  
Twere best you avoid the whole adventure,  
For tis only after darkness comes the light;  
A fine beginning, but a wretched end,  
Many a brave man has wrought, I'd contend.

And here's the reason I counsel you so:  
The horn was created by enchantment,  
And if a knight is so feeble as to blow  
Upon the thing, but then, in fear, repent,  
He'll spend his life in captivity and woe.  
For to the Lake-Isle he must then be sent.  
Thus, he who dare not finish, ne'er should start,  
Three times you needs must sound it; or, depart.

The first two blasts bring the greatest peril,  
Each is a weary trial, filled with pain;  
Each time you must labour like the devil.  
But, for a third time, sound the horn again,  
And you'll need no sword, or casque of metal,  
For so fine an adventure's then in train  
That if you lived a hundred years or more  
You'd find but joy and happiness in store.'

## **BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 25-29: ORLANDO BLOWS THE HORN FOR THE FIRST TIME**

Once the Count had learned from the maiden  
All he needed, of the wondrous adventure,  
He burned to complete the tasks, as given,  
Nor sought more advice (as was his nature!)  
But stretched out his hand, as he was bidden,  
And took the book and horn; first, however,  
Ere he started, to prepare for the fight,  
He helped the maid, Leodilla, to alight.

Then he pressed to his lips the magic horn,  
And being quite well-skilled in warlike art,  
Blew a thunderous note; o'er the land twas borne,  
And could be heard in the remotest part.  
And when that call had ceased to adorn  
The air, a mighty boulder split apart,  
A hundred yards off, with a crashing sound,  
And two great creatures rose from the ground.

For, once that mass of stone had split in two,  
A pair of wild bulls emerged, with a roar,  
Strange and dreadful in their size and hue,  
Each with a cruel gaze; sharp horns they bore,  
And both of iron; pawing the bright dew,  
Those creatures, waited, and Orlando saw  
Their hides were shimmering, now green, now black,  
Red, yellow. Ere the monsters could attack,

He oped the book; the Count found written there,  
A text that read: 'Sir knight, know you must lose  
Should you seek their deaths, for in this affair  
Your sharp sword can do naught; no, you must use  
Your bodily strength, if their horns you'd dare,  
And would end the matter, and do so choose.  
You must capture them both, whate'er the pain,  
And then yoke them tight, with a length of chain.

Once those wild bulls are yoked, then plough the ground  
There where you saw the boulder split in two,  
And cut furrows in the soil, all around.  
Do this when you have blown the horn anew,  
And then, a second time, here will be found  
The means and the manner by which you  
Will win honour in this labour, or death.  
Away now, and breathe fire with every breath.'



**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 30-38: HE CAPTURES  
AND YOKES THE WILD BULLS**

Orlando closed the book; he read no more,  
But made his way straight towards the boulder,  
Nor was there much delay, for to be sure  
The bulls charged, with a great roar of anger.  
He quit Baiardo for the grassy floor,  
And faced the first enormous creature,  
That lowered its head, and swollen with pride,  
Arriving swiftly, struck the Count's left side.

It threw him more than twelve feet in the air;  
He fell heavily to the solid ground  
Where the second, with its iron horns laid bare  
His chest, scattering plate and mail around.  
It tossed him to the sky, and, slowing there,  
He descended, once more, with scarce a sound.  
His flesh and bones were bruised, but, being charmed,  
He landed on soft earth, and was unharmed.

Don't ask me if the Count was in a rage;  
For no human tongue could express his ire.  
With both feet firmly planted centre-stage,  
He displayed his strength, and his sole desire;  
Delivering harsher blows than I could gauge,  
Making Durindana sing, eyes on fire,  
As at those wild bulls' horns, and bristling backs,  
He aimed the blade, in his all-out attacks.

His weapon served as well as a blunt stick;  
It failed to pierce their flesh, or do them harm,  
For their hides were not only good and thick  
But well-protected by a magic charm.  
And, although Orlando was strong and quick,  
They drove him about, to his great alarm,  
So fiercely, as they tossed him here and there,  
With their iron horns, that he gasped for air.

Yet, since he was hardly there for pleasure,  
He sought for vengeance, in his sorry plight,  
And fought on, striking hard at each creature,  
The very image of a stalwart knight.  
Despite their thick hides, he had their measure,  
And made them bellow with pain, in that fight,  
For he struck them so hard, such strength he found,  
They were frequently beaten to the ground.

Now the cautious bulls began to back away,  
Their heads lowered, in reluctant defence,  
Though when the Count held them both at bay,  
Their proud spirits roused the pair to offence.  
And so thrice they retired from the affray,  
And thrice, as if the fight they'd recommence,  
They returned, until at last the bold Orlando  
Gripped one iron horn, of the nearest foe.

He grasped it with his left hand and the beast,  
In a rage launched its body in the air.  
It leapt about, but, while its strength decreased,  
He held it tight, though fiercely it did glare.  
He had Baiardo's bridle; when it ceased,  
He took it from his belt (he'd stored it there)  
And with the bridle, which was mostly chain,  
He bound the bull, that loudly did complain.

As he dragged the monster round, by its horn,  
Which he'd ne'er released, the second creature,  
Stung by anger, circled round him; twas born  
To rile him; the charm enhanced its nature.  
With a mighty heave, now treating it with scorn,  
He dragged the first to a marble pillar,  
Carved with a text, declaring that below  
That spot lay the tomb of King Bavardo.

Having bound the first proud bull with the chain,  
He yoked the second to the first, as well,  
And pounded them so hard one might fain  
Describe them both as tamed, as by a spell,  
Both those wild creatures, now subdued by pain.  
Now the warrior, that in war did e'er excel,  
Harnessed the pair in front of Durindana,  
(Its blade slanting forward) like a farmer.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 39-42: AND PLOUGHS  
THE EARTH, THEN BLOWS THE HORN AGAIN**

Then Orlando cut a branch for a goad,  
And set to ploughing the earth with his blade,  
Driving the bulls ahead, as he bestowed  
A blow, now and then, till they obeyed.  
O'er the open space his straight furrows showed.  
And never a better job of it was made;  
Durindana, razor-sharp, eased his toil,  
As it sliced through the roots, and stones, and soil.

When he'd ploughed the field to its boundary,  
The Count celebrated, and stopped to rest,  
Thanking God, in His virtue, and divinity,  
For granting the honour of this great test.  
He then freed the bulls, who bellowed loudly,  
And soon vanished down a dale to the west.  
He and the maidens watched them out of sight,  
But, on the horn, his hand did soon alight;

For though the bold Count was more than weary  
From his vast labour in ploughing the field,  
Each moment now seemed like a year, till he  
Might address the task the second blast revealed.  
Nor strength nor cunning (met with bravery),  
Would conquer him, he felt, so he appealed  
To fate, and raised the splendid horn once more,  
And blew a note that shook the valley floor.

The maiden who'd borne it had, earlier,  
Quit her palfrey, to watch the whole affair.  
And in a field that fair flowers did cover,  
She sat twining a garland for her hair.  
Though the echoes of the note grew fainter,  
The ground was still shaking everywhere,  
When the summit of a mound, not far away,  
Erupted, sending forth a fiery ray.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 43-48: A DRAGON  
APPEARS AND THE COUNT REFERS TO THE  
BOOK**

Milone's son was waiting, silently,  
To observe whatever sight might appear.  
When, from the hill, a dragon flew, swiftly;  
Twas so hateful Leodilla quaked with fear.  
The other maid, who dreaded naught, simply  
Turned to her, as she thought to disappear,  
Saying: 'Flee not; you are safe here with me;  
Tis the knight that needs show his bravery.

This task does not belong to you or I,  
For the knight must execute it alone.'  
Leodilla made disdainful reply:  
'Tis fitting he should do so on his own!  
Listen, gentlemen, to the lady's cry,  
For, by the Count's example, tis shown  
That true service to a woman counts as naught,  
If her loving attention goes unsought.

I return to the fire-breathing dragon;  
No larger specimen had e'er been seen.  
Its wings flapped in a bat-like fashion,  
Multi-coloured; its scales shone gold and green.  
Its tail made a swishing sound in action,  
Its sharp teeth showed three tongues in between,  
And it sent forth jets of smoke and flame, on high,  
From its mouth and ears, that obscured the sky.

When this serpent had taken to the air,  
Orlando consulted the book once more,  
And read the text that was presented there:  
'None, in all this world, that lived before  
This day, and sought to do what you shall dare,  
Such pain as you will feel did e'er endure,  
And yet the dragon you shall surely slay,  
If you choose to perform all that I say.

The battle you engage in must be brief,  
For the serpent's breath is so venomous  
The scorching from its heat beyond belief,  
The smoke and flame it emits so noxious,  
You must sever its head to win relief.  
Once you've dealt with the vicious creature thus,  
Grasp the head; show the courage that is yours,  
And draw every single tooth from its jaws.

Sow the teeth, in the furrows that you ploughed,  
And then you'll see a wondrous thing occur:  
Armed men will grow from the earth, a crowd,  
Strong and bold, that you must slay and inter.  
If you survive the hour, and, fierce and proud,  
Return with honour from the field (tis the spur  
To renown) and thus display your bravery,  
You will prove the very flower of chivalry.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 49-52: HE KILLS THE  
DRAGON AND EXTRACTS ITS TEETH**

It seems no more was written in the book,  
And Orlando closed it when he was done.  
The dragon-serpent (but a moment it took)  
Flapped its wings, and then dived, out of the sun,  
Upon him, spewing flame; his body shook.  
He waited, boldly; in the air it spun,  
As the strange creature opened wide its maw,  
And sought to snare him on its lower jaw.

But, as God willed, it merely caught his shield,  
Which, being simply made of wood, caught fire,  
And to the flames was swiftly forced to yield.  
The fierce cloud of steam and smoke rose higher,  
His helm, his armour, shirt of mail, concealed  
For an instant, like some dimly-glowing pyre,  
In its depths. His surcoat burned with the rest,  
As tongues of flame consumed his helmet's crest.

The Count had never duelled with such before,  
His strength and martial skills of little aid,  
The smoke filled his visor, the dust it bore,  
Blurred his vision and, discomforted, he swayed;  
He could scarcely see his sword, and unsure  
Of the beast's position, wild blows he made,  
Swinging his sharp blade from side to side,  
Though often flailing, and so striking wide.

Yet, in sweeping his weapon to and fro,  
In that hot and dark and clouded fight,  
He dealt the dragon's neck a mighty blow,  
Sliced it through, and severed the head outright.  
Grasping it in his hand, Count Orlando  
Gazed upon that vile and fearsome sight,  
(Twas in hue, green and brown, gold and crimson)  
And wrenched away the teeth, his labour done.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 53-55: HE SOWS THE  
TEETH AND WARRIORS SPRING FROM THE  
GROUND**

He removed his helm, and filled it with the teeth,  
Then took himself to where he'd ploughed the ground,  
As the book had instructed, and beneath  
The soil he sowed them, scattering them around.  
Thus, to the earth, strange seed he did bequeath,  
There where King Bavardo's tomb was found.  
Bishop Turpin says (and he rarely lies!),  
Helmet crests from the field began to rise.

The bright plumes, I mean, fluttered in the air,  
Then a helm would show, a head, a body,  
While the Count could only stand and stare,  
Until, from the field, emerged an army.  
Foot-soldiers first, then horsemen, a mare  
Or stallion under them, rose swiftly.  
And with: 'War! War!', raising horn and banner,  
Aimed their lances in a threatening manner.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIV: 56-58: HE SLAYS THE  
WARRIORS, AND BLOWS THE HORN FOR A  
THIRD TIME**

Perceiving so marvellous a matter,  
The Count said, to himself: 'The crop I've sown,  
I must scythe away with Durindana,  
And if I'm slain then the fault is my own.  
We delight in blaming someone other  
For our mistakes, as history has shown;  
And a man should be twice as swift to weep  
That sows evil seed, and evil doth reap.'

So, he spoke, and countenanced no delay,  
For our knight had not a moment to waste.  
Lacking sword or shield, he would but stay  
To don his helmet, again, which he laced,  
Leapt to Baiardo's back (who gave a neigh)  
And spurred him against the foes he faced.  
Thus, proudly, gainst that army he had sworn  
To destroy, he charged; though twas newly born!

What need have I to speak of every blow,  
Or every single stroke from Durindana,  
Since that blade overwhelmed every foe,  
Every weapon, show of skill, or armour?  
I'll conclude by saying that Orlando  
Put every man there to the slaughter,  
And all to which the soil had given birth  
Now vanished, silently, beneath the earth.

When Orlando gazed about him, and saw,  
They were gone like dew on a summer morn,  
And those who'd lived for an hour, no more,  
Interred in that place where they were born,  
Prepared to sound the summons, as before,  
The knight drew breath, and raised the magic horn,  
That those fearsome tasks might end with the third.  
The next canto will tell you what occurred.

BOOK I: CANTO XXV: ORLANDO AT ALBRACCA



ARGOMENTO.

Parte Orlando veloce, e non fa conto  
Del gran tesor, che guadagnar potea.  
Rende ad Orlando la sua armata pronto  
Ha fin la di *Marfisa* pugna rea.  
Va *Astolfo* a ritrouar *Rinaldo* gionto,  
In *Albracca* il buon conte di nomea.  
Ad *Angelica* sua promette; e giura  
Per lei pugar vn giorno a la Pianura.



ALLEGORIE.

I 1. Conte Orlando che sprezza il tesoro offertoli per l'hauuta fatica, ci manifesta, che l'huomo virtuoso non dee punto curarsi di ricchezze, però che sono cose, che hora si hanno, hora si perdono.

L'O D I O che piglia Orlando contra Rinaldo, ne mostra quanta noia apporti ad vn innamorato il veder che quella istessa cosa tanto da lui amata desidera, & ami.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 1-3: THE WHITE HOUND**

I left the Count, in the previous canto,  
About to sound that magic instrument,  
That he might put an end, by doing so,  
To his labours, ere he was wholly spent.  
He sought no rest, the brave Orlando,  
Until the horn revealed the full extent  
Of the mysteries it conjured; so, he blew  
A strident note, that capped the other two.

The valiant knight blew so hard, indeed,  
That of the task he wearied; yet perceived  
Nothing new, till the light to eve did cede  
Its reign, believing he had been deceived  
In some way; when a hound of noble breed,  
Pure white (and by enchantment conceived),  
Entered the flowering meadow, baying,  
At which Orlando gazed, quietly praying:

‘God bring me now some high adventure!  
Pain and toil enough I’ve suffered, surely?  
Tis a little late to regret the labour  
Required to reveal this hound, but truly,  
Am I to be rewarded with this creature?  
Is this the prize promised by the lady;  
To delight and content me, if I blew  
Thrice on this magic horn, and then proved true?’

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 4-8: MORGANA THE FAY**

With that he turned away in deep disdain,  
And readied himself to depart the scene,  
While hurling the horn to the grassy plain,  
In more than a mere token show of spleen.  
But the lady cried: ‘Wait, my lord, maintain  
Your place, no emperor has ever been  
Upon this earth, no king, that ever found  
Fairer fortune than is brought by the hound.

Listen a moment, and I shall tell you,  
The wondrous purpose of this fine creature.  
There is an isle not far beyond our view,  
Which contains, and is named for, its treasure.  
There dwells Morgana the enchantress, who  
Bestows gold on people, at her pleasure;  
And all that’s spread, throughout every land,  
Was once a gift received from her fair hand.

There it lies buried deep, neath high mountains,  
From which tis laboriously mined,  
Or panned from rivers, and bubbling fountains;  
While in India, too, ants the seams do find.  
Two quite separate ores she thus obtains,  
And two breeds of fish feed on the refined  
Metal; one is the Timavo sculpin;  
The other a carp, with a gilded fin;

And both kinds, with pure gold, the Fay sustains.  
But let me now continue my tale:  
O’er gold and silver ore Morgana reigns,  
And will fulfil the promise, without fail.  
By this means, your happiness she ordains,  
Since you sounded her horn here, in the vale,  
For a third time; thus, she sends her creature  
To grant you a life of joy and pleasure.

No other knight in this world has ever  
Twice blown the horn, though many men have tried.  
While seeking rare and noble adventure,  
A host, despite their bravery, have died.  
But perish such ill thoughts, bold warrior,  
And listen to my tale; come, quench your pride,  
And comprehend the wonder of it all;  
I tell of the hound, that came to your call.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 9-12: THE SECRET OF THE WHITE STAG AND THE WHITE BRACH**

Wise Morgana, of whom I have told you,  
(She is the queen of all things rich and fair)  
Created that white stag, so fine to view,  
With its antlers of gold, and hide so rare.  
Fashioned by a magic spell, it must pursue  
An errant course, straying here and there,  
Left to roam; and a wondrous turn of speed  
It shows to those that would catch it; indeed,

It can ne’er be trapped by force, but only  
With the aid of the hound can it be caught,  
For the brach knows how to find it quickly,  
And she bays, as the stag by her is sought.  
You must follow her by ear, and swiftly  
Pursue, for, as if from a bow pulled taught,  
She flies, quick as an arrow, and will race  
After the white stag and, for six days, trace

Its passage, yet on the seventh will meet  
 With the quarry, which will plunge into a fount,  
 And there it may be caught; and, to complete  
 The adventure, gold, in wondrous amount  
 Rewards the hunter, golden antlers greet  
 The eye, that do its noble brow surmount.  
 Of thirty points, they moult six times a day,  
 And each branched horn a hundred pounds must weigh.

And such great treasure you will then possess,  
 Once you have caught the enchanted deer,  
 That you will garner pleasure to excess,  
 Should riches lead to happiness down here.  
 Perchance she'll love you, that enchantress,  
 I mean the Fay, whom any might hold dear,  
 Morgana, brighter than the sun at noon,  
 Her face as lovely as the clear full-moon.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 13-17: ORLANDO  
 SPURNS RICHES, DESIRING ONLY HIS LADY,  
 ANGELICA**

Orlando listened quietly, with a smile,  
 But scarce allowed her to complete her tale,  
 Disdainful of its promise; all the while,  
 Certain her speech was wrought to no avail.  
 'Fair lady,' he answered, 'many a trial  
 I've run, like to these, and did e'er prevail,  
 For great perils, and fine deeds, are the lot  
 Of he who'd win fame, and ne'er be forgot.

Yet I would never, for mere gold or silver,  
 Unsheathe my sword, since any man  
 Will find, in that chase, an endless labour,  
 That sets his sights on riches; such a plan  
 Yields but deeper discontent the greater  
 His wealth; the more he has, the less he can  
 Find satisfaction; for yet more he'll yearn;  
 Naught that quest will gain him, he must learn.

The path is infinitely unrewarding,  
 A road barren of honour or delight.  
 Who goes that way is forever struggling  
 Yet the end they desire is ne'er in sight.  
 Rather than that foolish course pursuing,  
 I prefer to live as a wandering knight.  
 Let me be clear; now, hark to what I say:  
 I'll hunt the stag not this, nor any day.

Take up the horn, grant it to another,  
 To one who ventures after gold and gain,  
 For I am not now, nor was I ever,  
 One that did not his honour e'er maintain;  
 A man's but a vile and barbarous lover,  
 That loves not his lady twice as much again  
 As his own self. I know mine waits for me,  
 Now, meseems, she calls my name, lovingly.'

Then speaking to himself, with troubled face,  
 The Count said: 'I left her, I remember,  
 Besieged by war in a treacherous place.  
 Now, the outcome I must needs discover.  
 I quit the field, Agricane to chase,  
 With each side still battling the other,  
 And know not which army won the day;  
 Best then that I go swiftly on my way.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 18-19: HE SETS OUT FOR  
 ALBRACCA, AND ENCOUNTERS ORDAURO**

He lifted the maid to his steed again,  
 Though she mounted somewhat unwillingly,  
 Left the lady standing there, in the plain,  
 And gave Baiardo the rein, silently.  
 Soon a bridge o'er a river they did gain,  
 And met a lord, who glared at him fiercely,  
 Though the Count, ever gracious on meeting  
 A valiant knight, gave him courteous greeting.

Now that lord recognised her instantly,  
 As his Leodilla (for he was her Ordauro!)  
 Fairest daughter of King Manodante,  
 And issued a challenge to Orlando,  
 Threatening the Count, most arrogantly:  
 'The maid belongs with me; I'd have you know.  
 You've stolen her; come free her now, say I,  
 And swiftly too, or swiftly you must die!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 20-22: TO WHOM HE  
 CONVEYS LEODILLA**

'Is she's your lady, then yours shall she be!'  
 Said the Count, 'I'll not quarrel over her.  
 'Come, take her, by God, and that swiftly,  
 For I must be gone, that seek another.  
 Since it seems she likes not my company,

For your courtesy, I'll thank you, moreover.  
Let the pair of you go where'er you please,  
And I may, then, pursue my way, at ease.'

Ordauro, when he heard the Count's reply,  
A speech that seemed strangely cowardly  
For a man who seemed so fierce to the eye,  
Was much surprised; nonetheless, silently,  
Took up the maid; and the three, by and by,  
Departed; the two steeds, separately,  
Cantering forth, the one east to Albracca;  
Westwards, to Circassia, the other.

'Twas thus the Count relinquished the fair maid,  
Happy now to be with her Ordauro.  
Naught in the way of valour he'd displayed,  
(The latter, I mean) for brave Orlando  
Had chosen not to fight so naught delayed  
His journey, for his thoughts were all aglow  
With Angelica; each hour seemed a year  
Ere to Angelica the Count drew near.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 23-24: WE RETURN TO  
THE THREE DUELS, BEFORE ALBRACCA**

We'll leave Orlando to his weary way,  
And return to the three duels, that had grown  
In fury, so merciless a display  
They appeared among the cruellest known.  
Marfisa could be seen; the queen, that day,  
Whirled here and there, all her wildness shown,  
As on one side she fought Aquilante,  
On the other his brother, Grifone.

Rinaldo, the brave son of Amone,  
Having twice been badly wounded, pursued  
King Hadrian and bold Chiarone;  
While a long and dreadful fight had ensued  
Twixt the brave Oberto dal Leone  
And Torindo the Turk; the whole thing viewed  
By Truffaldino; now I'll convey  
All my previous canto failed to say.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 25-30: RINALDO  
PROPOSES THEY END THE FIGHT NEXT DAY**

I shall tell you how the fighting progressed,  
And the events that unfolded on the field.  
Truffaldino stood and merely watched the rest,  
As I've said, all his cowardice revealed.  
When Chiarone and Hadrian, oppressed,  
Yielded ground to Rinaldo, he sealed  
His treachery, as one with much to fear,  
And vanished to the fortress in the rear.

He'd escaped, quite unseen by Rinaldo,  
Or he'd surely not have reached his goal,  
For he'd have been caught by Rabicano;  
Yet, in the heat of the action, he stole  
From the scene, unobserved; Truffaldino  
Fled, and so reached the gate, still whole.  
'Twas there Rinaldo saw him, and cried:  
'Lo, the traitor can run but he can't hide!'

To the others he shouted: 'Hear me now!  
Do as I ask if you'd not die today.  
I'll kill you, in a trice, unless you vow  
To bring one who would all the world betray,  
That wretch Truffaldino, I care not how,  
Tomorrow, to the field, without delay.  
Let us rest this moment from the fight,  
And, return to resolve this, at first light.

All you here who would defend that creature,  
Truffaldino, your splendid lord and king,  
When the sun rises, ensure your treasure  
Of a master, and the devil's offspring,  
Takes to the field and we'll run a measure,  
Renew our battle, and conclude the thing  
With his death; or truly, I myself must die,  
Should God support the wrong, and right deny.'

These bold words, and others, Rinaldo cried,  
And to his offer all the knights agreed  
Except Marfisa who, as ever full of pride,  
Was but little disposed to pay him heed.  
Her heart was yet ablaze, and she decried  
The need for rest, and all that he decreed,  
Till Grifone and Aquilante swore  
That at dawn they'd continue as before;

And would fight her, then, from the break of day  
Till the sun sank to the ocean in the west.  
Then the defenders, weary of the fray,  
Retreated to the fortress, to seek rest,  
With not a piece of armour, I might say,  
Untouched and unbloodied; I'd suggest  
The state of those outside was no better,  
Rinaldo, Torindo and Marfisa.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 31-34: ASTOLFO JOINS  
RINALDO'S COMPANY**

Each of them tended, conscientiously,  
To their armour, and needs. All in the keep  
Save Aquilante and Grifone,  
Felt fear, yet talked of war till they found sleep.  
Astolfo said: 'Tis Orlando, who, clearly,  
Is in disguise, and treats you all like sheep;  
In that fashion, he puts you all to scorn,  
And tomorrow, at daybreak, you'll be shorn!'

'No, no, you're wrong,' Aquilante replied;  
Their leader is the Lord of Montalbano.  
I, and Grifone spoke with him aside,  
And requested that he not prove our foe,  
But he refused, not solely out of pride.  
Fierce and ardent is he, and tomorrow  
We shall fight again and he, or we two,  
Will die in the action; that much is true.'

'Then you must lose the war', mocked Astolfo,  
'For I shall seek to join his company.  
I'll ride, this very night, to find Rinaldo,  
And when, in the field, you meet with me,  
Trust me, you'll wish I had ne'er done so.  
Yet none of you will flaunt your bravery  
Or go a foot beyond these solid walls,  
For the knight encountering me ever falls.'

Aquilante knew him for a boaster,  
And retorted: 'Then, good luck to you!  
If that's how it is, then we must suffer!'  
Astolfo his new thought did then pursue;  
He left the keep, confident as ever;  
Night was falling, the sky a lurid hue,  
When he found his cousin, brave Rinaldo,  
And embraced that Lord of Montalbano.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 35-39: ORLANDO  
ARRIVES AT ALBRACCA**

Let us leave them thus, in their pavilion  
Where they will rest till the crack of dawn,  
And return to the Count, Milone's son,  
Who rode so hard, by brave Baiardo borne,  
That, ere the sun dipped neath the horizon,  
He attained Albracca, wearied and worn.  
At eve then, the warrior passed the gate,  
In a somewhat dilapidated state.

'Twas clear that he came not from the dance,  
His breastplate was split, his crest was gone,  
His helmet scorched; he clearly lacked a lance,  
His shield had vanished with his weapon,  
And yet he showed his usual arrogance,  
Or rather pride; who viewed him, sat upon  
Brave Baiardo, clad in his dented armour,  
Could but cry: 'Behold, the flower of valour!'

When he reached the citadel, on high,  
And the lovely Angelica appeared,  
From his steed, the Count did fairly fly.  
She greeted him warmly, as he neared,  
Removed his helm, and kissed him, by and by.  
Ask me not if by this the Count was cheered.  
When he felt her lips touch his lips and eyes,  
He though himself snatched up to Paradise.

The fair maiden had a hot bath prepared,  
Fine and noble, and perfumed most sweetly,  
And then she herself his bruised body bared,  
Kissing the knight full oft, and ardently.  
She salved his flesh with balm, no part was spared,  
To ease the bruises, handling him gently,  
For when a man is tired with riding long,  
His vigour such restores; he's rendered strong.

The Count was quiet, modesty was his name,  
While the maiden massaged him, here and there,  
Full of joyful contentment was that same  
Bold warrior, though he never thought to share  
His pleasure with her; modestly, he came  
To the scented bath, and washed himself with care,  
And, as soon he was dry, took great delight,  
In resting a while; for his heart was light.



**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 40-43: ANGELICA ASKS HIM TO DO HER A SERVICE**

And then Angelica led him by the hand  
To a fine and richly-furnished chamber,  
Where a pleasant meal the lady had planned,  
And Orlando ate a hearty dinner.  
Then the maid his attention did demand,  
Clasping him about the neck, moreover,  
And, gazing sweetly, asked him politely  
If he'd do her a service, saying, brightly:

'Tis but a small thing, dear Count, I ask,  
Do not refuse me, but give your promise,  
If you would win me with a single task.  
I'll repay you most fondly for your service,  
If in the light of your favour I might bask.  
Nor am I so discourteous as to speak  
Of aught you cannot give; all that I seek

Is that you show your prowess for a day,  
Reveal your best; I'll look on, and admire;  
If you are bold, my eyes will never stray  
From your person (such is my sole desire)  
Till you've emerged triumphant from the fray,  
And piled the foe's torn banners on the pyre.  
I know 'tis all within your power, too,  
For, I've heard, before, of all you can do.

There's a fierce Arabian warrior-maid  
Who came with my father to defend me;  
She rebelled, without cause, and has displayed  
Ill-will and rancour; she fights with fury,  
Attacks my company with lance and blade,  
And if you don't aid me willingly,  
I'll be captured by one who hates me so  
She'll torment me, then despatch me below.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 44-46: ORLANDO AGREES TO OPPOSE MARFISA**

So spoke the maid, and wept copiously,  
Bathing Orlando's troubled face with tears.  
He could scarce refrain from, instantly,  
Donning his armour to allay her fears,  
And though he spoke not, alarmingly,  
His eyes rolled, like a maddened steer's;

When his rage had decreased a little,  
He gazed at her, as if prepared for battle.

She could scarcely bear to see his face,  
So terrible a look it now displayed.  
'Lady,' replied the Count, 'tis Heaven's grace  
Has sent me this great task; be not afraid,  
For this woman you speak of I will chase,  
Capture, and slay, this same warrior-maid.  
Should all the world in arms support her,  
I will yet oppose them all, and conquer.'

Angelica, with this, was most content,  
For she well-knew his prowess in the field,  
And his offer now strengthened her intent.  
Sweetmeats and varied fruits were revealed,  
And every effort upon the Count she spent,  
Then left him, the promise signed and sealed,  
To Aquilante and Grifone, who  
Embraced Orlando, greeting him anew.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 47-50: HE LEARNS HE WILL ENCOUNTER HIS COUSIN RINALDO**

Angelica rejoiced at having won  
The Count's agreement, and that he would fight,  
Proud (since the man loved her) of all she'd done,  
Unworried by Marfisa, whom the knight  
Would certainly defeat. When she had gone,  
Aquilante told Orlando: 'You'll have sight  
Tomorrow of Montalbano's lord,  
You'll need all your skill with lance and sword.

I know not why he came here, but I deem  
He's lost his wits, in challenging us all;  
Crying shame, shows not a one here esteem,  
No, not a single knight, within the wall.  
I and Grifone challenged his extreme  
Opinion, and for compromise did call,  
But he defied all reason, we were forced  
To contend with him; my brother he unhorsed.'

'Are you sure tis he?' enquired Orlando,  
'Have you mistaken some other knight,  
For Rinaldo?' 'God save me, I say no;  
I viewed his face, ere he chose to fight,'  
Aquilante replied: 'Did I not know

That warrior of renown, at first sight?  
Am I robbed of intellect and reason,  
Not to recognise brave Almone's son?

Grifone gave the very same account,  
Knew twas Rinaldo, without question,  
And when he had heard him out, the Count,  
Convinced, wore a sourer expression,  
Jealous now, having drunk from the fount  
Of knowledge, fearing Rinaldo's mission  
Might to be to woo the fair Angelica;  
And it struck at his heart, like a hammer.

### BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 51-58: ORLANDO'S SOLILOQUY

He parted from the brothers and swiftly  
Retired to his chamber; there, alone,  
He paced about, wringing his hands, fiercely,  
Disdain and scorn upon his visage shown.  
Lamenting then, and grieving insanely,  
He threw himself upon his bed to groan,  
Still fully clothed and there he sighed and wept,  
Uttered words like to these, and never slept:

'Ah, human life, so sad and sorrowful,  
In which no pleasure lasts more than a day!  
Just as the world of light, so colourful,  
Eclipsed by the night, vanishes away.  
Such that there never was a joyful  
Time that fate or chance did not betray.  
All delight is but brief, and swiftly past,  
Grief endures, and forever holds us fast.

All of this applies to my sorry case.  
With honour and delight, I was received,  
By that maid, so divinely sweet of face.  
All my sorrows had ended, I believed,  
Yet this news dispels all thought of grace,  
My pain grows; perchance I am deceived,  
Tis greater grief to lose what we acquired,  
Than never to win what the heart desired.

From the ends of the earth I came, I say,  
Thus, to attempt to win a lady's love,  
And I have had such joy of her this day,  
No greater could the living soul so move.

Fate decrees no other such shall come my way,  
For Rinaldo now an obstacle must prove.  
God knows he does wrong in coming here  
And one of us must perish, such is clear.

I always did my best to win him favour  
At the emperor's court; when, in disgrace,  
The man was banned, seemingly forever,  
I restored him to the king's benign grace.  
Yet he never loved me, nor showed me other  
Than disdain, since mine is the higher place.  
He calls a minor keep, and town, his home,  
While I'm a count, and senator of Rome.

He lacks all love for me and reverence.  
Yet thinking he might curb that ill disdain,  
I have sought to show but slight offence,  
Thinking my prudence would his ire contain.  
Yet, indeed, the fellow tests my patience,  
One dish will not two valiant men maintain,  
And I'm determined there shall be but one;  
Rulers and lovers brook no companion.

Should he win free, he's so malicious  
He'll seek to deprive me of my life,  
He knows all the tricks employed among us  
To tempt women, a demon bringing strife;  
While if I were even so licentious  
As to touch a lady's hair, like a knife  
Twould cut me; I'd not know where to start  
Or end, did I not first command her heart.

What! Am I saying I must break the tie;  
Scorn friendship, and the bonds of family  
That our ancestors maintained, and thereby  
Do wrong? Ill were that, yet it must be,  
For Love prevents me doing right, say I.  
Let us, with naked blades, in enmity,  
Sever those ancient ties, the bond of blood,  
And woo the maid as martial lovers should!

### BOOK I: CANTO XXV: 59-61: HE PREPARES TO FIGHT

Thus, reflecting, with troubled mind, the knight  
Revealed the sorrows of an ardent heart.  
He slept not at all, longing for the light,

Tossing from side to side, and, for his part,  
Felt time was scarcely passing and the night,  
Its moon and stars, reluctant to depart,  
So slow were they to vanish with the morn,  
And concede to the glowing light of dawn.

Three long hours ere the sun rose in the sky,  
The Count was pacing up and down his room;  
A great lord of France, with his weapons nigh,  
Clad in full armour, fretting at the gloom.  
He donned Almone's helm, and gave a sigh,  
Caught up Durindana, that blade of doom;  
Down to the stable-yard Orlando went,  
To greet Baiardo; till the night was spent,

He was ever glancing at the sombre sky,  
Hoping to see the first clear sign of day  
Chewing his fingernails, as time crawled by,  
Scarce able to endure the long delay.  
Now, gentlemen, good luck to you, say I,  
For we must part, and you go on your way;  
I'll reserve to the ensuing canto,  
Orlando's encounter with Rinaldo.



BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: THE DEATH OF TRUFFALDINO



**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 1-6: ORLANDO AND RINALDO ISSUE THEIR CHALLENGES**

I've told you of the cruel and dreadful fight  
Between those two opposing companies  
Their measureless attacks, knight on knight.  
Now I must rise to greater heights, to please  
You, with the duel twixt two valiant parties,  
A battle that nigh makes my blood to freeze.  
Lords, give ear, if you'd listen to the tale  
Of two fiery hearts, seeking to prevail.

I've told you of how brave Count Orlando  
Waited, alone, for daylight to appear;  
Fulminating, as he paced to and fro;  
Biting his fingernails, yet not in fear;  
Waving Durindana (as if his foe  
Agolante, King of Africa, drew near,  
Or the most valiant Troiano, his son),  
Swinging the sharpened blade, ere twas begun.

The story says: before him stood an idol,  
A statue of immeasurable size,  
A work of the finest gleaming marble,  
And that, on seeing it before his eyes,  
The Count assailed it, as if in battle,  
Fiercely, with his sword, beat his prize,  
And struck at it, flailing the blade around,  
Till his 'foe' lay in pieces on the ground.

While Orlando, thus, in unconcealed  
Rage, passed the time waiting for the morn,  
Bold Rinaldo, whose tent stood in the field,  
Was no less restless ere the break of dawn;  
For he too was armed, his sword did wield,  
(Brave Fusberta) and, like a madman born,  
He stormed around, striking rocks and trees,  
Longing for fierce battle to bring him ease.

'Twas in the dark of night, no sign of day,  
When Lord Rinaldo mounted, fearlessly,  
And raised up his great war-horn; at its bray,  
The mountains shook, the plain quaked endlessly.  
Rinaldo blew so loud a blast, I say,  
That Orlando on hearing it, knew plainly,  
That it was his cousin's summons, his intent  
Made clear by the power of that instrument.

Then the Count's heart was so consumed by fire,  
And by anger, he could brook no delay.  
He lifted his own horn, and filled with ire,  
Issued his answer; followed, on its way,  
By threats and menaces: 'Rise from the mire,  
Traitorous hound, and face the light of day!  
In a moment, you'll meet me on the plain,  
And repent of it, in time, with woe and pain!'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 7-13: ORLANDO RIDES FORTH**

Little by little, the darkness dissipated,  
A crimson dawn now graced the peaceful sky;  
The stars had yielded to a belated  
Sunrise, when the Count, issued his reply,  
Gritting his teeth, in wrath, as if fated  
To enter the blazing fire where one might die;  
Shook his head, laced his helm and, thereupon,  
Mounted his steed, Baiardo, and was gone;

Yet was in such a mighty haste to start  
The encounter, that, full of arrogance,  
He well-nigh forgot the warrior's part,  
And left behind him his good shield and lance.  
He reached the barred gate, eager to depart,  
(Which was shut tight, at evening's advance,  
As they raised the drawbridge, there to stay  
Till the sun rose, on the following day),

And would have beaten down the solid gate  
Had his lady not seen him, and drawn near,  
With that kindly look she'd shown him of late,  
And stopped him, as he thought to disappear.  
Upon seeing her angelic face, his state  
Was such that he nigh dropped his sword in fear,  
Leapt from his saddle, rose with a bound,  
Then knelt humbly before her, on the ground.

She embraced the valiant warrior, and cried:  
'My lord, where go you? Surely you have sworn  
To be my knight, and promised me beside  
To serve me, and to fight for me, this dawn.  
Your love for me you should not seek to hide,  
So, wear this helmet crest, to greet the morn,  
Bear this painted shield, and so think ever  
On she who gives it; show your best for her.'

And, with that, the helmet-crest she revealed,  
The form of which displayed a naked boy,  
Winged, with bow and quiver; then the shield  
That a finely painted emblem did employ;  
Twas a white ermine on a golden field,  
And Orlando, gazing on her in pure joy,  
(He who often seemed cold) felt such desire  
He thought he'd die; his soul was so afire.

Grifone joined him, as they were speaking,  
Prepared for battle, fully armed, and then  
Aquilante and Grifone, seeking  
Their revenge, and Hadrian, fit again  
For war; but not Oberto, suffering,  
As he yet was, from the painful swelling  
Of his wounded face, that, through lack of care,  
Hurt the more, and did his actions impair,

He stayed behind; but here was Truffaldino,  
For whom the fight was at first proclaimed.  
His face was pallid, but, despite his woe,  
He could find no excuse (for he'd been named)  
Not to ride with them to the plain below,  
On that ill path, that might see him maimed.  
He felt twas all an outrage, and he, wronged;  
He looked half-dead; one that for safety longed.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 14-20: RINALDO AND HIS COMPANY AWAIT HIM**

Let us leave them, as the gate is opened wide,  
And the drawbridge lowered, and let us turn  
To the prince; he'd heard all the Count had cried,  
But twas the latter's presence brought concern,  
For though he felt the right was on his side,  
Twas a fight he'd have felt inclined to spurn,  
For he loved his cousin with all his heart,  
As if he were a brother, for his part.

He was troubled in mind by the thought,  
That he'd sworn Truffaldino must die,  
And now the Count, for that villain, fought,  
And would all others' weapons now defy.  
As he was musing thus, Astolfo sought  
His company; Marfisa, by and by,  
Joined them with Iroldo, Prasildo,  
And Turkey's mighty monarch, Torindo.

As the warriors gathered to the spot  
Bold Astolfo cried: 'Come, let's not delay!  
But, rather, beat the iron while it's hot.'  
'More haste less speed might serve to gain the day,'  
The prince replied, 'fair cousin, we are not  
Facing whom you think; armed for the fray  
Anglante's count approaches, tis Orlando,  
One that is ever the most fearsome foe.'

Marfisa raised her eyebrows, unconcerned,  
And, well-nigh laughing, asked Rinaldo:  
'Who then has such a reputation earned  
That, ere the man arrives, you fear him so?  
I'd tremble not; not even if I learned  
That he had sent Almonte down below,  
With all his knights; this Count Anglante,  
His very name means less than naught to me.'

Rinaldo offered the maid no reply,  
For other things now occupied his mind;  
Six knights upon the slope he did spy,  
Descending from the citadel, behind  
Their leader Orlando, who, to the eye,  
Was fierce of aspect, and to war inclined.  
Marfisa marked the Count, and said: 'The knight,  
That rides before them, makes a pretty sight.'

Astolfo said: 'Be not concerned, for though  
Your other fights but were a jest ere this,  
And he the stronger and the bolder foe,  
He's no master, I say, and naught's amiss;  
Rinaldo will handle him, but you may go  
First to the fray, and do so, if you wish,  
And I'll go third, in case you two both fall;  
Fear not, for I'll be there to save us all.'

Marfisa laughed: 'I regret, most deeply,  
That I've not time to battle gainst that boy,  
For there's another promise commands me,  
But, by my faith, all my wits I'll employ  
On avoiding death, or capture; swiftly,  
I'll return, and I'll bring the fellow joy.'  
So, they conversed; yet her design proved vain,  
For Orlando had descended to the plain.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 21-24: ASTOLFO IS UNHORSED**

The Count reached the border of the meadow,  
And then lowered his long and weighty lance.  
Aquilante, on the right, his lead did follow,  
While Grifone on the left, made sure advance.  
Truffaldino, with a face white as dough,  
Rode beside King Hadrian, of upright stance,  
And there too Chiarone, free of fear,  
Urged his courser onwards, and gripped his spear.

Marfisa now sped swiftly to the fight,  
Lance lowered; beside her rode Rinaldo,  
Iroldo, and Prasildo, men of might,  
With the bold Torindo, and Astolfo  
Bearing heavy lances, to left and right.  
Their encounter began, with blow on blow,  
Harsh and violent; and I will tell you all  
Those brave foes wrought, and what did there befall.

Marfisa first charged at Aquilante;  
Each seemed a pillar made of solid rock,  
For they both were strong, and seated firmly,  
And neither pitched backward at the shock;  
With lances shattered, recovering swiftly.  
Meanwhile Astolfo, from the starting block,  
Had aimed himself and his golden spear  
At Truffaldino who, as the knight came near,

Swerved, for every trick there was he knew,  
(As Bishop Turpin tells us in his book)  
Then approached Astolfo, somewhat askew,  
And, from the side, a wicked lance-blow struck,  
(While the other could but his course pursue)  
And such force it had, less by skill than luck,  
That Astolfo's strength and art was all in vain,  
For he landed, heavily, upon the plain.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 25-29: THE COMPANIES ENGAGE, RINALDO ENCOUNTERS ORLANDO**

Let us leave Astolfo there, on the ground,  
For I would follow the fierce battle's progress,  
And relate the whole tale of that renowned  
Encounter; bold Prasildo sought success

Gainst Hadrian, while Chiarone found  
Iroldo nigh him, whom he did address.  
Nor could the eye discern, in that advance,  
Which had the best of it; all broke a lance.

Torindo meanwhile engaged Grifone;  
He was toppled cleanly from his steed.  
While Orlando and the son of Amone,  
Bold Rinaldo, met, violently indeed,  
Each thinking he had, of a certainty,  
Unhorsed the other; but, my lords, give heed;  
For, strange but true, the faithful Baiardo,  
Recognised his master in Rinaldo.

The Count, if you recall, had gained the horse,  
When he took the life of Agricane;  
Now, possessed of intelligence, its course  
It altered, despite the Count's wish, clearly  
Opposed to any show of martial force,  
Against Rinaldo, swerving suddenly,  
So that Orlando's aim went all awry,  
While Rinaldo's lance bruised hip and thigh,

And well-nigh sent him flying through the air.  
Not one who saw Orlando then could gauge  
The height of his vast fury; the lightning-flare,  
Striking earth, the ocean-storm in mighty rage  
Howling loudest, the earthquake's roar, compare  
But faintly to the ire, the wild rampage,  
The Count indulged in; the boundless anger,  
That possessed the man; such that, thereafter,

He was blind with fury, and yet his eyes  
Blazed brightly, and glowed with living flame;  
He ground his teeth so hard, in fierce surprise,  
That the sound sped far and wide of that same,  
It seemed he breathed out fire, and furnace-wise  
Great blasts of heat forth from his nostrils came.  
Need I describe his dread appearance further?  
He drove his spurs deep into his courser.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 30-34: RINALDO ADMONISHES HIM**

As Orlando did so, he yanked the rein,  
Thinking to set Baiardo's course once more,  
But the horse showed reluctance, balked again,

And stopped, as if to graze the grassy floor.  
Rinaldo, viewing this with some disdain,  
Cried to the Count: 'Noble cousin, be sure,  
That all injustice and ill deeds displease  
The Lord above, who, ever, our error sees.

Where is that pure and honourable mind,  
That noble spirit, you possessed in France;  
Defender of the right and true, assigned  
To be fraud's enemy, and good advance?  
My dear Count, I fear you've sadly declined  
In chivalry, and turned your sword and lance  
To sinful deeds; a meretricious witch  
Has seized your heart, and hurled it in the ditch.

Would you have it known, at the emperor's court,  
That you defended a vile and wretched traitor?  
Twere better an honourable death you sought,  
Than live dishonoured, in shame, hereafter.  
Quit Truffaldino (for the man's worth naught),  
And the false delights of this Angelica;  
For in truth, and I'll ne'er tell you a lie,  
Which is the more shameful, I know not, I.'

Orlando answered: 'Here's the altar thief  
Who has turned to a preacher in the night!  
The flock can sleep secure, and feel no grief,  
For the wolf is kindly keeping them in sight!  
You counsel me, tis your fond belief,  
I should forgo Angelica outright,  
For no good reason. Look to your own sin,  
Ere upon the faults of others you begin.

I come not to bandy words with you,  
Tis not my forte, and discomforts me.  
Do me the very worst that you can do,  
For the day will not end before you see  
Much suffering; pain and woe here ensue  
For those who speak so discourteously,  
And in such terms, of my thrice-lovely maid,  
As you have done; all such shall be repaid.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 35-41: THEN PURSUES TRUFFALDINO, DESPITE BEING ATTACKED**

'Twas thus, they spoke, each man astride his steed,  
For Orlando was afraid to dismount,

Lest bold Baiardo departed at speed,  
Seeming set on abandoning the Count.  
As they conversed, for both men seemed agreed  
That common courtesy was paramount,  
Rinaldo had a chance to look around,  
And Truffaldino's steed, and person, found.

The king had knocked Astolfo from his seat,  
Though the latter had risen, sword in hand,  
And parried every blow, his footwork fleet.  
Rinaldo sped to where he'd made his stand,  
Observed by Truffaldino, that complete  
Child of sin, whose soul bore the Devil's brand;  
He fled the Lord of Montalbano's sight  
As a pigeon flees the hawk's stooping flight.

Truffaldino, as he did so, called for aid:  
'Help me, now, my band of brave cavaliers!'  
For he held them to the promise they'd made,  
And was, surely, not misled by his fears,  
For the prince was on his heels, and displayed  
A pretty turn of speed, while his brave peers,  
Now his foes, abandoned each their own fight,  
To halt that hot pursuit, and foil the knight.

The only man who did not was Orlando,  
Quite unable, as I mentioned before,  
To control Rinaldo's steed, Baiardo.  
But Grifone, master of the art of war,  
Reached the king in time, although Rinaldo  
When the knight's swift intervention he saw,  
Turned at once, and struck Grifone a blow  
That stunned him, and nearly laid him low.

Then once more he chased after Truffaldino,  
Who ne'er ceased from his flight o'er the plain,  
Though the prince was borne by Rabicano,  
Thus, the traitor's desperate course proved in vain.  
The king was set to meet his mortal foe,  
When King Hadrian intervened again,  
Though Lord Rinaldo struck him with such force,  
He sent Hadrian flying from his horse.

Meanwhile Truffaldino, the vile, had sped  
A good half a mile beyond Rinaldo,  
Yet, as if he were possessed of wings instead  
Of hooves, the faster mount was Rabicano.



Rinaldo reached the traitor, as he fled,  
As Aquilante, from the side, did show,  
And fought fiercely with him till Rinaldo,  
Struck his helm, to leave for dead his foe.

For he'd stunned Aquilante, and the knight  
Fell backwards on the crupper of his steed.  
The prince had Truffaldino yet in sight,  
When Chiarone, he of martial breed,  
Took up the duel, to whom the prince, outright,  
Delivered a swift blow, so fierce indeed,  
It unhorsed him; then chased Truffaldino,  
More swiftly than ever sped an arrow.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 42-45: ORLANDO  
BATTLES MARFISA; BRANDIMARTE APPEARS  
WITH BRIGLIADOR**

While Rinaldo hunted Truffaldino,  
Orlando duelled the brave Marfisa,  
Now able to command his mount, Baiardo,  
In the absence of its former master.  
Both fought effectively, and with no  
Apparent advantage, there, to either,  
Though Count Orlando was cautious indeed,  
As he now placed little trust in the steed.

He shifted ground slowly, fighting wisely,  
With every martial skill that he possessed,  
Saving his strength; and, full of energy,  
Then turned aside, and feigned to call for rest.  
As he did so, he spied Brandimarte,  
And Orlando's heart leapt in his breast,  
Overjoyed to see the warrior once more,  
And that he led behind him Brigliador.

He sped o'er the field to meet the knight;  
Each, of his misadventures, told the tale,  
Then Brandimarte sought to leave the fight  
Since he needed fresh weapons, plate, and mail;  
He'd return to the citadel, outright,  
And lead Baiardo to safety, without fail.  
Meanwhile the Count fit, as he was, for war,  
Changing steed, had mounted Brigliador.

Anglante's lord, feigning rest no longer,  
Galloped back to seek the warrior-maid,  
His threats and menaces far stronger,  
For, now, a mortal challenge he conveyed,  
As they drove their chargers at each other,  
To kill or conquer, all their ire displayed.  
I'll tell you, shortly, how the duel was fought;  
But meanwhile Truffaldino had been caught.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 46-50: THE DEATH OF  
TRUFFALDINO**

Rinaldo overtook him, near the keep.  
He chose not to kill him, then and there,  
But bound him, as he lay there in a heap,  
Held as tightly as a creature in a snare.  
And that he might the battlefield now sweep,  
Tied the traitor, head down and legs in air,  
To Baiardo, shouting, as he rode around,  
'Where now is his champion to be found?'

Bold Grifone had revived, while Hadrian  
And Chiarone, new-mounted, on hearing  
That bold challenge, their chase of him began,  
As, across the wide plain, he went racing;  
But he rode so quickly, dragging the man,  
That, while they were swift in pursuing,  
Rabicano was still faster, as though  
Unhampered by the half-dead Truffaldino.

And, as he passed, Rinaldo cried aloud:  
'Where are you now, all you brave champions,  
For whom a single warrior, nay a crowd,  
Was scarcely enough for your fine weapons,  
But rather the world entire you avowed  
To conquer? Here's your king, you minions!  
Will you see him die here, or defend him?  
Come, you courtiers, then, and attend him!'

So, the prince challenged them, as he rode,  
Dragging poor Truffaldino o'er the field;  
He, to every stone, a wound now owed;  
His shattered frame a smear of blood did yield,  
As Rinaldo galloped on, and never slowed;  
While blood-stained fragments that swift course  
revealed,  
Where Truffaldino's flesh, all cut and torn,  
Now adorned every hostile rock and thorn.

The evil king perished in that manner,  
And in truth, well-merited a death so vile,  
For, as our tale has told, he was ever  
False and treacherous, a wretch to revile.  
Let's turn to Orlando and Marfisa,  
Whose vicious clash, with naked blades, meanwhile,  
Was so savage, as if wrought to appal,  
The Earth and heavens seemed about to fall.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 51-56: ORLANDO  
QUITS MARFISA TO CHASE AFTER RINALDO**

The battle seemed uncommonly bitter,  
So fierce to tell of it might stretch belief;  
How the queen hacked at Orlando's armour,  
Pressing him, and offering scant relief.  
The Count made greater efforts; however  
He still failed to pierce her defence, in brief,  
Though with such mighty blows the Count did greet  
Marfisa, she was oft forced to retreat.

Minute by minute, the duel grew fiercer,  
Immeasurable the force of every blow.  
Yet, behold, Rinaldo drove his charger  
Close to the fight, as if he wished to show  
What he dragged behind him, the remainder  
Of Truffaldino's corpse, that part below  
(Borne above!) the traitor's waist, while the rest  
Remained behind: the head, and arms, and chest.

Rinaldo sped past them, in full flight,  
Calling loudly, so he was clearly heard:  
'Come defend your noble monarch, sir knight,  
For here's a king, whose virtues, in a word,  
Equal yours; nor is he one fit to fight!  
Where's the valiant heart you claimed was stirred  
By war, whene'er your banner you unfurled?  
Where that boast, of conquering all the world?'

The Count could not but hear the high disdain  
In that voice accusing him of cowardice,  
He therefore turned to Marfisa, to explain  
That the Lord Rinaldo had his promise:  
(Her name he'd not managed to obtain)  
'Brave knight, I feel obliged to defer this.  
Once I've slain him, God willing, I'll return,  
Yet our fight, for a while, we must adjourn.'

Marfisa answered: 'Sir, you much deceive  
Yourself, if you think to slay him quickly.  
He's worth no less than you, I believe,  
Since I've fought you both; assuredly,  
Tis like paying the bill ere you receive  
The sum, from the host, it seems to me.  
If you can survive the fight, till day's end,  
Then you'll have earned the right to boast, my friend!

But, go! And I'll wait here to discover  
Which of you two proves the better knight;  
Though if your friends should arrive to cover  
For your absence, I still intend to fight.  
I'll set myself to chase them all, moreover,  
Back to the fortress; yet, do what is right,  
And I'll not prevent your doing so,  
Nor follow, by my faith; thus, you may go.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVI: 57-64: HE AND  
RINALDO QUARREL OVER BAIARDO**

Orlando barely heard, for he had sped  
After Rinaldo, as he galloped by.  
'All your threats are but wasted if you've fled;  
Show your face not your back!' sang forth his cry.  
'If you'd strike fear, turn your horse's head,  
Not spout some boastful speech, as you fly.  
Now, you are bold! Your mount indeed is fast,  
But not so swift the steed cannot be passed.'

Hearing his call, Rinaldo, in anger,  
Turned about, and replied: 'I want no fight  
With you, cousin, though it seems, as ever,  
That, believing yourself in the right,  
You seek to fight with me; you'll discover  
When my cause is just, my fellow knight,  
With none on earth would I, a duel, forego;  
But, by God's truth, I'd not see you, my foe.'

'No, of that I'm quite sure,' cried Orlando,  
Since I'm no merchant you can rob, you thief;  
Some passing stranger you can steal from; so,  
Let us not bandy ill words, but be brief.  
Whatever valour you possess, now show.  
You lack the means, such is my belief.  
And I tell you, and in this I speak no lie,  
That you must either conquer me, or die.'

Rinaldo answered him: 'Nay, I'll not fight!  
You are blood kin, and I'll not duel with you.  
Why do you find offence in me, sir knight?  
For I've done naught for which revenge is due.  
Could it be that you feel shame, at the sight  
Of Truffaldino's corpse, that you now view,  
Because I slew the traitor? Trouble not,  
I'll confirm you were distant from the spot.'

Orlando now replied: 'You base spirit,  
You give away the secret of your birth.  
You're no son of Amone, far from it;  
Treacherous Ginamo, for what it's worth,  
He of Maganza, he lay behind it,  
Though you trumpet your lineage, o'er the earth,  
Such is your arrogance. Now you must fight,  
You cry for mercy, and forego what's right.'

At this, Rinaldo lost patience, and cast  
A fierce look in his cousin's direction.  
'You deem yourself so great, your pride's so vast,  
You think all dread to meet you in action.  
But give me back Baiardo, at long last;  
The courser is mine, and that's no fiction,  
Or you'll discover that I frighten not,  
For I think you, my friend, not worth a jot.

Nor do I care how you obtained the steed.  
Return the creature, settle your account.  
For you failed to manage him, and, indeed,  
Sent him from the field; yours a lesser mount.  
I'll win him back, however great the deed  
Required; though stone and steel, in vast amount,  
Keep him from me, I'll reach him; ah, come near,  
Since you hear not, though I speak loud and clear.'

'We'll test the proof of that, and shortly.'  
Said the Count, with a little smile, but then  
His face showing naught but hostility,  
His lips tight-pressed, his eyes blazed again...  
Though I'll complete the tale, as you'll see,  
I must desert you, briefly, gentlemen,  
And forgo, for now, sight of that duel,  
Than which no other was e'er as cruel.



BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: ORLANDO'S DUEL WITH RINALDO



ARGOMENTO.

Combatte con Rinaldo Orlando insieme,  
Dimostrano ugual forza, e ugual ualore,  
Pel dì seguente si sfidano, e ha speme,  
Ogni un di loro hauer de l'altro honore.  
Angelica d'amor seuita geme,  
E per ueder Rinaldo n'escie fuore.  
Tornano i Paladini a la battaglia,  
Per prouar chi di lor più possa, e uaglia. 12



ALLEGORIE.

LA Battaglia, che fa Orlando col suo cugino Rinaldo, ingiuriandosi con pungenti parole, mostra quanto douereffimo guardarfi dall'ira, poi che quella ne acceca sì, che ne fa dimenticare ogni cosa ragioneuole, & honesta.

ANGELICA, che sotto coperta di vedere la battaglia, v'è per vedere Rinaldo, c'insegna che quello che non si può ad altra guisa fare, con astutia spesso si conduce al desiato fine.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 1-9: RINALDO STUNS  
COUNT ORLANDO**

Who'll grant me speech, both noble and profound,  
Sufficient to describe that dreadful fight?  
Never was fiercer fought on any ground  
Than that mighty duel, twixt knight and knight.  
Other battles, that in story are renowned,  
Were but beds of roses, violets to delight.  
This tests my art. Earth's pride and valour  
Fought there, face to face, both seeking honour.

Both were enraged, such that they terrified  
All those gazing on, for some simply fled  
Without a word, while, of those who defied  
Their fear, few drew near, but watched in dread.  
Hot breath rose from the visors on each side,  
The air trembling at every word they said,  
And those that were nearest to those same  
Swore that their very helms were wreathed in flame.

They shouted harshly, and menacingly,  
Glaring, behind their visors, at each other,  
And though the battle had begun slowly,  
As I've said before, twas in the manner  
Of two bold men proceeding cautiously.  
Both were proud and, facing one another,  
They spoke, as I revealed, to demonstrate  
That neither was inclined to take the bait.

But then Orlando waved Durindana,  
Shouting: 'Come, let us see if here's a knight  
To prove your equal and more, dear brother,  
Come, wield your gleaming sword, and show your fight!'  
The contest sprang to life; the prince, in anger,  
Feeling obliged to move, and show his might,  
Urged forward, riled now by Count Orlando  
And grasping Fusberta, his Rabicano.

He launched a fierce and a powerful swing  
Of that blade, using all his strength and skill.  
Orlando's crest, the Love-God, shattering,  
Wings broken, flew through the air; yet, still,  
Almonte's helm, the Count's life preserving,  
Saved him (his own charmed hide served him ill  
In such a circumstance) the blow so great  
His brains were well-nigh addled in his pate.

But the Count, hot with pride, ignored the blow.  
He seemed like a vast rock amidst the sea,  
Untroubled by the waves that beat below,  
Or some sudden gale, and answered instantly,  
Striking Rinaldo's helm (that once Mambrino  
Owned) with his great blade, wielded powerfully,  
Yet the prince, strong, and able to withstand  
Far fiercer still, was scarce by that unmanned.

Rather, replying swiftly to the blow,  
He struck Orlando between lance and shield,  
Piercing the breastplate, and the mail below;  
To Fusberta's mighty blade all did yield,  
Dragging down his jerkin and shirt also,  
And leaving him with naked flesh revealed.  
This but roused Orlando further; he smote  
Rinaldo, the sword-blade aimed at his throat,

But it struck him on his left, above the shield,  
Shattered it, and sliced through his armour,  
Fragments of steel plate flying to the field,  
As it cracked his hauberk, tore whatever  
Lay beneath, and exposed what was concealed;  
All his naked flank it did uncover.  
Both waxed in fury, and in ill-intent,  
The fight crueller, since neither would relent.

Rinaldo showed a strength and power, indeed,  
That was greater than any he had shown,  
Landing a back-handed blow, at speed,  
That would have cleft the Count's helm, and the bone  
Beneath, and knocked Orlando from his steed,  
Had the helmet not been charmed; like a stone  
The mighty blade fell, and so stunned the knight,  
It robbed him, for a while, of sense and sight.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 10-12: WHO  
RESPONDS BY STUNNING RINALDO IN TURN**

His charger wheeled around, still bearing  
The Count, in the saddle, all unconscious.  
Lord Rinaldo cried: 'And now, I'm thinking,  
Twill not take long to decide between us!'  
He sought to end it, wildly hammering  
The helm a second time, and yet that vicious  
Strike, though I know not the reason why,  
Revived Orlando, who then oped his eye.

Seeing Rinaldo poised to make the kill,  
The Count cried out, in anger: 'Worthless slave,  
Evil fortune has brought you naught but ill;  
You'll ne'er win the day; however brave  
You show, you will be slaughtered still,  
Unless you seek your wretched life to save,  
And flee, in shame! Defend yourself with pride,  
Your wish for death shall ne'er be denied!'

So spoke the Count; in both hands he grasped  
Durindana, that strong blade, and in anger,  
Struck Rinaldo's helm, against which it rasped,  
And whose radiant gleam it served to smother,  
Rinaldo, who his mighty sword yet clasped,  
Fell backwards across his horse's crupper,  
While away the said Rabicano sailed,  
As his master's arms and sword madly flailed.

### BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 13-21: THE PAIR TAUNT EACH OTHER

Yet there was ne'er a snake more venomous,  
Never a fiercer dragon e'er awoke,  
Than Lord Rinaldo, aware and conscious  
Once more, despite that nigh-mortal stroke.  
His heart and face on fire, his mood vicious,  
He turned, and all his courage did evoke,  
Gripped Fusberta hard, and loosed his rein,  
As Orlando, likewise, advanced again.

Hot steel against each other's armour smashed,  
In furious conflict; still the force increased  
Of every blow, as plate and mail they thrashed,  
Scattering pieces to the field; and ne'er ceased  
To strive for some advantage as they clashed,  
For neither man relented in the least.  
Now, hearts on fire, they struck at chest or head,  
Now, stretched across their steeds, they seemed half-  
dead.

They drove at each other with an enmity  
As was more fitting to the vengeful mind,  
Stinging each other with harsh taunts; fiercely  
Shouting, Orlando cried: 'This day you'll find  
You've met the sword of justice; speak freely,  
Confess your mortal sins, to fate resigned.  
Tis said you are a thief, and with reason.  
Embrace what's right, for death's now in season!'

'Why! You seem to think that we're in France,'  
Replied the prince, 'and that your threats hold weight.  
Another land other customs; sword and lance,  
Here, obey not King Charlemagne's dictate.  
You slander me, display your arrogance;  
Think you that such ill speech I'll tolerate?  
I'll prove, in whatever place you choose, that I  
Am far the better man; tis you shall die!

What tis you boast of, you bastard, tell me?  
That, by a fount, bound tight by Charlemagne,  
There perished, at your hands, brave Almonte?  
You bear Durindana, and ride the plain,  
Quite as if that sword were yours rightfully.  
Oh, you're a whoreson, I'll e'er maintain;  
She cared so much for honour, your mother,  
After her first sin, she but craved another!

Or tis of Troiano you boast perchance?  
Shameful indeed! He, wounded mortally,  
Lacking a hand, still seeking to advance,  
Unhorsed you, e'er you slew him finally.  
Go hide yourself, my friend, quit sword and lance,  
No man, are you; nor what you claim to be,  
How dare you, thus, proclaim yourself a knight  
When you work ill so, and so scorn the right?'

Orlando answered: 'Nay, there's no dispute  
As to who's better; a true knight am I,  
And you but a base thief of ill-repute,  
As the whole world will perceive, by and by.  
That Almonte's death was shameful I refute,  
While Troiano, I say, was doomed to die,  
And both knights were valiant, both well-born,  
Men who'd have looked on such as you with scorn.

Ruggiero rode with me, and Chiarone,  
The latter knight the flower of chivalry;  
Men who were never in your company,  
For neither was a brigand, nor like to be.  
Why! You proclaim that you slew the mighty  
King Mambrino, though, most curiously,  
There's none can say how you wrought the deed,  
Since you fled, with considerable speed;

All occurred, unwitnessed behind a hill,  
No man alive could swear what happened there.  
Who knows if Malagisi wrought his will,  
Conjured a demon out of darksome air,  
And brought you victory, and does so still?  
I've dreamed, or perchance I've heard somewhere  
That his brother Constantin, you did attack,  
Stabbing him, treacherously, in the back.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 22-27: THEN TAKE UP  
THE FIGHT AGAIN**

With a wealth of scorn, they taunted each other,  
Each in turn abusing his valiant foe;  
Seeking something more than words, however,  
Barbed speech led them on, to many a blow,  
Outrageous deeds wrought on one another,  
Wrath, and humiliation, gripped them so;  
They swung their mighty weapons with such ire  
That every stroke sent forth showers of fire.

Orlando swung with both hands, in anger,  
And his sword landed with a hammer-blow,  
Nigh unseating his opposite number  
And sending him, stunned, to the ground below.  
No fierce flare e'er burned so bright, however,  
As the face of him of Montalbano,  
Once that lord revived, no star to the sight  
Could ever have appeared more filled with light.

He struck Orlando's helmet with such force,  
That the Count lost his senses, and lay back,  
Unconscious, on the crupper of his horse,  
Despite his vigour, dazed by the attack.  
His steed, relinquished to a wandering course,  
And he in such a plight, the reins now slack,  
All thought that he must fall from the saddle  
And, in that moment, concede the battle.

No wounded lion e'er raged as fiercely,  
No sleeping dragon roused with greater ire,  
Than did Orlando, waking, filled with fury;  
Now, from his visor, breathing steam and fire,  
For he was less dazed than rendered angry,  
And bolder yet, to victory did aspire,  
Hacking cruelly at Rinaldo's shield  
And scattering at least a third o'er the field.

As he slashed that mighty chunk of it away,  
Durindana cracked his hauberks' steel-plate,  
Tore it from Rinaldo's ribs and, sent to slay,  
Ripped his chain-mail, reduced to sorry state  
His whole breastplate and, in its vicious play,  
Toyed with his jerkin, shirt, till its full weight  
Came to rest, with a thud, against his side,  
Its force diminished greatly; else he'd died.

Rinaldo, though, so heated in the fight  
That he scarcely felt that final blow at all,  
In a sudden burst, again attacked the knight,  
And launched a stroke, intended to appal,  
That split the Count's shield in two, outright,  
Cleft his breastplate, and to his waist did fall.  
The count had his enchanted hide to thank,  
For resisting the blade that struck his flank.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 28-35: AT EVE, THEY  
AGREE TO REST, AND FIGHT NEXT MORN**

If I were to count the blows, one by one,  
And speak also of the fierce sparks that flew,  
Darkness would fall, ere my long task was done,  
(A thousand strokes they dealt, good and true)  
I'll refrain; yet I claim that there were none  
Of the ancients, not Hercules, nor those two  
Giants of Troy, great Achilles and Hector,  
Not bold Sampson himself, e'er fought harder.

What ill-fated Tristan, what pure Galahad;  
What further brave knight-errant, sung of old;  
Would not have wearied of the wounds they had,  
In the fierce encounter, of which I've told?  
They fought on fiercely, until scarcely clad  
In armour, pride and honour to uphold,  
From dawn to dusk; nor wavered in the fight,  
Each believing himself the finer knight.

The stars were showing in the evening sky  
Before they even spoke of seeking rest,  
Their hearts so wrathful, both prepared to die,  
And each full certain he'd survive the test.  
Ere the light was gone, they halted, by and by,  
Ashamed to proceed, thinking it were best  
To halt till morning, for no honest knight,  
In their day, e'er took to the field at night.

The Count said: 'You can thank the setting sun,  
And the fading light, that your death's delayed,  
For it seems that we must stop, now day is done,  
Though I grieve that your debt remains unpaid.'  
Rinaldo answered: 'Our contest is unwon;  
You may trounce me in debate, like a maid,  
But as yet you've gained little with your sword,  
Nor will do, while I live, rest you assured.

I myself am ready to end this now,  
To demonstrate I lack all fear of you,  
For you trouble me not, I here avow,  
And, night or day, our duel you will rue.'  
'Villain!' the Count replied, 'Yet, I'll allow,  
Twould show your nature, ever to pursue  
The beginning or ending of a fight  
By an ambush sprung in the dark of night.

I'd rather wage our contest in broad day,  
So, all can clearly witness your shame,  
Free of shadows, in which to slope away,  
And hide your sorry self from scorn and blame!  
Rinaldo cried: 'I'm delighted, I must say,  
To be so distant from home; you can maim  
Or slay me (faint hopes!) in this far country,  
Without my bringing pain to Duke Amone!

Oh, I'll fight you in the forest, if you will,  
At eve, at morning when the sky is light,  
Here on the plain, or on some lofty hill,  
From dawn to dusk, and so on through the night.  
While you display your rare renown and skill,  
Polish your fame, and keep it e'er in sight,  
Such that you ne'er fight till the sun is high,  
Thinking your quartered ensign awes the eye!

Around them stood the armoured gathering,  
Those from the fortress, those with Marfisa;  
For they had quit their duelling, at evening,  
To gaze on the warriors' fierce encounter.  
The proud pair now decided on returning  
Next morning, once more to face each other,  
So, at last, they might settle this affair,  
As to which was the best and bravest there.

## BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 36-39: ANGELICA DISCOVERS RINALDO IS AT ALBRACCA

Then they returned to the fortress keep,  
Orlando, I mean, and his company,  
The rest to the tents where they would sleep.  
In the field, horns and trumpets blared loudly,  
Many a strange tongue called from the deep,  
And sudden campfires flared, shining brightly,  
While torches lit the walls of Albracca,  
Where the bells tolled; twas there Angelica

Accompanied by her ladies, met the Count,  
In a richly decorated chamber,  
Where food, and wine in copious amount,  
Were served. The Count was troubled, however;  
His armour split, as my tale did recount,  
His shield, with its ermine insignia,  
Quite shattered, while he'd lost his Cupid crest,  
Hence, add an anxious heart to all the rest.

He was so downcast, he was scarcely sure  
If he was alive or dead, for he thought  
The lovely maiden had been keeping score,  
And twas that emblem, of the Love-God, she sought.  
He was not troubled long though, for she saw  
His nervousness, and so asked about naught  
But what appeared most pleasing to the knight,  
And spoke only of his valour in the fight.

As they passed their time in conversation,  
Concerning the duel on the plain below,  
In so doing, the Count had occasion  
To name the Lord of Montalbano  
As his foe, I know not for what reason.  
Hearing sudden mention of Rinaldo,  
The maiden started, but, wise and clever,  
Hid her thoughts, and dissembled, as ever.

## BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 40-43: AND FINDS A PRETEXT TO BE NEAR HIM IN THE MORN

She said to the Count: 'Tis melancholy  
To stand all day watching from the wall,  
Uncertain if tis you, far-off, I see,  
Amidst the crowd, and fearing lest you fall.  
If fate allowed, on that field I would be,



Just once, when you fight, and view it all,  
Simply to admire your great skill in war,  
In truth, I pray to God for nothing more.

Though she's harsh and cruel, this Marfisa,  
Think you for a day she'd guarantee  
My security, if I stood closer?  
Who could be sent to the lady, from me,  
That might successfully seek that favour,  
And so, win a promise of my safety?  
Who'll present my petition to the maid?  
Perchance, Sacripante my cause will aid.'

King Sacripante, she summoned to her;  
He, to his very marrow, was on fire  
With love for that fair lady (as later,  
You will hear) possessed by such desire  
That there was naught he'd not attempt for her,  
And, to be brief, here's the tale entire,  
She spoke with him, and swiftly conveyed  
What she required of the warrior-maid.

He departed, and rode swiftly o'er the field,  
Though, as I've said, twas now the dark of night,  
And her request to the queen he revealed  
As soon as he was led before her sight.  
She answered favourably; the pact was sealed,  
(He was nothing if not eloquent, the knight)  
With pleasant words twas determined so,  
That Angelica might safely come and go.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 44-47: SHE PASSES A SLEEPLESS NIGHT**

When every star had vanished from the sky  
But the morning-star that precedes the sun,  
And the dewdrops, that on the grass did lie,  
Seemed like shimmering crystals, every one;  
When dawn broke, and the heavens, by and by,  
Took on hues of gold and crimson, night was done;  
Or, to state things more simply, it was morn,  
Though the bright sun itself was scarcely born.

Now, Angelica, stirred by that fierce fire  
That burns the heart, but ever chills the mind,  
Consumed, I mean, by her love and desire  
For Rinaldo, rose swiftly, disinclined

To wait for the dawning sun to rise higher,  
For each moment seemed but harsh and unkind,  
That concealed the sight of Rinaldo's face,  
And her hours wasted, lacking his embrace.

And since, as I've related, she now knew  
The prince was sleeping in his tent below,  
She'd not won an hour's rest, not e'en a few  
Precious minutes, through thinking of him so.  
Hoping in joy, sighing with sadness too,  
She waited for the sun's clear light to show.  
For ever it was her wish, nay her longing,  
To see him, though she should die of seeing.

Meanwhile, all undisturbed, Orlando  
Was yet lying, fast asleep, in his bed.  
Still, lost in slumber, battling the foe,  
As fiercely as he had (though in his head!)  
I doubt there lives a mortal, brave or no,  
Whether a common man or nobly bred,  
Who'd not have been a little scared to view  
That knight who, e'en in dream, did war pursue.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 48-52: SHE ROUSES ORLANDO AT DAWN, AND SEEKS A PROMISE**

Alone, the maiden came to him, at dawn,  
And hardly dared to wake him, but as one  
Who'd have the time speed by, and it be morn,  
To whom minutes seemed hours, ere they were done,  
While an hour seemed a day, ere day was born,  
E'en more ready to ride forth with the sun  
Than was the Count, with her lips, now her hand,  
She sought his wakeful presence to command.

'Come, rise from your bed, and sleep no more!'  
She cried: 'The world awakes on every side.  
I heard a mighty horn blast, I am sure,  
To summon valiant knights, from far and wide;  
And, since I wished and therefore did implore  
You to lead me to the field, and with pride,  
God willing, aid our return, I did wish  
To wake you and, from you, seek a promise.'

The Count, gazing on her lovely face,  
Felt his poor heart fill with amorous fire,  
And trembled as his lady, of her grace,

Clasped him in her arms (the flames grew higher!),  
 She saying, as he warmed to her embrace:  
 'I am at your command, but wait, dear sire,  
 If you love me, for, upon my, faith I swear,  
 I will do as I say, true love will share,

With you, and I will let you do your will,  
 Alone, as we are now, in your chamber,  
 If you grant me but one gift, and fulfil  
 My request when I ask it, and so offer  
 A proof of your love and your goodwill.  
 Come, show me that I possess your favour,  
 For tis but a single deed I'll request  
 When I ask it; and grant you all the rest.

But if you're so unkind as to seek  
 To take your pleasure now, and so shame me,  
 You'll be known as a villain; what you wreak  
 Will turn delight to tears and disgrace me;  
 For I'll die by my own hand, yet will speak  
 Before I die, to others, of your villainy.  
 It rests with you alone, and your own will,  
 Whether you slay me, or I live on still.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 53-57: WHICH HE CONCEDES**

As she finished speaking, the tears ran down;  
 She lowered her eyes, to rouse his pity.  
 The Count, in his own tears, well-nigh did drown,  
 Unable to endure hers, and spoke humbly,  
 In a low voice, and begged that she not frown,  
 And sought her pardon if, inadvertently,  
 He'd offended, and blamed his ardent heart,  
 For naught was intended, upon his part.

And then he swore a sacred oath, that he  
 Would honour the request that she had made.  
 Now, the moonlight had waned, and o'er the sea  
 The bright rays of the risen sun now played,  
 When that best of knights, full of bravery,  
 Who e'er the laws of chivalry obeyed,  
 Readied himself the cruel foe to assail,  
 And clad his body in steel-plate and mail.

Though Orlando possessed a manly heart,  
 And there was naught of which he was afraid,  
 Yet he checked his armour, standing apart,  
 His gauntlets, iron-clad boots, and bright blade;  
 For he knew Rinaldo fought with skill and art,  
 And had his courage in their joust displayed,  
 Thus, twas wise not to grant his mortal foe  
 The least benefit, nor good sense forego.

Once he was quite content with his armour,  
 And had his sword, Durindana, at his side,  
 He received, from the fair Angelica,  
 A helmet-crest, and painted shield beside.  
 On a field of gold, a tree, this latter  
 Displayed, like to the crest he now applied  
 To his helm, and then mounted on his steed,  
 Gripped his lance, and, as the pair had agreed,

Descended, with the maiden, to the plain,  
 She riding a well-mannered white palfrey.  
 Aquilante and Grifone again  
 Accompanied him, with bold Brandimarte,  
 And King Ballano; all unarmed; in their train,  
 Rode King Hadrian and Sacripante.  
 The wounded Chiarone, kept to the steep,  
 With Galafrone, and guarded the keep.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVII: 58-62: ORLANDO AND RINALDO ARRIVE FOR THE DUEL**

I'll speak of her champion, Orlando,  
 Who having ridden to the field below,  
 Halted, briefly, in the flowering meadow,  
 And blew his great horn, to challenge the foe;  
 Whereupon, in plate and mail, bold Rinaldo,  
 Now present to commence the duel, also,  
 Sounded his response, beside Marfisa;  
 She was there in support of the latter.

Her helmet doffed, her face thus unconcealed,  
 No finer warrior-maid e'er was seen.  
 Her blonde hair, coiled, her flawless brow revealed;  
 Her eyes were brighter than a star at e'en.  
 Her beauty's glory and nobility were sealed  
 By her agile movements, confident mien,  
 Her bold, clear speech, tall form, and bronzed colour,  
 Or so Bishop Turpin says, who saw her.

Angelica's looks were dissimilar,  
Hers were much softer, and more delicate;  
Her skin white, her lips a crimson colour;  
Her silky glances, meant to fascinate,  
Stole the hearts of those who gazed upon her;  
Her hair too was coiled above, in ornate  
Fashion; her speech was sweet, gentle, light,  
Turning every mournful thought to delight.

Angelica, then, rode beside Orlando,  
As I said but a moment before,  
While beside the Lord of Montalbano  
Came Marfisa. All armoured as for war,  
Rinaldo rode the valiant Rabicano,  
And was accompanied, you may be sure,  
By Torindo, and the duke Astolfo,  
Prasildo, and the vigorous Iroldo.

Now both parties have reached the grassy plain,  
They have halted, a moment, ere the fight,  
Each sounding his challenge, to maintain  
His claim to be the world's finest knight.  
I beg you, noble lords, return again,  
The next canto will add to your delight;  
Of all the many duels of which I tell,  
This was the greatest joust that e'er befell.

BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: RINALDO SAVED

ARGOMENTO.

*Da vn aspro colpo Orlando el fio d'Amonè,  
Dalqual stordito il porta Rabicano.  
Teme Angelica, e manda il suo campione  
Al fier di Falerina incanto Erano.  
Rende poscia a Rinaldo il suo ronzone  
Ma ei non ascolta. Lo leua di mano  
Astolfo a quella che fe l'imbasciata:  
Vede Orlando vna donna a vn pin legata.*



ALLEGORIE.

ANGELICA, che veduto Rinaldo da vn fiero colpo strango(cia to, temendo che Orlando lo finisce di ammazzare, manda il Conte al Giardin di Falerina: mostra che l'amore che ad alcuno porta la donna, spse uolte tanto grande, che se bene è da colui che essa ama sprezzato; pure per farle beneficio non guarda anco mettere in pericolo coloro, che ad essa portano piu che ad altra cosa amore.

Orlan. Inna.

P

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 1-7: ORLANDO  
THREATENS RINALDO**

He who has never known the power of Love  
May, perchance, seek to blame that valiant pair,  
Each duelling, his supremacy to prove,  
With ire and fury, and without a care  
For the respect due, e'en at one remove,  
To family, and the blood the two did share.  
Count Orlando, was certainly remiss,  
The desire to fight being mostly his.

But he who knows Love, and its endless might,  
Will excuse the Count; stronger than the mind,  
Love overcomes all art and wit, outright;  
None can defend themselves from it, we find.  
Young and old join the dance, lord and knight,  
Merchant and peasant, folk of every kind.  
Love lets the lover pause not to take breath,  
For there's no remedy for love or death.

And this will, shortly, be made manifest;  
For Count Orlando, who'd possessed good sense,  
Had changed his nature, being now obsessed,  
And most impatient for his lady's presence.  
Rinaldo was his foe, though, once, the best  
Of friends; driven now to warlike nonsense,  
Orlando threatened him with death that morn,  
And cried out, after sounding his great horn:

'You're not back in Montalbano now,  
And so able to hide behind its wall;  
Malagigi's not here, to scrape and bow  
And exercise his magic, at your call.  
Who will save you from my grasp, and how?  
Where could you run to, if you chose? Midst all  
The realms and cities of the earth, there's none  
Where you have not some crime, or other done.

You journeyed to the Barbary Coast and there  
It seems you kidnapped Belisandra,  
Perchance to those shores you would repair,  
Or seek the Levant and there find shelter,  
Where seven brothers died, none Fate did spare,  
Through your fraud and folly, and, as ever,  
Your inevitable bent for treachery.  
Or perchance you'll go hide in Thessaly?

There you captured King Pantasilicor,  
No greater cowardice was ever known!  
You took him prisoner and what's more  
Saw him hanged, Whichever king holds his throne,  
There you cannot pass. I know not, for sure,  
The tale of all the lawlessness you've sown,  
Your thefts and murders, yet, by night and day,  
Montalbano's road's treacherous they say.

I do know that you stole a weight of gold,  
Wealth that by every right belonged to me,  
For twas me, not you, in lying ever bold,  
That killed India's king, Durastante.  
And twas amidst a truce, so I was told,  
Of Charlemagne's, that you most secretly  
Stole King Marsilio's graven image.  
Repent! Today I'll repay the damage.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 8-12: WHO REPLIES  
IN KIND**

Rinaldo gave the Count a sharp reply.  
He blew loudly on his horn, Bondino,  
And once the sound had ceased, he gave a cry:  
'To your mark, vassal, once a knightly foe,  
Since you seemed disposed at least to try  
And settle scores for every pagan so,  
That was killed, by me, you claim, in the course  
Of hanging, theft, or abduction by force.

But let me remind you, I avenged, thus,  
The deaths of many a Christian there.  
While you may recall the most courageous  
Don Chiaro, whom you slew, in that affair,  
Because of which Girardo, one of us,  
Renounced his faith, turned pagan, in despair.  
Hear me, you renegade! You, vile offence  
Against honour! The evil lack defence!

Ranier, brave Oliviero's father,  
Was killed by Charlemagne because of you.  
Arnoldo of Bilanda, moreover,  
Before his loving father's eyes, you slew.  
When you rise tomorrow, and prayers offer,  
Do you hope to have Paradise in view?  
You'll need far more than a fine word or so,  
To outweigh your foul deeds, that fact I know.

Come villain, and recall Aspromonte!  
The capture of that place, by treachery,  
Meant death for the valiant king Balante,  
A treachery you shared in equally,  
Being close to Charlemagne; cowardly,  
You proved, not facing the man openly.  
But, at your behest, other men did go;  
'Twas Rugiero the Vassal slew him so.'

Rinaldo shouted out these words and more,  
Taunting Orlando, sparing him not at all,  
Until the Count could no longer endure  
His cries and, maddened by the other's gall,  
Charged, tempestuously, as if in war.  
Each knight crouched behind his shield, a wall  
Against his foe's sharp lance, brave indeed;  
Fast as wind or lightning seemed each steed.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 13-18: THE WARRIOR'S EXCHANGE BLOWS**

Like two fearsome opposing gales at sea,  
That clash, causing mighty ships to founder,  
Drowning small vessels, scattering debris,  
Or two mountain streams that meet together,  
Rolling boulders, uprooting every tree  
In their path, that pair fought one another,  
Charging to the encounter, there to clash,  
Till their lances struck, with an almighty crash.

Neither moved a finger's breadth in their seat,  
Though the broken shafts hurtled to the sky.  
They wheeled and, drawing their sharp swords to meet  
The foe, glared deep into each other's eye.  
There was none so brave, amidst the elite  
That watched on, that sight failed to terrify,  
For, those two, turning, showed a fearsome gaze,  
Grim, and menacing, in which dark fires did blaze.

No crueller thing the world has ever seen  
Than the fierce onslaught of those two.  
While the onlookers trembled at the scene,  
And sweated, as those bold knights toiled anew.  
Steel armour, chain-mail, as was rarely seen,  
Baring the flesh, not only fell but flew  
O'er the ground. Swinging hard, Rinaldo  
Struck so fiercely at the shield of his foe,

That the targe split, and the blade swept on  
To fracture the guard about his forearm.  
Though the Count was pained by the blow thereon,  
It yet failed to do him long-lasting harm,  
While he attacked Rinaldo; thereupon,  
Dealing a blow, left-handed, overarm,  
That whistled like the wind, and cracked the shield,  
And struck the shoulder-blade it had concealed.

Little by little, their fury waxed further.  
Rinaldo struck the Count's strong helm with force;  
'Twas once Almonte's and charmed, however,  
So that the blade deflected in its course,  
Though Orlando took time to recover  
From that fierce blow like the kick of a horse.  
Dazed a moment or two, he yet survived;  
Filled by shame and anger as he revived.

Gritting his teeth, the valiant knight groaned,  
And struck Rinaldo a blow on the head,  
Denting the helm Mambrino had owned,  
With a fury rarely seen, a blow that led  
To the prince slumping down, well-nigh dethroned  
From his steed. Rabicano plunged ahead,  
Then, as if borne by wings, sped on again,  
While Orlando spurred his own mount in vain.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 19-26: AND STUN EACH OTHER**

Never so sad a sight was ever seen,  
As that of the valorous Rinaldo  
Hanging limp from the saddle; o'er the green  
Grass of the meadow, trailing, in his woe,  
His sword, Fusberta; twas a sorry scene.  
Crimson flowed from his helm, and dripped below,  
While he shook in his sore distress and pain,  
His coursing blood trembling in every vein.

Blood issued forth from out his mouth, and nose,  
And twas not long ere his helmet was full.  
His courage was down, his heart nigh-froze,  
His steed ran free; pained by a throbbing skull,  
The knight was dazed awhile, such was the blow's  
Great force; yet no fierce snake, no raging bull,  
Matched Rinaldo in anger, when he woke,  
Recovering swiftly from that mighty stroke.

Ne'er was a fiercer challenge in this world;  
 What ensued surpassed all the duels of old.  
 For Rinaldo unstrapped his shield, and hurled  
 It to the ground, and then tightened his hold  
 On Fusberta, and round his head he whirled  
 That mighty sword, in both hands, to unfold  
 A vicious blow, striking hard at Orlando,  
 Dealing a shock to the forehead of his foe.

The Count could barely withstand its force,  
 His arms hung down loosely at his side.  
 He banged his head on the rump of his horse,  
 And then swayed back and forth, as he did ride,  
 Well-nigh sliding from the steed, in its course.  
 His sudden lack of strength he failed to hide.  
 Little kept the Count from falling to the field,  
 Stunned as he was; though not about to yield.

For like the knight he was, of sovereign strength,  
 He roused swiftly from his pain and distress,  
 And, gazing at Durindana, at length  
 Cried: 'The blade is mine, and endless success  
 It brought me, by the fount, where a tenth  
 Of my Saracen foes, twas little less  
 I despatched at each blow; or I'm deranged,  
 And tis for some other sword exchanged.

I must trial the blade.' Then he looked around,  
 And discovered a block of solid marble,  
 And split it, from its summit to the ground  
 Or well-nigh, as he leant from the saddle.  
 He turned to Rinaldo; fresh strength he found,  
 His eyes aflame, as, he sped to battle,  
 A dragon breathing fire, set to engage,  
 Whirling his sword, grinding his teeth in rage.

O Our God in Heaven, O Virgin Queen,  
 Defend Rinaldo from that mighty blow!  
 More vicious than aught our age has seen,  
 It might had laid a diamond mountain low.  
 Durindana's gleaming steel was ever keen,  
 Armour held no truce with it, as we know,  
 But the Lord wished to save Amone's son,  
 And twas but the flat of the blade he won.

Were it the edge, twould have sliced him in two,  
 Down to the saddle, and his mail worth naught;  
 He'd have died there and then. The blow was true,  
 For Orlando his cousin's death had sought.  
 There was danger still; he was stunned anew,  
 The force of it his helmet's crown had caught,  
 And the shock of it bruised the head below,  
 So that from ears and mouth the blood did flow.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 27-28: ANGELICA INTERVENES TO SAVE RINALDO**

All who stood there, gazing on, raised a cry,  
 At the sheer power unleashed, in that stroke;  
 E'en fierce Marfisa had a tear in her eye,  
 Thinking him lost. While, ere the prince awoke,  
 Orlando swung again, his sword on high,  
 To slice the knight in two, and death invoke.  
 And since Rinaldo lay as still as death,  
 He might have drawn, that instant, his last breath.

But the mortal blow now failed to descend,  
 For Angelica called to the Count to hold.  
 Then, with smiling face, took his arm, to end  
 The duel and, in a voice sweet yet bold,  
 Said: 'My intervention I'll not defend,  
 Dear Count; midst the chivalrous, I'm told,  
 One's word is everywhere a guarantee  
 Of one's good faith, as I deem yours to be.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 29-32: SENDING ORLANDO ON A QUEST TO DESTROY FALERINA'S GARDEN**

I swore my very self you might command,  
 That I'd render you happy, twas my vow;  
 Yours the how and when, you understand,  
 Yet that you'd first one sole request allow,  
 Undertaking a task that I'd demand,  
 Whene'er I might wish; and, that time is now.  
 Therefore, brave lord, go hence, without delay,  
 And, as to your road, hark to what I say.

Follow the road that crosses this country,  
 And make sure you do so without resting,  
 Till you reach Orgagna's near boundary,  
 Where you'll discover a most wondrous thing.

For, there, a deceitful, artful lady,  
Falerina, fair queen of sorcery,  
(God give her grief!) has wrought a magic garden,  
That can but bring ruin to her kingdom.

All that portion of enchanted ground,  
Is guarded by a dragon at the gate,  
Which has ravaged all the fair land around,  
While full many have been led to their fate;  
Since no stranger passes there, safe and sound,  
Nor knight that's not captured soon or late,  
Nor lord defending some lovely maiden;  
All such are delivered to the dragon.

So, I ask of you, if you do love me,  
Which, as far as I can see, you surely do:  
Remove the threat to that fair country,  
Which I cannot endure; to me, prove true.  
I know the depths of your bravery,  
Both the strength and skill that belong to you,  
And that though the task is dangerous,  
You can ne'er be aught but victorious.'

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 33-35: BUT RINALDO STILL REJECTS HER LOVE**

Orlando at once bowed to the lady;  
No need was there to speak another word.  
The Count galloped off so rapidly,  
He was soon out of view; full hard he spurred.  
Rinaldo revived, was full of fury,  
And seemed bent on revenge, still wildly stirred,  
For, with both hands, he gripped his mighty sword,  
Pouring endless scorn on that departing lord,

Though, by then, Orlando was a league away.  
Rinaldo pledged to follow on his trail,  
For he swore he'd have no peace, night or day,  
Till one of them was dead; to no avail,  
For Astolfo and Marfisa had their say;  
At last, their words of wisdom did prevail,  
And though Rinaldo's mind was yet on fire,  
He abandoned, with reluctance, his desire.

Such was the end of that ill-advised fight;  
Rinaldo had his wounds bathed and tended.  
Angelica wished to speak with the knight,

But to be with her he ne'er condescended.  
He had such hatred of her, the mere sight  
Of the lady annoyed him, and offended.  
Hence, she departed, her sadness unconcealed,  
While he was borne to his tent in the field.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 36-41: ANGELICA'S COMPLAINT**

On returning to the fortress, the lady  
Complained of her love, and her ill-fortune.  
She called on Death, while weeping profusely,  
And cried: 'Was there e'er, beneath the moon,  
Any maid that lived, any soul, that, sadly,  
To the depths of hell descended, late or soon,  
That felt such loving ardour and such pain  
As my tormented heart must here sustain?

That noble knight possesses my poor heart;  
He wishes me dead, yet will not slay me,  
He hears me not, is cruel, walks apart.  
If I could but make him listen, calmly,  
To the tale of my torments, then impart  
The means to end my existence, wholly  
Content I'd die. My deep love I'd reveal,  
That he might know the depths of pain I feel.

Every heart that's harsh and disdainful  
Yields at last to love, and tears of woe,  
So, Hope assures me, and I am hopeful,  
That he'll grant what he denies me, and so  
The sole path to joy is to be loyal,  
And have patience, and pray, yet cry also,  
And if I fail, left forever sighing,  
Then twill not be for the want of trying.

Nay, I shall conquer his discourtesy:  
I'll please him though it takes forever,  
My pain, the endless flames that consume me,  
Will make him pity his tormented lover.  
And to start upon that path, I must surely  
Send him Baiardo, since that bold charger,  
Or so I hear, for all folk say tis true,  
He loves more than aught else the eye can view.



The Count will not return, whose is the steed,  
For all his strength and skill are useless where  
I've sent him; he'll know nothing of my deed,  
Thus the creature's fate is my own affair.  
Dear Lord, how sinful I must be, indeed,  
To be the sole cause of his dying there!  
But, God knows, by no means could I stand by,  
And see the man I love condemned to die.

Anglante's lord must perish, in his stead,  
And, thereby, he has kept my love alive;  
Yet the Count, who loves me, will join the dead,  
While he I love, of love, doth me deprive.  
Thus, ill-conscience weighs heavy on my head,  
And I do wrong, in this that I contrive.  
Love's is the fault, who rules his subjects so,  
Obeys no laws, and wills both joy and woe.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 42-46: SHE  
INSTRUCTS HER LADY'S-MAID**

And, with this, she called forth a lady's-maid,  
One who had been her lifelong companion,  
That noble manners and sweet speech displayed.  
She curtsied to her mistress, whereupon,  
Angelica said: 'A word I wish conveyed,  
To that fair warrior-queen who wars upon  
Our citadel, and, in her pride, maintains  
This cruel siege, though my clear right obtains.

Mount your palfrey, and lead on Baiardo,  
That noble charger, his reins in your hand.  
Midst the tents, that o'er the field overflow,  
Find Montalbano's lord, you understand,  
And offer him the steed, and say also,  
That though he is pitiless, he doth command  
My heart, and though I perish from desire,  
I'd not retain his mount, nor rouse his ire.

I could ne'er let the steed endure distress,  
Much less his master, who opposes me  
Unjustly, and does my poor realm oppress.  
And yet mine is the right, as he must see;  
If I've wronged him, tis by my own excess  
In loving him, past all belief, as must be  
While I possess heart, blood, life, this I know,  
Whether I wish to feel such love, or no.

Speak to him in this manner, tell him this,  
Return with his answer, if he'll reply,  
For so little sympathy, it seems, is his,  
He may disdain to look you in the eye.  
Yet, ere you return, go seek a promise,  
From the queen, but honour her not, say I;  
Approach Marfisa, yet not reverently,  
Stay mounted, and make this request from me,

Say to her that I know Agricane,  
Through his prowess in war, has roused great fear  
Amongst the folk of many a country,  
And so coerced them into fighting here.  
If she'll depart, of her true chivalry,  
Her absence would lead folk, far and near,  
To come hither, and help me with their aid,  
While her presence has rendered them afraid.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 47-50: ASTOLFO  
SEIZES BAIARDO**

The maid descended from the citadel;  
Soon, she found Rinaldo's tent, midst the field.  
She gave him the message, speaking well,  
Both softly and courteously; there, she kneeled,  
But naught good that I know of, thus, befell,  
For, if he understood aught, he concealed  
The fact, and, on learning who had sent her,  
He turned his back, disinclined to hear her.

With him, in his tent, was bold Astolfo,  
Who, on seeing the lady's-maid depart,  
Still leading that noble mount, Baiardo,  
To follow after her, at once, did start;  
He insisted that, by right, she should know,  
The horse, indeed, was his, since, for his part,  
He'd brought the steed to that very country,  
Which, therefore, must be his courser, clearly.

To conclude, the lady was powerless  
To refuse him, and therefore dropped the rein,  
Which the bold Astolfo seized with address,  
And led Baiardo away, o'er the plain.  
The lady's maid now searched, nonetheless,  
For the queen's tent, her attention to gain,  
And ceased not her quest, going to and fro,  
Till she found Marfisa, and neither slow

To address her, nor afraid of the queen,  
Pronounced her request in a clear manner,  
Boldly but yet prudently, I mean.  
Of ardent spirit, disinclined to suffer  
Others gladly, Marfisa, the gist did glean,  
And, with little patience, gave her answer:  
'Pleas are easily made, but once begun  
'Tis by action, not speech, that wars are won.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXVIII: 51-54: ORLANDO  
ENCOUNTERS A KNIGHT, ULDARNO**

I'll refrain from describing how the maid  
Presented the matter to Angelica  
On her return, and all you've heard conveyed.  
But rather I'll return, to consider  
Orlando's progress, who his passage made  
Through a forest, o'er flowering fields after,  
And, beyond the trees, on that open land,  
Beheld a mounted knight, with lance in hand.

On a marble bridge o'er a river there,  
The knight stood sentinel, as by design,  
While above the stream, dangling by her hair  
A woman hung from a nearby pine.  
She made such sad lament, in her despair,  
'Twas like to make the passing flood repine.  
She cried out for aid, she begged for pity,  
And filled the air with her pleas for mercy.

Orlando felt compassion for her plight,  
And so approached the pine-tree to free her,  
But, from the marble bridge, the mounted knight,  
Called out: 'Move not, sir, but let her suffer!  
Upon yourself, shame and woe must alight,  
If you grant aid to that evil creature.  
Never has any age, ancient or new,  
Seen a woman so depraved, so untrue.

Through her malice and her wickedness  
Seven knights have been sentenced to die.  
But tis not needful I my thoughts express,  
'Tis a long and sorry tale; come, ride on by,  
Attend to other things, seek not distress.'  
Dear lords, and ladies, yield not a sigh,  
Rest content with what you've heard, for now  
This canto ends, and I will take my bow.



BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: THE TALE OF ORRIGILLE

ARGOMENTO.

Dapoi che Orlando inteso ha la cagione,  
Perche la donna pendea giù dal pino.  
Da quello liberarla si dispone;  
E per ciò far il franco paladino,  
Quattro guerrier l'un dopò l'altro pone  
A terra, indi la spicca, e al suo camino  
Seco la mena, e rimane aggabato,  
Che gl'irè da lei il suo desirier leuato.



ALLEGORIE.

QUANTO POSSI vna Donna con il suo fingere far credere ad  
alcuno una cosa falsa per verissima, ce lo dimostra Origiile,  
che con le sue false parole spinge Orlando a volerla ad ogni  
modo staccar dall'albero oue pende.

CH E essa poi gli rubbasse il cavallo, ne ammaestra quanto sia-  
no fallaci, e che senza ricordarsi di beneficio alcuno cercano  
ingannar gli huomini, che danno loro fede.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 1-5: ULDARNO BEGINS HIS TALE**

In the last, I told you how Orlando  
Saw a tall pine-tree o'er the river,  
From which a maiden hung, her cries of woe  
Fit to melt the heart of any creature.  
And while the warrior gazed upon her so,  
That other knight, arrogant by nature,  
Shouted at him: 'My friend, be on your way,  
Aid not the woman, for I say you nay!

For tis what she deserves, hung by the hair,  
To twist about, in the breeze, like a leaf,  
Since she's ever earned a dance in the air,  
Being born to do so, tis my belief.  
She's tormented lovers, more than her share,  
With empty hopes, and a burden of grief.  
In the manner she's now twisted around  
Her promises were twisted, on the ground.'

The Count replied: 'I hate to contemplate,  
Indeed, can scarcely credit, such cruelty.  
I'd rescue one doomed to so vile a fate,  
No matter the cost; where lies your pity?  
I think you'll not choose to remonstrate  
With me, if I show the woman mercy.  
If you've been harmed, and tis revenge you seek,  
Such deeds are wrought only by the weak.'

'This vile woman', the mounted knight replied,  
'Was ever cruel herself, and merciless,  
So vain and empty, yet so full of pride,  
Tis right that she's condemned to nothing less.  
Perchance a stranger to this countryside,  
You know not the tale of her wickedness,  
Thus, you seek to save one, out of pity,  
Who's worse than a she-bear for cruelty.

Hark to me, and I'll tell you, all the tale,  
And show why, rightly and lawfully,  
She dangles from this pine. Justice, prevail!  
Born in the place I lived, of her beauty  
She was vainer than a peacock of its tail,  
Fanning out its feathers, pridefully,  
Strutting neath the sun's glittering rays,  
For women to envy, and men to praise.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 6-8: OF HIS, AND LOCRINO'S, LOVE FOR ORRIGILLE**

Her name is Orrigille, and the place  
Where both of us were born is called Bactra.  
From my earliest days, her lovely face  
I adored; twas my ill-fate to love her.  
Now with disdain, now with a show of grace,  
Now promising, and then refusing later,  
By and by, she kindled so fierce a flame  
In me, I was on fire at her mere name.

Another young man loved her, a knight,  
Not more than I (such indeed could not be),  
Yet he wept over her (e'en at the sight  
Of the maid) till he seemed dying slowly.  
His name was Locrino; day and night  
He suffered such torment, felt such cruelty,  
In his longing, that eve and morn he'd cry  
For Death to bring him aid, that he might die.

She held us both captive in her net,  
With fair words (yet many an ill deed done)  
In winter could be sweet as a violet,  
And then, in summer, ice beneath the sun.  
But though we knew that she deceived us, yet  
It happened, as it does to many a one,  
That neither ceased to love and to adore,  
For each of us believed she loved him more.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 9-19: HOW SHE SET OUT TO DECEIVE HIM**

I presented myself full oft before her,  
While rehearsing loving words in my heart,  
Yet could never say those fair words to her,  
For in her presence, tongue-tied, all my art  
Vanished; I'd forget them altogether,  
And lose my voice, and sense, ere I could start;  
Not one rational phrase could I advance,  
But sounded like a madman in a trance.

At last Love made me bold enough to speak,  
In such words as these: "Sweet hope of mine,  
If you believe that I was born to seek  
Such suffering, and dust to gold refine,  
Or that these consuming flames, that wreak

Such havoc in my heart, will not consign  
Me to my grave, you must such thoughts defy;  
For, lacking your loving aid, I must die.

I swear tis true, and seek not to deceive.  
That any lover would endure fierce pain  
Rather than hurt the one he loves (believe  
It in your heart) yet, if he should sustain  
Torment because his love seeks to deceive,  
Grieves worse than aught; tis but to die again,  
Though any anguish must, indeed, prove less  
Than to experience mere hopelessness.

God knows, I have no hope of aught elsewhere,  
For you are the woman that I love the most.  
Yet this state of being I can scarcely bear.  
Mercy, I beg of you, in this utmost  
Extreme of pain; honour will be your share,  
For I'll do you service; if, lost almost,  
I gain not your aid, I must surely die,  
And you forego a loyal heart, thereby."

Nor were my words mere dissimulation;  
Indeed, from my heart's root they arose,  
But, the fickle woman, to this oration,  
(For cunning are such full oft, I suppose)  
Offered this false reply (mere incantation!)  
To gain my heart completely, thus she chose:  
"Uldarno," (tis my name) "more than my eyes,  
My soul, my life, I love yourself likewise.

If only I could prove the thing to you,  
As easily as I can say your name;  
For nothing moves my loving heart, tis true,  
But your passion, indeed, I'd serve that same,  
Could the way and means be found, so to do;  
And, thereby, might satisfy your love's claim.  
I am prepared at any hour to favour  
Your suit, if both can protect our honour.

Myself, I can only see one certain way  
(That will both preserve my reputation,  
And your name and honour, as I say)  
By which we may achieve satisfaction.  
Ill-fortune as you know, upon a day,  
Caused mortal strife between the faction  
Of that cruel, inhuman knight, Oringo,  
And my brother the valiant Corbino.

That young man (of Corbino I speak),  
Lay dead upon the field; most unjustly,  
For he was unskilled, as yet quite weak  
In knowledge of arms, the other, rightly,  
Was well-renowned; my father now doth seek  
A brave knight, to right the wrong, and richly  
Will he be rewarded; even now, I know,  
He's found the man, or shortly must do so.

Imitate Oringo's arms and armour,  
Show his emblem on your shield, wear his crest,  
Then, beyond the town, where my father  
Ordains the contest, seek to do your best.  
When you've both tilted once, however,  
Let yourself be captured; thus, I attest,  
You may seek to achieve your dearest wish,  
If you but follow my counsel in this.

You will of course be led here under guard,  
(As Oringo) when taken by the knight.  
You'll be bound, but though the gate be barred,  
Fear not, for I'll e'er keep you in sight,  
And watch over you, that naught be marred;  
And though a burning anger is alight  
Within my father's breast, and he will seek  
Harsh vengeance for his son's death to wreak,

Be assured I've already found a way, I might,  
Spend sweet hours with you, then make it seem  
That you've somehow escaped, and taken flight."  
I swiftly pursued her deceptive scheme,  
Following all this liar claimed, outright,  
And careless of the risk, for twas my dream  
To be alone with her; I loved this same,  
And I'd have crossed, for her, a sea of flame.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 20-24: AND DECEIVED LOCRINO IN SIMILAR MANNER**

I dressed in Oringo's arms and armour,  
And adopted his insignia and crest,  
But once I'd left her, upon my honour,  
She chose to mock the folly of my quest;  
For she's cruel and perfidious, this traitor,  
And, midst false deceivers, of the best!  
Once I'd left, as I said, she sought another,  
Summoning Locrino, who did love her.

This Locrino, whom I mentioned before,  
He was every bit as foolish as I;  
She possessed of cunning tricks a store,  
But deceived him with a similar lie,  
Saying that if he wished to see her more,  
And sought to attain her love thereby,  
He must be her champion against the foe,  
And take or slay, for her, this Oringo.

Then, she sent Locrino to where I'd gone,  
A place beyond the city, and, like me,  
Twas false insignia that he had on,  
Imitating another's blazonry.  
A field of green his shield bore, and thereon  
Was the emblem, two golden horns, and he  
Wore a surcoat and crest, that showed the same,  
Though another knight those arms did claim.

He was a lord, his name Ariante,  
And he bore those twin horns as his device;  
A man bold, and powerful, and lusty,  
Made for battle, with a grip like a vice.  
Now this knight also loved Orrigille,  
And sought to win the maid, at any price,  
And he had made a pact with her father  
To conquer Oringo and, then, wed her.

He was to bring that knight from the field  
Alive or dead, and so obtain the maid.  
But, to be brief, so all might be revealed,  
The true Ariante, bearing his blade,  
Came to where I waited with sword and shield.  
A token resistance I displayed,  
Expecting that I'd be taken to her;  
Conceded, and yielded to my capture.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 25-27: WITH ULDARNO CAPTURED, LOCRINO DEFEATS ORINGO**

At the same time, the young knight Locrino  
Met the true Oringo, in encounter,  
They fought not for their amusement though,  
Love fired the one, and anger the other.  
Now, Locrino was wounded by a blow  
To the chest; one to the head, one other  
To the ribs, sorely hurt the wrathful lord;  
Half-dead, they scarce a further could afford.

But, in the end, twas Locrino won the fight,  
For the amorous heart will conquer all.  
Her old and cruel father, day and night  
Kept vigil for, whate'er else might befall,  
He was determined to uphold the right.  
Set on vengeance, and seated in his hall,  
He waited for the moment when his knight  
Would drag this Oringo before his sight

Came 'Ariante', with that errant lord,  
For the latter knight held no shield or blade,  
And seemed a captive, tightly secured.  
Twas no lie, and pale and shaking, he made  
(The father) a swift approach, once assured  
Twas his foe, to see loss by vengeance paid.  
Yet the unhelmed victor seemed Locrino  
By his looks, not Ariante; and twas so.

### **BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 28-30: THE TWIN DECEPTIONS ARE REVEALED**

Now he knew Locrino loved his daughter  
And long had done so, therefore he said:  
"I swear that if you'll yield your prisoner  
To me, it will stand you in good stead;  
For what you desire the most, I'll offer,  
The fairest delight the world has bred,  
If you love Orrigille, and prove true,  
Then you shall wed the maiden, tis your due."

Locrino, mad with love, at once agreed,  
Though his honour was harmed by doing so,  
Yet Love spurred him on to yield and, indeed,  
He'd have given half his heart, with his foe.  
They'd only just decided to proceed  
In this way, when confusion came, for lo,  
Ariante arrived (not quite the plan!)  
And he, and I, approached that fierce old man.

Now the whole matter was exposed to view.  
Recall I wore Oringo's arms and crest,  
He now reproached me; Ariante too  
Berated Locrino, who wore his vest;  
And fierce fighting well-nigh broke out anew,  
The true knights against two falsely-dressed,  
For the former knights were scarcely charmed  
That we'd imitated them, fully armed.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 31-34: ALL FOUR KNIGHTS ARE SENTENCED TO DEATH**

In our land, the law is clearly expressed:  
That if a knight seeks to usurp the name  
Of another, and bears his arms and crest,  
He'll be dishonoured, and so put to shame,  
And if not pardoned, at the king's behest,  
Must swiftly lose his head. Although that same  
Law may seem cruel, in that the punishment  
Exceeds the crime, tis of ancient descent.

This matter, then, was brought before the king.  
He, learning that the maiden was the cause  
Of all that had occurred, who, by deceiving  
We two, had consigned us, both, to the jaws  
Of fate, bearing false arms; and consulting  
The legal guides, and all the various laws,  
Ruled that we had all done wrong thereby,  
And all four of us, for our sins, must die.

Oringo, though of rank and martial fame,  
Had slain Corbino, who was but a lad,  
While Ariante, with eyes upon the dame,  
Like an assassin, though in armour clad,  
Had promised her father to slay that same  
Oringo, if needs be (and well-nigh had!)  
Locrino was doomed, equally, to die,  
For wearing false arms and crest, as was I.

Being a capital offence, we four,  
Were sworn not to stray too far away,  
Till the sentence could be served, and, what's more,  
The wrathful king drew lots that very day,  
To choose who would lead her to the shore  
Of this river (the maid I mean), there to pay  
For her crime in, thus, provoking us two.  
A torment worse than death was now her due.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 35-37: ULDRNO IS CHOSEN TO GUARD THE BRIDGE**

She is pinned to that bough, as you can see,  
And is kept alive on bread and water,  
Swinging in the wind, from this lofty tree,  
Hanging by a hair's breadth o'er the river.  
The first lot drawn was mine, so tis for me

To keep her from every friend or stranger  
Who'd grant her aid, and for three days I've fought  
Any man who would thus defy the court.

And seven brave cavaliers I have slain,  
Whose names I'll not repeat here and now.  
You may view their emblems, and hence obtain  
Knowledge of those knights, for on that bough  
I've hung their painted shields, and there again  
Their helms and horns are pinned, to show how  
A luckless man's lost arms will be displayed  
If he seeks to liberate this wicked maid.

And, should it chance, that I myself should die,  
Oringo will guard her, then Locrino,  
Then Ariante, all fiercer than I.  
Therefore, sir knight, backwards you should go,  
Nor should seek, I counsel you, to pass by,  
For you'll fight me then, or a stronger foe.  
All those who halt not at the bridge must fight,  
You have no choice; for I'll maintain the right.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 38-43: ORLANDO SLAYS THE FOUR KNIGHTS, AND FREES THE MAID**

Orlando listened to the knight's long tale,  
While, yet, the maiden, hanging from the pine,  
Shed many a tear, voiced many a wail,  
And cried, as about the rope she did twine,  
That he was a liar, a villain, then did flail  
Her arms and legs, called him an evil swine,  
Who tortured her from spite, in devilry,  
Hanging her thus, defenceless, from a tree.

She claimed the seven knights had been slain  
By treachery, and not by martial skill;  
Twas to frighten passers-by he did maintain  
That display of arms that the bough did fill.  
And then she wept, and then she wailed again,  
Begging brave Orlando to save her still,  
Praying God, and the Count, to show mercy,  
Not abandon her, thus, to cruelty.

Not delaying to reflect, Orlando,  
Found himself, filled with pity, stirred outright.  
He shouted his command to Uldarno,

'Cut the maiden free, or prepare to fight!  
After trading challenges, twas blow on blow  
They sought, and wheeled their mounts, and were in flight.

Aiming true, twas the Count his target found,  
Toppling this Uldarno to the ground.

As soon as the knight tumbled to the field  
Orlando hastened swiftly to the tree,  
But a tower on the bridge now revealed  
A dwarf who sounded a war-horn, loudly,  
And, as he did so, a knight, there concealed,  
(Twas Oringo) shouted threateningly  
That he would kill the Count unless he stayed  
At least twenty yards distant from the maid.

Count Orlando's lance was still unbroken,  
So, he wheeled about, lowered it, then sped  
To the joust, with a blow (twas no mere token),  
Grounding his foe, who landed on his head.  
The dwarf blew his great horn; as if awoken  
From trance a knight (Locrino) spurred ahead,  
But on arrival, like the other two he found  
His match, and was tumbled to the ground.

Once more, the dwarf blew upon his horn;  
The fourth knight (Ariante) came in view.  
The Count spurred towards him, breathing scorn,  
And stretched him flat, with a blow, straight and true.  
He left all four for dead, with none to mourn  
Their swift demise, and o'er the bridge he flew,  
Neared the pine, dismounted, and climbed the tree,  
So as to cut the rope, and set her free.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 44-48: HE TAKES HER WITH HIM, AND SHE STIRS HIS PASSION**

Down through the branches, in his close embrace,  
He bore the maid, and set her on the ground.  
She begged him then to bear her from that place,  
For she'd be harshly punished were she found.  
The Count calmed her, assured her, of his grace,  
That he'd protect her from all foes around,  
And having, in that manner, eased her mind,  
Mounted, setting her on his steed, behind.

Now, she was indeed of a rare beauty,  
But malicious in intent, and full of lies.  
She'd a wealth of tears on hand, that lady,  
A well-nigh boundless fount, I would surmise.  
She ever gazed upon a lover sweetly,  
But ne'er kept a promise, batting her eyes;  
And had she a thousand lovers a day,  
Her smile would have fooled them all, I say.

As you've heard, the Count rode off with the maid,  
And having parted from that evil place,  
Many a sweet and winsome speech she made,  
Till, little by little, love found a space  
In his heart, which his glances now betrayed,  
For he'd oft turn to view her form and face,  
That spurred his desire, and pleasure begot,  
Such that Angelica was nigh forgot.

This she knew, of course; such a woman  
Being sharply aware of his attention,  
Though the Count was unaware of her plan,  
To execute which, she stoked his passion.  
Her honeyed words, and her smile, fired the man,  
And drew him into close conversation.  
The Count, who was unused to such, I deem,  
Talked of love like a person lost in dream.

The darkness seemed a thousand leagues away,  
That might offer him a chance of success;  
For, though ignorant of what he should say,  
He hoped to win her favour, nonetheless.  
And so, frustrated by that endless day,  
He cursed the sun; the shadows would address,  
They'd not embarrass him, as did the light;  
And thought that he'd ne'er see the fall of night.

#### **BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 49-50: THEY REACH A STANDING-STONE, AND SHE DECEIVES HIM**

And they rode on thus, his wish ill-concealed,  
While talking of many things, till they came,  
Upon a towering rock, amidst a field.  
Inscribed with golden letters was that same.  
A flight of thirty steps the top did yield  
Of that standing-stone; it seemed all aflame.  
The stairs that led from the ground to the height,  
Had been carved with skill, the eye to delight.



The maiden said: 'I assure you, sir knight,  
If you're as skilful as you seem to be,  
Rare adventure awaits you; climb the flight,  
And, once there, you shall see what you shall see.  
Ascend the stone, and stand upon its height,  
Tis open like a well beneath; quickly,  
Lean in, look deep inside, and feast your eyes,  
For you will see both Hell and Paradise.'

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 51-54: SHE STEALS HIS HORSE, AND LEAVES HIM BEHIND**

The Count had no other expectation  
Than that he'd find God, and the Devil, there.  
He left his charger with her, and was gone,  
Climbing the thirty steps of that high stair.  
She saw him reach the top and, thereupon,  
Cried out: 'Sir knight, I know not if you care  
To walk the roads, but that's what you must do,  
For, I must now depart, with: God speed you!'

And so, the fair deceiver turned away,  
Crossed the field, and vanished o'er the plain.  
The Count, quite stunned, and filled with dismay,  
Called himself but a fool; yet, I maintain,  
Any man may be deceived along the way,  
Believe in one he loves, and reap the pain.  
Yet Count Orlando blamed himself alone,  
And believed himself a dunce, dull as stone.

Of what to do next, he was uncertain,  
Having lost his fine steed, Brigliador.  
He turned to gaze down at the stone again,  
And read the golden letters that it bore.  
Twas the tomb of Ninus (all writ there, plain),  
Who once the sceptre of that kingdom bore,  
And built fair Nineveh, a three-days' ride  
In extent, if one traversed every side.

But he cared little for that fact; indeed,  
He descended from the tomb full of woe,  
And, since he'd clearly lost his wondrous steed  
Set out to walk the plain, his pace but slow.  
Twilight was creeping in, thus fate decreed,  
When, in the distance, to his sight did show  
A band of travellers (so twould appear),  
Though arms and armour gleamed, as they drew near.

**BOOK I: CANTO XXIX: 55-56: BOIARDO'S PLEDGE TO RETURN TO THE TALE**

I'll tell you later all that, then, occurred,  
And whom he met, as he walked o'er the plain;  
And it will please you, lords, most every word,  
And pass the time; the sequel I'll explain.  
Yet, after the tale of love that you've heard,  
We must turn to brave tales of war again,  
And to great Charlemagne, the emperor,  
And speak of matters on a distant shore.

Ne'er was such a tale of might, and glory,  
E'er writ, nor one that offers such delight;  
For I will sing of one, now famed in story,  
Blessed with all virtues, a most perfect knight,  
Ruggiero, unmatched in old and hoary  
Myths, by such heroes as they bring to sight.  
My lords, I trust you all will fill a place;  
I aim to please, if God yet grants me grace.



## BOOK II: CANTO I: AGRAMANTE'S WAR COUNCIL



### ARGOMENTO.

*Narra l'auttor la stirpe di Agramante.  
Che dal Magno Alessandro origin' hebbe  
Poscia il consiglio, che fa il Re prestante,  
Se contra Carlo Mano egli andar debbe:  
Ode varij parer, ma l'arrogante  
Rodomonte fu quel che in furia crebbe,  
Onde il consiglio fassi de l'altiero:  
E perciò dan si a cercar di Ruggiero.*



### ALLEGORIE.

**I** L temerario ardire di Rodomonte, ci dinota quanto la gioventù sia cagione spesse fiate di farci credere di potere ottener quel lo che le proue poi lo rendono certo del contrario, onde a tempo ne perde anco con desiderio la propria uita.

**L** A deliberatione che fa Agramante di passare in Francia, ne dimostra che spesso l'huomo che si innagina di fare, ò non far una cosa, si attriene finalmente al suo peggiore.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 1-4: BOIARDO DECLARES HIS INTENT**

In that most gracious season, when Nature  
Makes the star of Love to shine more brightly,  
When she covers the world in fair verdure,  
And the branches bear sweet blossom lightly,  
Tis then youths and maids, and every creature,  
With glad hearts, find happiness, and rightly.  
But time goes by, and then comes cruel winter;  
Joy departs, and pleasure follows after.

So, in times when virtue flourished freely,  
Among the knights and noble lords of old,  
There dwelt with us true joy and courtesy,  
But then they fled along dark paths, grown cold,  
To wander, lost, in some distant country,  
With no thought of return to our drear fold;  
Yet the chill winter winds are now no more,  
And virtue blossoms, as it did before.

And I, in song, turn to the memory  
Of deeds of prowess wrought in former days,  
And shall relate the fairest history  
(If you'll listen, quietly, while its music plays)  
For none was more glorious, in story,  
And you shall hear of bold feats to amaze,  
The worthy actions of knights long ago,  
With those of the enamoured Orlando.

Of mighty prowess, and renown, you'll hear,  
And of the virtues of a Christian heart;  
The infinite force and beauty shall appear  
Of Ruggiero, whose fame stands apart,  
(Though the third of that name, I mention here)  
And whose skill, as regards the warlike art,  
Was known to all; though Fortune did him wrong,  
For by vile treachery he died, ere long.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 5-9: OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT, AND ELIDONIA,**

In Bishop Turpin's book I find it writ  
That Alexander, that great prince and foe,  
Having conquered the world, and all within it,  
And toured the heavens, and the sea below,  
Fell deep in love, in the land of Egypt,

Took the maiden as his mistress, and so  
He might pay tribute to her rare beauty,  
Beside the waves, he built a royal city.

And he called the place Alexandria,  
From his own name (it yet adorns the shore)  
Departing for Babylon thereafter,  
Where a deed was done all men must deplore;  
For he was poisoned by a vile traitor,  
And his empire was overwhelmed by war;  
The world was troubled, as his generals seized  
This part of it or that, just as they pleased.

In Egypt, then, there remained his lady;  
She was named Elidonia the Fair,  
Six months pregnant, and in misery,  
Upon hearing the news; thus, in despair,  
Dreading she might be prisoned, cruelly,  
She boarded a vessel, and thought to dare  
The waves, without a helmsman, in her fear  
So, letting Fortune trim the sails and steer.

A following wind drove her o'er the sea,  
And carried her to Africa's bare strand.  
The breeze was gentle, and the sky cloud-free,  
When, eventually, the boat reached land.  
Raising her eyes, she saw an elderly  
Fisherman hauling his net, hand o'er hand,  
And begged the aged fellow to show pity,  
And grant her aid, of his grace and mercy.

He sheltered her, from pure humanity,  
And when three months had gone by, no more,  
In his hut, blessed by humble poverty,  
Three fine sons that troubled lady bore.  
And, thereafter, the town of Tripoli,  
Was founded there, upon that stony shore,  
Her three sons, thus, recalled by that same,  
While Tripoli is still the city's name.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 10-12: OF THEIR THREE SONS, THE YOUNGEST BEING ARGANTE**

They, as the powers above chose to decree,  
Were each possessed of so much martial skill,  
They later slew the king there, Gorgone,  
Africa being subject to his will.

Sonniberra, the eldest of the three,  
Was tallest, and the first place did fill,  
The second son was named Attamandro,  
The last Argante, fair as a lily though.

Thus, those three noble brothers held sway,  
In their time, over all North Africa,  
Ruling tribes, from the Coast of Barbary,  
To the borderlands of the Sahara.  
They held the realm not through bravery,  
Or vigour, or cunning, or mere power,  
But through their innate virtue and good sense  
That ensured their subjects' obedience.

All three were courteous and, from their hands,  
Their wealth was liberally dispensed to all.  
Thus, every region of their far-flung lands  
And every city, was, willingly, in thrall.  
They ruled the sea-coast, and the shifting sands.  
From Egypt to Morocco, they could call  
On the realm's support; on men of every hue,  
From Dongola to distant Timbuktu.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO I: 13-17: ARGANTE'S DESCENDANTS DOWN TO AGRAMANTE**

The eldest two sons died without an heir,  
And Argante was left to rule alone,  
Renowned and honoured by the people there,  
Begetter of a race that held the throne,  
The mighty lords of Africa the Fair,  
That caused the lords of Christendom to groan.  
They conquered Spain, in their great arrogance,  
Divided Italy, and stormed through France.

King Argante's son was killed, Barbante,  
When mighty Charlemagne made war in Spain.  
That son was father to King Agolante,  
And from his seed brave King Troiano came,  
He that Orlando killed in Burgundy;  
And Rugiero the Vassal, I blame,  
And Chiarone; all three together,  
Slew Troiano, twas a mortal error.

King Troiano left a young son behind,  
That was but seven when his father died.  
Now powerful in body, and in mind,

His harsh looks and gaze were born of pride.  
A scourge to Christians of every kind,  
He proved himself; let this work be your guide  
To his deeds (stay lords, and hearken the while),  
A world on fire the outcome of his guile.

Twenty-two was the noble youth's age now,  
This son of Troiano, Agramante.  
Not a knight in Africa but must bow  
Before him, for none dared, certainly,  
To look him in the eye; none he'd allow,  
But one youth, even fiercer than was he,  
Brave, and strong, and tall; head to toe  
A giant; son to mighty Ulieno.

Sarza's savage ruler, Ulieno,  
Fathered this warrior, Rodomonte,  
Of whom I speak, so fierce, so proud also,  
That he ravaged all France's fair country.  
From east to west, indeed, all men did know  
Of his high worth, and of his bravery.  
Hark, Christian gentlemen, I shall relate  
All the turns, start to end, of chance and fate.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO I: 18-21: AGRAMANTE DECREES A COUNCIL AT BIZERTE (HIPPO)**

Now, Agramante summoned every king  
From his realms, and they numbered thirty-two.  
In the course of four months, that gathering  
To his capital, Bizerte, he drew.  
Some by land, some by sea, came journeying,  
And ne'er was such magnificence in view.  
Thirty-two great war-lords, wearing a crown,  
Entered the gates of that most noble town.

For Bizerte was a rich place, in his day,  
Though a pile of ruins now, on that shore;  
For the Count razed it, sweeping it away,  
In the course of that interminable war.  
Now, as I said, beside its curving bay,  
The monarchs camped, along the open shore,  
And with great pomp, into the town, there went  
Those thirty-two, to learn the king's intent.

In a great keep, Agramante kept court,  
A royal castle like to none other,  
For the sun shone on no mightier fort,  
Nor a more magnificent, nor richer.  
The monarchs, two by two, his presence sought,  
Clad in cloth of gold, to show their power,  
Climbed the stairway, and feasted their eyes  
On a view of Heaven, and fair Paradise.

For the hall was five-hundred paces, long,  
And a hundred paces wide in extent.  
While its golden ceiling shone, o'er the throng,  
Red, green, and white enamels, therein, blent.  
Rubies and sapphires, fine as those in song,  
To each figure on the wall, beauty lent,  
For there was engraved, in all its glory,  
Alexander the Great's wondrous story.

## **BOOK II: CANTO I: 22-30: THE DEPICTION OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT'S HISTORY**

There one could view the wise astrologer  
Who had fled the confines of his own land,  
Having taken, in serpent's form, his pleasure  
With the queen he'd deceived; close at hand,  
Was shown, next, the birth of Alexander,  
That bold child, surely born to command;  
For one saw him then as, from a wood, he led,  
A steed he'd tamed, with horns upon its head.

Bucephalus was that great courser's name,  
And it was written so upon the wall.  
And here he sat astride that very same,  
There he crossed the waves, at destiny's call,  
For Alexander to the world laid claim,  
And war rode at his heels, to challenge all.  
Twas in this conflict Darius led a host  
That covered all the lands about, almost.

There, proud Alexander lowered his lance,  
Routed those armies and journeyed on,  
No longer fearing Darius' advance,  
Which king returned to the fight, whereupon  
Alexander conquered, and not by chance.  
Next one viewed the satrap Bassus, thereon,  
Who slew King Darius, through treachery,  
And was slain, at Alexander's decree.

Then one saw him reaching India;  
Swimming that great river, the Ganges;  
Then trapped in a town, alone moreover,  
Surrounded by a throng of enemies,  
Razing the walls of that town, thereafter,  
And routing the inhabitants with ease,  
Passing beyond it, and ne'er turning back;  
Then repulsing the Indian king's attack.

Porus was his name, and his great weight  
No charger in this world could e'er support.  
A mighty elephant he rode, in state,  
And yet his skill and prowess were worth naught,  
With the size of his army, though twas great.  
By Alexander that monarch was caught,  
Treated by him as a man of valour,  
Then freed, while still possessed of his honour.

Next, one could see a basilisk portrayed,  
Lurking, evilly, on a mountain pass,  
Murdering folk, with a glance like a blade,  
And, with its hissing, scaring them en masse.  
The perilous quest Alexander made,  
To free the traveller from that impasse,  
Was shown; how he, with a wise man's counsel,  
His shield a mirror, sent it down to Hell.

Every battle of his was painted there,  
And every deed; richly, and fair to see;  
And how he rode two gryphons through the air,  
When he'd gained half the world, in victory,  
Flaunting his sword and shield everywhere.  
And how in a glass vessel, neath the sea,  
He plunged to view the whales, full deep his dive,  
Yet returned, to the air above, alive.

And then, once he had conquered all he might,  
One perceived that he was conquered by love;  
For Elidonia, with gaze clear and bright,  
Had pierced his heart; and her he did approve.  
Another scene portrayed a dreadful sight,  
His being offered, at the first remove,  
A gold cup, poisoned by Antipater,  
And how all the world mourned, thereafter.

Then Elidonia, fleeing, one saw,  
Finding, with that old man, sanctuary,  
And giving birth to her sons, by the shore,  
Midst the fishing nets he deployed at sea.  
The final scenes were those of blood, and war,  
That Sonniberra, and fair Argante,  
And Attamandro, brought to Africa.  
The artist had painted all that matter.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 31-37: AGRAMANTE  
ADDRESSES HIS COUNCIL, AND CALLS FOR WAR**

On entering, the monarchs gazed around,  
Wondering at the splendour of the scene,  
Tumblers, and dancing girls, there they found  
Seen performing on a raised stage, between  
Fine musicians who drew harmonious sound  
From tambours, strings, and pipes, the serene  
Air filled with sweetness. There, on his high throne,  
In royal robes, Agramante sat, alone.

With reverence the kings bowed to the earth.  
He welcomed them, displaying his pleasure,  
Clasped them, with due regard to rank and birth,  
And kissed them, and calmly took the measure  
Of their counsellors, men of power and worth.  
The lesser folk were dismissed, and at leisure  
The kings, their counsellors, each lord and knight,  
Found their seats; the council a splendid sight.

Thirty-two chairs, adorned with gold, were placed  
On either side of his throne, while the rest  
Of the council sat on lower seats well-spaced  
Since there was room for every noble guest.  
Many a conversation they embraced,  
Speaking some well, some ill, as they addressed  
Each other, as best they could, but silence fell  
As the king, all their chatter to dispel,

Began like this: 'My lords, that here repair  
At my command, I must love and honour  
You, as highly as (by the love you share  
With me more than yourselves) you ever  
Show me honour. And, indeed, all my care  
Is to love you, all you men of valour,  
Always, and everywhere, and swell your fame,  
As I seek, always, to exalt my name.

'Tis not by singing, dancing, or the chase,  
Or toying in the shade with some fair maid,  
That we may honour, and renown, embrace,  
But only where the drums of war are played.  
Fame alone outlasts us, and those who face  
Their end without a name, by Death unmade,  
Through failing to seek honour, are but base;  
For life is short, and time runs on apace.

Think you that twas by drinking, and feasting,  
That Alexander conquered half the world,  
The founder of our House, that puissant king?  
O'er all the East, his mighty banners swirled;  
His name is known where'er men are dwelling;  
His history, on our walls, is here unfurled;  
Showing that honour by great deeds is earned,  
With naked blades and lances e'er concerned.

If my great hopes in you go not astray;  
If you would memory of yourselves enhance,  
And seek to add to your renown someday;  
If you love me, and would my fame advance,  
Come, ride with me, and we will make our way  
To war, against King Charlemagne, in France,  
Allah's law to glorify. This I'll dare.  
I pray, my lords, come fight beside me there!

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 38-43: KING BRANZARDO  
ARGUES AGAINST WAR**

After this bold speech, the king fell silent,  
And waited for his councillors' reply,  
While they conversed, regarding his intent,  
To which some lords said 'no', and some said 'aye'.  
Old Branzardo, sensible, and prudent  
King of Bugia, watched by every eye,  
Rose to speak, as many a time before,  
And, gathering himself, delayed no more.

'Magnanimous king' said the aged lord,  
'All that one learns, all a man may know,  
By all that experience can afford,  
By example or reason's proven so.  
Thus, in replying, I would here record  
My counsel, and true loyalty will show.  
I say that to make war on Charlemagne,  
Will go ill, twere a journey made in vain.

And rational thought makes this manifest.  
Within his borders, he's a powerful king,  
And has noble lords, with sterling virtues blessed,  
Of ancient Houses, used to gathering,  
As one, for war, where each supports the rest,  
As they ever support him, while fighting;  
Yet your host are conscripts, nine in ten,  
That can but lose, gainst experienced men.

Then, take, for your example, Alexander,  
Your ancestor, who crossed the sea to war,  
His men grey-haired, yet each a warrior,  
Who'd fought for him, many a time, before;  
While Darius led a host, through Persia,  
To encounter the foe, on land and shore,  
Where each man there scarce knew another's name,  
And thus, his armies Death alone did claim.

As for experience, I'd choose rather  
To recall another race than our own,  
But a descendant of your grandfather  
Agolante, brave Caroggieri's known  
To have failed in Italy, moreover  
His brave men died ill, in seeking a throne.  
Almonte, Agolante, were slain so,  
As was your father, brave Troiano.

For Allah's sake, forego this cursed plan.  
Reign in your will, while you have time and space.  
Dear lord, if I say 'nay', perchance I can,  
As one yet most deserving of your grace,  
For what harms you, harms me, that am your man.  
I bore you, when a child, in my embrace,  
All threat to you is, thus, by me deplored,  
For to me you're both a son, and my lord.'

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 44-51: KING SOBRINO  
SUPPORTS HIS SPEECH**

Old Branzardo then knelt before the king,  
Returning soon thereafter to his seat.  
Now Sobrino, both wise and clear-thinking,  
The King of Algoco, took to his feet.  
He had travelled through the land, surveying  
And inspecting the realm; his tour complete  
He had made his way to join the council,  
And prepared to speak, while listening still.

'My gracious lord,' he said, 'this beard, now white,  
I bear upon my face, may lead some here  
To think I lack the strength of a true knight,  
But by Allah, I swear that, though tis clear  
My strength is not as it was, my mind and sight  
Are unchanged, from those times I hold dear  
When I fought, long and hard, in Reggio,  
On behalf of that great lord Ruggiero.

So, believe not that I'd seek to deter you,  
From the course you propose, through cowardice,  
Or that I fear for my life, for tis true  
I've not many years to live, and would wish  
To spend them in the way you'd have me do.  
But, as your servant of old, I'd give, in this  
Grave matter, the counsel that seems to me  
The wisest, nor one born of enmity.

One may reach the land of France, in two ways,  
And those two journeys I have made before.  
One a path that reckless folk might praise,  
By landing from the sea towards Aigues-Mortes.  
Tis reckless, for the Christians, these days,  
Hold defensive lines, guarding that same shore,  
And we would need a host of willing men,  
A hundred, or more, to their every ten.

The other, and better path, I would maintain,  
Is by way of the straits of Gibraltar,  
Where your ally, Marsilio of Spain,  
Will welcome you, as he would a brother,  
Provide an army, and your cause sustain;  
Thus, the Christians must face another  
Mighty host; for as they say, and I believe,  
All wars take more to end, than to conceive.

We'd seek to reach the Gascon plain, and so  
Put all its inhabitants to the sword;  
Yet fierce Rinaldo holds Montalbano,  
He guards the pass that leads to it, my lord,  
And may Allah protect us from that foe!  
None easily withstand him, be assured;  
For when you think you've driven him away,  
He'll attack you on another side, next day.

Charlemagne will gather every brave knight  
Of his court, and none better can be found.  
Don't think that they'll run from the fight,  
To hide behind their walls; open ground  
They love; while Orlando, in all his might,  
That wields keen Durindana, and doth sound  
Almonte's horn, that indomitable lord,  
Will be there; he severs all with that sword.

Count Gano, and Uggiero the Dane,  
I've encountered; he's a giant, the latter.  
Oliviero we'd meet upon the plain,  
Salamone, and many another.  
Against them we strove, with might and main,  
When King Agolante, your grandfather,  
Crossed the sea, and we fought. It seems to me,  
By far the best plan is to let them be.'

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 52-56: RODOMONTE  
BERATES THE COUNSELLORS**

Thus, the white-haired warrior had his say,  
More or less in such words as I have done.  
But Sarza's king was next to speak that day,  
Bold Rodomonte, Ulieno's son.  
He surpassed his father in every way,  
In size and strength, many a fight had won,  
With endless valour, yet he was full of pride,  
And so despised the whole wide world beside.

He rose, and said: 'In every single place  
One lights a fire, the flame at first is small,  
But then it gains and occupies a space,  
And looks as if tis set to trouble all,  
But then it wanes, and loses force apace,  
And so do human beings wax and fall,  
For when his prime is past, every knight  
Loses courage, and valour, wits, and sight.

And is this not seen here, clearly, my lord,  
In these two who have spoken, for we see  
That each, once more than skilful with the sword,  
Is now robbed of common-sense entirely,  
So much so that they would have ignored  
What their king now asks of them, humbly.  
The white-haired ever give their advice  
More freely than their aid, and do so twice!

Your lord has not asked you to advise  
Him of the worth of the task, but to say  
That you will join his royal enterprise,  
And then propose the most effective way  
To swell your fame, and gain for him the prize.  
And all that refuse are traitors, I say,  
And those who seek to go against the king,  
I'll fight in mortal duel; war I'll bring!

So spoke the King of Sarza, for the plan,  
The arrogant, and eager Rodomonte,  
And there was ne'er a fiercer, prouder man,  
For, from a boy, he'd fought savagely,  
And had a giant's strength, and height, and span.  
His deeds we shall hear of aplenty.  
With a black gaze, he looked around that hall,  
Meeting silence; they feared him, one and all.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 57-59: THE KING OF  
GARAMANTA, AND PRIEST OF APOLLO SPEAKS**

Garamanta's king, though old and slow,  
Sat there in council; ninety-years of age,  
He was a priest of the god Apollo,  
Astrologer, enchanter, and wise sage.  
His desert land was bare and empty, so  
Its skies revealed the heavens' wondrous stage;  
He'd view the night sky and count the stars,  
That reign on high, above this world of ours.

This bearded veteran was not dismayed  
By Rodomonte's threats; he simply said:  
'My lords, of such bold talk be not afraid,  
The lad's but one opinion in his head.  
If I now seek to challenge and dissuade,  
Let him do what he will; and folly wed.  
Hear the word of Apollo, and believe!  
Not for the lad, but for you, lords, I grieve.

Hark, and take note of what I say, for I  
Have consulted the oracle; all here  
Who choose to fight a war in France, shall die;  
Their campaign both long and bloody, I fear,  
And filled with pain, beneath a foreign sky.  
Neither the small nor the great shall win clear,  
And King Rodomonte, for all his might,  
Shall feed the crows in France; a woeful sight.'



**BOOK II: CANTO I: 60-62: RODOMONTE  
SCORNS HIS PROPHECY**

When he had spoken, he regained his seat,  
His desert headscarf wound about his face,  
But Rodomonte laughed, saw him retreat,  
And, once the old man was silent a space,  
Cried, dismissively: 'How the aged bleat!  
In his great voice, devoid of tact or grace.  
'While we are here still, you may sigh and vent,  
And prophesy our fate, to your heart's content,

But once we've sailed over the sea to France,  
And put that land to fire, and to the sword,  
No such prophecies will you dare advance,  
For I shall be the prophet there, my lord!  
These words you think you heard, in some trance,  
May scare the rest, to me they but afford  
Amusement; wine, and foolishness, forego;  
You'll soon cease to hear from your Apollo!

Full many laughed, savouring his reply,  
Despite the arrogance the young king showed,  
For most of the younger men saw eye to eye  
With Rodomonte, needing no sharp goad  
To spur them on to fight, to win or die;  
But the old, those who'd travelled that same road  
With Agolante, scarcely overjoyed,  
Called out that Africa would be destroyed.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 63-67: AGRAMANTE  
INSISTS ON WAR**

Great were the many cries from the floor,  
But Agramante raised a sovereign hand,  
And obtained a sudden silence, once more.  
Then, speaking temperately, gave his command:  
'My lords, I yet desire to win that shore,  
And challenge Charlemagne in his own land;  
Thus, tis to France we shall make our way;  
Tis mine to decree, your place to obey!

And think not that, once the royal crown  
Of Charlemagne is shattered, and all France,  
You shall have rest; for I now seek renown.  
With the Christians subdued, I will advance,  
The walls of many a city I'll tear down,

And conquer all the Earth with sword and lance.  
And after I have won this world, likewise,  
Ascend to wage fresh war, in Paradise!

Then, that mighty king, Rodomonte,  
Rose up joyfully, his face aglow,  
'My Lord,' he cried, 'Let your name be, loudly,  
Acclaimed, where'er the sun lights all below.  
I swear I'll serve your cause, and faithfully,  
Through Heaven or Hell, gladly, will I go,  
Following my master, Agramante;  
Or in the van, if he so commands me!

Tremizon's king affirmed he would so do,  
And ride with Agramante, by hill and plain;  
This was Alzirdo, a bold warrior too.  
Marbalusto of Oran, cried, again,  
That he agreed; his year-old crown yet new.  
Bambirago, Arzila's king, was fain  
To raise his hand and swear, by Allah, he  
Would ne'er cease to follow Agramante.

What more is there to say? All present swore  
An oath; and the fiercest won most favour!  
They issued their threats, and spoke of war,  
None daring to admit their fears (as ever).  
The elders, though opposed to it before,  
Still vowed allegiance, upon their honour.  
Yet Garamanta's wise and aged king  
Spoke again, once more prophesying.

**BOOK II: CANTO I: 68-70: THE KING OF  
GARAMANTA CONVEYS A FURTHER PROPHECY**

'My lord,' he cried, 'Though all that go must die,  
I'll not refrain, since such is your intent.  
I too would go to Europe, though, on high,  
Baleful Saturn ascends the firmament,  
For all that lives must perish, by and by,  
And far too many years have I been lent,  
Thus, I care not, let whatever come that may,  
For I'll not last much longer; yet, I say,

Hearken now; for I speak Apollo's word,  
And in his sacred name, my lords, I pray,  
You'll attend, since in haste you have conferred,  
And chosen to seek war, on this dark day;

Lord, in your realm (perchance you may have heard),  
Dwells a warrior, one peerless, in his way,  
The astrology that I employ doth show  
That he's the best that ever fought the foe.

Apollo speaks to you, my lord, and he  
Proclaims that, should this knight but follow you,  
You'll win praise and honour in that country  
Of France, and Charlemagne rout often, too.  
If you would know who that knight might be,  
If his worth and lineage you would view,  
Know his mother was your father's sister,  
The lady's name was: Galaciella.

The knight is your fraternal cousin, then,  
And heaven, in its wisdom, did ordain  
That this child should be born a Saracen,  
And, so, would Christianity disdain;  
While should he e'er become a Christian,  
Our warriors everywhere will be slain.  
His father was the good Ruggiero  
The flower of chivalry, and yet, in woe,

His mother, in a humble boat, sailed here,  
After her noble husband was betrayed  
And Reggio was burned; with many a tear,  
On our shore she sought a fisherman's aid,  
And lodged in his hut; wretched and afraid,  
She bore two infants, with much pain, I fear.  
One, the fair youth, the knight I spoke of so,  
Is named, as his father was, Ruggiero.

The other, a sister, I have not seen,  
Though if she is as fair as her brother,  
She must be lovelier than any queen,  
For he shines brighter than any other,  
Brighter than the sun itself, I mean.  
Their birth saw the death of their poor mother,  
And so, the orphaned babes, thereafter,  
Atlante raised, the sage necromancer.

Your vassal, he dwells on Mount Carena,  
(And there has wrought an enchanted garden;  
None, it seems, can reach that place however.)  
A great astrologer, the stars in heaven  
He had read, and knew the skill and power  
That the youth would come to wield among men,  
And so, he nourished the boy on the fresh  
Blood of lions, bone-marrow, and their flesh.

And he trained him in all the skills also,  
That he'd have need of, all the arts of war.  
If you'd defeat him, then you'd need to show  
All your skill and power, you may be sure,  
Yet he's the sole means to defeat the foe,  
And bring down Charlemagne, and so ensure  
That you save your men, and victory attain;  
And not, as I prophesied, yourself be slain.'

So spoke Garamanta's grey-bearded king;  
His words won belief with Agramante,  
For he divined many a hidden thing,  
Was skilled in magic, and necromancy,  
Knew of each star its rising and setting,  
And the arcane rules of astrology;  
Thus, far into the future this man saw,  
Predicting dearth or plenty, peace or war.

Thus, without delay, the king conceded  
That they should seek out that mountain lair,  
And find the young warrior they needed,  
In that fair garden, wrought high in the air.  
My canto's now complete; all who've heeded  
Its clear song, and have fed upon its fare,  
Return for the next, for I promise you  
Rare delight, of this tale both old and new.



BOOK II: CANTO II: THE BRIDGE PERILOUS



ARGOMENTO.

*Prasildo, Iroldo, Astolfo, e il fio d'Amone  
Trouano una donzella iscapigliata.  
Per scioglier la donzella ognun si pone,  
Ma tre di lor van ne l'acqua incantata.  
Co i figli di Olinier riman prigione  
Origille, e a morir seco è guidata.  
Marfisa occide Oberto, e con Balano  
Prende Antifor, Chiarione, il Re Adriano.*



ALLEGORIE.

LA compassione che ogn'uno douerebbe hauer di coloro che sono afflitti, & massime delle donne, cercando di giouarli a tutto suo potere, lo dimostra Rinaldo, & in compassione della dolente giouane, si mettono p rédergli q̃llo, per la cui causa si lamétava  
AQUILANTE, e Grifone, che essendo lieramente raccolti, e la notte furono a tradimento presi, ne ammaestra che giamai creder dobbiamo all'aspetto dell'huomo, perciò che spesso è contrar ijsimo all'opere sue.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 1-6: RINALDO PURSUES ORLANDO**

If those that had gathered at Bizerte,  
(Of whom I spoke) had sailed without delay,  
They'd have won Christendom entirely,  
For Orland and Rinaldo, away  
In the East, were far distant, and wholly  
Undefended the shores of France now lay.  
Without those champions, Charlemagne  
Might well have failed his realm to sustain.

Not long since, I told you that Orlando  
Had lost Briagador his courser,  
When Orrigille had deceived him so,  
(He'd mounted the rock, through that fair traitor),  
But I would follow after Rinaldo,  
And pursue the adventures further,  
Of that brave knight, who, with Marfisa,  
Laid siege to the fortress at Albracca.

While Agramante and his company  
Searched for Ruggiero, yet all in vain,  
Rinaldo, who had been consumed wholly  
By his anger since the duel on the plain,  
That I described, ended prematurely,  
(I mean the battle where fate did ordain  
That the maid intervened, and Orlando  
Had quit the fight, and his anguished foe)

Was in deep despair, for he knew not why  
The Count had abandoned the field of war;  
For neither warrior was like to die  
Of his wounds, and victory was unsure.  
Whate'er the reason, twas strange to the eye,  
For he knew the Count had ne'er fled before.  
He decided to hunt him, day and night,  
Find that warrior, and renew the fight.

When darkness fell, he mounted Baiardo,  
Fully armed, and left, in the moonlight,  
Accompanied by the Duke Astolfo,  
And two who e'er supported the knight,  
Iroldo, I mean, and brave Prasildo.  
Not till the morning came, and it was light,  
Did the Queen, the fierce Marfisa, know  
That they'd departed, or missed Rinaldo.

She seemed unconcerned at their going,  
Whether she was troubled by it, or not.  
The company rode o'er the plain, slowing  
For naught, till dawn, and at a steady trot.  
The shadows waned, the day was breaking  
The sky crimson, night well-nigh forgot,  
While, ere the sun rose, a serene half-light  
Tinted the heavens till the world shone bright.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 7-12: HE AND HIS COMPANY COME UPON A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS**

At the front rode Astolfo, Otho's son,  
On his mighty courser Rabicano,  
Reciting his prayers with due devotion,  
As was his custom, when travelling so,  
When, ere his 'ministrations' were done,  
He beheld a maiden, seeming full of woe,  
Seated on a rock, who beat her face, her breast,  
Moaned, and sighed, and clawed at all the rest.

'O, wretch that I am!' the damsel cried,  
'Oh, what grievous trouble, and dismay!  
My sweet sister, half my heart, all my pride,  
Would we had never seen the light of day;  
To have that traitor whip your tender side!  
Alas! I'm left alone to weep and pray,  
And Fortune so torments me, sore afraid,  
I lack the power to bring my sister aid.'

'What ill deed,' cried the troubled Astolfo  
'Causes you to grieve so violently?'  
As he spoke, he was joined by Rinaldo,  
While the maiden still wept, ceaselessly,  
And then by Iroldo and Prasildo.  
'Oh, wretched woman!' the maid cried, loudly,  
I'll die at my own hands, and swiftly,  
Should I find no kindly soul to help me.'

She gazed upon the mounted knights, and said:  
'If one of you, in his heart, has pity,  
Aid me, for God's sake, act in His stead,  
Ne'er has a maid met with such cruelty.  
If you are true warriors, and nobly bred,  
Then, for the good Lord's sake, show me mercy,  
And prove all your virtue, gainst a traitor;  
Vile, base, and cowardly, is his nature.

There stands a tall tower, not far from here,  
Which is that evil madman's dwelling-place,  
Beyond the bridge, o'er the river, twill appear,  
Where it flows into a deep dark lake, apace.  
My sister and I were journeying near  
That bridge (a maid she is of peerless grace)  
When he from its span descended there,  
And seized my poor sister by the hair!

He dragged her o'er it to the other side,  
Raging full wildly, while she did suffer,  
And I, now left behind, but wept and cried,  
All I could do, with no way to reach her.  
My poor sister he bound, and then he tied  
Her arms to a cypress-tree by the river;  
He'd stripped off her clothes, till she was bare,  
And now he whips her sides, and naught doth spare!

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 13-15: THEY RIDE TO HER  
SISTER'S AID**

So many tears the wretched maiden shed  
That she could scarce continue her sad tale,  
While their pity and their anger it fed,  
Beyond all imagining; none could fail  
To be distressed, and each warrior said  
He would fight this mad villain, and prevail,  
While, to pursue the matter, Astolfo,  
Placed her on the back of Rabicano.

They rode on, perchance a mile or two,  
Until they reached a bridge across the flood,  
Whose entrance was barred to the riders, due  
To a latticed iron fence; amidst it, stood  
A small gate a man alone might pass through,  
But a horse could not, be it understood;  
And likewise, a gate barred the other end,  
In a fence that the bridgehead did defend.

Beyond the bridge, a tower they could see,  
In a wooded meadow, while the river spread  
To a mile-wide lake; there a cypress-tree  
On the bank, one of many, reared its head,  
And there the girl was bound, cruelly,  
And filled the air with her cries, as she bled  
Profusely, neath a rain of wicked blows,  
Delivered by an armed man, as he chose.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 16-20: IROLDO AND  
PRASILDO ARE SLAIN BY THE CRUEL KNIGHT,  
ARIDANO**

In his left hand a club bound with iron,  
In his right a bloodstained whip, he had,  
And he beat the maid beyond all reason,  
As if, indeed, he belonged midst the mad.  
Iroldo who was moved with compassion,  
Felt such pity, viewing the maid unclad  
And hurting so, that, sans Rinaldo's leave,  
He grasped at the gate, and gave a heave.

He entered on foot, where no steed could go,  
And the cruel knight met him on the way.  
He had left the poor maiden to her woe,  
(Still bound to the cypress, I should say)  
And with the iron cudgel launched a blow,  
As Iroldo came hastening to the fray.  
And, thus, the battle lasted but a moment,  
For neath the club the latter's head soon bent.

He fell, and lay there, prostrate, as if dead,  
So fierce was the stroke, and so weighty.  
The fierce pagan picked him up and sped  
Back again, like an arrow and as swiftly,  
And, before their eyes, raised him overhead  
And hurled him in the lake, mercilessly.  
The armoured knight vanished in the deep,  
And all that such dark depths receive, they keep.

Lord Rinaldo dismounted from his steed,  
To join battle with the knight, but Prasildo  
Begged precedence, and the prince agreed.  
The madman now stood ready for his foe,  
In the field, as the knight advanced at speed.  
The former launched another mighty blow,  
And the battle ended as the first had done,  
With a stroke designed to kill or stun.

Prasildo staggered, and fell, and once more  
The pagan dragged his victim to the lake,  
And hurled him in, as he had done before,  
Fully clad in armour, ere he could awake.  
Rinaldo felt great grief, his heart was sore,  
For his friends were lost; it nigh did break.  
All had happened so swiftly in each fight,  
He'd barely registered the other's might.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 21-27: RINALDO LEAPS INTO THE LAKE CLASPING THE MADMAN**

Now, vexed beyond measure, he crossed over,  
With his head held high, and his shield gripped tight,  
Like one accustomed to duels, as ever  
He trod cautiously, sword low, towards the knight.  
His foe swung his great club, at the other,  
But Rinaldo kept the path it took in sight,  
And skilled in fencing, swiftly leapt aside,  
So that he dodged the blow, which fell full wide.

Then he struck at the villain with his blade,  
His spirit ardent, and landed a fierce stroke,  
But the knight's steel armour was so well-made,  
He but treated the matter as a joke.  
Their battle was full long, each blow repaid.  
Rinaldo knew that club, of iron-bound oak,  
Could slay him with a single mighty swing,  
And so strove to avoid that very thing.

He slashed and thrust, but seemingly in vain,  
For all he tried failed to stop the other,  
His blows fell harmlessly, he thrust again,  
The madman gave a shout, then another,  
And hurled his club, with might and main,  
At the prince and, ere he could recover,  
The sideways blow struck upon his shield,  
Its sudden force nigh causing him to yield,

Yet he was hardly down ere he arose,  
And, undaunted, he returned to the fight,  
But that fierce stranger with him did close,  
Seized him, and hauled him to the lake outright.  
Rinaldo countered, as you might suppose,  
But his strength was equalled by the other knight;  
Momently, his opponent's so surpassed  
His own he failed to break the other's grasp.

Down to the lake his mighty foe did race,  
To toss him, like the others, in the deep.  
But Rinaldo held him in a close embrace,  
And so the madman scant reward did reap,  
For the prince cried out: 'Swim with me, a space!'  
And, clasping the other near, made a leap,  
So that he plunged, while grasping him tight,  
Into the lake's dark depths, with the knight.

Neither surfaced again, for in that flood  
The noble art of swimming found no place,  
And their strong armour, be it understood,  
Weighed enough to sink an army apace.  
Astolfo looked on, though it chilled his blood,  
He stood there helpless, with a pallid face,  
Gazing, as they disappeared below,  
Scarce crediting the fate of Rinaldo.

The knight dismounted, and passed the gate,  
And hurried to the lake shore where he stood  
An hour waiting, in a hapless state,  
But it seemed that the prince was gone for good.  
His soul was in mourning, his grief was great,  
As you may imagine, for their brotherhood  
Was broken; his cousin lost, Astolfo  
Now knew not what to do, or where to go.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 28-32: ASTOLFO AND THE TWO SISTERS LEAVE THE SCENE**

The maiden too quickly crossed the river,  
And ran, o'er the field, to the cypress tree,  
Then swiftly liberated her sister,  
And clothed her once again, most tenderly.  
Astolfo ignored the pair however,  
Consumed as he was by grief and pity;  
He cried out, and wept, striking at his face,  
And begged the Lord for death, of His grace.

He was so overcome by his anguish,  
He might have tumbled in the water,  
If the anxious maidens, perceiving this,  
Had not run to the swooning warrior,  
And comforted him sweetly, with a kiss,  
Crying: 'Brave lord, oh, beware the river!  
Despair not; take heart; virtue's never known  
Till fate's harshest; then is true courage shown.'

With many a wise word, to ease his woe,  
One, and the other, consoled the knight,  
And so prevailed upon the stunned Astolfo  
To retreat from the riverbank's steep height;  
But when he'd reached, and mounted, Baiardo,  
He felt he might yet die of grief outright.  
Crying out: 'Brave steed your good master's lost,  
And naught's to do here now but count the cost.'

Many a word he uttered soft and low,  
Weeping, all the while, most bitterly.  
Then, one sister mounted Rabicano,  
And since Prasildo's steed was running free,  
The other rode that of the lost Iroldo,  
As they departed that place, mournfully,  
The duke between the two on Baiardo,  
That bore a master burdened by his woe.

They journeyed slowly on, till noon that day,  
When they reached a second river, and there  
The travellers heard a mighty horn's loud bray...  
Yet I must leave Astolfo, and repair  
To the knights at Albracca, where they lay,  
Guarding the keep, in that grave affair,  
And fighting against the bold Marfisa,  
The warrior-maid still afire with anger.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 33-35: THE SITUATION AT ALBRACCA**

There, Torindo was supporting her cause,  
And he sent word to Sebastia,  
To Bursa, all of Turkey and its shores,  
Alexandria Troas, and Smyrna,  
Ordering all the Turks to the wars,  
To fight beside him and Queen Marfisa.  
These forces were led by Caramano  
That was the brother of King Torindo.

The latter swore he'd never quit the field,  
Alive, until he saw Angelica  
And all her people starve, or burn, or yield.  
Therefore, he led his vast host, with fervour,  
O'er the plain, and such vast power revealed  
No defenders could leave, as earlier  
Some knights had chosen to, nor could they stray  
All about the walls, as they had, each day.

But proud Antifor, and King Ballano,  
Were ever mounted and armed for the fight,  
And King Hadrian, and bold Oberto,  
King Sacripante, and that valiant knight  
Chiarone; they still attacked the foe,  
And slew all those on whom they did alight,  
For Marfisa could not be in every place,  
Though, where she was, men fled before her face.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 36-42: THE BRIDGE PERILOUS, NOW THE BRIDGE OF ROSES**

These few knights had departed the fortress:  
Aquilante, and the bold Grifone,  
And Brandimarte, courteous to excess.  
The last had been the first to go, wholly  
Due to his love for Orlando no less,  
The which had grown while in his company,  
And, once he'd learned that the knight had left,  
Soon followed, of that company bereft.

Then the two sons of Oliviero,  
(I mean Grifone and Aquilante)  
Had set out the next morn, nor rode so slow  
On their passage through that open country  
That they failed to by-pass Count Orlando,  
And thus, attaining a view of the sea,  
They came upon a palace near the shore,  
In a meadow that many a flower bore.

There was a seaward-facing loggia,  
Their way before which the warriors made,  
In which damsels were dancing together,  
While minstrels a rare, sweet music played.  
Grifone, passing, asked an onlooker  
(Two stood there, with hawks and hounds arrayed)  
Whose was the palace, and this countryside.  
'Tis called the Bridge of Roses,' he replied.

'If you know not, there, lies the Caspian Sea.  
Where this palace and its gardens stand now,  
A dense forest stood, many a tall fir tree,  
And a vile giant, on that bridge, I avow,  
That, o'er the flood below us, you can see.  
And that monstrous villain would ne'er allow  
A knight or maiden their passage to maintain;  
Every one that attempted it was slain.

But Poliferno, a most valiant knight,  
He that was later made Orgagna's king,  
Killed the giant, in a most furious fight,  
And felled the trees, afterwards adorning  
This place, where weary travellers may alight,  
With the palace, garden, and everything.  
You will find all is as true as I claim;  
And he also altered the bridge's name.

It was the Bridge Perilous before,  
And now as the Bridge of Roses tis known,  
While this palace he built upon the shore,  
So that every brave knight that serves a throne,  
And every courtly maid, might thus ensure  
That the seed of his fame is widely sown,  
And all the world might laud his courtly ways,  
That, in every country, engender praise.

You may not cross the bridge unless you swear  
That you will lodge for a full night therein;  
So, before you should choose to ride elsewhere,  
I pray you, seek shelter and rest within.'  
Bold Grifone replied: 'We'll gladly share  
A meal beneath its roof, for that's no sin,  
If my brother welcomes our doing so;  
I thank you for the offer you bestow.'

#### **BOOK II: CANTO II: 43-44: GRIFONE AND AQUILANTE ENTER THE PALACE**

'Tis as you please!' answered Aquilante,  
And they both dismounted on the shore,  
Then approached the palace, with Grifone,  
The more eager, now forging on before.  
They reached the loggia, strange and lovely,  
Where the maidens, that festive garlands bore,  
And the minstrels, came joyfully to greet  
The two brothers, with ministrations sweet.

Their armour was removed and they sat  
To taste confections, fruit, and drink rare wine  
From a golden cup; much refreshed by that,  
They joined the dance, to music half-divine.  
And then, behold, the dancing stopped, whereat,  
O'er the flowering field, as if by design,  
A lady came riding, and when they saw  
Her steed they wondered, for twas Brigliador.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO II: 45-48: ORRIGILLE DECEIVES THEM, CLAIMING THAT ORLANDO IS DEAD**

The two brothers now left the dancing-place,  
And went to attend upon the lady,  
And set to questioning her, for a space,  
Seeking to learn, from her lips, the story

Of how she'd found the horse, and, of her grace,  
Where that most valiant warrior might be  
Who had been the true owner of the steed;  
And she answered them, graciously indeed.

Like all those who are false beyond measure,  
She revelled in the falsehoods she could spread;  
And claimed that on a bridge, o'er a river,  
She had come upon a knight, lying dead.  
His surcoat was of a bright green colour,  
And the crest, that topped the helm on his head,  
Was a small green tree, while beside the knight,  
Lay a giant he had slain in valiant fight.

The knight's flesh was unmarked even so,  
But a weighty blow had dented his skull.  
Aquilante hearing this, felt deep woe,  
All joy departed, and his eyes filled full.  
'Ah, who has betrayed you, dear Orlando,'  
He cried, 'for no giant was e'er so dreadful,  
In his strength, that he could, in a fair fight,  
Overcome the world's most accomplished knight.'

Grifone now joined in his dire lament,  
Overwhelmed, completely, by his grief.  
Asked for more, the lady gave her consent  
To describing that scene beyond belief.  
The bright sun was now making its descent,  
Behind a hill; seeking solace and relief,  
The two brothers, full of sorrow, did repair  
To the palace, where they met with rest and care.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO II: 49-51: THEY ARE SEIZED, WHILE ABED, AND IMPRISONED**

That same night they were seized, while abed,  
And taken, bound, to a forest, dark and deep;  
And, once there, to a castle they were led,  
And imprisoned in the depths of its keep.  
They were held in irons, in constant dread  
Of execution; none for them did weep.  
One day their gaoler led them forth again,  
With their arms fastened by a length of chain,

And, with the brothers, they led forth the maid  
Who'd appeared mounted on Brigliador.  
They met a captain, and his men, in a glade,



Who greeted them, and this vile message bore:  
 'Today a death you'll suffer long-delayed,  
 Unless God, in his mercy, brings the cure!  
 From the maiden's face all colour did drain,  
 On hearing the news that they'd be slain.

But the brothers flinched not, stout hearts they bore;  
 To God, each now his soul commended;  
 While, on emerging to the plain, they saw,  
 A knight on foot, armed; his way he wended  
 Towards their troop. The distance being more  
 Than a hundred yards, none comprehended  
 Whom it might be though, later, I'll declare,  
 What man it was that trod the roadway, there.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 52-56: MARFISA'S  
 ENCAMPMENT IS ATTACKED**

For I must speak, instead, of Albracca  
 Besieged by the valiant warrior-maid.  
 Chiarone, with many another  
 That the tale names, each day displayed  
 His courage, riding forth to discover  
 The enemy's placements, but no knight stayed  
 To meet Marfisa, who countered swiftly,  
 For all had fought her but Sacripante,

He had stayed within the wall, to his woe,  
 For in the opening campaign, the knight  
 Had been injured by an arrow, and so  
 Was unable to wear armour and fight.  
 A full month had passed now, you should know  
 Since Galafrone had joined in their flight.  
 Now, one morning, they began an enterprise,  
 To take the queen's encampment by surprise.

All within cried: 'To arms!' and forth did go;  
 Each seemed a very lion in his pride.  
 Before them, went the bold King Ballano,  
 And, this time, King Sacripante did ride,  
 With Hadrian, Antifor, Oberto,  
 And Chiarone; the maiden they defied,  
 And ran riot midst her camp on the plain  
 Slaughtering many, dealing the rest much pain.

First one and then another valiant knight  
 Attacked, each one from his own direction.  
 They wore their shields at their back to fight  
 So that both hands were free when in action.  
 Knights and infantry fell, or took to flight.  
 Men quaked and ran, but for a mere fraction  
 Scattered o'er the field; cowards fled the scene,  
 While Queen Marfisa sought to intervene,

The maid, not delayed by donning armour,  
 For she lived, clad in steel, prepared to fight,  
 Now looked to display a leader's valour.  
 She was soon perceived by that skilful knight  
 Ballano, who had fought her; he, however,  
 Having gained experience of her might,  
 Found a reason to be elsewhere, for his part,  
 Than in the presence of that fiery heart.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 57-60: SHE COUNTERS,  
 AND KING BALLANO IS TAKEN**

The band of knights had earlier agreed,  
 That each would lend his companions aid,  
 For they knew she'd attempt some mighty deed,  
 And seek them out; thus, none were unafraid.  
 Now, as Ballano veered away at speed,  
 She chased behind, her anger well-displayed,  
 Crying: 'Turn, turn, you hound! Come face me here!  
 You'll not so easily, this day, win clear!'

Shouting loudly, she chased him o'er the plain.  
 Antifor of Albarossia, he  
 Struck her hard from behind, but to mere pain  
 Oblivious, she rode on, furiously,  
 Intent on meeting Ballano again.  
 That king spurred his steed on more swiftly.  
 Oberto too, in pursuit, crossed her course,  
 And lashed out at her helm, behind, with force.

She scarce noticed, bearing down on Ballano.  
 Chiarone, with a snake's swift attack,  
 Launched towards the queen a two-handed blow,  
 That likewise struck her helmet, at the back,  
 Which again she barely felt, being so  
 Intent on Ballano, who with no lack  
 Of courage, turned his steed, and from the sky  
 Dealt a stroke that landed hard, as she sped by.

He'd dropped the reins, swung the sword o'er his head,  
 And the blade, descending, fell on her shield,  
 And sliced it like a piece of mouldy bread,  
 Such that half of it scattered o'er the field.  
 The maid returned, and aimed to strike him dead,  
 His helm cracking, and his skull thus revealed.  
 Her men, now grouped about her, caught his steed,  
 The king seeming but half-alive indeed.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 61-65: SHE CAPTURES  
 KING HADRIAN, AND KILLS OBERTO**

Nor did she linger there, but Chiarone  
 She then hunted, like a hare, o'er the field,  
 While his comrades dealt the maiden many  
 A blow, though her scorn went unconcealed,  
 Counting them not worth a fig; angrily,  
 She caught Chiarone, forcing him to yield,  
 And had him bound, and dispatched to her tent.  
 Antifor fled, escape his sole intent,

Yet, reaching him, his helm the maiden seized,  
 And dragged him, rendered helpless, from his steed,  
 Then shaking him about, the knight she teased  
 Like a cat that will toy, despite its greed,  
 With a mouse, doing with him as she pleased,  
 Then tossed him to her men. Next, at speed,  
 She caught King Hadrian, though Sacripante  
 Being elsewhere on the field, yet went free.

She set eyes on Oberto dal Leone;  
 He had scattered a squadron, all alone.  
 The savage warrior-maid spurred swiftly  
 To meet him, fell upon him like a stone,  
 Split his stout shield in two completely,  
 Broke apart the plate guarding flesh and bone,  
 Stripped his hauberk, and the mail below,  
 And pierced his skin, with a single blow.

The brave knight, dismayed beyond measure,  
 With two hands launched a swing of his blade,  
 Which the maid turned aside, at her leisure.  
 For scant regard for such blows she displayed,  
 As her armour and helm were ancient treasure,  
 Wrought by enchantment, in a secret glade,  
 And protected her ever; she dealt a stroke  
 That landed on his helm, which promptly broke.

Her sword descended with such vicious force  
 His stout helmet could not withstand the blow  
 That split his brow and nose, in its fierce course,  
 And sank through the mouth, teeth, and jaw below.  
 Down to the saddle, and well-nigh his horse,  
 That keen blade passed, there only did it slow,  
 And, but for an inch, near cut the saddle through,  
 After slicing Oberto clean in two.

**BOOK II: CANTO II: 66-70: AND IS THEN  
 CONFRONTED BY SACRIPANTE**

King Sacripante fought some way away,  
 Cleaving the foe in battle, with his sword  
 Wielded in his two hands. To his dismay,  
 He saw Oberto slain, that valiant lord.  
 Now he rode, abandoning the affray,  
 And galloping, amidst the tangled horde,  
 To reach Marfisa and that gory scene  
 Blade in hand, and fight the warrior-queen.

He delivered such a blow that the maid  
 Was sure she'd never felt the like before.  
 She almost swooned, such pain the stroke conveyed.  
 'Twas now as if King Sacripante bore  
 A pair of wings, so swift the turns he made.  
 Her prowess, all the strength she had in store,  
 Went for naught, so rapid was his course,  
 As he circled her on his splendid horse.

He spun about her like some agile bird,  
 Avoiding her wild blows, while striking hard.  
 Many a trenchant sword-stroke he conferred  
 Upon the queen, who was ever on her guard.  
 Frontalate was his mount; he scarcely spurred  
 The creature, which ever went unscarred,  
 So agile was he, and so clever in a fight,  
 That, when Sacripante his flag unfurled,  
 On that fair steed, he scorned the mortal world.

The courser was quite faultless, he'd maintain;  
 'Twas so well-formed, that it lacked for naught,  
 A fine bay-horse, and of a chestnut grain,  
 Though a white blaze on its brow, it did sport.  
 That steed was bred in Granada, Spain,  
 Its mould was slim, its haunches strong, in short  
 A rare beast, with a long tail, and blonde mane,  
 While pale 'socks', on three fetlocks, showed plain.

When armed and so mounted, Sacripante  
Claimed that he could conquer any foe.  
He'd great need of that mount now, for, clearly,  
Ne'er before had he had to labour so,  
As he faced that relentless warrior-lady.  
I'll describe the rest in the next canto,  
Or I'll seek to do so, for, to tell no lie,  
It needs a more brilliant penman than I.

## BOOK II: CANTO III: SEEKING RUGGIERO

### A R G O M E N T O.

*Con Marfisa combatte Sacripante,      Lo anello vuol Brunello in vno istante  
Ode del regno suo cattiuu noua,      Rubar. Preso Aquilante Orlando troua,  
Ruggiero è in van cercato. L'arrogante,      Lo scioglie, e col fratel la damigella,  
'Rodomonte de' Galli vuol far proua.      Si parte poscia, e troua vna donzella.*



### A L L E G O R I E.

**D I** Quale utilità ne fia l'vsare ingegno, e destrezza nelle cose pericolose, ce lo insegna Sacripante, che con l'altezza del destriero, e con l'ingegno faceva che Marfisa menaua i colpi suoi tutti al vento.

**G R I F O N E**, & Aquilante che menati insieme con Origille per cibo al feroce serpente, sono li liberati da Orlando, ne mostra che douiamo sempre sperar bene, percioche spesso quando manco aspettato allhora ne auiene, liberandone di molte graui calamità,

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 1-6: MARFISA AND SACRIPANTE CONTEND**

In my previous canto, Marfisa  
Was left battling against Circassia's king.  
Regardless of how she fought, however,  
That steed of his, deftly manoeuvring,  
Made an equal match of their encounter.  
Anger gnawed her, for though contending  
With his blade, and then answering again,  
With two handed sword-blows, twas all in vain.

Behold the king, swooping like a falcon,  
Struck her cheek-guard on either side.  
She, with a backhand thrust, neatly done,  
As swiftly as she could, at once replied.  
Yet that steed, with a leap towards the sun,  
As if bearing wings, nimbly flew aside,  
Denied the least advantage to the queen,  
And, at once, leapt back to where it had been.

Sacripante aimed at her shoulder-blade.  
His weapon struck against the solid plate,  
And, sliding down, across her shield, displayed  
Her steel-clad arm, leaving, in sorry state,  
All it touched; yet, with every move he made,  
If she were but to land a blow, his fate  
Would be decided, for if she came near  
Then he'd be split in two; that fact was clear.

As when a castle on a rocky steep  
Is besieged on every side, and the foe  
Receives weighty rocks and beams, in the deep,  
That endanger their forces there below,  
And, as the hail descends, close watch they keep  
Lest they are downed by but a single blow,  
So Sacripante and Marfisa fought,  
Cautious in all they did, conceding naught.

She struck like lightning from a winter sky,  
Whene'er she advanced her keen-edged blade,  
For through the air that fearsome sword would sigh,  
The blow despatched right swiftly by the maid.  
But the king's steed, scarcely troubled thereby,  
Rarely paused, leapt about, and never stayed,  
While in front, behind, and on every side,  
In a blur, the king his whirling weapon plied.

He trimmed from her helm, the helmet-crest,  
Her shield was broken, splintered from the fight.  
He'd rent her surcoat, and yet all the rest,  
Of her armour was whole, in his despite.  
He hammered at her arms, and sides, and breast,  
But she cared not, the damage merely slight,  
Biding her time, and hoping in her heart,  
With one fierce blow, to split the knight apart.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 7-12: SACRIPANTE RECEIVES ILL NEWS**

They had fought each other to a standstill,  
And had agreed to retire, awhile, to rest,  
When a messenger appeared on the hill,  
And reached the field; his face his fear expressed.  
His looks, to Sacripante, boded ill,  
As he knelt before him, his voice distressed,  
And tearfully, proclaimed: 'My lord, I bring  
Ill news of your realm, for that mighty king

Mandricardo, who is Agricane's heir,  
Being his eldest son, has sought to gather  
His far-flung Tartars, all the land can spare,  
And has invaded your Circassia.  
He himself has slain your own brother, there,  
Thus, your kingdom seeks to call you thither.  
Mandricardo would surely flee or yield  
If he saw you lead your men o'er the field.

We were greatly saddened by a rumour  
Of your death, the which prompted, suddenly,  
An invasion; for that fierce warrior,  
Entered the realm with a new-made army,  
Took the bridge at Levashi, crossed over,  
Moved south, and burned the town of Shamakhi.  
There it was he slew Olibandro,  
Your valiant brother, to our grief and woe.

He has brought flame and ruin everywhere  
Passing like a firebrand through the land.  
While you defend a maid, however fair,  
You but neglect the realm that you command.  
The people call for you alone, and there  
They have no other hope; they make a stand,  
But our most noble country faces doom,  
The steel rends her, and the flames consume.

The brave monarch listened with altered face,  
And wept endless tears of grief and anger,  
Both his thoughts and feelings churning apace,  
Torn twixt love and ire, condemned to suffer;  
Urged, by the latter, to depart the place,  
Yet bound to defend his lady, by the former.  
Then finally, his heart torn twixt the two,  
He turned to the queen, reluctant to pursue

Their duel, sheathed his blade, and to Marfisa  
Relayed the news the messenger had brought,  
Of the devastation wrought by another,  
That, counter to the right, destruction sought.  
And then, asking humbly, he begged of her  
As eloquently as he could, with tears fraught,  
In a fine speech, with many a sweet word,  
To quit the place; let the siege be deferred.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 13-16: MARFISA REJECTS  
HIS PLEA**

The queen began by pledging her whole army  
And herself, to his service, if desired;  
Yet would not countenance the thought that she  
Should leave; to her aim she yet aspired,  
Of Angelica's death; nor would mercy  
Be shown the citadel, till she'd acquired  
Its surrender; thus, in greater discord,  
The pair renewed the fight, with shield and sword.

They began a fierce and dread encounter,  
More ardent than the pair had fought that day.  
Sacripante, mounted on his swift courser,  
Flew about her, thus keeping her at bay.  
He knew how easily he might suffer  
Both disgrace and shame, in that mortal play,  
For should Fortune fail to come to his aid,  
One mighty sword-stroke and he'd be unmade.

He'd resolved to tire the warrior-maiden,  
Or die striving, if ill-fate so decreed.  
He struck her helm and armour often,  
Yet could not dent the metal, while, indeed,  
The queen, unwearied, maintained her station,  
Undisturbed by his blows, or by his steed,  
Dealing two-handed strokes that oft promised  
Much, yet given his tactics simply missed.

The fight between those two was so prolonged,  
It needs more time to describe it fully;  
Yet, should I leave it awhile, you're not wronged,  
I'll return to the same point, faithfully.  
But now to those to whom the task belonged  
I turn, that assigned by Agramante,  
Of searching Mount Carena's every trail,  
Seeking Ruggiero, for so runs the tale.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 17-19: MULABUFERSO  
FAILS TO FIND RUGGIERO ON MOUNT CARENA**

Mulabuferso, King of Fizano,  
Fierce in mien, expert at everything,  
Searched all the mountain, riding to and fro,  
From the desert to the sea, pursuing  
Any trace of the said Ruggiero,  
Found him not, and returned to face the king,  
To whom he sped, on reaching Bizerte,  
Convinced twas but vain to search further.

'My lord,' he said, 'performing your command,  
I have searched all Carena's mountain height,  
Yet, despite my toil and care, please understand,  
All was the same, at the last, as at first sight,  
And I assure you that, in all that empty land,  
There is nary a sign of that young knight.  
A Ruggiero died, there, at Reggio,  
And no other I think the world doth show.

Yet, if it pleases the king of Garamanta,  
Let him divine the place where he might be,  
Since he knows that art, and may see further,  
And yet we'd be but mad, it seems to me,  
To attend upon this old snake-charmer,  
For, by now, we should be upon the sea.  
He searches for what may be found no more,  
So our people may not sail, and make war.'

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 20-24: RODOMONTE  
POURS SCORN ON DIVINATION**

Rodomonte scarce let him make an end,  
Scornful, as he listened, with fiery gaze,  
Ere he cried: 'That's as I told you, my friend.  
He makes mock of the king with his mad ways.  
No, he'd not have us war; those that depend,

On some man's word, accepting all he says,  
Are, full oft, misled; tis wrong to believe  
In things unseen, and speeches that deceive!

For the world's latest fashion is to lie,  
And never a man that does so, shows shame,  
But charts the heavens as the stars pass by,  
To colour each incredible new claim,  
Announcing what will happen, by and by,  
And interpreting dreams, to swell his fame.  
Mercury, Jupiter, or Mars he'll say  
Is fostering peace or war, somewhere, this day.

If there are gods, of which I am unsure,  
They care for things above, not here below.  
No man has seen them, and yet, all the more,  
Base fools, through fear, believe they come and go  
Upon this Earth: My faith you may explore:  
Tis in my armour, and my sword, the blow  
From my iron mace, and in my good steed  
For I am my own god, and none do need!

While this old priest, with an olive twig draws  
Circles in the dust, claiming, when the Sun  
Is conjoined with Venus, we'll see no wars,  
Because we'll be at peace with everyone;  
And that, when the grass is springing outdoors,  
And the fairest of the seasons has begun,  
The King should refrain from war in France,  
Scratch his belly, and rest his sword and lance.

I marvel that my bold and puissant lord  
Can endure so vain and idle a tale.  
This old man twould be pleasing to afford  
A tight grip on his hair, who doth regale  
The court with such, and so heave him aboard,  
Then leave him there, in France, without a sail,  
Or whisk him through the air; I know not why  
I refrain, twould be fine to see him fly.'

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 25-30: GARAMANTA'S  
KING SPEAKS OF ATLANTE'S REALM, AND OF  
THE RING**

The white-haired priest merely smiled, and said:  
'His words, and the fiery look, this lad shows,  
This brave youth with such wisdom in his head,

Scare me not; tis the truth, as my lord knows,  
I reveal; the boy to war has been bred,  
His mind, ever astray, is filled with foes.  
The gods care not for him, nor he for they.  
Of other things I speak; come, hark, I say!

I told you, my lords, and I say again  
That on Carena's mountain dwells a knight,  
Whose clear destiny Heaven doth ordain,  
A youth unequalled in his skill and might.  
Lest you've forgotten, tis with toil and pain,  
One may hope to find him; twill be despite  
His guardian, schooled in necromancy,  
That hides him well. His name is Atlante.

He wrought a garden on that mountain peak,  
Which is encircled by a wall, like glass,  
And sits so high, upon cliffs bare and bleak,  
That he's secure there, for no man can pass.  
The ring-wall is quite sheer, its stone unique.  
Though tis marvellously hard, that great mass,  
Twas raised by dark enchantment, in a day;  
Sprites from Hell he conjured; there's no way

One can ascend the peak without consent,  
For that old wizard guards the heights above,  
And so, none sees the garden therein pent.  
Not even from a distance, can one prove  
That realm exists; for such was his intent.  
Rodomonte laughs! Fools e'er disapprove!  
And yet still one may view this wondrous thing,  
If one but possesses the magic ring

That I know of, wrought in such a manner  
(Many a time, its power has been shown)  
That its presence dispels every barrier,  
Achieved by the work of magic alone.  
Tis owned by King Galafrone's daughter;  
In Cathay, in far India, is his throne,  
While Angelica holds court in Albracca  
Now besieged by the fierce Queen Marfisa.

Unless that magic ring is in your power,  
The lofty garden will be sought in vain;  
For that peak's an impregnable tower.  
Sail without Ruggiero, and naught but pain  
Will you endure, with every passing hour,

While none, who war there, will return again.  
 Since I foresee, if that fair knight you lack,  
 Ill-Fortune shall clothe Africa in black.'

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 31-33: HE PROPHESES  
 THAT HIS OWN DEATH IS IMMINENT**

When the old king ceased from speaking so,  
 He bowed his head, and wept many a tear:  
 'Yet I'm happier than you all, for I know  
 The moment of my death, the which is near.  
 And that proof, of what I say, I may show,  
 I say the hour fate chose for me, is here.  
 When the Sun enters Cancer, then my life  
 Will end as if twere cut through with a knife.

I die ere the hour has passed, and truly.  
 If there's aught, of Allah, that you may need,  
 Then I'll bear your request along with me.  
 Now hold fast to the words the god decreed,  
 Which I'll now repeat: 'Choose to journey  
 To France without that knight, who indeed  
 Shall be your only shield, and pay the cost;  
 All shall be sore dismayed; all shall be lost.'

His life was no longer than he'd foretold  
 Being a wise and skilful diviner.  
 He died that instant; in their sight, grew cold.  
 Agramante was stunned, every warrior  
 Was dismayed; even those who were most bold,  
 And had denied the king's prophetic power,  
 Now believed all that the old man had said,  
 For he lay, on the ground before them, dead.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 34-37: RODOMONTE  
 DEPARTS, TO PREPARE FOR WAR**

Rodomonte, alone, was unafraid  
 And scornfully addressed Agramante:  
 'I too, my lord, the old man's fate had weighed,  
 And foresaw he'd not live long, at ninety!  
 The wicked old babbler certainly displayed  
 Every sign of dying and, it seems to me  
 Being so full of years, in constant pain,  
 He knew he neared the end of his long reign.

But now his death appears to prove, somehow,  
 Since he predicted it, the claims he made.  
 Yet it's nothing new, all here would avow,  
 To witness an old man's death, long delayed.  
 Remain behind then, follow not my prow;  
 I'll cross the waves alone, with lance and blade.  
 We'll see if Heaven thwarts my bold advance,  
 Enough to keep me from the throne of France.'

Finding no more to say, proud Rodomonte,  
 Without taking leave, departed the council.  
 To Sarza went that fiery heart, then swiftly  
 Gathered men to Algiers, to assemble  
 An invasion force, equip a navy,  
 Such as to make the Frankish kingdom tremble.  
 I'll tell you later how those waves he crossed  
 And the war he waged, to Charlemagne's great cost.

The counsellors, yet assembled, as ever  
 Pursued the matter, saying yay and nay,  
 While the king, regaining his composure,  
 Was still set on sailing, without delay.  
 All swore to follow, if they could be sure  
 That this Ruggiero would pave the way,  
 If he were not found, all might yet go ill;  
 The king agreed and, thus, expressed his will:

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 38-44: BRUNELLO  
 PROMISES TO STEAL THE RING, AND THE  
 COUNCIL ENDS**

Agramante vowed that if any man  
 Could be found with a nature so daring  
 As to steal the ring, by some cunning plan,  
 That Galafrone's daughter was wearing,  
 He'd grant him a realm, a tract larger than  
 One could conceive, rich beyond comparing.  
 All understood the prize, thus to be won,  
 And yet worthwhile offering came there none.

Till the white-haired King of Fez was heard  
 To say: 'My lord, let me depart a while,  
 And, Allah willing, you shall hear the word  
 Of a servant of mine, a man of guile.'  
 He was not long away, while they conferred,  
 And returned with a dwarf who did smile  
 A wicked smile, his fingers never slow  
 To acquire fine things; his name, Brunello.



In height the thief was a little fellow,  
But in malice marvellously great.  
He was four and a half feet tall, or so,  
With short black curly hair on his pate.  
He spoke a base tongue, his voice a bellow,  
Like a war-horn's bray, that did ever grate  
On the ear; he slept by day, moved by night,  
Unrestrained in speech, in virtue light.

When he arrived, and cast his gaze upon  
The gems and gold platters, of which I told,  
He wished he was taller, his eyes thereon  
As large as they, then, nothing if not bold,  
He drew near the throne: 'You may count upon  
Me, my lord,' he cried, 'Ere the day is old,  
I'll be off to win, by cleverness and skill,  
The kingdom you've promised, that I will.

I'll seize the ring, not a chance of failure,  
And return to the palace, in a trice,  
And if you should need me for a bigger  
Task or two, well you needn't ask me twice.  
I could pluck the moon from heaven quicker,  
Or seize the Devil's trident; for a price,  
Spite the Christians, steal the Pope's treasure,  
And rob bells of their peals, for good measure.'

King Agramante marvelled to see  
A little fellow with such self-assurance.  
Brunello went away to sleep, for he  
Preferred the dark of midnight, to advance  
His cause, and none saw him, certainly,  
Prising jewels from the walls; twas by mere chance  
He'd been born to dwarfism, and so small  
He could scarce reach those gems, to seize his haul.

The king's council was dissolved, there and then  
For the work of that gathering was done.  
Each man journeyed to his own land again,  
To seek all required for the invasion.  
The king, of his grace, gifted all these men  
With such gifts as had their allegiance won,  
For he gave armour, jewels, jars of gold,  
Brave steeds, and hawks, and deerhounds, we are told.

## **BOOK II: CANTO III: 45-48: ORLANDO MEETS A TROOP OF MEN, AND THEIR PRISONERS**

Each lord, singing loudly, his road did go,  
Dressed all in cloth of silver, and of gold;  
But I must quit them, and seek Orlando,  
Whom I left, afoot, a sad sight to behold,  
Suffering, as he walked, both pain and woe;  
For Brigiador he'd lost, the trail now cold,  
While he rebuked himself, for he'd obeyed,  
And been deceived by, a treacherous maid.

To himself, he said: 'Though, I set her free  
From depths of torment as cruel as death,  
Yet she was but discourteous to me,  
And led me to this sorry waste of breath.  
May he be damned that trusts so foolishly  
In woman: so many an old book saith.  
For each is faithless, when put to the test,  
And never a loyal one midst all the rest.'

Yet he struck his lips, when the thought was done,  
And scolded himself: 'Villain of a knight,  
What could make you think thus, of anyone?  
Have you forgotten, then, the noble sight,  
Of her who won your heart, the tender one  
That ever fills your mind and soul with light?  
Surely her goodness and example prove,  
That there are women worthy of your love.'

While he was musing thus, afar, he saw  
Standards, and pennons atop lances, gleaming.  
Men were passing o'er the plain, as if to war;  
Most were on foot; some brave steeds were riding.  
A captain led two prisoners on before  
The rest; two knights, or such was their seeming,  
Arms bound with iron chains, and in despair.  
As they neared, the Count recognised the pair.

## **BOOK II: CANTO III: 49-53: THE CAPTIVES ARE AQUILANTE, GRIFONE AND ORRIGILLE**

Those knights, Aquilante and Grifone,  
Were both being led to execution.  
A maid, on Brigiador, rode sadly  
Before them, bound tightly in position,  
All pallid of face, and grieving deeply,

As she was borne to her destination.  
Orlando knew her visage, instantly,  
Twas that false deceiver, Orrigille.

Concealing his knowledge, he now approached  
The soldiers, and asked as to their intent.  
One with a russet beard, to whom he broached  
The question (his fat belly tightly pent  
In armour) replied: "These three encroached  
Upon this land, where the mighty serpent  
Consumes all that come here, and are caught;  
For, as offerings then, their death is sought.

Should you know it not, this is Orgagna;  
And you are close to Falerina's Garden.  
Naught more wondrous was created ever,  
For the queen's magic wrought its construction.  
Therefore, fear to draw nearer, stranger,  
For you will be pounced upon, and taken,  
And go to feed the dragon with these three,  
Should you fail to take to your heels, and flee.'

Now, Count Orlando was filled with delight,  
On learning, from the soldier's calm reply,  
That the enchanted garden, as fair as night,  
Which he was bent on destroying, was nigh.  
But then the speaker, whose face to the sight  
Was like a doleful hound's, cried: 'Fly, man, fly,  
If our captain sees you, you'll be caught,  
And then thrown to the serpent, for its sport.'

The man had scarcely ceased answering though,  
When his fierce captain caught sight of the pair,  
And shouted: 'Seize the rascal, don't be slow!  
Bad luck for him he chose to breathe our air,  
Bound in chains, with these others, he shall go.  
'This day, the beast will devour that trio there,'  
He cried, and then, pointing at Orlando:  
'He'll make a tasty mouthful for tomorrow.'

## BOOK II: CANTO III: 54-58: ORLANDO ROUTS THE TROOP

The soldiers rushed to capture the brave knight,  
The whole troop attacking him together,  
While, as one always ready for a fight,  
He gripped his shield, and drew Durindana.

Not knowing his boundless skill, and might,  
They felt no fear as they ran in, however,  
Each, hastening on, ignorant and eager,  
Since they prized his weapon, and his armour.

Yet they swiftly discovered their mistake,  
For as soon as they met in this encounter,  
He cut at some, and other men did rake  
With his blade, and scarce a blow in error.  
'Stand firm, lads, now! Hold fast, for honour's sake!'  
Came a shout from a tall man, with a banner,  
'Stand firm!' he cried, his efforts all in vain,  
For he'd been left far behind, on the plain.

None heeded him, but quickly turned to flee,  
Seeking whatever cover might be found,  
While the Count ran beside them, cheerfully,  
Scattering heads, arms, and legs o'er the ground.  
He reached the tall flag-bearer, and fiercely  
Swung Durindana, with a whistling sound,  
And sliced the man in two, in a trice;  
While none lingered to see him wield it twice.

The captain, who rode the choicest steed,  
Led their swift retreat, shouting as he fled:  
'That's the one who wrought the fatal deed  
And slew Rubicone; we'll all be dead,  
Unless Fate saves us, and this turn of speed!  
Woe to the man that's forced to face his blade,  
It cuts flesh like butter; he'll not be stayed!'

Whether you recall the thing, I scarce know,  
But twas Rinaldo slew Rubicone,  
And, with that blow, my lords, saved Prasildo,  
And Iroldo; and this captain, simply  
Thought, when he gazed on bold Orlando,  
And saw him swing his sword so fiercely,  
That this was the self-same cavalier,  
And fled the faster, thinking he drew near.

## BOOK II: CANTO III: 59-61: HE FORGIVES ORRIGILLE

But the Count chose not to pursue the foe,  
For the rogues were clearly at his mercy:  
'Away with you, you rascals! Off you go!'  
He cried, and then turned to the knights swiftly,

Who wept for joy, escaping pain and woe,  
Scarce believing twas really Orlando;  
But the maid, who'd deceived him, turned paler,  
And let her head hang down even lower.

She was fair, beyond measure, as I've said,  
In every way exemplifying beauty,  
Such that e'en her embarrassment and dread  
Failed to hide the fact that she was lovely.  
Viewing her splendid figure, toe to head,  
The Count's thoughts were muddled, entirely,  
And he forgot his injuries, and her slight,  
And only grieved at witnessing her plight.

What shall I say? The maiden pleased him so,  
That he freed her first, and his nephews last.  
While she, a false deceiver, as you know,  
Seized her chance to bury the recent past,  
As she would; begged for mercy, cried her woe.  
The Count, seeing her so sad, and downcast,  
Had no wish to see her weeping like this;  
So, he raised her, and made peace, with a kiss.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 62-64: WHO, IT SEEMS, IS  
NOW IN LOVE WITH GRIFONE**

Once they were reconciled, and he content,  
Orlando once more mounted his brave steed,  
Having unchained the two knights; her intent,  
However, was to another's side to speed,  
For her eyes upon Grifone now were bent.  
That pair were deep in love; fate had decreed  
That, though held in separate cells, the fire  
Had been aroused in both, of fond desire.

Why wonder that she preferred Grifone?  
For the Count with bushy eyebrows was blessed,  
And one eye had a squint (though twas barely  
A blemish, and scarce diminished the rest)  
While those rosy cheeks of 'dear' Grifone,  
And the absence of a beard, tis confessed,  
Appealed more to the young; the strength and size  
Of the Count seemed, to her, the lesser prize.

She kept her gaze fixed on her Grifone,  
While that knight with like passion gazed on her,  
Full of love for the maid, and sympathy,

His ardent breast heaved; his heart sighed for her,  
And the lovers behaved so openly,  
That Orlando was not inclined to suffer  
Grifone's presence long, and so he told  
The knights to depart, ere the day grew old.

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 65-67: THE KNIGHTS  
DEPART, AND A LADY APPEARS**

He said that he was bound upon a quest,  
And was sworn to accomplish a great deed,  
That very day, alone, and so twas best  
If they quit his company, and at speed.  
Graciously, they obeyed his curt request,  
And said their farewells, though twould need  
Three reminders at least from Orlando  
Ere Grifone, mounted, felt bound to go.

Once his two nephews had departed,  
Orlando dismounted and, although  
An awkward lover (though stout-hearted),  
Was seeking to confess his love, when, lo,  
A lady appeared, ere he'd quite started,  
Upon a white palfrey, and ambling slow.  
When salutations were done, the maid cried:  
'Ah, unlucky man, whom Fate has so denied

The good-fortune you deserve, know you not,  
You are but two miles from the dreaded gate  
Of Orgagna's garden; death will prove your lot  
If your fate draws you there. 'Tis not too late!  
Flee now, by God! Let this land be forgot,  
For close to death are you, the danger great,  
When near, as now, to that enchanted wall,  
Yet you linger, as if you're safe from all.'

**BOOK II: CANTO III: 68-70: ORLANDO SEEKS  
HER COUNSEL**

Orlando answered the maid, with a smile:  
'I must render you my thanks, endlessly,  
E'en though you'd have me ride many a mile  
From great peril, for such you've said to me.  
To that garden I shall win, by force or guile,  
You must understand; I deign not to flee.  
For Love, who sends me there, at a venture,  
Assures me I'll, thus, enhance my honour.

If you would but give me advice, or aid,  
And suggest what I might say there, or do,  
For none to me such matters have relayed,  
I'd truly, be beholden unto you.  
I've met none who this same journey has made,  
Or likewise, has had its stone walls in view.  
And so, I pray you, of your courtesy,  
If you know aught of that realm, counsel me.'

The damsel dismounting, graciously,  
From her white palfrey, trod the field below,  
And revealed to him all that he might see,  
No more nor less; or all that she did know.  
Twas a marvellous adventure, truly,  
Which I'll tell you of, in the next canto,  
If the Lord so pleases; sweet company,  
Rest in peace; and we'll meet again, shortly.

BOOK II: CANTO IV: FALERINA'S GARDEN

A R G O M E N T O.

Dà vn Libro al Conte la gentil donzella,  
 Che insegna dissipare il mal Giardino,  
 Gabbato è, ammazza il serpe a l'empia,  
 Fatta ne leua il bel Brādo accialino (fella  
 La Sirena e'l fier Tor del Mondo suellā,  
 L'Vccel feroce, e l'Asin fa meschino,  
 La Fauna uccide, e'l Gigante incatena  
 Gli doi che dal suo sangue hebber la vena



A L L E G O R I E.

Q V A N T O sia potente la morte nel far scordar ogni graue offesa, si può vede-  
 re nel Conte Orlando, che così presto si racqueta con la donzella, accettando  
 ogni sua falsa escusatione per uera.  
 L A donna che dà ad Orlando il libro che insegna a dissipare il giardino, è l'ae-  
 cortezza dell'huomo, laquale gli dimostra il modo di vincere ogni impresa  
 benchè perigliosa, Orlando che ucciso il Dragone troua Falerina, & gli tol-  
 se il buon brando fatto per dargli la morte, ne dimostra quanto possi la forza  
 ua nel voler felicitare alcuno.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 1-3: BOIARDO ON THE POWER OF LOVE**

Light of my eyes, heart of my own heart,  
For whom I first learned to sing, so sweetly,  
My poems of love, wrought with subtle art,  
To this tale I render now, inspire me.  
You alone, brought honour, set me apart,  
From others when I sang of you, purely;  
For Love grants voice and intellect to those,  
That tell of you, your virtues to disclose.

Love, it was, first invented rhyme and verse,  
Sound, and song, and every melody.  
To distant strangers Love doth yet rehearse  
Its tunes; unites them in sweet company.  
Delight, and pleasure, lost, all would prove worse  
If Love held not the throne, and mastery;  
Vicious hatred, war's cruel banners unfurled,  
If Love were not, would rule all the world.

Love banishes all wrath and avarice,  
Urging the heart to valiant enterprise;  
So, Orlando wrought more wondrously in this  
Brave season, when Love made him wise-unwise.  
If you recall, I left him, following that kiss,  
And the fair lady's arrival; likewise,  
I remember, and will speak of that affair,  
For the pleasure of those with time to spare.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 4-9: THE LADY GIVES ORLANDO A BOOK WHICH DESCRIBES THE GARDEN**

The lady, who'd dismounted, now addressed  
The Count, saying: 'I'd grant you aid, sir knight,  
In the garden, by my faith, were it my quest,  
But, tis as a messenger I alight,  
And cannot linger, spite of your request,  
While I have far to go, ere it be night.  
Yet listen to my words, if such you crave;  
For you must seek to be both wise and brave.

If you'd not fall prey to that vile dragon,  
And be consumed as other folk have been,  
Ensure you're chaste for three days, whereupon,  
You may attempt the venture, for, I ween,

You'll not survive otherwise; this dragon,  
As the first test, at the first gate, is seen;  
And I shall give you a book that shows all  
The garden within that encircling wall,

And that creature that slays many a knight,  
And the nature of the other marvels there,  
And the fair palace, which the queen, last night,  
Entered, a strange enchantment to prepare;  
For the witch seeks to forge, while hid from sight,  
Through incantation, and the pressed juice of rare  
Herbs and roots, a sword, whose gleaming blade  
Will conquer all that magic charms now aid.

The enchantress may toil to such an end  
Only beneath a slender waning moon;  
And the purpose for which she doth intend  
This weapon, that she tempers late and soon,  
I'll explain; there's a knight who can contend  
With any foe and, charmed, he is immune  
To assault; and such strength he doth employ  
That she foresees her garden he'll destroy.

In Europe dwells that knight, and, as I say,  
His enchanted flesh defies every harm;  
He's fought and killed full many on a day.  
And so, the vile enchantress works a charm  
To forge a blade that such a one might slay,  
For his very existence doth alarm  
This dark lady, and she still prophesies  
That her garden he'll raze, before her eyes.

Yet, while I speak, precious time slips away  
And I've not said what you most need to know.  
None can enter but at the break of day,  
As the sun is rising; now, I must go,  
The task is done, I can no more delay,  
Though I regret that I must leave you so.  
Take the book now, and read the text with care.  
God grant you aid, and all good-fortune, there.'

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 10-13: ORRIGILLE STEALS BRIGLIADOR AND HIS SWORD DURINDANA**

She placed the book then in Orlando's hand  
Mounted her steed, and bade the Count farewell.  
He thanked the messenger, a while did stand

And watched as she rode away, for a spell.  
Then, recalling her very last command,  
He thought to rest, till the sun should dispel  
The shadows, and to his task he might go,  
Recalling he must be chaste ere he did so.

Love and desire now caused him pain;  
Orrigille, whose life he'd saved, was there.  
Yet the Count was determined to refrain,  
Though he longed for the maid, and she was fair.  
A crescent moon, the starry heights did gain;  
He lay down in the field, his mind elsewhere,  
Clad in armour, his shield beneath his head,  
The maid at his side, on that grassy bed.

Orlando was asleep, and snoring loudly,  
Free of his cares for now, while the maid,  
Deciding she should follow her Grifone,  
Being full of malice, that ill trait displayed;  
For, prepared to slay the Count, and silently  
Pondering it in her mind, quite unafraid,  
She drew closer to his side, to afford  
Access to his belt, then purloined his sword.

Since Orlando was still clad in armour,  
She was, though, all uncertain what to do,  
Having second thoughts about his murder,  
Unsure if she'd the strength to pierce him through.  
So, she sought for Brigliador, at pasture,  
And mounted the steed, ere the day was new;  
Then, to distance them both from his owner,  
Rode forth, noiselessly, with Durindana.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 14-19: ORLANDO  
REACHES THE EASTERN GATE AND SLAYS THE  
DRAGON**

Orlando woke, close to dawn, that morning  
To discover he'd neither sword nor steed.  
Think of his wretchedness on realising  
His loss; he felt he'd die of shame indeed.  
Yet he was still intent on entering  
Orgagna's garden, so departed, at speed,  
For though he'd lost his horse, and his sharp blade,  
The daring knight felt strong, and unafraid.

The Count, forging ahead, courageously,  
Set out towards the garden; on the road,  
He broke a stout branch from a tall elm-tree,  
Then, grasping it like a cudgel, on he strode;  
Soon, the morning sun was rising brightly  
As he approached the dragon's fell abode.  
His eager pace slowed almost to a crawl,  
As he gazed about him, at the gleaming wall.

It formed a barrier, of polished stone,  
Curving around, in an unbroken ring;  
And soaring upwards (the height of it unknown,  
But half a mile at least), encircling  
The garden, and pierced by one gate alone,  
Towards the East; there, a dragon, beating  
Its wings, lashed its tail, and hissed, so loud,  
The ill noise seemed the whole world to enshroud,

Orlando approached, with no sign of fear,  
His club gripped tight, his shield on his arm.  
The dragon at the gate watched him draw near,  
And stood its guard, ready to do him harm.  
Its jaws were open wide to tear, and shear,  
And, then, devour him, at the least alarm.  
The Count, used to such duels, soon lashed out  
With his club, and struck the beast on the snout.

The serpent-dragon was enraged by the blow,  
And charged at the Count, in maddened fury,  
While, with his green elm bough, Orlando,  
Countered the wild attack, striking fiercely.  
And then, he climbed its back, to its great woe,  
Gripped tight, and rode it to and fro, cruelly  
Pounding with both hands, like a storm of hail  
On its head, as he sought thus to prevail.

He cracked its skull; from the shattered pate  
The brains poured forth; the savage beast fell dead.  
Behind him, the wall, once pierced by the gate,  
Had sealed itself; now none that way could tread.  
He scarce knew what to do, hemmed in by fate,  
Yet he turned, to seek some clear path ahead.  
He gazed around, unsure which way to go,  
Having, at least, rid himself of his fierce foe.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 20-25: HE FOLLOWS A STREAM, TO REACH THE PALACE**

On Orlando's right, he espied a fount,  
That sprinkled sparkling drops all around;  
On top a stone statue, on a mount,  
Spilled clear water from its breast to the ground,  
And there, written on its forehead, the Count  
Read: 'This pleasant stream leads, it will be found,  
To the palace.' To cool his hands and face,  
He approached and bathed them, charmed by the place.

The fountain stood amidst the green verdure,  
And on each side were little groves of trees,  
While from it splashed a sweet stream of water,  
So pure and clear the sight could not but please.  
It ran on, amidst the flowers, thereafter,  
On a course the Count could follow with ease,  
Twas described on the scroll that he had read;  
So, he chose to follow where its babbling led.

Thus, the palace was the goal he pursued,  
For some noble adventure there he sought,  
Striding along the bank, in joyful mood,  
While gazing at the scene, afraid of naught.  
It was the month of May, and all he viewed  
Was blossoming and flowering, and, in short,  
There floated through the air a fragrant scent,  
Enough to make the saddest heart content.

Sweet meadows and pleasant hills he saw,  
With verdant groves of splendid pine and fir,  
That tuneful birds within their branches bore,  
Singing brightly, midst the trees' soft murmur.  
While antlered stags strayed o'er the woodland floor,  
And conies scampered in and out its cover;  
And there, too, passed many a hare in flight,  
All rendering that garden scene a delight.

Orlando journeyed on, beside the stream,  
And, having travelled far through that fair zone,  
Where a hill-slope met the shore, it would seem,  
He saw a palace, carved of polished stone.  
At first, he knew it by a sudden gleam  
From its walls, for it stood not there alone,  
But ringed with trees, and then as he drew near  
Midst the grove he could see it, shining clear.

Not only walls of marble met his eye,  
The which he had glimpsed amidst the trees;  
Bright enamels, gold-leaf, he did espy,  
Set in the surface, and designed to please,  
Adorning the stone glowing there on high.  
The entrance gate was finer than all these;  
Some thirty feet tall, and fifteen feet wide,  
With emeralds and rubies there allied.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 26-30: AND CAPTURES A MAID DRESSED IN WHITE (FALERINA)**

The drawbridge lay open, and thus the knight  
Could pass within, which he did, being bold,  
And there he saw a maiden, dressed in white,  
And wearing a diadem wrought of gold.  
She bore a sword which gleamed in the light,  
And mirrored there she could herself behold.  
As soon as she perceived the Count draw near  
She took to flight, as if possessed by fear.

She fled the palace courtyard for the plain,  
With the Count, in pursuit, in full armour,  
Two hundred paces, and they met again,  
When he swiftly grasped the sword to disarm her.  
Twas the weapon forged that he might be slain,  
Designed, treacherously, for his own murder,  
Thus, the blade had been cast to do him harm,  
Its virtue to dispel each hostile charm.

Orlando grasped the maiden by her hair,  
Which the breeze, o'er her shoulders, had spread,  
And he threatened her with death and despair,  
With fierce torments to fill the heart with dread,  
Unless she showed him a way forth to fare,  
Yet, though he grasped her tight by the head,  
And she shook with terror, she'd not relent,  
Refused to answer, and denied consent.

Despite his menaces, and her own fear,  
She refused Count Orlando a reply,  
Nor would she deign to grant one, that was clear.  
He tried to coax her now, and gave a sigh,  
Yet she grew more obstinate, twould appear.  
Though he thought to persuade her, by and by,  
His attempts at sweeter speech gained no more  
Than his threats; she was silent, as before.



Orlando was distressed, at heart, saying:  
 'There's naught left for me to do but use force;  
 Yours is the hurt, mine the shame; this thing  
 I can't evade, there is no other course.'  
 Then, he led her to a beech-tree, tying  
 Her tightly to its trunk (he had recourse  
 To slender twigs, entwined with subtle art)  
 And then asked to know how he might depart.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 31-39: HE ENCOUNTERS  
 AND SLAYS A SIREN**

When the stubborn maid still offered no reply,  
 Choosing rather, it would seem, to suffer,  
 'False and fraudulent, are you!' was his cry,  
 'In your despite, some means I'll discover;  
 For I'll consult the book that I have nigh,  
 I believe a clear answer it may offer;  
 At the least some new thought it may yield.'  
 Forth from his breast, where it lay concealed,

He drew the tome, describing the garden  
 Both within and without, and there he read  
 There was a door to the south, which lay open  
 If one could conquer a wild-bull; it said  
 The beast possessed one horn made of iron,  
 Rooted in the bony crown of its head,  
 And one wreathed in flame; and the former  
 Every kind of plate and mail could sunder;

And he'd find that, before the door, there lay  
 A lake that was most difficult to cross,  
 Because of something strange sent to delay  
 A brave knight's passage o'er the fosse,  
 Of which I'll tell you; yet the book did say  
 How to escape its influence; because  
 He was obliged to go, he left the maid,  
 Tied to the tree; departing from the glade,

He made his way over the fragrant grass,  
 And then a wise precaution he took,  
 For he stuffed both his ears, as he did pass,  
 With rose-petals (for so advised the book).  
 Since wild roses filled the glade, en masse,  
 He stuffed his helm's ear-pieces, every nook;  
 Then strained to hear the birds on every side,  
 Their song lost, though their beaks were open wide.

However hard he tried to discern the sound,  
 Naught could he hear for the roses filled  
 His aural cavities, and all around  
 Had fallen silent; the world mute and stilled.  
 Further on a calm and pleasant lake he found  
 (Though its dark depths many a knight had chilled)  
 Which welcomed him, its waves full of joy,  
 That with its banks, along the shore, did toy.

The Count had scarcely reached the margin there,  
 When the water began to churn, and then,  
 A Siren rose, revealing to the air  
 The sweet form of a seductive maiden.  
 (While beneath was all a fish-like affair,  
 Invisible, since her loins were hidden  
 Beneath the surface, while she was so placed  
 As to disclose the maid, above the waist)

And she began to sing melodiously,  
 Such that every creature flocked to hear,  
 Birds and beasts; yet its sweetness, suddenly,  
 Drowned them in sleep, the instant they drew near.  
 The Count heard naught at all, but cunningly  
 Feigned to do so, as a sleeper did appear,  
 For, as the book had instructed, down he lay,  
 In the grass by the lake, and snored away.

And loud he sounded, seemingly asleep,  
 Yet set to deceive that subtle creature;  
 She came ashore, a sly watch he did keep,  
 And grasped at her hair, ere she drew closer,  
 (Or close enough to draw him to the deep).  
 As he seemed not to hear, she sang louder,  
 Since twas all she could do, but all in vain,  
 Rose-petals muted her tuneful refrain.

Gripping her by her tresses, Orlando  
 Dragged her from the water to the shore,  
 And cut her head off with a single blow  
 Of the magic sword (the book did so implore)  
 And with her blood, the which did overflow,  
 He stained his armour, behind and before.  
 O'er his surcoat that liquid he did pour,  
 Then the petals, from his helm, to the floor.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 40-45: AND THEN THE WILD BULL AT THE SOUTH DOOR**

In this manner, he stained his plate and mail,  
 Since, otherwise, his fine suit of armour  
 Must be destroyed, and naught would him avail,  
 When facing that strange enchanted creature,  
 That with horns, one flame, one iron, would prevail,  
 That wild bull so fiery in its nature  
 That all who faced it must burn like dry wood,  
 Without this sole defence, the Siren's blood.

That wild bull has been described before,  
 The fierce guardian of the southern gate.  
 Count Orlando at last approached the door,  
 After wandering the plain, to meet his fate.  
 The moment he arrived, the brave knight saw  
 That bronze door of the garden change its state,  
 It unlocked, swung wide and, black as night,  
 That savage bull charged forth, into the light.

It emerged, bellowing to the encounter,  
 Tossing its horns, one of iron, one afire,  
 That were set to pierce the finest armour,  
 Steel-plate and mail fast trampled in the mire.  
 The Count, his bright blade charmed however,  
 Attacked its brow, and ere it could retire,  
 Sliced away the horn of iron, at a bound  
 And sent it flying, cleanly, to the ground.

Still the cruel battle ne'er ceased its course,  
 For wielding its other horn, that of flame,  
 The wild bull swung towards him, with such force,  
 He could barely keep his feet, to his shame.  
 He'd have been scorched from head to toe, perforce,  
 Were he not drenched in blood, e'er he came,  
 For that coating repelled the fiery horn,  
 Wrought to put the finest armour to scorn.

Orlando fought on courageously,  
 A warrior unaccustomed to fear.  
 With a two-handed grip, in his fury,  
 He swung that gleaming blade, then danced clear;  
 The sword's magic power (so tells the story)  
 Such that its blows cost the dumb creature dear.  
 The Count struck at the hump, and head, and back,  
 Till the bull collapsed, ending its attack.

The Count sliced through its legs and neck, and so,  
 With a last mighty heave, the task was done,  
 While all the parts of that bull now sank below  
 The earth, and left the ground bare to the sun.  
 Yet the wall, that an opening once did show,  
 Now sealed itself, till all was joined as one;  
 Both the bull and the door no more were seen;  
 Nor a trace left to show where they had been.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 46-47: HE CONSULTS THE BOOK AND HEADS WEST**

The Count was unsure what he should do  
 Now the door had vanished, so he addressed  
 The book once more, and then pondered anew,  
 Knowing he must move towards the west,  
 And, while he kept the mighty wall in view,  
 Follow a river to fulfil his quest,  
 That ran, from the east, to a jewelled gate,  
 Guarded by a wild-ass, in armour-plate.

Soon I'll tell you the nature of that beast,  
 For its form was most marvellous indeed.  
 (God aid the Count, travelling from the east,  
 Along that river-bank, as fate decreed!)  
 Off he went, running quickly, nor decreased  
 His pace, as in his mind, spurred by need,  
 He devised a plan, for the book revealed:  
 Ere he arrived his course a task would yield.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 48-55: HE ENCOUNTER AND SLAYS A HARPY**

This he knew; as he ran beside the stream,  
 He saw a tree, tall beyond all measure,  
 No beech or pine, except perchance in dream,  
 E'er possessed such mighty boughs and stature.  
 Full of leaf to its crown, its trunk did gleam  
 From afar, and he recognised each feature  
 As described in the book, so could prepare  
 For his next task, before arriving there.

Thus, Orlando stopped beside the water,  
 And from his helmet he detached the crest,  
 Then tied his shield tight, so as to cover  
 His brow and eyes (his armour clothed the rest).  
 He then proceeded to follow the river,

Gazing down at his feet, as he progressed,  
And, though moving blindly, he drew near  
To the tree, and by memory did steer,

(For he'd marked the thing's position before,  
And so walked directly to its base)  
When a mighty bird, from a bough did soar.  
A Harpy it was, with a human face,  
Like some mortal queen, and a crown it bore.  
Its hair was blonde; gold and red he could trace  
O'er the neck-feathers, the rest, to his view,  
Were coloured, and flecked with every hue.

Its tail was all green, and crimson, and gold,  
While bright peacock-eyes showed upon each wing.  
Its great talons, designed to clasp and hold,  
Like huge grappling hooks, to its prey would cling.  
Woe to the warrior who, overbold,  
Was grasped by that ill-met, voracious thing!  
And the creature left a foul trail behind,  
That, if it touched the open eyes, would blind.

That giant bird clattered from the tree,  
And flew, in a trice, towards Orlando,  
Who was nearing it, painfully slowly,  
Shield e'er face, gazing at the ground below.  
As he drew close, the Harpy screamed loudly,  
Then wheeled about his head, a fearsome foe  
That, as he paced blindly, clamoured above,  
And like some monstrous eagle nigh did prove.

Often, he wished to gaze at it outright,  
But then recalled the book's admonition,  
And, behind his shield, kept the thing from sight,  
While the vile monster, from its position  
In the sky, poured down poison on the knight,  
That struck his helm, and like a foul unction,  
Ran down his chest, hissing like burning oil,  
Though his eyes were saved by his swift recoil.

Orlando feigned a collapse to the ground,  
Then like a blind man groped at the tree,  
At which the Harpy swooped, made a bound,  
And clasped him in her talons, cruelly,  
But Orlando swung his sword blade around,  
With a backhanded blow slicing neatly  
Through the neck, and severed it, side to side,  
Such that (and I'll be brief) the creature died.

After he'd gazed awhile at that vile pest,  
He left it dead in the shade of the tree,  
Fixing upon his helm his feathered crest,  
And quitting the location joyfully.  
Then he sped, along the bank, to the west,  
Where the wild ass was stationed, and barely  
Had he gone a mile that swift stream beside  
When he came to a portal, open wide.

## **BOOK II: CANTO IV: 56-61: AND THEN THE WILD ASS, GUARDING THE WESTERN DOOR**

Nowhere was such fine work to be seen  
As adorned that door's bright exterior,  
Covered with rich gems, red, blue, and green.  
Twas defended not with the sword, however,  
But by a wild-ass, its hide one golden sheen,  
While its great ears four feet long did measure,  
And, like two serpent-tails, could coil and wind,  
Seize and squeeze, as e'er it wished, and so bind.

Twas clad with golden plates or scales, I say,  
And none could pass that evil creature by.  
Its tail cut like a sword, and naught could stay  
Its passage; armour, mail could ne'er deny  
That blade; and when the beast began to bray,  
It shook the land around it, and the sky.  
The Count was drawing near to this gate,  
When the thing charged. Leaving naught to fate,

Orlando struck its body, viciously.  
Its charmed and scaly hide proved no defence;  
He flayed its flank, laid it bare, utterly,  
For his blade's power, you recall, was immense,  
And negated all enchantments, easily.  
With its ears, created solely for offense,  
It seized his shield, which it thrashed to and fro,  
Dragged from his arm, and stamped upon below.

Consumed now by boundless rage, Orlando  
Attacked those ears, and cut them both away,  
For they were unprotected, naught did show  
Of the golden scales that served, in an affray,  
To defend its flesh; it screamed at the foe,  
Swung its rump, and set its sharp tail in play,  
Which sliced and hewed at the Count's thick armour;  
He, with a charmed hide, it scarce did bother.

The bold Count a mighty blow did deal,  
That landed on the right haunch, and cut through,  
Pierced the left thigh, most of the flank did steal,  
And, thus, the death of the beast it did pursue.  
Naught could defend against that charmed steel,  
And the enchanted creature screamed anew  
As it fell to the ground, a loud howl of fear,  
But the Count cared little, it would appear,

For, with a double grip, he swung again,  
Despite the wild ass's tormented cry,  
And, with a single stroke, that evil bane  
He thus beheaded, or at least well-nigh.  
At that the portal shook, and all the plain,  
And the earth, opening, rose up to the sky,  
Swallowing the beast, with a fearful roar,  
Then tumbled back, and all was as before.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO IV: 62-65: THE NORTHERN GATE IS GUARDED BY A GIANT**

Orlando now prepared to leave the garden,  
And turned his steps towards that ornate door,  
But the exit he had seen was now hidden,  
For the stone was smooth, the portal no more.  
He took up the book, as he'd been bidden,  
Of what action to take he was unsure,  
Since, despite all his wearying labour,  
It had brough his departure no nearer.

Every exit had but disappeared again,  
Although he'd risked his life in each venture,  
And the text was now at pains to explain  
There was little chance, if he went further  
And tried the northern gate, that he could gain  
Aught so; counsel, there, had naught to offer,  
Nor had boldness, intelligence, nor force,  
So extreme was the danger of that course.

A giant, immeasurably strong, stood before  
That northern portal, with his sword in hand  
And, were that one to be slain, then two more,  
Born from his blood, stood where he did stand;  
Each, if killed, gave rise to another four,  
And so on, thus enlarging that vile band,  
The number doubling, each time, without end,  
Swelling the guards that did the gate defend.

He'd much to do ere he could reach the gate,  
The which was fashioned from solid silver,  
Needing sense and cunning to negotiate  
A course that might defeat its giant porter.  
Yet he gave no thought at first to his fate,  
But facing it, with customary ardour,  
Said to himself (giving his sword a swing),  
'He that endures will conquer everything!'

#### **BOOK II: CANTO IV: 66-67: HE REACHES A DALE WITH A FOUNT, AND TABLES SET FOR A FEAST**

Musing thus, northwards he took his way,  
Atop a slope, and, as the Count drew near,  
A flowering dale beneath the hillside lay,  
In open view; level it did appear,  
And in its centre, where a fount did play,  
White tables, set around its waters clear,  
Displayed rich golden goblets by each place,  
While the finest fare those same boards did grace.

Though he gazed all about, he failed to see,  
Either within the vale, or on the hill,  
Any person charged with all this luxury,  
The tables round the fount, nor set to fill  
The cups or eat the food; a mystery  
It seemed to the Count and, cautious still,  
He first drew out his little book, to read  
All it might say, and pondered o'er its screed.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO IV: 68-70: HE ENCOUNTERS AND KILLS A LAMIA**

Scanning the volume's text, our paladin  
Discovered there was danger in the thing.  
A host of crimson flowers glowed within  
A clump of thorn trees, just beyond the spring,  
And a fearsome Lamia hid therein.  
Above the waist female in everything,  
Its long tresses, its face, neck, and the rest;  
Yet a serpent form it otherwise possessed.

This creature held a chain in its hand,  
That lay concealed amidst the flowers and grass,  
And looped around the fountain; deftly planned,  
Such that if, drawn by the feast, one did pass

Within its hidden round, and there did stand,  
He'd be caught, and prisoned there alas;  
She'd tighten the chain and, by that device,  
Drag him to the thorn trees, in a trice.

Orlando all that place now skirted round,  
And made his way towards the clump of thorn,  
Then approached the Lamia at a bound,  
At which she screamed, and slid from her bourne,  
Slithering, serpent-like, across the ground,  
While the Count, to her destruction now sworn,  
Swung his sharp sword and, with a single blow,  
Slew the creature, that scant defence did show.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 71-74: HE SLAYS THE  
GIANT, THEN FACES ANOTHER TWO**

The Lamia lay dead upon the field,  
While the Count continued north to the door;  
He saw it from afar, twas not concealed.  
A bridge led o'er the stream to the far shore,  
Which he crossed; there the giant was revealed,  
With helm on head, and shield raised before  
His chest, while threatening seemed his gaze.  
Clad in full armour, his sword he did raise.

Orlando now approached this mighty foe,  
Without a doubt as to his instant success,  
For he'd fought many a time, as we know,  
And, fearing naught, thought this trial less  
Than the others; his opponent though  
Stepped forward and upon him did press,  
Swinging his sword; the Count avoided harm,  
And struck with that blade wrought by subtle charm.

It landed on the giant's hip and thigh,  
Where the plate and mail offered scant defence,  
Broke the stomach-plate, and slid on by,  
Slicing through the other thigh, and hence  
The giant cleft in two, fell from the sky,  
With a crashing sound, sudden and immense.  
The Count rejoiced, thinking his task was done,  
Set to depart through the gate he had won.

The giant was dead, but blood flowed all around,  
And, as it trickled from the bridge, it fell  
To form a crimson pool upon the ground,

From which a flame arose, and did swell,  
To form a giant shape with helmet crowned,  
And clad in armour, as if come from Hell.  
A cruel face appeared, the flame shook anew,  
And after the first, a second giant now grew.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 75-81: HE OVERCOMES,  
BUT STOPS SHORT OF KILLING, THEM**

They seemed indeed the offspring of fierce fire,  
For each was swift and furious, with a gaze  
That burned; their eyes were full of heat and ire.  
Orlando paused, uncertain, in a daze,  
Not seeing, now, how he might aspire  
To conquer, though the Count survived always,  
For should he fell this vile pair to the earth,  
To four more, it seemed, their blood must give birth.

Yet, nonetheless, he chose to battle on,  
Though a million more such giants might appear,  
And turned towards the gate, whereupon,  
The giants manned the portal, as he drew near.  
Each held a scimitar, whose bright steel shone,  
(Both created with such) to slice and shear.  
Despite them the Count, seeking to enter,  
Broke the door, scattering many a splinter.

Each seemed more threatening than the other,  
As they swung to attack the knight in turn.  
But Orlando held scant esteem for either,  
For the Count's hide was charmed as they would learn.  
He kept his sharp blade sheathed however,  
For, now, another means he could discern,  
Of gaining the victory; grasped at one,  
Neath the hips, and a solid purchase won.

Both the giants were strong, yet the Count more so;  
He raised the fellow up, and swung him round,  
All his foe's strength useless gainst Orlando,  
And threw his victim face down on the ground.  
The other giant, now furious with his foe,  
Never ceased to swing away, and to pound  
At the Count, striking him on either side,  
High and low, though many a blow fell wide.

Orlando, leaving the first giant half-dead,  
Gave all his attention to the other,  
Gripped him, tightly, and swung him round his head,  
Hurling him to the earth, like his brother.  
Meanwhile the sleeper had woken, and sped  
Into battle, roused by pain and anger;  
So, the Count turned again, and defended,  
While the second from the ground ascended.

The conflict was long; the way they fought  
There was little hope of it ending soon.  
Orlando could scarcely pause for thought,  
For fear of being bruised again, unhewn,  
For though they toiled for hours, the battle fraught,  
The Count's hide was from piercing immune,  
And, in turn, he declined to use his sword,  
For slaying one would other foes afford,

And he feared lest this pair should multiply.  
He beat them to the ground, yet would not slay  
Either giant, though his exit they'd deny.  
He wished to leave, and longed to find a way,  
And now thought of a method he might try.  
He feigned retreat, while keeping them at bay,  
Then turning, ran swiftly o'er the meadow,  
While, to his surprise, they failed to follow.

**BOOK II: CANTO IV: 82-86: BINDS THEM WITH CHAIN, AND EXITS THE GARDEN**

The giants returned to the bridge once more,  
As if they'd lost interest in Orlando,  
While he, as he crossed the valley-floor,  
Thought twas from pure fear that they did so;  
But, in truth, twas the spell that did ensure  
(That formed their nature) all they could know  
Was that they were there to guard the shore  
Of the river, and the bridge, and the door.

This Orlando clearly failed to realise.  
He simply left behind his giant foes,  
Proceeded to the thorns, and cast his eyes  
All about the grass where the fountain rose,  
Where the Lamia had sought to disguise  
Her snare for any passer-by that chose  
To sample her fine feast, the boards still spread,  
To tempt the flesh and blood on which she fed.

He recalled that her noose was iron chain,  
As I told you earlier. He dragged it free,  
And then pulled it at his back, o'er the plain,  
To the bridge, and fastened the end tightly.  
He forced one giant to the ground again,  
And then bound his arms and legs securely,  
So, he was leashed to the bridge, like a hound,  
And then dealt with the other, safe and sound.

It took a while, though, for giant number two  
Fought him, in a most annoying manner;  
Yet he won; then, with a like end in view,  
Downed and, with the chain, bound that other.  
The portal lay open, he staggered through,  
(With nary a giant in sight) to recover.  
The Count was thus free to depart, at will,  
And, if you'll return, I'll speak of him still;

For they say the finest song's tedious,  
If it flows on too long, without a pause,  
And I'd wish to delight the curious,  
But not with a tale that wearies and bores;  
So, if you'll be patient and indulge us,  
I'll wait a while, and savour your applause,  
Ere I sing the end of his strange adventure,  
And other things of a wondrous nature.



BOOK II: CANTO V: BRUNELLO THE THIEF



ARGOMENTO.

*L'Arbor taglia da' piedi il sir d' Anglante,  
E vi si spicca l'alta cima, E vede,  
Che'l bel Giardin gli sparisce dauante,  
Onde ammirato, a pena se lo crede,  
Va con la Fata Brunel' Africante,  
Che d' Angelica già l'anel possede,  
Rubba la Spada a Marfisa, E al Cirasso  
Il caual. Toi va a cercar di Gradasso.*



ALLEGORIE.

*I l. Giardino che va in rouina sono le opere fatte per mal di al-  
cuno, lequali Iddio fa che presto siano spente, & dissipate.  
L'ANELLO, la Spada, & il destriero rubati da Brunello, mo-  
stra quanto possi l'astutia nel conseguirsi qual'unque difficil cosa.  
ANGELICA assediata da noue genti dopo l'hauer perso l'Anel-  
lo, ne mostra il poter della Fortuna, nel fauorire uno, hor pro-  
fondarlo in ogni estrema miseria.*



**BOOK II: CANTO V: 1-8: THE TREE WITH VICIOUS THORNS AND GOLDEN APPLES**

Joyful and endless life, my lords, to you,  
That have listened to my song with delight.  
Since you've returned, thus, to hear me anew,  
From where I paused, I'll begin outright.  
The Count had tied not merely one but two  
Huge giants to the bridge, bound them tight,  
And now, having conquered all his foes,  
Could leave the magic garden, if he chose.

And yet he thought, ere he quit the place,  
If he did no more, he'd fail of his quest,  
And find himself, indeed, in deep disgrace  
With Angelica who'd imposed the test.  
For the garden did much harm, and twas base  
To allow it to endure, he confessed,  
Since many a knight, many a fair lady  
Had perished there, with savage cruelty.

Therefore, the Count halted, to consider  
If he could destroy both the park and wall,  
By some subtle means, and in some manner  
That might serve to eradicate it all.  
Thus, he would win renown and honour,  
On him the crown of victory would fall,  
And the cause of many a traveller's death  
Be ended, by his prowess, in a breath.

He read the book and found there was a tree  
That kept the magic garden in being,  
Yet break away its topmost branch and he  
Would win, by that act, the park's undoing.  
No man had ever climbed it; seemingly,  
Torment and death lay in so attempting.  
Count Orlando, who feared naught neath the sky,  
Determined to reach its high crown, or die.

He turned back from the wall, by a valley,  
That led to the palace gate outright,  
And so came to where he'd met the lady  
That used the sword as a mirror bright.  
He'd left the maid bound to a tall beech-tree,  
If you recall, yet, nonetheless, the knight  
Sped on his way, neglecting to free her,  
Rather he left her there awhile to suffer.

He was in haste to reach the fatal tree,  
And found it in the middle of the field,  
The branch that crowned its summit he could see,  
Possessed of a beauty that the light revealed.  
No arrow from a Turkish bow could, surely,  
Reach that height, and yet the task might yield  
To his efforts; the branches spread around,  
But twas not a yard about near the ground,

No thicker; the branches long and slender,  
Hid vicious thorns amidst their greenery,  
That fell, yet were renewed daily ever,  
Golden apples adorned it gracefully,  
Heavy, glowing brightly in the cover  
Of the leaves, yet hanging, menacingly,  
O'er those who came too close to the tree,  
Bowing the thin branches, threateningly.

These apples were a man's head in size,  
While whoe'er drew near to the trunk it swayed,  
And trembled, and the apples shook likewise,  
And then fell violently, and so repaid  
The visitor with an unlooked-for prize,  
For flat upon the ground that man was laid,  
And slain indeed, since such was their great weight  
That little could survive that act of fate.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 9-12: ORLANDO SETS OUT TO BREAK THE TOPMOST BRANCH**

The limbs began a bow-shot from the ground;  
The trunk below them was as smooth as glass.  
So, no living human being could be found,  
That could ascend and, to the summit, pass,  
For that surface did every grasp confound,  
And the trunk at the crown so thin, alas,  
That no weight would it bear; Count Orlando  
Had read it in the book, and learnt twas so.

But the more difficult appeared the quest,  
Then the more audacious the Count became.  
He set his mind on completing the test,  
And cut beech branches to construct a frame.  
With turf and soil, he covered it, as best  
He could, then on his shoulders placed that same.  
It rose above his head; he lashed it tight,  
Then o'er the field, at high speed, ran the knight.



Now, the strength of Orlando was so great,  
That (so Bishop Turpin says) he once bore  
A pillar, quite massive in its weight,  
From Anglante to Brava; thus, he wore  
His beech-frame lightly, as he headed straight  
For the tree, which was shaken to the core,  
And those enormous apples, thick as snow,  
Fell on his back, and to the ground below.

He sped on anxiously, to reach the bole,  
As the turf, earth and sods, were knocked away,  
And still the hail of apples took their toll,  
Till his wicker frame was full; there they lay,  
And were like to achieve their vicious goal,  
So heavily upon him did they weigh.  
And if he'd not reached the trunk in time  
He would have lost his life, ere he could climb.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 13-15: HE FELLS THE TREE,  
AND THE GARDEN IS DESTROYED**

Think you the Count climbed it to the crown?  
Not at all, for he felled it at a blow,  
Broke the highest branch, once it was down,  
And achieved the task he'd accepted, so.  
Darkness, at once, did that garden drown,  
For, neath the grass, the earth shook from below,  
Quivered, and trembled as the sun was hid,  
And the dark sky, above, closed like a lid.

The Count could see nothing where he stood,  
While the earth oped, with a mighty roar,  
And the air filled with smoke as black as mud,  
While a flame rose, a tower's-height or more.  
Some demon out of Hell grasped the falsehood,  
And drew it down beneath the valley-floor,  
While, once that garden's ruin was complete,  
The sky cleared, and the sun his eyes did greet.

The wall that had encircled all that ground,  
Had quite vanished; naught remained to the view.  
And neither fount nor palace could be found,  
The landscape all about him cleared anew,  
And all the enchantress had fashioned, drowned;  
Though that maid, Falerina, it was true,  
Yet remained alive, as Orlando saw,  
Still bound fast to the beech-tree, as before.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 16-24: FALERINA'S PLEA**

The maiden grieved, and wept profusely,  
Over the destruction of her garden.  
No longer silent, but pleading loudly,  
She begged the Count that he might pardon  
Her false enchantments, and show her mercy,  
And, viewing her sorry plight, not harden  
His heart towards her: 'Flower of chivalry,'  
She cried, 'death I deserve, yet pity me!

For though I deserve to die, tis true,  
If you were to kill me now, the deed  
Would mean the cruel end of no small few  
Knight and ladies whose capture I decreed.  
Hearken now, ere your actions you might rue.  
It took me seven months, at wondrous speed,  
To create the garden, with my magic arts,  
And all therein; a day, and it departs!

To punish a single knight it was wrought,  
And a maiden, his deceitful lover,  
Though rather than to them, death it has brought,  
If I am honest, to many another.  
For the garden sufficing not, I sought  
To build a bridge o'er the stream, to capture,  
Knight and ladies, all those that might appear,  
As many as thought to cross, or came near.

The knight I speak of is Ariante,  
Orrigille is the false maiden's name,  
I'll say no more of them, though there's plenty  
That I might say of those evil same.  
Tis my misfortune that, among the many  
Who were caught, those two I failed to claim,  
Though more have died there in misery,  
Than there are leaves and branches on this tree.

For the enchanted garden put an end  
To all those who sought to venture there;  
While my captives that river-bridge doth send  
To imprisonment; a guard has the care  
Of that crossing-place, which he must defend,  
And has tempted many the path to dare.  
I'll not describe the place, but, by my plan,  
Those who'd pass are captured by that old man.

Not so long ago, a fair enchantress,  
Who is King Galafrone's daughter,  
Angelica, and dwells, in some distress,  
Besieged in Albracca, with her father,  
Was deceived and held, under duress,  
By that old man, as she chanced to wander  
Beside the bridge and, how I do not know,  
Escaped, and freed the rest as she did so.

Yet a host of prisoners still remain,  
For the old man ever captures more,  
And, instantly, were I to be slain,  
The bridge, and his prisoners, tower, and shore,  
Would vanish, ne'er to be seen again,  
All would die with me, you may be sure,  
And you the cause; yet if my life you'll spare  
Then I'll free them all, safe and sound, I swear.

And should you not believe what I say here,  
Then take me with you, bound as I am now,  
Captive or free, tis all the same I fear,  
For I am shamed, regardless of my vow  
To destroy his tower (twill disappear  
If you do) and their freedom straight allow;  
Choose which path you will, then, as you please:  
To let them die, or set me at my ease.'

The Count swiftly chose the latter course,  
Though he'd not have slain her, either way,  
Neither hatred nor injury could force  
The Count to harm a maid, nor make her pay.  
So, though she showed little true remorse,  
They left, to seek the bridge, without delay.  
But, here, my source, deferring their story,  
Turns to Marfisa and Sacripante.

## **BOOK II: CANTO V: 25-31: BRUNELLO ENTERS ALBRACCA AND SEEKS ANGELICA**

Their battle had continued in the same  
Manner as their first fierce encounter,  
Marfisa nigh indifferent to the game,  
Well-defended by her wondrous armour,  
And unconcerned by lance or sword, I'd claim,  
While Sacripante's steed dodged, as ever,  
Her blows, so swiftly it nigh went unseen,  
And he rode by, unwounded by the queen.

Thus, on the plain they fought, fruitlessly,  
Though Marfisa's blows rained down thick and fast,  
For she swung her mighty blade uselessly,  
As, before her eyes, he quickly passed.  
Meanwhile, the King of Fez's bold lackey,  
Brunello, his African thief, at last,  
After crossing many a distant border,  
Reached the lofty walls of fair Albracca.

King Agramante had sent Brunello there,  
Because the thief had boasted to the king  
That he could enter Albracca the fair,  
And, from Angelica's hand, take the ring,  
Which, if you recall, no charm did spare,  
For so subtle a mind had wrought the thing,  
That, in its presence, every enchantment,  
Lost its power to deceive, its magic spent.

The ring was needed to find Ruggiero,  
Concealed on Mount Carena's lofty peak,  
And so, this brazen thief, and cunning foe,  
Had been sent that very thing to seek.  
Up the wall, climbing swiftly, he did go,  
Over which a spider could scarcely sneak,  
For the castle's smooth stone all but defied  
An assault, cut sheer from the mountainside.

Only upon one face was there a stair,  
Hewn, with toil, by heavy picks, from the stone.  
The entrance to, and exit from, that lair,  
A steep flight, manned by soldiers, stood alone.  
The stone was smooth above the river; there,  
No guards were e'er required, for flesh and bone  
Could not ascend (was doomed to die trying,  
Twas thought) by any means, short of flying.

Brunello was adept at scaling all  
Such obstacles, and climbed, as on a rope,  
All the rock below, and so reached the wall;  
Then he clung there, above the lower slope,  
Feet and arms fully stretched, ere he could fall,  
And for every little crevice then did grope,  
Launching forth, like a swimmer in the sea;  
Spite the peril, not one prayer needed he.

Full of confidence, he made his ascent,  
As if he slipped across a grassy field,  
And, after he had gained the battlement,  
Like an agile fox was soon close-concealed.  
Twas not night, nonetheless, he was content,  
Though a bright sun was, now and then, revealed,  
For he slunk about, as a sly fox would,  
And so reached the place where the lady stood.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 32-36: HE STEALS THE RING, AND ESCAPES**

Angelica was standing o'er the gate,  
Having climbed to that spot, to watch the fight,  
Her eyes fixed on the duel which, of late,  
Had restarted twixt Marfisa and the knight,  
Bold King Sacripante, I mean, whose fate  
Was now discussed, some saying, at the sight:  
'See how Marfisa handles her fierce blade,  
The king's swift steed won't save him from the maid.'

While others cried: 'He's a skilful horseman,  
He'll prance about, and keep the maid at bay,  
If he veers not too close (for that's his plan),  
And protects the steed, and goes not astray.'  
Meanwhile Brunello, cautiously, began  
To creep amidst them, ere he made his play,  
Not wishing to linger there till evening,  
Deftly, from her finger, sliding the ring.

She'd not have known, but she glimpsed his face,  
And called out, in alarm, at the sight.  
With the ring in his hand, he fled the place,  
And sped to the battlement, in his fright,  
O'er which he'd climbed; twas now a race,  
For the rest pursued the wretch outright,  
While Angelica, in tears, tore at her hair,  
Crying: 'Quick! Quick! that's the villain, there!'

'Seize him, ere that vile thief escapes' she cried,  
'I'll die if that foul villain is not caught!'  
To please the queen, the whole company tried  
To do so, but their efforts went for naught.  
He slid down the wall, leaping from its side  
To the cliff below, then the flood he sought,  
As if he were descending a rocky stair,  
O'er the slope, to reach sanctuary there.

Don't think he was troubled for an instant,  
For he swam like a fish, and then the flow  
Was swift, and deep and wide the current,  
So, he plunged in, and down the stream did go,  
With his muzzle in the air, quite content.  
Like a frog he seemed, for a while did show,  
Yet though they sought to keep the wretch in sight,  
He vanished, just as though he'd drowned, in flight!

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 37-40: THEN STEALS SACRIPANTE'S HORSE, MARFISA'S SWORD, AND FLEES**

Angelica remained in deep despair,  
The wretched maiden now beat at her face,  
While Brunello quit the stream, without a care,  
And fled o'er the plain, scarce leaving a trace  
And came upon the resting warriors there,  
And stopped to observe them. Still in place,  
Queen Marfisa and Sacripante,  
Had yet paused awhile amidst their tourney.

For, wearied by their second savage bout,  
Both wished to catch their breath. Now, Brunello  
Thought to himself: 'I'll not pass you without  
Acquiring something useful as I go.  
You'll be lucky if, ere you can raise a shout,  
I'm not off with whate'er you've left on show.'  
But since you're brave knights, of courtesy,  
I'll leave the rest, as a small gift, from me!

Musing thus, he studied Sacripante's steed,  
For the king was pondering, all alone,  
About the state of his realm and, indeed,  
Seemed, for the moment, nigh turned to stone.  
He pictured his land in flames, in sore need  
Of his aid, and was fearful for his throne.  
And his thoughts brought Sacripante such pain,  
He saw naught, his eyes fixed upon the plain.

Brunello smiled: 'Who is this sleeping knight,  
And with so fine a horse? Next time I doubt  
He'll be so keen to slumber, thus, upright.'  
And with that, while keeping a sharp look-out,  
He untied the girth and, concealed from sight,  
Set the saddle on a tree-stump thereabout,  
And as Sacripante mused, with lowered head,  
The bold thief stole his horse; yet, ere he fled,

He passed Marfisa who stood there wide-eyed.  
(By now you've guessed Brunello had the ring  
In his mouth, and was invisible), one stride  
Took him to where her sharp sword was leaning  
On a rock; this the wily thief had spied,  
And, while she stood astonished, seized the thing,  
And ran, swiftly, the stolen mount to gain,  
On which he spurred rapidly o'er the plain.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 41-48: SACRIPANTE  
LEARNS OF THE RING'S THEFT FROM ANGELICA**

He now replaced the ring on his finger,  
And Marfisa, seeing him, cried aloud:  
'You'll pay for this!' Indisposed to linger,  
He gestured vilely at her, as he bowed,  
And shouted out: 'Learn then, from your error!'  
He sped away as, from her camp, a crowd  
Hastened forth, and pursued, but he, who'd won  
Both the horse and the blade, fled neath the sun.

Sacripante meanwhile stood in wonder,  
Quite unable to say what had occurred,  
Whether twas a theft or some blunder  
Of his own, at last the warrior stirred:  
'Who was he then;' in a voice of thunder,  
He cried: 'that evil wretch, who has spurred  
Away, on my steed, and yet all unseen?  
'Tis some imp, with his vile magic, I ween.

Yet, if that's true, my lady with her ring  
Can retrieve the steed, and the ill can mend.  
It shames me, and yet where's the man living  
That against such enchantments can contend?  
With this he turned towards Albracca, sighing,  
And, distraught, to the gate his way did wend,  
Where, once he was within the walls, he found  
Angelica, half-dead, upon the ground.

Her grief had nigh slain her, as she dwelt  
Upon the injury that was done her.  
Sacripante, by his beloved, knelt,  
Calling out her name, as her fond lover:  
'Dear heart, who's harmed and wronged you?' He felt,  
More than merely heard, her mournful answer.  
'I'm defenceless now, and this Marfisa  
Will end my life, and with savage torture!

I have lost what till now protected me,  
'Twas my best defence, my last resort,  
And now I'm doomed to captivity  
And cannot live for long once I am caught.  
And it weighs more heavily upon me  
Since it was done almost as if in sport.  
Yet I know no more, sadly, of this thing  
Than that some thief stole my precious ring.'

Sacripante, in the field, as we know  
Had seen naught of all that occurred before,  
And so twas only now he heard, with woe,  
How a thief had snatched it, and how they saw  
Him scamper down the wall, and skip below,  
And then run, apace, to the river-shore,  
And how they'd failed to follow, for he'd leapt,  
And then vanished, as downstream he was swept.

Sacripante said: 'By Allah, that villain  
Drowned not in the flood (would it was so!),  
For tis he, I think, who, surfacing again,  
Came and stole my swift steed a while ago,  
And then sped, like a bird, o'er the plain.  
Though Marfisa set herself to follow,  
I doubt the thieving fellow will be caught,  
For I know the steed that he sits athwart.'

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 49-54: CARAMANO'S  
ARMY ARRIVES BEFORE ALBRACCA**

While they all conferred, and his reply  
Led to further speech, the guard in the tower  
Cried: 'To arms!' and rang the bell hung on high,  
And to their questions gave a swift answer,  
That an army, fast approaching, he could spy;  
So vast that it filled the plain, moreover,  
With pennants, and great banners flying there,  
So many that naught he'd seen could compare.

Now the mighty host he could see below,  
(I say this so you're certain of the fact)  
Was led by the powerful Caramano,  
That came a further siege to, there, enact.  
Two hundred thousand warriors or so,  
Now made camp, occupying a vast tract  
Of land; the army raised by Torindo.  
He sought to slay Angelica, his foe.

His force now encamped upon the plain,  
 Its men sworn to besiege Albracca,  
 Till the walls of that fortress they might gain,  
 And raze it from the heights to the water.  
 Angelica, trembling lest she be slain,  
 Menaced by fierce foes threatening slaughter,  
 Was desolate; the hostile camp had grown,  
 Yet the knights were gone, leaving her alone.

The maiden recalled how that bold knight,  
 Orlando, had arrived to rescue her,  
 With valiant men, to battle for her right  
 To hold the keep; why then make him suffer  
 By sending him upon that quest outright?  
 She cursed Fortune, herself, and her ardour,  
 The love that warmed, yet scorching her so,  
 Now left her helpless; that for Rinaldo.

With her there remained King Sacripante,  
 Yet he was handicapped in waging war,  
 Since he'd lost that agile courser, sadly,  
 That had served him so usefully before.  
 And then he was distressed for his country,  
 Now invaded, so grieving him the more;  
 Still, his sorrow was greater in seeing  
 His lady besieged, and lacking the ring.

He'd not have wept for the loss of his steed  
 Nor his realm, could he have found a way  
 To help her, for she was frightened indeed,  
 Now that this mighty army was in play.  
 The fortress held three months' supplies to feed  
 Those within the walls, then they must pray  
 That relief arrived from some other source;  
 Prompt aid they needed, from some friendly force.

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 55-59: GALAFRONE  
 SUGGESTS SEEKING AID FROM KING  
 GRADASSO**

This was the counsel King Galafrone  
 Gave Sacripante, and Angelica:  
 'Here is my sound advice, go, seek promptly  
 The aid of my peer, in Sericana.  
 Beyond India is his far country;  
 Look to him for help gainst those who gather.  
 Gradasso is his name, noble his birth,  
 And his prowess unequalled on this Earth.

Seventy-two the realms he has conquered,  
 In his own right, and he commands them still.  
 Every sea, and France and Spain, he's entered,  
 Such that his name all true men's ears doth fill.  
 Now he's sworn, seemingly discontented,  
 Urged on by arrogance, and his proud will,  
 That the crown he has doffed he'll wear no more,  
 Till he has landed on that western shore.

The cause arises from his war in France,  
 For he won there, and captured Charlemagne,  
 Who promised him, by some fatal mischance,  
 That he'd send him a sword, he would obtain  
 From a lord named Orlando; happenstance  
 Has seen Gradasso long for it in vain.  
 Now he prepares to journey to the west,  
 And capture Charlemagne, with all the rest

Of his noble lords. In Druantuna  
 Which is his ancient and established seat,  
 He gathers a mighty host, and sooner  
 Rather than later, once all is complete,  
 T'will be on the move; and none greater  
 Neath the moon was seen, nor his noble fleet;  
 Though his men are worth little in my sight  
 When compared to the strength of that great knight.

Therefore, to save us from Marfisa's hand,  
 T'would seem to me, he is our best resort;  
 Yet how shall we make the king understand  
 Our plight, and by how much we fall short  
 In men and arms; those at his command  
 He will send if I ask; have we not fought  
 Side by side? By what means, however,  
 Can we do so, save some true messenger?'

**BOOK II: CANTO V: 60-67: SACRIPANTE  
 ACCEPTS THE MISSION**

Then he turned his eyes on Sacripante,  
 And added these words: 'You are, my son,  
 A brave knight and love me and my country,  
 And my daughter, and many a fight have won.  
 Not bold Mandricardo it seems to me,  
 That despoils your land, nor yet that dear one  
 You grieve for, your brother Olibandro,  
 Prevents you aiding our mission, so.

And, if God wills it, we shall reward you,  
 Most fittingly, though how I know not,  
 But all we have, and ourselves, firm and true,  
 Is yours; for such aid could ne'er be forgot.  
 By Mohammed's faith, if you pursue  
 This task, and if victory be our lot,  
 Then my daughter, my kingdom, all this land  
 Shall be at your service, and your command.

But all such, indeed, is as good as lost,  
 (For both we and the realm will fall, as one,  
 And not a soul will be left to count the cost)  
 If we cannot find aid; for I have done  
 All that I can, every bridge have crossed,  
 Now in secret, now openly neath the sun,  
 To resolve this affair, and yet must fail,  
 If Gradasso comes not. Yet we'll prevail,

My son, if you'll go, as I conjure you,  
 (By our love, and by your sovereign power).  
 Let this mission be one you'll now pursue.  
 Seek Sericana. At the evening hour,  
 When all is dark, and watching eyes are few,  
 Slip quietly from the confines of this tower,  
 And pass by those ill foes, who, unaware  
 Of your going, will grant it little care.'

Sacripante gave but a brief reply;  
 To serve was all he wished to do, he said,  
 Merely sad that the eve was not yet nigh,  
 And he could not leave, instantly, instead.  
 As soon as the sun had set, and the sky  
 Began to darken, he covered his head,  
 And body, in a black robe, pilgrim-wise,  
 And so passed the Turkish lines in disguise.

Men gave him but a glance as he strode by.  
 He wielded a long staff in his right hand,  
 But the robe, beneath which no man could spy,  
 Hid his armour, and sword, you understand.  
 The maid and her father, with many a sigh,  
 Remained there in the keep as, o'er the land,  
 Sacripante on his way swiftly pressed,  
 Finding high adventure in the quest.

You shall hear the tale and many another,  
 Containing much that's marvellous, that I,  
 For your true delight, have stitched together,  
 (In India the Stone Fount he'll pass by).  
 But now, my fair audience, I'd rather,  
 Speak of Rodomonte, that would all defy;  
 That King of Sarza, whose pagan belief  
 Was: that Allah was scarcely worth a leaf.

Of other deities, he thought little more,  
 For his god was his ardour and his might,  
 Nor aught he could not see would he adore.  
 His arrogance was such, that he would fight  
 All the world, in his pride, on every shore,  
 Yet declared in fair France he'd first alight,  
 And, in three days, would there subdue the foe,  
 As you'll hear, in the very next canto.

BOOK II: CANTO VI: RODOMONTE IN PROVENÇE

A R G O M E N T O.

Doppo molta rouina in Francia è sorto,  
L'ogoglioso, e superbo Rodomonte,  
Carlo manda sue genti, che nel porto,  
Pugnan con le pagane alhor pur gionte. Ne rimane Arcibaldo quasi morto  
Onde le squadre al fuggir si fan pronte,  
Sopraggiunge lo esercito di Carlo,  
Ma già non teme il pagano affrontarlo.



A L L E G O R I E.

R O D O M O N T E Benche hauesse il vento contrario, pur volse passare il Mare, mostra quanto vn'huomo cattiuo fermo nella sua opinione non temendo Iddio, ne altri, che se gli possino esser contrarij.  
L E p r o u i s i o n i che fa Re Carlo intédèdo il passaggio de' Mori, dinota che l'huomo dourebbe sèpre cò prudèza ouiare i quato è possibile alli sopraffatti picoli.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 1-10: RODOMONTE  
DEFIES THE WEATHER AND SETS SAIL FOR  
FRANCE**

I must raise my voice to the heights of song,  
And seek for nobler words to match my theme.  
My swift bow must sweep more grandly ere long  
O'er the lyre; I must show, within my scheme,  
A youth, so harsh and vicious, and so strong  
Of will, that to raze the world was his dream;  
Rodomonte, that advocate of war,  
Whom I have spoken of, to you, before.

In the city of Algiers, I left that king,  
Determined to cross o'er the sea to France,  
For, there, he'd had success in gathering  
A mighty host equipped with sword and lance.  
Longing for that ill hour when he might bring  
Fire and ruin to that land, in swift advance,  
He cursed whoe'er had wrought the wind and sea,  
That saw him setting forth so tardily.

More than a month, now, he'd lost in Sarza,  
That distant land, opposed by many a gale,  
(North-winds: Greco, Maestro, Tramontana)  
But he had sworn that he would drown or sail  
To Christendom, ere he'd tarry longer,  
And told the helmsmen that they must prevail,  
And cross under canvas, in spite of all;  
No matter how close the wind they must haul.

'Blow, wind! Blow high,' he cried, 'if you know how!  
For, I say, we set sail this very night.  
I'm not your slave or the sea's thus to bow  
To ill-Fortune and your pretence at might.  
Agramante's rule, alone, I'll allow,  
And am content, for he's a king who'll fight,  
With a scant love of peace; all his commands  
Ne'er fail to please, no matter his demands.'

With that, he called a helmsman, old and grey,  
A Moroccan, whose name was Scombrano,  
Skilled in the art, and prudent, I might say,  
For he was cautious whate'er winds did blow.  
Rodomonte asked: 'Why then, all this delay?  
Why do you hold me here, and e'er cry no?  
Six whole days but brief might seem in your view;  
Yet six provinces were mine, save for you!

So be ready, this same evening, to set forth,  
Make sure these vessels are all set to go.  
Don't tell me of your winds from out the north;  
If I'm to drown, then mine shall be the woe.'  
I care not what men are lost; for, henceforth,  
Tis mine to say if all shall sink below.  
And if I plunge downwards so, to the deep,  
Then I'll dictate what company I'll keep!

'My lord,' Scombrano, humbly, made reply  
'The wind indeed is wrong; we should not sail.  
The waves increase, the gale, would, by and by,  
O'erwhelm us; and, worse portents now prevail:  
The sun was drowned in cloud, and, like to die,  
The moon arose deep red, and now grows pale;  
Ne'er have I seen so wan and strange a moon.  
Tis, since the sea now rises all about,  
An omen of ill-fortune, without doubt;

And then the coots, not swimming on the sea,  
But pecking on the dry and sandy shore,  
The gulls crying overhead, raucously,  
The heron, rarely seen, trouble me more,  
And tell me the gale approaches swiftly;  
While the dolphins, hid from our view before,  
Here and there, upon every side, now, leap;  
And show the sea sore troubled in the deep.

We'd be sailing beneath darkening skies,  
If that's your will, and, of a certainty,  
We'd all perish; and there's no man denies  
My skill in things pertaining to the sea.  
And, by my faith, I swear, if any dies  
In such a manner, it shall not be me.  
Though Allah might assure us we'd prevail,  
I'd say: 'I'll rest in harbour; you may sail!'

Rodomonte answered: 'Alive or dead,  
Tis no matter; I would cross to France.  
And if, living, to that far shore I'm sped  
Then, in three days, twill fall to sword and lance.  
If my corpse to that doomed land is led,  
Then, in that form, I'll nonetheless advance,  
Inspiring dread, in every single one  
Of those Franks. I would conquer, and they'd run!'



**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 11-15: HIS FLEET IS  
SCATTERED BY THE GALE**

So, from the harbour, issued that vast fleet,  
And close to the wind all those vessels sailed.  
A north-westerly, at first, ruled complete,  
But, in time, a north-easterly prevailed.  
Forced then to come about, twas but to meet  
A gale from the south-west at which they quailed  
For they were caught between, no course could keep  
Blown wildly, thus, about the troubled deep.

The sailors cried aloud, amidst a roar  
Of the wind in the rigging, while the sea  
Grew darker and the heavens even more,  
With deathlike hue, looming evilly.  
Hail and rain lashed the ships far from shore,  
Now this, and now that, wind blew more fiercely.  
And, here, a tall wave seemed to drown the sky  
There, the sea-bed was revealed to the eye.

The ships were so tightly-packed with men,  
With horses, provisions, arms and armour,  
They'd have proved hard to sail not just then  
But even in the calmest summer weather.  
The only light they saw, now and again,  
Was a flash of lightning; heard only thunder  
And the gale, as the ships were tossed about,  
All commanded, none obeyed; twas shout on shout.

Yet Rodomonte was scarcely dismayed.  
When all seemed dire, he acted as needed,  
Hastening everywhere to grant men aid,  
Commanding clearly, his orders heeded,  
Tightening, slacking ropes, his ire displayed  
In threats and menaces whene'er impeded.  
He stayed on deck, his head bared to the sky,  
Despite the tempest raging there on high.

His hair, iced about with freezing hail,  
Sounded in his ears; he cared as little  
As if seated in his cabin, and the gale  
A following breeze bearing him to battle.  
His mighty fleet as one, had sought to sail,  
But now was scattered, midst the sea's upheaval,  
His force surviving, though at heavy cost;  
For every ship still afloat, one was lost.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 16-25: CHARLEMAGNE  
ADDRESSES HIS WAR-COUNCIL**

I shall leave that valiant warrior out at sea,  
With his vessels yet in a parlous state:  
I'll tell you more, if you'll bear with me,  
But now I must turn to Charles the Great,  
Who'd had news of this fleet, and Rodomonte,  
And had summoned all his Council of State;  
For though he feared naught, and was undismayed,  
He desired that fitting plans might be laid.

He said: 'My lords, the news has come to me,  
That King Agramante would go to war!  
Undeterred by that rout of his army,  
In which numbers of his folk died before,  
Nor the examples of Agolante  
And his own father, he whom, as we saw,  
You slew, in defending king and country;  
Since now, it seems, he'd keep them company!

Yet to meet our needs, we must now address  
The state of our defences everywhere,  
For shame and blame both attend on weakness,  
And heavy then the losses we would bear.  
Overland through brave Gascony they'll press,  
Or a landing at Aigues-Mortes they prepare,  
Thus, invading fair Provence from the sea.  
In arms, we must bar them from the country.'

With this, he called out to Duke Amone,  
And commanded: 'Since your son, Rinaldo,  
Ever self-indulgent, I now fail to see,  
Take good care that you hold Montalbano.  
Send your men to every nook and cranny  
Of that land, and the movements of the foe,  
In Spain, that realm which borders yours,  
Report to me; scan all its heights and shores.

Your sons are there, each a fighting man,  
So, you need scant resource to hold your land.  
If you need assistance, then you may plan  
On support from these two knights, near at hand,  
Ivone, I mean, your friend and kinsman,  
And Angelieri, here, whom I command  
To obey your orders as they would mine,  
At risk of offending me, and our line.

And let William, the Lord of Roussillon,  
And Arricardo of Perpignan, both go  
With all their men, with full amour on,  
To lodge with you at Montalbano.'  
Charlemagne, the emperor, thereupon,  
Turned to his other side and spoke so:  
'My lords, I look to you, now, to defend  
Fair Provençe and the coast; and thus, my friend

Lord Namus, the Duke of Bavaria  
I wish to take command, on land and sea,  
And guard against the Africans further,  
And so, hold all our southern shores for me.  
Though I deem twill be an easy matter,  
To hold their first assault, yet to foresee  
Where they'll come ashore, may prove much harder,  
Than repelling their invasion thereafter.

For this great task I'd have him take all four  
Of his sons to accompany him there,  
And the brave Count of Lorraine, there, shall war,  
My dear Ansuardo, the labour to share,  
And Rinaldo's sister, I would implore  
To join that fight, Bradamante the Fair,  
With the strength and courage of her brother;  
May God preserve her to me, forever!

The Duke of Savoy, brave Amerigo,  
And Guy of Burgundy shall aid you too,  
Bovo of Dozona, and Roberto,  
He of Asti, should that same aim pursue.  
Beware, the crown will treat as rebels though,  
All those who shall refuse, no matter who.  
Lastly, Duke Namus, hearken now to me,  
Keep a sharp watch! Bar the shore utterly;

For you must not be taken unaware,  
But must guard every last creek and harbour,  
For let the foe disembark anywhere  
It shall prove to be no laughing matter.  
Post wakeful lookouts, scan both shore and sea,  
And keep me informed, upon your honour.  
I shall remain in camp, prepared to aid  
Any front where bold incursion is made.'

## BOOK II: CANTO VI: 26-27: AND HIS FORCES TAKE UP POSITION

Their dispositions were determined so,  
According to the wish of Charlemagne.  
All took their leave; and to Montalbano  
Almone went, his fortress to attain,  
With his large force, while Duke Namus did go  
To Marseille, o'er many a hill and plain,  
With the larger part of the king's army,  
Composed of infantry and cavalry.

He'd a good thirty thousand mounted men,  
A further twenty thousand trod the road,  
And each of the attendant noblemen  
Was thinking of some title he was owed,  
And which city he'd govern, as and when;  
Yet as one undivided force they rode,  
Each content to accept Namus' command,  
And take whate'er position he'd demand.

## BOOK II: CANTO VI: 28-31: MEANWHILE RODOMONTE'S FLEET REACHES FRANCE

Let us now return to Rodomonte  
Who'd met with much ill-fortune out at sea.  
The sky was black, the stars veiled completely,  
No moon shone; not a thing could they see.  
Their ears filled with the sounds of tragedy,  
Ships colliding, then wildly breaking free,  
Midst a dreadful clamour, as hail, and rain,  
And the storm-wind, their assault did maintain.

The mutinous waves combined together,  
As the wind grew fiercer, there on high,  
Hour on hour, with no break in the weather,  
As if the ocean would drown the very sky,  
Helmsman and crew often lost moreover,  
From some vessel, there in the depths to lie.  
The rest, in deep despair, scant help did prove,  
While Rodomonte cursed the clouds above.

The men uttered vows, and many a prayer,  
But he launched threats gainst the world of Nature,  
And cried such blasphemies, his heart laid bare,  
As made the bravest souls blanch in terror.  
Three long days and nights they thus did fare,

Tempest-tossed, amidst the troubled water,  
With never a sign of a calmer sky,  
But wind and rain that did their spirits try.

The fourth day was most perilous of all;  
Ne'er such a storm did any fleet endure.  
One whole squadron the fearsome winds did maul,  
And drove it neath Monaco's rocky shore.  
On no wise aid or counsel could they call,  
While the tempest each hour but waxed the more,  
Broke apart the vessels on some jagged reef,  
Or in some cove, where none could bring relief.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 32-35: HE BEACHES THE  
SURVIVING SHIPS**

All who recognised the Saracen fleet,  
Cried: 'Drive the dogs away!' and, to the shore,  
Descended, the invading force to meet.  
They hurled mighty rocks, from slings, by the score,  
At the vessels, which fiery darts did greet,  
Arrows that burning pitch-soaked wrappings bore,  
While Rodomonte lacked means to counter  
The menace they presented, midst that furore.

High on his vessel, standing near the prow,  
Clad in full armour, he surveyed the scene,  
While arrows rained down upon the bow,  
Cross-bow bolts, and rocks, great stones, I mean,  
So heavy they'd have brought a giant low.  
Yet undaunted, his mind still clear and keen,  
He reflected, then issued his command,  
For good or ill, to steer the ships to land.

His men, who feared him, sped now to obey.  
The sails filled, and the vessels, one and all,  
Turning shoreward, then rapidly made way,  
Running their bows aground. Whole masts did fall,  
As the southerly gale drove them on that day,  
And freezing rain yet cloaked them in its pall.  
Naught but the wind was heard, and mortal cries,  
As the vessels were beached, neath foreign skies.

The Saracens, weighed down by their armour,  
Drowned in the waves that beat upon the shore,  
Or sought in vain to launch some dart or other,  
That wave and wind far from the mark now bore.

Every Frenchman, soldier or shore-dweller,  
Countered their fire, and destruction swore,  
While with his Lombards, forth from Monaco,  
Without delay, came Count Arcimbaldo.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 36-42: AND LEADS HIS  
REMAINING TROOPS ASHORE**

Arcimbaldo, the Count of Cremona,  
And the son of King Desiderio,  
Marvellously strong, a bold warrior  
Skilled in warfare, leaving Monaco,  
His steed's vermilion carapace brighter  
Than the sun, down along the coast did go.  
He sought the place where war was to be found,  
Where ill-fate had ordained a killing-ground.

To Monaco, so ordered by his father,  
(Tis on the border of Provence) he'd gone,  
The latest information to gather,  
So that Pavia's king might act thereon.  
Desiderio was in Savona,  
From there, he'd lead his army in person,  
On sea or shore, to defend that country,  
And deny the roads to Agramante.

Now Arcimbaldo, as I said, descended  
Upon the coast, with a fighting force,  
And his knights, in three platoons, defended  
All the shore-road, while, on his splendid horse,  
He led his archers and soldiers, extended  
O'er the cliffs, to aid the locals in due course,  
Since a fierce conflict had ensued below,  
Though their landing had depleted the foe.

Twas Rodomonte, that savage creature,  
Who, alone, achieved more than all the rest,  
Standing there, waist-deep in shallow water,  
By spears and stones and fiery darts oppressed.  
All had such dread of that warrior,  
None would approach too near, but wrought their best  
From a distance, with missiles they could throw,  
While the archers fired upon the ships below.

Rodomonte seemed a rock amidst the sea,  
With mighty strides he drew nearer the sand,  
As proud and scornful, spite the treachery

Of the rocks beneath him, he made dry land.  
Now, fair lords, I can't deny that, sadly,  
The Christians failed to battle hand to hand,  
With the man, for the ground was difficult,  
Though his reaching the shore was the result.

Behind the king, came the rest of his men,  
Abandoning the vessels, now destroyed.  
And regrouped in the shallows, though again  
Many were struck by the missiles deployed  
By the defending host, and drowned; and when  
The remainder reached dry land, overjoyed,  
They were still dazed from the storm; twas no more  
Than a third of his army reached the shore.

So strong was this son of Ulieno,  
He not only protected his army  
As they waded to the shore, from the foe,  
But turned to the attack, furiously  
Dealing the Christians blow upon blow,  
Raging like a fire in straw, so fiercely,  
And rousing such dread, you understand,  
That he easily drove them from the sand.

### **BOOK II: CANTO VI: 43-45: HE WOUNDS ARCIMBALDO**

By now Arcimbaldo had returned  
To his horsemen and led them to the beach  
In orderly fashion, having learned  
From experience (which the wise doth teach),  
How to act in battle; his spurs he'd earned.  
Their pennants fluttered, they filled the breach,  
The Count spurring on now, in advance,  
At Rodomonte, wielding his sharp lance.

The African ne'er moved from where he stood,  
When bold Arcimbaldo's blow struck his shield,  
Though the strike was firm, and the aim was good,  
And enough to make a lesser man yield.  
Rodomonte had a giant's strength, his blood  
Was up, and his vast power he now revealed,  
Dealing a stroke, two-handed, that cut through  
Arcimbaldo's shield, splitting in in two,

Then travelling onwards, scarcely slowing,  
After that destruction, to the Count behind,  
The steel-plate and mail, loudly, shattering;  
And then carving across his flank to find  
The flesh beneath; and soon his men, bearing  
The Count back o'er the stony road, did wind,  
To Monaco; and while not in his last throes,  
With 'death in his mouth', as the saying goes.

### **BOOK II: CANTO VI: 46-50: RODOMONTE REASSURES HIS MEN**

Six thousand six hundred men, of France  
And Monaco, were slaughtered on the shore.  
In the face of Rodomonte's advance,  
A mere forty-five fled on foot, no more,  
To the castle, abandoning sword and lance,  
And fled within the walls they'd left before,  
While had their foes but had steeds to pursue,  
The cavalry might well have perished too.

They were followed, nonetheless, to the keep,  
Then the invaders returned to the sand;  
The sky was calm; smooth and silent the deep,  
And Rodomonte set up camp on dry land.  
His men carved out warm places to sleep,  
And retrieved supplies and stores, near to hand,  
That the briny sea now, gently, did lave,  
Which before had been thrust beneath the wave.

A hundred and ninety ships had the king  
When he left Algiers, vessels large and small;  
Better furnished, his fleet, with everything,  
Than had e'er been seen there, men, stores and all.  
Nigh on a hundred and thirty were missing,  
A good two-thirds; now lost beyond recall,  
And those left were not fit for peace or war,  
Since most lay aground, close by the shore.

All the horses were dead, the food was gone,  
Much tackle and gear, yet Rodomonte,  
Scarcely took the time to think thereon,  
Caring not a straw, but choosing, wisely,  
To move among his troops, cheer them on  
To win all required: 'My brave company,'  
He cried, 'We'll swiftly seize a thousand more  
Of everything we've lost on this cruel shore.

We'll not rest here for long, midst poverty;  
 These peasants have naught, little will they yield.  
 I'll lead you to treasure, and in plenty,  
 That in France's rich realm lies unconcealed,  
 Where those lying dogs wear, openly,  
 Gold about their necks, as you'll see revealed,  
 So, give nary a thought to what we've lost;  
 Here is a land of wealth, and theirs the cost!

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 51-55: DESIDERIO AND  
 NAMUS JOIN FORCES**

Thus, King Rodomonte solaced his men  
 With brave talk, addressing several by name,  
 And told them to rest until, as and when,  
 Their marching orders he chose to proclaim.  
 Let me speak of Arcimboldo again.  
 The fort of Monaco he'd reached, in the same  
 State I told you of, wounded and defeated;  
 By his surgeon, midst others, to be greeted.

On entering, he sent a messenger  
 To tell the king of their near-disaster,  
 With many a detail of the invader,  
 His fleet's grounding, and the fight thereafter.  
 And then a note he sent, by another,  
 To Duke Namus, like that to his father,  
 To reach him at Marseille, he being there,  
 That told the story of the whole affair.

Desiderio heard the news with dismay,  
 And, greatly grieved, departed Savona,  
 With all his army, and so lead the way,  
 To Monaco, neath his royal banner.  
 He thus brought his forces into play,  
 While Duke Namus hastened from the other  
 Side; now quitting Marseille with his men,  
 To take revenge upon the Saracen.

Those hosts took to the road with great ardour,  
 The French and the Italian, I mean,  
 And one dawn, approaching one another,  
 From the coast near about, they could be seen.  
 Rodomonte, thus able to discover  
 Their presence, his camping-ground caught between,  
 Scowled, as he perceived Desiderio,  
 Upon the cliffs, as he gazed on below.

The mass of men, each with lance or spear,  
 Formed a dense forest on the mountainside,  
 While steel-plate and mail, in the sun, showed clear,  
 As along the slopes the king's host did ride.  
 Rodomonte called for his squire to appear,  
 And, in a trice, that bold warrior defied  
 The whole world, clad in armour, with his sword;  
 A savage weapon from his royal hoard.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 56-59: RODOMONTE'S  
 MEN FIGHT DESIDERIO'S SQUADRONS**

He was on foot, since his steed had drowned,  
 Ere the passage they had made to the shore.  
 Now, at his back, he heard the trumpets sound,  
 As Duke Namus appeared, who rode before  
 Ottone, Belengiero, o'er the ground  
 On his other flank, and behind came more  
 Fine knights, Lorraine's count, Asti's Roberto,  
 And Bradamante, keen to face the foe.

That lady, prouder than many another,  
 Resembled bold Rinaldo, on her steed;  
 She was the very image of her brother,  
 And yet a maid most beautiful indeed.  
 She now led the squadron, as below her  
 Rodomonte to the looming threat gave heed,  
 Seeing the troops ride in from either side,  
 Nigh on creating a pen, with him inside.

He turned towards his men, with darkened face,  
 And cried: 'Attack whichever force you please,  
 Right or left, I care not, leave me but space  
 The other host of Christians to seize,  
 For whichever you choose, by the grace  
 Of Allah, mine I'll destroy, and with ease!  
 So spoke the bold youth, and his small army,  
 Hearts aroused, charged at that of Lombardy.

At one the drums beat, and the trumpets cried,  
 Desiderio hastening to the fight,  
 Wreaked havoc there, on the right-hand side,  
 Descending swiftly with many a knight.  
 Though the Saracens fought with ample pride  
 With their king's fine example yet in sight,  
 They were fewer than the Lombards they found,  
 And, foot by foot, they steadily lost ground.

**BOOK II: CANTO VI: 60-65: WHILE HE  
HIMSELF CHALLENGES NAMUS AND HIS  
COMPANY**

Yet the contest there was but slight to view  
Compared, I mean, to what took place nearby,  
Where Rodomonte fierce war did pursue  
With the French, his emotions running high.  
For his prowess was greater, his courage too,  
Than any other Saracen, say I.  
There was ne'er such a fight against the foe;  
And I'll seek to tell of it, blow by blow.

Duke Namus, who was prudent and wise,  
Observing the Saracens on the shore,  
Had halted his men on the nearby rise,  
And then, in three divisions, waged his war.  
The first squadron was led, in fearless guise,  
By Bradamante, who a sharp lance now bore,  
Which she lowered, that daughter of Amone,  
And then spurred her steed, advancing swiftly.

There, beside her, rode the Count of Lorraine,  
That veteran warrior Ansuardo;  
He stormed downwards, in a trice, to the plain.  
Then came Asti's count, the bold Roberto.  
This was the first force the shore to gain,  
With sixteen thousand fighting men or so.  
The second to attain the sands below,  
Was led by Guy, beside him Amerigo.

The first was the Duke of Burgundy,  
And the Duke of Savoy, was the other,  
Both strong knights; Bovo too, assuredly,  
Deserves a mention, he of Dozona;  
And they too met the invading army.  
Old Namus led the third, fierce as ever,  
With his sons, the brave Belengiero,  
Ottone, Avorio, and Avino.

The father and his four sons held the rear,  
With their Bavarians, upon that field.  
But we turn to Rodomonte, free of fear;  
He bore no banner, only sword and shield.  
Alone he charged them all, as they drew near.  
He, disposed to conquer, and ne'er to yield,  
Was swift to attack, as they descended.  
And fought alone, on foot, undefended.

Fair lords, be pleased to return once more,  
When the story of that battle I'll relate;  
For, if you've ever heard a tale of war,  
Of furious blows, dealt by men and fate,  
Of shattered armies on a distant shore,  
Twas nothing to the scene I'll recreate.  
And I'll tell you more of Count Orlando.  
*Addio, signor!* Till the next canto!

BOOK II: CANTO VII: MORGANA'S LAKE

ARGOMENTO.

<i>Occide Rodomonte il buon destriero ,</i>	<i>Con Falerina Orlando il buon guerriero ,</i>
<i>Di sotto a Bradamante ardita, e forte,</i>	<i>Gionge la oue Haridano (hai triſta ſorte)</i>
<i>Poi le altre genti piu che giamai fiero ,</i>	<i>Preſo teneua il fior d'ogni Barone ,</i>
<i>Diffipa, taglia, tronca , mette a morte.</i>	<i>Combatte, e in l'acqua uāno a traboccone.</i>



A L L E G O R I E.

**L**E genti che ſtando lontane animaua cō parole Bradamante nel combattere cō Rodomonte ne dimoſtra quanto poco douereſſimo far conto della gente uile, e da poco, poi che da quelle non potiamo aſpettare agiuto di ſorte alcuno. **O**RLANDO che al conforto di Falerina qual ſi piegaua alla partenza, ci dinota che le parole, e luſinghe delle genti ne ſono ſpeſſo cagione di di ſturbar qualche opera ſanta, e buona.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 1-7: BRADAMANTE  
ATTACKS KING RODOMONTE**

There was ne'er, my lords, so terrible a fight,  
Nor so strange, as this, whereon I discourse,  
For, King Rodomonte, that man of might,  
Stood alone against Namus, whose great force  
Was large enough. 'Twas a most wondrous sight;  
And its details I'll describe, in due course.  
Yet Turpin from the truth did ne'er depart,  
The bishop states all as fact, not mere art.

I know not if eternal Heaven blessed  
With such endless strength the Saracen king,  
Or if a devil from Hell, as some attest,  
Fought that day on the field; here's the thing:  
Of our forces he routed the very best,  
On that most fateful day of which I sing,  
Such that none can recollect a defeat  
Of Christian troops so grievous, or complete.

All our squadrons, as I said, descended,  
From the mountainside, where Rodomonte  
Opposed their coming, and thus upended  
Many a knight, battling so fiercely,  
That our sorry ranks their lives expended,  
Mown down like grass, slaughtered cruelly;  
Our horsemen, infantry, the weak, the strong,  
All fell before the monarch's scythe ere long.

Ever striking true, that bold African  
With many a straight or backhanded blow,  
Screaming his war-cry, working to a plan,  
With his blade cleared a space amidst the foe.  
'Twas now fair Bradamante faced the man;  
That maid of a proud race, her skill did show;  
Like a bolt from Heaven, her gleaming lance  
Struck Rodomonte, halting his advance.

She moved to clip him on his left-hand side,  
And the valorous maiden pierced his shield,  
And almost laid him on the ground beside  
Yet the Saracen ne'er a wound revealed.  
For though the king on many a skill relied,  
His strength appearing endless in the field,  
Yet he wore (and 'twas no enchanter's trick)  
A tough serpent's-hide, half a hand's-width thick.

Nonetheless, he nearly fell to that blow,  
Of which I've told, as he made his advance,  
When the maid, who valiant force did show,  
Thrust him in the side with lowered lance.  
Her men, who knew not if she'd slain him so,  
Cried aloud ('twas a telling circumstance),  
Yet they kept a good distance from the foe,  
Shouting as one, as if she'd laid him low.

She turned her armoured steed, once more,  
To face the furious Rodomonte,  
While Count Roberto, now upon the shore,  
Thrust at the warrior's shield, full fiercely,  
While Ansuardo, wise in battle-lore,  
Spurred beside him, sword drawn, in company.  
Then her men, inspired by their bravery,  
Charged as one, driving forwards, valiantly,

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 8-11: RODOMONTE SLAYS  
ANSUARDO AND UNSEATS BRADAMANTE**

Crying: 'On! On!' and launching many a stone,  
Many a sharpened arrow, many a spear.  
Yet the scornful king, laughing, stood alone,  
Like a man quite unaccustomed to fear.  
He swung his mighty blade; flesh and bone  
It found in Ansuardo's form, slicing sheer  
Through his waist; and the Count of Lorraine  
Collapsed, in a moment, to join the slain.

The sad corpse was cleft, a sight to deplore,  
Half mounted, and half tumbled to the ground;  
A stranger incident scarce seen in war.  
Rodomonte now turned himself around;  
Against Bradamante his sword he bore;  
He missed the maid but her brave steed he found,  
Clad in chain-mail and steel-plate all in vain;  
He sliced the neck, half-covered by its mane.

The charger fell, and thus the maid also,  
While Rodomonte left her there to lie,  
As he sought to find some other bold foe;  
Roberto, Count of Asti, caught his eye.  
He was cleft in two by a single blow,  
A fearsome stroke, a sight to terrify,  
Enough to make the bravest warrior yield,  
And any that could do so, fled the field.



Bradamante though was forced to remain,  
Amidst the gravely wounded and the dead,  
Still trapped beneath her charger, on the plain,  
While mighty Rodomonte forged ahead,  
Wielding his fierce blade till all were slain,  
That stayed to fight him, while cowards fled.  
Where'er men held, the Saracen appeared,  
Hacked at their bodies, sliced, and cut, and sheared.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 12-16: THE FIRST  
ASSAULT HAVING FAILED, BOVO IS SLAIN**

On every side, he scattered o'er the ground  
Pieces of armour, from some man or steed.  
What need then to describe the dreadful sound  
Of his whirling blade, twas terrible indeed.  
Our ranks were routed, sanctuary they found  
In Heaven's care, the field did swift concede.  
And, in short, though but little time had passed,  
Our first assault had well-nigh proved our last.

For the king, midst our second rank of men,  
Had, there, the vicious contest now renewed,  
And, though they pressed upon the Saracen,  
His course of swift destruction he pursued,  
Swinging that mighty blade, at will, again;  
And heaps of dead like stacks of straw accrued.  
Namus viewed that slaughter beyond belief,  
And thought that he would die of bitter grief.

'God in Heaven', he cried aloud, 'if our sin  
Has brought your fierce justice down upon us,  
Let not the heathen this great contest win,  
And so, gain honour against the pious!'   
With that, he called, above the mighty din,  
To one who'd bear news of their perilous  
Plight, and their need for aid, to Charlemagne,  
Though endless ruin was their fate, twas plain,

For the Saracen king was of such might  
That none could defend against the man.  
Now Bovo of Dozona, that brave knight  
He disembowelled, whose followers soon ran,  
Leaving him there to lie, a wretched sight.  
All who at first were brave, and then did scan  
The field, and so viewed the dead, on seeing  
Bovo fall, fled, with the foe pursuing.

Rodomonte chased, and harried, and downed  
Many a man in flight, without a thought.  
Some were on foot, while some a horse had found,  
But all were slow to him; a host he caught;  
For that monarch was so swift o'er the ground,  
He'd bring down leopards as they ran, in short,  
To flee was no defence; the king would gain  
On his foe, and leave him dead on the plain.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 17-22: RODOMONTE  
KILLS AMERIGO, AND FIGHTS NAMUS AND HIS  
SONS**

As in November, when the cold winds blow,  
And the first frosts chill all the air around,  
And leaves from the branches swiftly flow,  
Till few remain, so the dead cloaked the ground.  
Amerigo of Savoy addressed the foe,  
And his lance the Saracen's breastplate found,  
But the lance shattered, to his great dismay;  
Rodomonte flicked the fragments away.

The Saracen attacked the duke, his blade  
Cleft the knight's helmet, falling to his thigh.  
The Christian soldiers ran, now sore afraid,  
Ne'er was such chaos viewed by any eye.  
Old Duke Namus his courage now displayed,  
Lowered his lance, prepared it seems to die,  
As did his sons: Ottone, Avino,  
Avorio, and Belengiero.

The contest waxed; the loud war-cries rang out;  
Midst the tumult, clouds of dust rose on high.  
Avorio struck home, despite the rout,  
Yet broke his lance, as he passed the king by.  
Rodomonte hardly stirred, but turned about  
To face Ottone charging with a cry,  
Then stood fast on his two feet, as ever,  
Indifferent to that blow from the other.

Belengiero and bold Avino  
Next made their attempts, old Namus too,  
A fine warrior, match for many a foe,  
But naught gainst this madman could they do.  
After the fifth lance, and fifth failed blow,  
Like a snake, the king raised his brow anew,  
And tossed his head as if to cry: 'Away,  
With you, men of straw, for mine is the day!'

He spoke not a word, but raised his sword,  
And struck Ottone's head with lethal force,  
The Son and the Virgin did their aid afford,  
For the stroke fell flat, the blade altering course.  
Yet such a hit Rodomonte scored  
As knocked this bold opponent from his horse.  
Nor did the king rest with that fierce blow:  
Belengiero, and Avorio,

He now toppled, wounded, and the rest,  
Whether noblemen or base, he'd have slain,  
Every man that he could see, I'd suggest,  
But Desiderio now reached the plain,  
With his Lombards, and put him to the test.  
For Fortune now a fresh course did maintain,  
As that king brought a host of fighting men,  
And sent their ranks against the Saracen.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 23-26: HIS TROOPS ARE  
ASSAILED BY DESIDERIO'S MEN**

The king sought to capture Rodomonte,  
Who routed and chased many another,  
Having left Avino bleeding freely,  
Beside Avorio, and their brother.  
As some mighty storm, raging fiercely,  
The fields with blowing sand will cover,  
So that savage, with his fearsome blade,  
The battlefield with slaughtered men arrayed.

Shields, and fragments of mail, flew through the air,  
Helmeted heads, severed arms in armour.  
Rodomonte not a man chose to spare,  
Slicing steel, flesh and bone to uncover.  
Yet oft he turned his eyes, gazing where:  
His men, routed, o'er the field did scatter.  
As he waged his fierce and dreadful war,  
He watched the ranks, disliking all he saw.

As a lion, trapped in some woodland glade,  
That hears the hunter nearing, at its back,  
Shakes its head, tosses its mane, undismayed,  
Roars, and shows its claws, set to attack,  
So that monarch, a scornful face displayed,  
As he turned, with the Lombards on his track,  
To view his troops scattering o'er the plain;  
Angered now, and expressing deep disdain.

His people fled; those who could spurred hard,  
And those in front were the happiest there.  
King Desiderio, with scant regard  
To his safety, like a hound on the hare,  
Paused not; yet first, by many a yard,  
His son, Count Arcimbaldo, now did share  
The lead with the mighty Rigonzzone,  
He of Parma; both vying, eagerly.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 27-30: AND HIS BANNER  
IS TOPPLED**

Rigonzone was fierce beyond measure,  
Though he possessed a mind as light as straw,  
For he'd fight with or without his armour,  
And in an eye-blink would be off to war.  
He seemed careless of both life and honour,  
And a crossbow without a lock, he bore,  
For he'd shoot a man at the slightest jest.  
'Brave but mad' his character, thus, expressed.

This pair now chased the Saracen foe,  
Spreading rout and ruin all around,  
Rigonzone, and Count Arcimbaldo.  
Sarza's standard was toppled to the ground,  
The scarlet banner, that a lion did show  
Bridled by a queen, now swiftly downed.  
She was Doralice of Granada,  
Loved by Rodomonte, with pure ardour.

His ensign ever bore amidst the strife,  
Her portrait to inspire his bravery.  
It seemed so natural, so true to life,  
It lacked her voice alone; while but to see  
That banner float on high, where war was rife,  
Increased his courage (and his savagery).  
As if he saw her in the flesh, one look,  
To fill his heart with fire, was all it took.

Watching her flag now tumble to the ground  
Made him sadder than aught that he had known.  
His face turned pale, as his teeth he ground,  
Then it burned with anger, he gave a groan.  
If God brings not his aid, ne'er safe and sound  
Shall Desiderio, his flesh and bone,  
Nor his troops depart the battlefield.  
Lost to Rodomonte's fury, they must yield!

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 31-34: WE RETURN TO ORLANDO AND FALERINA**

Later on, I'll recount to you further  
The story of this battle without end.  
But I'll say no more now of the matter,  
For to seek Orlando my path I wend.  
Who'd reached the Fay's enchanted river.  
In Falerina's garden he'd been penned,  
And despite the devices there employed,  
Its walls all wrought by magic he'd destroyed.

That place was guarded (I should explain,  
For those who can't recall it) by a dragon,  
A bull, an ass, a giant, though in vain;  
For he slew them all, with scarce a weapon.  
And then Orlando, with no little pain,  
Cleft the branch, and so ended the garden.  
He untied the captive Falerina,  
To help him free her prisoners, thereafter;

They were the noble folk she'd had ensnared  
By that old rascal at the bridge. Therefore,  
Orlando took her with him, as he fared  
To that place, their liberty to ensure.  
O'er hill and plain they travelled, strangely paired,  
Falerina on foot, no less, no more,  
Than the Count, for traversing the country  
They lacked both his fair steed and her palfrey;

The Count had lost Brigliador, to his woe;  
The horse was stolen, with Durindana.  
Now, as they walked, albeit they were slow,  
They came one fine day upon a river.  
Now twas here the Treasure Fay, as you know,  
Had ordained a thing, the strangest ever,  
Whereby a sudden challenge, and a leap,  
Had sunk the flower of knighthood in the deep.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 35-39: ARIDANO, THE GUARDIAN OF THE BRIDGE**

For Rinaldo had been plunged in her lake,  
As I've told you, as had been Iroldo,  
(The mere memory of it, keeps me awake)  
And his friend, the valiant Prasildo.  
Not long after, Dudon who, for their sake,

Had been searching all over, to and fro,  
On the orders of the king, Charlemagne,  
Came seeking the knights, o'er the plain,

Both Rinaldo and Orlando, I mean.  
Dudon had searched nigh all the world, in vain,  
Until, led by ill-fortune to the scene,  
The shore of the evil lake that lord did gain.  
There Aridano, its guard, fierce and keen,  
Had brought many a knight-errant pain,  
And many a lady, for many he did take  
In his grasp, and then plunge into the lake.

And Dudon was, in that way, held, and thrown  
To the water; in vain was all defence.  
Aridano, by spells, though flesh and bone  
Had yet been granted a strength so immense  
Twas six times that of any knight, alone,  
(Never mind the ladies who fought!) and hence,  
He entrapped them all; strong though they might be,  
His enchanted grasp o'ercame them, readily.

That villain was possessed of such might  
That one could often see him swimming there,  
Fully-armed, and, plunging far from the light,  
Returning from those depths without a care.  
When he'd disposed of some passing knight,  
He'd dive down, search around with time to spare,  
Find their armour, and return to the shore,  
And add it to his ever-growing store.

For he was proud and arrogant, and he  
Having gained the armour of those he caught,  
Hung it there, like a trophy, from a tree,  
Though lacking honour, in the way he fought.  
And, high above all the rest, one could see,  
Rinaldo's armour and surcoat athwart  
A cypress branch, where that vile Saracen  
Placed it openly, to taunt honest men.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 40-49: FALERINA WARNS ORLANDO OF THE DANGER**

Now, Orlando came on foot, as I've said,  
To this shore, with the witch Falerina,  
Who was ever at his side; he strode ahead;  
But when she saw the bridge o'er the river,

Rather than urge him on, she chose instead  
To deter the Count, blaspheming Allah  
And the faithful: 'Sir knight, we shall be slain;  
We'll ne'er escape from death, and bitter pain.

This is the work of some celestial foe  
(May he fall from Heaven into Hell!)  
Who has led us both to this place of woe,  
To perish by force, or perchance some spell;  
For a brigand dwells here, I'd have you know,  
He slays many, and robs those folk as well.  
Treachery and cruelty are his game,  
And Aridano is that villain's name

He was not born strong, or fierce, or bold.  
He comes of ill blood, and low ancestry.  
But now he's stronger, transformed of old,  
As I'll explain; tis a strange history.  
Deep in the lake, its waters dark and cold,  
Dwells Morgana, a creature of faerie,  
That, by her art once wrought a magic horn,  
That would bring an end to any man born.

For the knight that the magic horn did sound  
Was doomed to meet his death, out of hand.  
The tale's too long to tell, yet twould astound,  
Of all those caught and slain at her command.  
Yet a knight who that evil place had found,  
Blew the horn (I forget his name and land)  
And then conquered a wild bull, a dragon,  
And slew the soldiers that arose, everyone.

That knight, a man of wondrous valour,  
Broke the spell, its dark enchantment,  
And stirred the Fay to disdain and anger,  
That any could so do; in discontent,  
She then formed this bridge o'er the river.  
If one searched the world, an aeon spent,  
One could ne'er find a knight, howe'er brave  
That, once o'er the bridge, she'd not enslave.

She deemed that the knight who'd blown the horn,  
Would pass by one day or, of his honour,  
Being to chivalry and adventure born,  
Would seek this perilous place, to kill her;  
And then she'd capture him, that very morn,  
For no man the bridge and guard could conquer.

'Twas Morgana wrought the flood, and the lake,  
To slay that cavalier, for vengeance' sake.

She searched the world o'er to discover  
A guardian both cruel and treacherous,  
And found Aridano, that vile creature,  
Pitiless and, than all folk, more vicious.  
She furnished him with enchanted armour,  
And then with something far more marvellous,  
For he ever has six times the strength, or more,  
Of any that dare face him on this shore.

And thus, it seems true; nay, I am sure,  
That none could e'er survive that cruel test.  
I foresee that, like so many men before,  
You're doomed, likewise, to perish in the quest,  
While I too will sink to the lake's deep floor;  
For, once seen, we are doomed to join the rest,  
There's no recourse, no time in which to go,  
Ere we're caught by the fearsome Aridano!

Orlando merely smiled at all she'd said,  
And told the maiden, speaking soft and low:  
'Neath the sun, no man fills my heart with dread,  
Nor shall I retreat one step before the foe.  
God knows, I'll not see you harmed or dead,  
Nor leave you here alone. Your fear, forego,  
All will be well; need I explain at length.  
Cold steel will handle this fellow's strength.'

Yet the maiden replied, while still weeping:  
'By God, fly now, sir knight; fly death and fate!  
E'en the famed Orlando would flee this thing,  
All Charlemagne's fair court would quit it straight!  
I shed tears, possessed by fear of dying;  
Yet, sadder still, all thought of your death, I hate.  
For I am worth but little, while, sir knight,  
You are noble and bold, the future bright.'

## **BOOK II: CANTO VII: 50-54: HE SPIES RINALDO'S ARMOUR**

The Count was slowly yielding to persuasion,  
Swayed by her speech, both gentle and sweet,  
Thinking that he heard the voice of reason,  
And had well-nigh determined on retreat,  
When he spied, and twas with some emotion,

Rinaldo's armour, hanging there, complete,  
From the tree: 'Cousin, who has wronged me here?  
He cried: 'O flower of knights, your death I fear!

Murdered it would seem, most treacherously,  
By that villain on the bridge, for no man  
Could e'er overcome you, honourably,  
Twould need some evil, some deceitful, plan.  
In Paradise, whence you gaze down on me,  
Hear the plea of your Count, and, if you can,  
Forgive him you once loved, though he erred,  
Overpowered by passion; hear now his word.

For tis your mercy I seek. Pardon me,  
My cousin, if I e'er offended you,  
For I am yours, and was, and e'er shall be,  
Though false suspicion, and vain love, tis true,  
Persuaded us to fight; twas jealousy  
Placed sharp swords in our hands, which I now rue.  
I loved you, and do still. I did you wrong.  
Tis to me that both blame and shame belong.

Where's the vile wolf, the traitor, where is he;  
Who has prevented us from returning,  
To a state of sweet peace and harmony,  
Bathed in noble kisses, softly weeping?  
The bitter grief that well-nigh unmans me,  
Is that I cannot, with familiar greeting,  
Speak to you, once more, and seek your pardon.  
That's the reef that my heart is wrecked upon!

With this, Orlando gave a mighty sigh,  
Grasped his stout shield, and drew forth his sword,  
A sword which all enchantment did defy,  
And through all foes cut a path deep and broad.  
I have told you before, nor need, say I,  
A further explanation to afford,  
Of when, and how (herbs, roots, and spells her aid)  
Falerina had forged that magic blade.

## BOOK II: CANTO VII: 55-60: THE COUNT FIGHTS ARIDANO

The Count, who seethed with grief and anger,  
Leapt onto the bridge, and the blade did wield,  
Downed the gate and fence above the river,  
And sought for Aridano in the field.

Neath the cypress tree, he found that robber,  
Where hung the armour, and the sword and shield,  
That belonged to the Lord of Montalbano,  
Which he was gazing on. He heard Orlando

Call out, and with a start raised his eyes,  
To find the Count a formidable foe.  
He had taken the villain by surprise,  
But the rascal seized his club, even so,  
And then cried aloud: 'If all Paradise  
And Allah were to aid you, you should know  
No mere mortal will prove stronger than I,  
No matter how you fight, you're doomed to die!'

With that, he swung his club, bound with iron,  
And shattered Orlando's solid shield.  
The Count fell to his knees, loosed his weapon,  
And the rogue, thinking him about to yield,  
Bent and spread his arms, in one swift action,  
To grasp him, and drag him o'er the field,  
In the way he did with all he would unmake,  
Plunging with them to the depths of the lake.

Orlando, though, was not inclined to yield,  
Despite his situation, unafraid,  
He launched a blow at Aridano's shield,  
Knocked a segment to the ground, sank his blade  
Deep in the other's side, rose, and wheeled,  
Slicing through plate and mail; the villain swayed,  
His enchanted strength unequal to the sword,  
And might have, but for his posture, been floored;

For, in stooping, he'd avoided its full force,  
Else the Count would have cut him clean in two,  
Like a round of cheese; thus, stopped in his course,  
The rascal would have paid his every due.  
Nonetheless, the man staggered like a horse.  
While wrath and venom rose in him, anew,  
He launched a weighty blow, its measure great,  
But Orlando, wise to all, chose not to wait,

For he leapt swiftly, as his blade he plied,  
Aiming his sword, low, at Aridano,  
Just as the Saracen, took one long stride,  
His iron-bound club descending for the blow.  
Each swung, backhanded, from his left-hand side,  
Thus, their weapons clashed together, although,

The sword, that countered every magic threat,  
Cut two feet from the cudgel, as they met.

**BOOK II: CANTO VII: 61-63: WHO PLUNGES,  
WITH HIM, INTO THE MAGIC LAKE**

Aridano gave a bestial cry,  
And leapt at the Count, in his anger.  
While Orlando, who was startled thereby,  
Could do little to avoid the danger,  
Grasped by the rogue, who like a hawk did fly  
With his prey, to the edge of the water,  
And, embracing the Count in his armour,  
Plunged into the lake, then swam deeper.

They'd dropped, in a moment, from the bank,  
Into the shadowy depths far below;  
Falerina waited not, while they sank,  
But o'er the plain, full swiftly, she did go.  
Her concern was for herself, to be frank,  
Glancing back in terror, and trembling so,  
That naught but Aridano filled her thought,  
She imagining that she'd soon be caught.

'Twas a while ere he surfaced again,  
Having reached the lakebed with Orlando.  
But I'll not take the time, now, to explain,  
I'll defer the rest to the next canto.  
Return, and listen to my noble strain,  
For the strangest thing you'll hear of so,  
The truest, and most certain to delight,  
If God grant peace to all; for such I'll write.

BOOK II: CANTO VIII: FAERY TREASURE

A R G O M E N T O.

Occide Orlando il Gigante Arridano,      Segue per monte alpestre, e loco strano,  
 Satta il lago, ne piglia il bel carbone,      La Fata del Tesor, che in quel Girone,  
 Venne Rinaldo il sir di Mont' Albano,      Fugge veloce via leggiadra, e isnella,  
 Con Brandimarte preso, e il buon Dudone      Per l'aspro bosco i questa parte, e i quella.



A L L E G O R I E.

ARRIDANO che credendosi di disarmare Orlando come faceua gli altri, e rimanda esso ammazzato, si dimostra la varietà de glihuomini, & la differenza, ch'è dall'vno a l'altro.

ORLANDO, che potèdo prender Morgana, la lascia, e poi tornando li conuenne hauer molta fatica nel seguirla, ne insegna che quando vno ha la Fortuna fauoreuole douerebbe cercar di tenerla ferma.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 1-3: IN PRAISE OF FAMOUS LOVERS**

When the world is verdant and in flower,  
The sky at its most pleasant and serene,  
Then the nightingale's song, many an hour,  
Fills the shadowy grove, midst the leaves' green.  
That sweet season now grants me the power  
To pursue my delightful song, unseen,  
And praise the renown and mighty honour  
Won by those who are both knight and lover.

Fair ladies and glorious lords, draw near,  
That grace this court with your nobility;  
Bring your chairs closer, and my story hear,  
Of knights of old and their high chivalry,  
Whose renown will endure many a year:  
You know of Tristan and Iseult, surely,  
Of Guinevere and King Ban's Lancelot,  
Yet Count Orlando must not be forgot.

'Twas he, that, for Angelica the Fair,  
Wrought many a bold and marvellous deed,  
Thus, in song he's well-nigh beyond compare.  
I described how he was forced to concede  
His ground, in that most treacherous affair  
Where we saw fierce Aridano succeed  
In grasping him, and plunging in the deep.  
Now hear the facts in full, of that vile leap.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 4-7: THE COUNT AND ARIDANO, BENEATH THE LAKE, CONTINUE THEIR DUEL**

Falling with a mighty splash from the bank,  
Those two vanished in the murky water.  
Aridano and the Count swiftly sank,  
And were soon a mile down, locked together,  
Heading for the lake-bed, dark and dank,  
When the shadows cleared, and all seemed purer,  
And then to a strange new region they won,  
And found a brighter land, another sun.

It was as if a new world had been born,  
For they found themselves amidst a meadow,  
While overhead, as if lit by the dawn,  
Clear water shone; and midst that bright morrow,

All seemed there to enjoy a fairer morn.  
'Twas enclosed within a marble grotto,  
Formed of fine, and brightly gleaming, stone,  
Within its walls, green countryside there shown.

At the foot of a slope this grotto lay,  
In extent it was three full miles around.  
Now I'll tell of the Count, as best I may:  
In the giant's embrace, he fell to the ground.  
Clasped tight together, face to face, were they,  
And though he tried to free himself, he found  
That he fought, and he struggled, all in vain,  
For six times his force his foe could attain.

Neither wrestler could win free from his foe,  
As they rolled about, o'er the flowery field.  
Aridano sought to strip Orlando  
Of his armour, thinking him about to yield,  
Being dazed; and, thus, he let the other go;  
But Orlando now raised his sword and shield,  
Once he'd, foolishly, relaxed his guard,  
And struck him a blow; twas both good and hard.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 8-13: ORLANDO SLAYS ARIDANO**

So, the bitter fight now began once more,  
All that cruel and most pitiless affair.  
The Saracen his mighty club yet bore,  
That could lay a forest or a mountain bare,  
At a blow, while the Count's sword would ensure  
By its magic, that he must conquer there;  
For all that the fierce blade met it would cleave,  
Naught could that weapon fail in, I believe.

As soon as he'd escaped the other's hold,  
Orlando swung at him, to lay him low.  
The Saracen's bright helm he cracked, I'm told,  
(His face, though, left intact) with one swift blow.  
Aridano ground his teeth, his words yet bold:  
'Tis the way you swat flies, and off they go,  
'Tis the way you fan your nose, no doubt,  
But you'll pay, for I'll give you such a clout!

And, so saying, he took a mighty swing,  
Although he failed to strike the Count as planned,  
Or he'd certainly have sent him flying,



And wounded him, or slain him out of hand.  
Now battle raged, their moves astounding,  
One strength, the other courage, did command,  
As each man sought to gain the victory,  
For none e'er fought harder, or more fiercely.

Though the giant dealt many a fearsome blow,  
He failed to harm Orlando in the least.  
For to right and left his cudgel did go,  
While Orlando, skilled in warfare, ne'er ceased  
To strike deftly at him, above, below,  
Caught him thrice, and sorely wounded the beast,  
In the head, and the belly, and the thigh,  
Releasing fierce streams of blood thereby.

And, not to keep you here till dead of night,  
The final blow the Count dealt the fellow,  
Sliced him in two, at the waist, outright,  
And thus, from him, life, with the blood, did flow.  
The man was dead. No other was in sight;  
The empty slope had merely stone to show,  
And the green of sundry bushes and trees.  
Orlando gazed around, and felt the breeze.

He was unsure what to do, now he was free  
Of that wretch; the white marble all around  
Preventing him ascending, certainly,  
Though the fairest flowers adorned the ground,  
Yet, to the west, a portal gleamed royally,  
There, where a smooth sheer cliff was to be found;  
Carved by chisels, twas tall, and open wide,  
Ne'er its like was seen, nor the realm inside.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 14-17: HE VIEWS A DEPICTION OF THE LABYRINTH**

Orlando, gazing round him, as I said,  
Saw the open doorway and drew near.  
He faced the entrance looming ahead.  
Around its arch, a carved frieze did appear,  
Beyond the door he deemed a pathway led.  
The frieze portrayed a tale, incised and clear,  
Yet all adorned with precious gems, and gold,  
And pearls, and fine enamels, wrought of old.

It showed a maze; a hundred walls he saw,  
That enclosed its centre, all high and strong.  
Twas the Labyrinth, with many a subtle door,  
To its hundred circuits, to send folk wrong;  
Its plan made clear, as if drawn on the floor.  
And there were scenes of true knights slain among  
Its windings, for none, that its depths did dare,  
Found their escape; all doomed to wander there.

To the entrance not one could e'er return,  
But there within it they must stray and die,  
Or, led by Fortune to the centre, earn,  
As cruel and painful, yet swift, a death thereby.  
The Minotaur they met, at that last turn,  
Half man, half savage bull, with horns on high.  
No crueller a monster e'er was born.  
It consumed all who wandered there forlorn.

And portrayed, on the one side, was a maid,  
Whose heart was enamoured of her lover,  
And she had taught him, so the tale conveyed,  
How to follow a clue, to re-join her,  
Having slain the beast; the Count displayed  
Little care for such things then, however,  
For he left those scenes behind, entered in,  
And then followed the gloomy path within.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 18-22: HE REACHES A BRIDGE TO MORGANA'S TREASURE-COURT**

Fearlessly, the Count strode through the grotto,  
Without light, the path harsh and perilous,  
And had travelled about three miles or so,  
When he came upon something marvellous.  
Twas a stone, from which issued a strange glow.  
Of pure fire it seemed, amidst the cavernous  
Space ahead, and shone brighter than the moon,  
Or e'en the sun in the sky, at high noon.

It lit a stream in front, athwart the way;  
Twenty yards wide it was, or slightly less,  
And the light o'er a field of gems did play,  
Beyond it, which to tell of, I confess,  
Would, truly, take forever and a day.  
So many stars the night sky ne'er did bless,  
Nor so many flowers the Spring's fair face,  
As did the pearls and precious gems that place.

The stream I spoke of, by some subtle plan,  
Was crossed by a bridge, long and narrow;  
Indeed, its width was scarcely half a span.  
At each end, a tall statue caught the glow,  
In the shape of an armoured, iron man;  
While a large courtyard lay beyond the flow,  
And twas there Morgana stored her treasure.  
Now hark to a thing strange beyond measure.

The Count had scarcely placed his foot upon  
The narrow bridge when the metal statue,  
Fabricated with great art, thereupon,  
Raised a mighty cudgel head-high; tis true  
That Orlando had his magic falchion,  
Fit to parry whate'er might now ensue,  
And yet he needed it not, for the blow,  
Struck the bridge, and made it sink in the flow.

The Count watched closely as it disappeared,  
And marvelled at it, greatly, in his mind  
For gradually the bridge once more appeared,  
Rising slowly where it had at first declined.  
The Count approached it boldly, since he feared  
Naught at all, and yet was chagrined to find,  
That the statue struck the bridge ere he crossed,  
As ordained, and, again, the thing was lost.

### **BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 23-28: THEN LEAPS THE STREAM, AND ENTERS THE COURTYARD**

He marvelled at the stream and bridge once more,  
Then mused: 'Were this same stream full ten miles wide,  
I could leap it, and reach the other shore;  
By this rivulet, I'll not be denied!'  
And with that he leapt, although, to be sure,  
He took a run at it, to gain the other side,  
Knowing he was clad in heavy armour;  
Yet, with a bound, flew across the river.

Once on the further bank, where Morgana  
Stored her treasure, Orlando now perceived  
Statues of a king, and many another,  
His council; this her magic had achieved.  
He was enthroned, the rest sat together,  
And all the forms were of gold he believed,  
Yet adorned with jewels glowing brightly,  
Many a diamond, emerald, and ruby.

It seemed all there were honouring the king.  
As for a feast, the table there was laid  
With various foods of subtle devising,  
Worked in enamel, that their form displayed,  
While, above the royal head, was hanging  
A menacing sword, with glittering blade,  
That threatened death to the monarch below;  
While an archer, to his left, aimed his bow.

At his side stood his twin; every feature  
Was identical, it seemed, twixt the two,  
Though a scroll in the hands of the latter  
Held an inscription high, for all to view:  
'Power, and status, and the world's treasure,  
Owned in fear, prove worthless to pursue.  
For naught can grant us joy, or bring delight,  
If it pains the anxious mind, day and night.'

The king looked sad; and twas for that reason.  
Seated nobly, yet he gazed, from his throne,  
At all he saw, with profound suspicion.  
On the table, there rose a precious stone  
From a gold lotus-flower, its position  
Such that, by the glow it shed, all was known;  
For light that diamond to the court supplied,  
That stretched five hundred yards, on every side,

With solid flagstones that square court was laid,  
Its walls the living rock; in each a door,  
That gave ingress and egress, richly made;  
Like the portals of a palace, were all four.  
Lacking windows, no light within it strayed,  
But the diamond lit all the walls and floor,  
Shining with such splendour, that the sun,  
At noon, could not a better job have done.

### **BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 29-33: HE TAKES A DIAMOND, FOR A GUIDING LIGHT**

The Count was not tempted by the gem.  
He chose to try the nearest door, but found,  
That all was dark within, and each of them  
Oped in turn, was by a like darkness bound.  
Each was dim, gloomy, such the stratagem  
Of her that had formed them, and not a sound  
Emerged from the space behind those doors;  
The Count tried each of them, without a pause.

He stood but for a moment, lost in thought,  
Then returned to the diamond, and its light,  
For that marvellous brightness he now sought,  
And he hastened to seize the gem outright;  
But the statue of the archer, his bow taut,  
Loosed the arrow; not at the speeding knight,  
But at the diamond, which it pierced, when, lo,  
Its fire was doused, while all the floor, below,

Quaked and shook, with a noise like thunder.  
On all sides, the hollow cavern gave a roar.  
Never was there a commotion greater,  
As the earth trembled neath the courtyard floor.  
Halting, the Count took not a step further,  
Though he was quite as unafraid as before.  
Behold! The diamond swift regained its light,  
And, o'er the walls around it, shone as bright.

Orlando tried to grasp the gem once more,  
But as he reached his hand towards it, lo,  
The statue, closest the king, its aim sure,  
Sent a second golden arrow from its bow.  
The cavern shook again, with a vast roar;  
That quake rumbled for an hour or so;  
But, when it ceased, the light, at full power,  
Shone, from the gem atop the lotus-flower.

Now, the Count of Anglante thought again.  
Firmly determined to achieve his end,  
He grasped his shield, held it high, and when  
The archer his swift dart once more did send  
Towards the gem, deflected it, and then  
Grasped at the diamond, though forced to defend  
Himself, from a further well-aimed arrow;  
The shield proving mightier than the bow.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 34-38: AND, BY ITS GLOW, DESCENDS A MARBLE STAIRWAY**

And then, with Fortune guiding him, each door  
He tried again, with the diamond in his hand,  
Wisely, examining the walls and floor,  
And, with that source of light at his command,  
Descended to the left, the path secure,  
(Rather than ascending, you understand,  
By the other roads). Now there, far below,  
Dudon was imprisoned and Rinaldo;

In that place, there shone neither moon nor sun,  
Return, from those depths, was fraught with danger.  
There Brandimarte was held, with many a one,  
Knights and ladies, seventy in number,  
While escape, from thence, was open to none,  
Nor was granted them hope of it ever,  
For a strange and dreadful spell held them all,  
And they thought themselves lost, in its thrall.

Yet know that the bold Brandimarte  
Was not caught and held by force, like the rest,  
But Morgana, with her vile sorcery,  
Had wielded power o'er the heart in his breast;  
For she had inflamed it, treacherously,  
And he'd followed her ever, without rest,  
For many a glance, and caress, he did reap,  
Till he plunged to that prison in the deep.

The brave Count of Brava, as I have told,  
Descended by a left-hand path that led  
Down a marble stair, gleaming now, yet cold,  
After more than a mile to where outspread  
Lay a level plain; though the Count was bold,  
Without the gem, in vain would he have sped  
Down that steep flight, broken, and winding;  
Erred thus a thousand times, and died trying.

When, by means of the light, he attained  
That level ground, Orlando thought he saw  
A distant fissure in the wall; maintained  
His course, and in a hundred yards or more,  
Walking the strange path that fate ordained,  
He perceived the cavern ended at a door,  
An opening, that revealed the light of day,  
Granting him exit from that sunless way.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 39-45: HE REACHES A MEADOW, AND FINDS MORGANA SLEEPING BY A FOUNT**

On the craggy cornice, o'er that portal,  
The letters of these words were carved, on high:  
'Knight or maiden, creature frail and mortal,  
Know you may enter, easily, hereby,  
Yet not ascend so fast, should that immortal  
Fay, elude you, that from your arms will fly.  
She may not rest; she ever flees, you'll find,  
While hair upon her head she lacks, behind.'

This claim was scarce heeded by Orlando,  
 For the bold adventurer straight entered in,  
 And then descended further to a meadow,  
 And gazed at the grass and flowers therein,  
 Filled with delight, for none that he did know  
 Had e'er found that green field, and walked within,  
 Nor seen a place in all the world as fair,  
 So noble, pleasing, as that pasture there.

The cloudless sky shone there, so serenely  
 No sapphire could surpass its shade of blue,  
 And groves of trees clothed the meadow sweetly,  
 Bearing fruit, and yet buds and flowers too.  
 A mile or so beyond the door, or nearly,  
 A towering wall split the whole field in two;  
 'Twas fashioned of stone, transparent, and clear,  
 Through which a lovely garden did appear.

Orlando left the portal far behind,  
 And then, as o'er the grass he made his way,  
 A fount, wondrously adorned, he did find,  
 Set with gold, gems and pearls, beside which lay,  
 With her lovely face towards the sky inclined,  
 The sleeping Morgana, that cunning Fay;  
 One so beautiful and sweet, twould appear,  
 That sight of her the saddest heart must cheer.

'If you fail to seize her, ere she should wake,  
 O paladin,' a voice behind him cried,  
 'You'll pay with weariness for your mistake  
 Pursuing her, on ill paths, far and wide.  
 Your dusty feet, your tired mind shall so ache,  
 Ere a tress you can catch (a host have tried)  
 Of her hair; a true saint of earthly life  
 You'll be thought, in peace to endure such strife.'

These words came but softly to Orlando  
 As he gazed, intently, at the sleeping Fay,  
 So, he turned back, and walked, his paces slow,  
 Listening, silently, as he made his way  
 Towards the voice; in thirty yards or so,  
 He reached the lofty wall, as bright as day,  
 Of solid crystal, transparent and clear;  
 And, since naught obscured his view, he drew near.

## BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 46-50: HE SPEAKS WITH DUDON, RINALDO, AND BRANDIMARTE THROUGH THE WALL

Thus, Orlando found the voice was mortal,  
 Of the one who had spoken previously,  
 Prisoned strangely, there, behind the crystal,  
 For he recognised those features instantly.  
 It was his brave Dudon, that man of mettle,  
 And it seemed they were separated merely  
 By three feet of solid wall, more or less.  
 Imagine, then, their pain, and their distress.

They spread their hands, in vain, against the glass  
 Each knight seeking to embrace the other.  
 To Dudon, Orlando said: 'Naught can pass;  
 It seems I cannot reach you, there, my brother!'  
 Meanwhile Rinaldo faced the same impasse.  
 He and Brandimarte, approached together,  
 Not thinking to behold the Count once more.  
 They joyed on doing so, yet wept full sore.

Then Rinaldo said: 'His sword is at his side,  
 There's armour on his back, he'll save us all!  
 By God, his courage will ne'er be denied;  
 And yet our former quarrel I recall,  
 And know not if his fury' (here, he sighed)  
 'Is yet extinguished, for it cast a pall  
 Over our friendship; mine was the error,  
 Who almost died, battling him in anger.'

Never should I have disagreed with one  
 That is my elder, for so slight a reason.  
 He deserves my respect; I showed him none.'  
 Yet Brandimarte told Amone's son:  
 'You are kinsmen, when all is said and done,  
 Have no fear; for once our freedom's won,  
 And the Count has saved us, as God is true,  
 I shall make peace between the pair of you.'

The two of them were conversing so,  
 As I've sought to display, somewhat sadly,  
 When, having been perceived by Orlando,  
 And both recognised by him, instantly,  
 Sighing and weeping, in a voice of woe,  
 Speaking now both plaintively, and gently,  
 He asked: for how long, and in what manner,  
 Enchantment had prisoned them together.

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 51-56: A CAPTIVE LADY INSTRUCTS ORLANDO**

And when he'd understood their sad mischance,  
Which each of them recounted, while weeping,  
His heart felt pain, as if pierced as by a lance,  
For vain seemed all his great strength and cunning,  
To overcome the parlous circumstance  
In which they found themselves, and, grieving,  
Our Count Orlando was all the more distraught,  
For, though seeing them, yet he could do naught.

Before his eyes, he perceived Rinaldo,  
And the others, whom he loved equally,  
And so, consumed by both anger and woe,  
He raised his sword to strike the wall, fiercely;  
But the captives all gave a shout: 'No, no!  
Forbear to use your blade; for, instantly,  
Were the crystal to be riven, we must fall  
Into a deep, dark dungeon, one and all!'

Then a lady, nearby, took up the tale,  
A look of deathly anguish on her face,  
Still beautiful, e'en though she was so pale,  
And she counselled Orlando, for a space:  
'Sir knight, if you would free us all from gaol,  
You must seek the gate, to enter this vile place,  
That seems wrought of emerald and diamond  
For there's no other way to pass beyond

The wall; tis not by force, or by cunning,  
By threats, sweet eloquence, or bravery,  
That you can enter that jewelled opening,  
If Morgana will not yield you the key.  
First, she'll seek to elude you by fleeing,  
Till you think no worse torment could there be  
Than to pursue her through the wasteland so,  
Led on, there, by false hope, to certain woe.

Yet virtue, in the end, will conquer all;  
He that endures shall win, if virtuous.  
The only hope, for all those neath her pall,  
Of life, is that you'll prove victorious.  
Full many here into this realm did fall,  
Through force, all wretched and inglorious.  
Only you, prized above all other men,  
Come fully armed to the enchantress' den.

And therefore, Hope gives comfort that you may  
Gain high honour yet, in this vile affair,  
And ope the sad portal, this very day,  
That keeps us prisoned in her evil lair.  
Delay no more, for, perchance, the Fay  
Knows not of your presence. Seek her there,  
Fair knight; upon the fountain cast your eye,  
And, perchance, you'll yet find Morgana nigh.'

**BOOK II: CANTO VIII: 57-63: HE PURSUES MORGANA THE FAY**

The Count, who greatly desired to enter,  
Ran to the fount, and found Morgana there,  
Who danced all about and, dancing ever,  
Sang most sweetly. Less lightly, in the air,  
Twirls a wind-blown leaf, ceasing never,  
Than did she, seemingly without a care,  
Gazing now upon the Sun, now on the Earth,  
And these the words to which her song gave birth:

'Whoever in this world seeks for treasure,  
For honour, or for rank, or for delight,  
May, to win good-fortune in full measure,  
The golden tresses, o'er my brow, grip tight.  
Bliss shall be theirs, for I'll grant them pleasure;  
Yet let them not delay, by day or night;  
Time passes, nor returns, nor comes again;  
And I shall twirl about, and leave but pain.'

So did the beautiful enchantress sing,  
As she watched Orlando race to the fount,  
Dancing ever about that cool, fresh spring,  
And then, she turned her back upon the Count.  
Abandoning the meadow, and fleeing,  
She ran straight toward the slopes of that mount  
Above her little vale, and sped away;  
Chased by the Count, fled Morgana the Fay.

Orlando, thus, pursued her o'er the ground,  
Determined to seize her, if he could,  
Keeping on the witch's heels, till he found  
He'd reached a wasteland, the path less than good;  
(To be truthful, none was worse) all around  
Lay stony tracts; beneath a sky like blood,  
He passed now high, now low, along the hill,  
That tangled briars with vicious thorns did fill.

Orlando was scarce troubled by his course,  
For hard labour but nourishes the bold.  
The sky grew dark, the wind now blew with force,  
Deep shadows hid the path; twas icy cold.  
Rain and harsh hail fell, from some evil source,  
Beating down, the hills and dales to enfold.  
The sun had vanished now, naught there gave light  
Except when lightning split the seeming night,

Bolts and forks of flame, with peals of thunder,  
Rain, and cloud, a tempest, filled the sky,  
As, now and then, the heavens broke asunder  
And lit the slopes, and all the ground nearby.  
The endless storm increased, e'en out from under  
The shaken earth the snakes, disturbed thereby,  
Foxes and conies, from their holes did sail,  
All drenched now, and defenceless gainst the gale.

We'll leave Orlando there to drown or freeze;  
Yet be not troubled by his evil fate,  
All you that listen, seated at your ease;  
Flee from what's ill, ere breath and life abate.  
He'll find the path again, and Fortune seize,  
For valiant knights will conquer soon or late.  
Let those who can escape the foul weather.  
Fair folk, may the Lord preserve you ever!

BOOK II: CANTO IX: FORTUNE'S TRESSES

ARGOMENTO.

*La Patienza, ad Orlando è compagna,  
Mentre che ei segue la empia, e crudel Fa  
La prède al fine, e con la sua cōpagna, (ta  
Scioglie Rinaldo, indi l'altra brigata.*

*Sol Ziliante si lamenta, e lagna,  
Che lo ritien la dama scelerata,  
Si parton. Va Rinaldo al sir gagliardo,  
Per far battaglia col fier Balifardo.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**P E R** Orlando accompagnato dalla penitenza mentre cerca la Fata, significa che lo huomo di valore volendo venire al fin del suo desiderio bisogna che sopporti molti incomodi, & molti disagi, perche non si puo venir a bene alcuno senza fatica.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 1-4: ORLANDO PURSUES MORGANA THE FAY**

Listen now, and pay heed to my advice,  
All you who yearn for a courtier's place:  
If you seize not Fortune's tresses, in a trice,  
She'll but scorn you, and turn aside her face.  
Blink not: she never gives her blessing twice,  
Shrink not: if her ill frown denies you grace,  
But, closing your ears to what others say,  
Care not whom you serve, yet serve away.

Why blame Fortune, you who curse her so,  
Saying the fault is hers, the pain your own?  
The moment comes but once, as I well know,  
And, indeed, that truth in my tale is shown,  
For, while fair Morgana slept, Orlando  
Failed to seize her forelock, though all alone  
She slumbered midst the flowers by the fount,  
Which, to a harsh pursuit, thus doomed the Count.

He was so pained and wearied by the chase,  
That every step was torment, while the Fay  
Fled before him, and never turned her face.  
The wind blew harshly at his back always;  
The plants lost all their leaves, at the base;  
Stems were stripped to the core; ne'er a ray  
Of sunlight shone; all the wild creatures fled,  
As rain poured from the dark clouds overhead.

O'er stony slopes, through many a gloomy dale,  
Along perilous paths, the Count was drawn.  
Swollen torrents coursed downwards midst the gale,  
Within which trees, and turf, and rocks, were borne,  
And, in the dark and shadowy woods, the wail  
And the roar of the winds that thrashed and tore  
The branches, filled the air, and shook the ground,  
And hurled their splintered fragments all around.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 5-9: AND IS, IN TURN, PURSUED BY PENITENCE**

The Count ran on, indifferent to the storm;  
Bent on catching Morgana, at the last,  
But his ill-luck grew, for a female form  
Now emerged from a cave, as he sped past.  
Her face was pale, her clothes seemed to conform

To its greyish colour, of a clay-like cast,  
Her body lean; and with a whip she flailed  
At her back and shoulders, and cried, and wailed.

Weeping, the poor wretch beat at her frame,  
As if constrained to do so by some law;  
From morn to eve, obliged to do that same,  
And thrash away, despite the scars she bore.  
The Count, troubled, sought to know her name:  
'I am Penitence, who go, thus, pained and sore,  
Shorn of all pleasure, happiness, and ease.  
I ever follow those whom Fortune flees.

And, therefore, I shall keep you company,  
You, who let Morgana sleep, in the field,  
And you'll be beaten and be whipped by me  
As long as your chase lasts, and ne'er be healed.  
Your strength will aid you not, nor bravery,  
Unless to patience you yourself shall yield.'  
Milone's son replied, at once, to this:  
'Why, patience is ever the coward's dish.

Waste not your efforts on annoying me,  
For patient I shall never be, I'm sure.  
Reproach me, and you'll find but misery,  
While serve me well and twill reward you more,  
That is, if you will bear me company,  
O'er this desert, that ne'er a flower bore.'  
Thus, Orlando answered, while Morgana,  
Sped on ahead, her lead growing larger.

So, ending their rapid conversation,  
The Count set himself to pursue the Fay  
And, with ardour and determination,  
Win the challenge, or perish on the way;  
While she of whom I gave a description,  
Penitence, followed him without delay;  
Her every wrathful gesture and action  
Like to chasing a dog from the kitchen.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 10-15: WHOM HE FAILS TO DETER**

Reaching Orlando, with her whip clutched tight,  
She beat at his back, unconscionably.  
Much annoyed, and greatly troubled, the knight  
Turned, with an ill look, and shouted loudly:



I'm not so base, nor e'er so filled with spite,  
As to slay a helpless woman, but, truly,  
If I catch you, and seize you by the hair  
You'll find yourself a mile high in the air!

Penitence, indifferent to the matter,  
Said naught, and paid him but little heed.  
Orlando then attacked her in anger,  
And flicked his open hand, with force and speed,  
Towards the woman's left cheek; however,  
Twas if as he lashed the breeze, or, indeed,  
A shower of rain, or a dense bank of mist.  
He struck at her form, but naught did resist.

The Count's swift blow had harmed her not at all,  
And she still snapped her whip at his back.  
Orlando, having hoped she'd cease or fall,  
Stunned by the failure of his swift attack,  
And beaten thus, and angered, thought to maul  
Her with blows, that but little force did lack.  
Yet twas like to pounding, in a mortar,  
Naught more solid than a pint of water.

After he'd sought to deal with her in vain,  
This woman who but seemed a mere shadow,  
He left her, and took up the trail again,  
For twas Morgana he sought to follow.  
Yet as he laboured away, in some pain,  
Penitence seemed fresh strength to borrow,  
Striking him so fiercely with her whip  
That he turned, again, to strike her on the lip.

Yet, as before, Orlando failed to land  
His blow upon that insubstantial thing.  
He tried to abandon her, out of hand,  
And chase Morgana, that bird on the wing,  
Yet, to his lasting shame, could not command  
The absence of the whip and its fierce sting.  
Since the Count had done all that he could do,  
He clenched the bit, and hunted her anew.

'Tt if pleases God, or else the Devil,  
That I show patience, then patience I'll show.  
Yet the very taste of it is evil,  
And that's a thing that all the world should know!  
What madness has led me to such trouble?  
What wild fantasy has enthralled me so?

How then, and when, and where, did I enter  
This trap? Am I the Count or some other?

## **BOOK II: CANTO IX: 16-20: HE CATCHES MORGANA AND DEMANDS THE KEY TO HER PRISON**

So, he cried, taking up the chase once more,  
Following the enchantress as she fled,  
Trampling the briars, o'er the thorny floor,  
And leaving a broad trail, where'er she led.  
He drew nearer, had caught her he was sure,  
But, yet again, away the Faery sped.  
Though he must soon o'ertake her, he believed,  
She 'scaped his grasp, he found himself deceived.

Oh, the many times he thought he'd caught her,  
Now grasping at her clothes, now her person!  
But well-nigh abandoned hope for, ever,  
She vanished, a whirl of white and crimson.  
At last, for but a moment however,  
She turned to glance at him, as though she'd won,  
God, and Good-Fortune, for once, on his side,  
And he seized the tress that her brow did hide.

At once, the weather changed, the darkened air  
Cleared swiftly, till the heavens looked serene.  
The mountain slope, all strewn with stones, and bare  
But for briars, and spiny thorns, now was green,  
With shrubs, and trees, and flowers; a sweet affair.  
Penitence, ere she vanished from the scene,  
Curbed her whip, her face sweeter than before,  
As she addressed the Count, but one time more:

'Come, sir knight, and attend to Fortune's tress,  
That you've grasped, and are twisting in your hand,  
Take care to keep your balance, wariness  
Is required to hold tight, you understand.  
Tis when she's standing quiet and motionless,  
That your must clasp it like an iron band,  
Lest she escapes, for only fools trust her;  
The maid's inconstant, and faithless, ever.'

Thus, spoke Penitence, so pallid of face,  
And once she'd said all that she had to say,  
She returned to the cave, her dwelling-place,  
To whip herself, and weep both night and day.

The Count turned to Morgana, apace,  
And addressed the fair maid, without delay,  
Speaking threateningly, then courteously,  
Demanding, of the Fay, the prison key.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 21-25: WHICH SHE  
GRANTS HIM, WITH A WARNING**

The Faery, with false seeming, and a smile,  
Said: 'Awaiting your pleasure, cavalier  
Are all the folk that dwelt with me awhile;  
All yours are they, and I, it would appear.  
Yet leave with me the knight that others style  
Monodante's son, the lad to me is dear;  
Ziliante, I mean; or take me too,  
For, should I lose him, my days will prove few.

That fair youth has wounded me to the core;  
He is all my good, and my true desire,  
I beg you, by your worth below, therefore  
And the true God, if you e'er did aspire  
To love a lady, on whatever shore,  
Take not my lover, whom I love entire,  
From out my garden; you may have the rest,  
And let them, by you, with freedom be blessed.'

Orlando answered her: 'Grant me the key,  
And I swear the lad will remain with you,  
Since your desire him so; and yet with me  
You shall go, for I need to find, anew,  
Some path to reach your garden, that is free  
Of those sharp thorns, and skies of darksome hue;  
So, hand me the prison key, if you please,  
And your love you'll enjoy in peace and ease.'

Morgana untied her dress, to left and right,  
And took the key, which was solid silver,  
From her breast, and handed it to the knight,  
Without delay: 'Go, fearlessly as ever  
To the door with me, yet, employ no might  
Against it, take care in your endeavour,  
Break not the lock, I say, and with reason;  
Do so, and you'll plunge to my dark dungeon;

And every knight and lady will so fall,  
And, thus, will be lost and doomed forever.  
Not my arts, nor those of others could recall

You from those depths.' The Count gave a shudder,  
For that lock he knew oft defeated all  
A man's attempts, howe'er deft or clever;  
For beneath the moon, there are few, truly,  
That can wield Fortune's key securely.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 26-31: HE UNLOCKS THE  
DOOR, AND FREES ALL BUT ZILIANTE**

He kept a tight hold of Morgana's hair,  
And she led him to her garden, in the end,  
Then they traversed the open country there,  
And a path to the door did slowly wend.  
Thanks to God, he oped the lock with care,  
And a strange one it was, you may depend;  
Yet he whom Fortune has in company,  
Soon finds the proper way to wield the key.

Brandimarte, Rinaldo, and the rest,  
Who'd been caught at the bridge o'er the river,  
Had seen the Count, as o'er the field he pressed  
While grasping Morgana's hair, as ever.  
Both Christians and Saracens addressed  
Their god, their hands clasped tightly together,  
Hoping, when they heard the portal's key  
Turn in the lock, that soon they would be free.

Once the richly furnished door was open,  
They all issued forth to the flowering field.  
And Orlando sought the knight, there and then,  
Morgana's love for whom she had revealed.  
He saw a youth, pale and fair, midst the men,  
Delicate of face, blushes scarce concealed,  
In both speech and action, sweet and happy;  
He, thus, was named: the fair Ziliante.

The lad remained within; tears he did cry  
On seeing that whole company depart,  
While Orlando was greatly grieved thereby,  
Though being bound by honour, for his part.  
And yet a time will come when he will sigh,  
Regret his oath, obtained by cunning art,  
And be obliged to seek that place once more,  
The youth from out that magic realm to draw.

There he left him, and with the others passed  
Through the door to the garden, at their will.  
Fair Ziliante wept and, to the last,  
Cursed his misfortune, to be prisoned still.  
The rest sped through the portal, un-harassed,  
And next climbed the marble stair, until  
Emerging from that dark and gloomy cave,  
They re-surfaced; then Orlando the Brave,

Led them through the courtyard filled with treasure,  
Where sat the golden king, and his council,  
All encrusted with gems, in ample measure,  
Rubies, diamond, and pearls, set there with skill.  
All those who'd been prisoned, now, at leisure,  
Admired the workmanship, and gazed at will,  
But none dared stretch a hand to that store,  
All afraid that they'd be spellbound, once more.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 32-41: RINALDO  
ATTEMPTS TO DEPART WITH A GOLDEN CHAIR**

But Rinaldo, brave without a sword or lance,  
Picked up a chair; twas wrought from solid gold.  
He said: 'I'll bear this prize with me to France,  
No finer have I seen than this I hold.  
Twill guarantee I'll find men, in advance,  
A mercenary army strong and bold,  
To squeeze each merchant, envoy, or fat priest,  
And, once found, upon their riches we'll feast.'

Orlando answered that he thought it base  
To traipse about thus, burdened like a mule.  
'I recall a friar who thought it his place  
To preach of abstinence, his golden rule  
In life,' Rinaldo said, 'it brought men grace;  
Yet he himself, I think, was no such fool,  
For his own paunch was such, scarce a pace  
Could he take without breathing hard a space.

And now you preach the same here, more or less,  
A true member of his fraternity,  
Praising fasting, while feasting to excess,  
Devoted to your flock of geese, solely.  
For gifts Charlemagne on you doth press,  
And the Pope provides for you equally.  
You've castles and towns without number,  
You're Lord of Anglante, Count of Brava;

While I'm so poor I've but a single Mount,  
In all the word possess but Montalbano,  
Scarce a bite to eat, naught to my account,  
Unless I make some rich stranger my foe;  
So, when Fortune pours forth wealth from the fount,  
I help myself with both hands, risk or no;  
Since I hold that there's no sin, no misdeed  
In taking what one can, to meet one's need.'

As they were speaking, they came to the door,  
That led from the courtyard; here, a gale,  
A wild wind, met Rinaldo, crossed the floor  
Struck him in the chest and face, with a wail,  
And blew him backwards twenty yards or more.  
None other of the knights did it assail,  
Only Rinaldo, carrying the chair.  
He was still inclined not to leave it there,

So rose, and headed for the door again,  
But on reaching the threshold, to his grief  
The wind struck once more; he fought in vain  
But was still driven backwards like a leaf.  
The others were discomforted, twas plain,  
But Orlando worried more, tis my belief,  
For he greatly feared the proud Rinaldo  
Would persist, and be slain in doing so.

Yet Rinaldo feared not, he dropped the chair,  
Free of his golden burden, neared the door,  
And, thus, passed o'er the sill without a care.  
He could have left it at that, done no more,  
Yet he longed for the gold, had none to spare,  
And twould pay for good men, and so he bore  
The chair to the gate, dared the wind to blow,  
And thought of the needs of Montalbano.

But Rinaldo was repulsed and, burdened so,  
Was prevented from departing, once more.  
Hoping to leave with the chair, wind or no,  
With a mighty heave, he raised it from the floor,  
Hurled it like a stone from a sling, although,  
It weighed a good six hundred pounds or more,  
A measure of his strength, and watched it go;  
Yet, instantly, the wind again did blow.

He'd thought to throw it swiftly through the air,  
 Expecting it to vanish through the gate.  
 Yet the furious gale flung back the chair,  
 And left him in the same frustrated state.  
 The others gathered round Rinaldo there,  
 And begged him to accept the path of fate,  
 Seek to leave the prison, and loose his hold  
 Of that thing, for twas wrought of faery gold.

He abandoned his labour in the end,  
 And with the rest passed through the open door.  
 They travelled a mile, ere they could ascend  
 The stony stair, and then three steep miles more.  
 A deal of effort they were forced to spend,  
 Climbing ever, ere they reached a level floor,  
 And at last issued forth, beneath the sky,  
 To a field of cypress trees, the sun full high.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 42-48: HE LEAVES FOR FRANCE, ORLANDO STILL SEEKS ANGELICA**

They recognised the meadow, instantly,  
 The cypresses, the bridge, and the river.  
 There Aridano had brought them misery,  
 Who once the guardian, was lost forever,  
 Hurling to the depths, cleft from brow to belly,  
 Never to rise again; a blow to sever  
 Soul from body; the soul bound, to its woe,  
 For Hell, the body vanished down below.

The knights' weapons and shields hung from a tree,  
 (Orlando's steed grazed there, amidst the green)  
 Upside-down their armour set, shamefully,  
 That their disgrace might readily be seen.  
 Dudon, Rinaldo all that company  
 Hastened to find their own and, full swiftly,  
 Each cavalier donned his suit of armour;  
 With shield and arms, once more a warrior.

The Saracens and pagans who'd been caught,  
 By Aridano, at the bridge, now departed,  
 To places near and far, but first they sought  
 The Count to thank him; while the bold-hearted  
 Christians, most from Charlemagne's court,  
 Heard Dudon recalling how he'd parted  
 Thence, as Agramante, with sword and lance,  
 Was preparing (twas known) to sail for France.

He recalled how he'd been sent by Charlemagne  
 To seek, through many a far-flung country,  
 That pair of brave knights, his enemies' bane,  
 Each a flower of the court and chivalry;  
 Then return with them, as was right, to gain  
 At his side, a Christian victory.  
 'Twas Orlando and Rinaldo he addressed,  
 As he spoke, thus, surrounded by the rest.

Rinaldo quickly chose to head for France,  
 Without delay, while Orlando stood still,  
 Musing silently, confusion in his glance,  
 For his ardent heart and his amorous will  
 Each their various claims did now advance,  
 With many a thought his poor mind did fill;  
 True love gainst honour, duty gainst delight,  
 Warred within the breast of our noble knight.

Honour and duty urged him, thereupon,  
 To work that task, of the king's conceiving;  
 As a Roman senator, and champion  
 Of the Church, such indeed was his calling.  
 But that which conquers each and every one,  
 Love, I mean, had sent his spirit reeling,  
 Such that he thought but worthless an affair  
 That kept him from Angelica the Fair.

There was little reason, he thought, to stay,  
 So, he mounted his steed and, Brandimarte  
 At his side (through love), set out on his way,  
 For the latter sought to keep him company.  
 I shall leave them for a while, if I may,  
 For I want to pursue Rinaldo's story,  
 And say how he rode to Montalbano.  
 The tale is long, and his travels more so.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 49-51: RINALDO AND HIS COMPANY REACH A RIVER**

He'll pass through many a distant country,  
 In those realms strange adventures will pursue,  
 Of which I'll speak briefly and clearly,  
 So, their essence I may reveal to you.  
 I'll display the worth, and the courtesy,  
 Of Iroldo and Prasildo anew,  
 And Dudon's noble strength and bravery;  
 'Twas those three, kept Rinaldo company.

They went on foot, that valiant band of four,  
Armoured as they were, in plate and mail;  
(Having lost their steeds at the bridge, before  
Being dragged to the lake; you know the tale)  
And yet, laughing and talking, they strode o'er  
The ground; thus, traversing hill and dale,  
While the labour of that endless journey  
Seemed far less, in each other's company.

Five toilsome days had passed since they'd taken  
Their leave of the garden, when, distantly,  
They heard a horn that all the hills did waken,  
Sound from a castle, well-walled and lofty,  
Set on a mountainside; there, unshaken,  
Lay a level plain, wondrous in its beauty,  
That ringed it round, while a river ran by.  
No fairer thing e'er met the human eye.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 52-55: THE MAIDEN AT  
THE FERRY ADVISES THEM**

Marvellously fine and clear, was the flow,  
Yet so deep none on foot could cross it there.  
A maiden, dressed in garments white as snow,  
On a ferryboat, the sunlight in her hair,  
Smiled at them from afar, for to and fro  
Her ferry went: 'Fair gentlemen, come share  
My little barque, if you would cross the river,  
For there's no other path o'er the water.'

Thus, she called, and the knights who, indeed,  
Wished to cross the flood and be on their way,  
Thanked her for her offer and, once agreed,  
Climbed aboard and cast off, as she did say:  
'On the other side, a perilous deed  
Awaits you; tis the toll that you must pay,  
And none can leave until they climb the mount,  
And of themselves, there, render good account.

For this river's source is a stream that flows  
On divergent paths, down the mountainside,  
And, in descending, broadens, to enclose  
This plain, and all within it, far and wide.  
None can depart unless he promptly goes  
To seek the castellan who will provide  
His task. Go, with bold and ardent brow!  
Behold! He crosses o'er the drawbridge, now.'

And with this, she pointed her finger, so,  
At a group descending the slope above.  
None of the knights below were daunted though,  
As the armed men towards the shore did move.  
The first to approach them was Rinaldo,  
That ever the leader in such things did prove.  
The rest followed, shield on arm, sword in hand,  
Prepared to force a way, at his command.

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 56-58: THE CASTELLAN  
APPOINTS THEIR TASK**

A fine old gentleman, came forth unarmed  
From their midst, to greet the warriors there.  
He rode a mighty steed; his presence calmed  
The knights; his gaze honest, his speech as fair.  
'I would have you know, none shall be harmed,'  
He said, 'but Monodante's arms I bear,  
King of this realm; from here you cannot stray,  
Ere you've served our monarch for a day.

And you must all serve him in the manner  
I will relate, if you'll grant me an ear.  
Beside the sea-mouth of this fair river,  
Two mighty keeps, linked by a bridge, appear.  
A malicious giant has dwelt there, ever,  
That has slain many a brave cavalier.  
That vile giant's a dark enchanter also,  
A necromancer named Balisardo.

King Monodante wants the villain caught  
For he's done much damage to this land;  
And all that to cross the flood have sought  
Are required to obey his firm command.  
They must swear to fight for a day, in short,  
Till they conquer or are captured, out of hand.  
You must go as other men have gone, say I,  
Or remain in this meadow, starve, and die.'

**BOOK II: CANTO IX: 59-62: THEY SAIL TO  
ENCOUNTER THE WIZARD, BALISARDO**

Rinaldo answered: 'We would wish to go;  
For all such encounters we seek, ever.  
I myself long to catch this giant foe;  
That seems but a man of straw, however.  
Let him chant his enchantments, even so,

He'll not cast a spell we cannot conquer.  
But show us where, and how, to reach the place,  
So, this fellow, Balisardo, I may face.'

The old castellan answered not the knight,  
But with a cry of: 'Come now, no delay!'   
Called to the fair damsel dressed in white,  
'Ferry them to the bridge; be on your way!'   
She danced towards the stream, swift and light,  
Asked the lords to join her, as if in play,  
With a pleasing smile, her bright eyes agleam,  
And, once they were aboard, set sail downstream.

The swift barque was borne along by the flow,  
Like an arrow it sped beside the isle,  
Now near, now far; at last, by doing so,  
They reached the coast, in but a little while,  
And there a mighty bridge above did show,  
That linked two towering keeps; there stood the vile  
Balisardo, that fierce Saracen, on high,  
Where the arch, o'er the flood, met the sky.

Like a tower on the bridge, the Saracen  
Stood watch, with bearded face and cruel gaze.  
His voice seemed much like thunder to the men  
Down below, though they were fearless always.  
Yet I've reached my canto's end, once again,  
Though 'I'll be back, anon', so runs the phrase,  
To reveal such marvels to you, in the next,  
As have no like in any earthly text.

BOOK II: CANTO X: BALISARDO THE SHAPE-SHIFTER

ARGOMENTO.

*Trasildo, Ivoldo, Rinaldo, e Dudone,  
Quei due per forza, e questi per inganno,  
Dopo fiera battaglia ognun pregione,  
Rimandi Balisardo il fier Tiranno,*

*Orlando Conte figliuol di Milone,  
E Brandimarte ver d'Albracca vanno,  
Trouan Marfisa andar dietro a Brunello,  
Che gli hà inuolato il brado ricco, e bello.*



ALLEGORIE.

*PER* Trasildo, & compagni che restano presi da Balisardo, si dimostra che gli  
huomini buoni non sono sicuri dai Principi Tiranni, percioche ò per forza, ò  
per inganno soffogano la Virtù, & la Giustitia.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 1-3: BOIARDO'S  
INVITATION TO HIS AUDIENCE**

If knightly honour, and true chivalry  
Can grant delight to the manly spirit,  
You'll win delight from my brave history.  
Fair noblemen, of courtesy and merit,  
That ever praise valour and bravery,  
Qualities that cowards ne'er inherit.  
Come, listen to the tale that I unfold  
In praise of those valiant knights of old.

Draw forward; hear of many a brave deed  
Performed by cavaliers of proven worth,  
And ever of greatest courage, so we read,  
When adventure to greatest risk gave birth.  
For brave spirits conquer all, tis agreed.  
They win Fortune's aid, those folk, on Earth,  
Who seek to aid themselves, for such I mean;  
And many a fine example we've seen.

Take Rinaldo, the subject of my text  
At present, who'd barely quit one venture,  
Ere he was eager to attempt the next.  
Enchantments, to him, scarce seemed to matter,  
(Though by vile Aridano he'd been vexed,  
That had shamed him so, beside the river)  
For scorning every spell and magic charm,  
He'd sailed, intending Balisardo harm.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 4-7: RINALDO AND THE  
OTHERS DISEMBARK**

'Twas in my last canto, you know (or should),  
That the knights went downstream with the flow,  
To the coast, where two mighty castles stood,  
And a tall bridge between the two did go;  
And from that span, set high above the flood,  
A mighty giant gazed on the boat below,  
And shouted at them, with a fearsome roar,  
That shook the water and troubled the shore.

Each of the warriors, witnessing the sight,  
Now wished to encounter this noisy foe,  
So tall and arrogant, in his vast might,  
Full wide in girth, malevolent also.  
He'd hastened to the bridge, prepared to fight,

That scorner of all faiths, and gazed below  
To discover who these people might be  
That floated down the stream so recklessly.

Spying the giant, from afar, the maid  
Turned pale as clay, and terror gripped her heart,  
Such that from out her hand the tiller strayed  
While the boat, now lacking that pilot's art,  
Drifted free, but Dudon his skill displayed,  
And Rinaldo, too played the sailor's part,  
And the other two, all eager to make war  
On this fellow, helped steer the boat to shore.

They disembarked, a bow-shot from the wall  
Of one of those two castles, and saw naught  
Till they reached the bridge, looming over all,  
Where tall turrets framed three portals; none sought  
To obstruct them, they heard no sound or call  
From the castle above, from tower or court,  
And no living soul appeared where they stood;  
So, they dared to enter, where few men would.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 8-10: IROLD AND  
PRASILDO ARE CAPTURED BY THE GIANT**

As I said, twixt the keeps flowed the river,  
Beneath the arching bridge, and there before  
Each of its ends stood an entrance tower,  
With three turrets each one framing a door.  
In the midst of the span the giant did glower,  
Balisardo, who was mighty, to be sure.  
Naught compared to him, or to his armour,  
Steel-plate and mail, for no suit was larger.

The armour seemed to glow, twas burnished bright,  
While his mail was of brilliant gleaming gold.  
Set with pearls, and rich gems that caught the light,  
No gear was e'er finer, if truth be told.  
We'll turn to the first brave and daring knight  
Among our lords who, being knights of old,  
Were both high in spirit, and fierce of heart;  
'Twas Iroldo who took the leading part.

Off to meet the giant then, went Iroldo,  
Yet he was soon laid low, and forced to yield.  
The next to try his luck was brave Prasildo;  
Balisardo soon stretched him on the field,



(Or the bridge, at least) this irked Rinaldo,  
Itching to employ his sword and shield,  
As the giant hauled his two captives away,  
Bold knights, and yet his prisoners that day.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 11-20: BALISARDO FIGHTS  
DUDON BUT IS FORCED TO FLEE**

He soon returned, as threatening as before,  
Shaking his club, and demanding battle.  
Rinaldo longed to knock him to the floor,  
And prepared to charge, ere he could settle,  
But Dudon knelt in his path, to implore  
His lord for a chance to show his mettle,  
And be the next to meet their giant foe,  
Rather than the rogue fighting Rinaldo.

The latter, somewhat grudgingly, agreed,  
Not knowing how to deny the other.  
This third contest was different indeed,  
And proved quite unlike, in length and manner  
Of a different kind, and while fought at speed,  
Not ended so easily, as either  
Of the earlier two, for brave Dudon  
Was fit to be Charlemagne's champion.

This Dudon earns good Bishop Turpin's praise,  
In his writings, as among the first at court.  
He was a giant himself, in many ways,  
Big but agile, strong but quick, when he fought;  
Wielding that heavy mace of his, always  
Many a Saracen he'd slain or caught.  
Yet his goodness, and kindness, and restraint,  
Had earned Dudon the nickname of 'the Saint'.

Now he charged along the bridge on high,  
Clad in his steel-plate and gleaming mail,  
As Balisardo, who was disinclined to die,  
Raised up his shield, determined to prevail.  
Both carried their great clubs, so, by and by,  
A lively contest would result, without fail.  
They began to forge away with such force  
The river shook, to the depths of its course.

Dudon now struck the giant on the head,  
And broke the rim of his gleaming helm,  
Such that Balisardo, stunned, yet not dead,

Almost fell. With a blow to overwhelm  
E'en a giant, Dudon, two-handed instead,  
Struck the costly silver shield, worth a realm,  
And, pressing the Saracen, showed his strength  
By splitting it in two, along its length.

Yet as if that second swing had roused the foe  
From some deep slumber, this proud Saracen,  
Leapt up and, instantly, fresh fight did show,  
For he began to swing his club again,  
And then struck Dudon, in the ribs, a blow,  
That would have felled the very best of men.  
That club weighed a hundred pounds or more,  
And the young knight fell, winded, to the floor.

It knocked him down, but again Dudon rose,  
Though, for one brief moment, his breath was gone,  
Yet his strength was great, and now he chose  
To swing his mace, twas a fearsome weapon,  
At Balisardo's helm; that king of blows,  
Delivered to its crest, and falling thereon,  
Struck home, which was the purpose of the thing,  
Dented the helm, and made his foe's head ring.

Dudon aimed ever at the giant's brow,  
His temples, and his face, while the other  
Brought his great club down hard, anyhow,  
On Dudon's neck and arms; their encounter  
Made the sky echo, and the air, I vow,  
Seemed on fire, for, as they clashed together,  
And their weapons struck and struck anew,  
From the clashing iron, bright sparks e'er flew.

Now Dudon swung with both hands and broke  
The villain's visor, and his massive nose,  
Knocked out three of his teeth (twas no joke  
That sudden strike, nor were his other blows).  
He shaved his beard, with that single stroke,  
Without soap, the giant's weak chin to expose,  
Laying the beard upon his chest, that mace  
Thus, smoothing and polishing, his bare face.

When the giant felt the outcome of the blow,  
He recognised bold Dudon's skill and might,  
And knew that he'd encountered such a foe  
As could battle him from morning to night.  
Glancing at the second keep, Balisardo,

In an instant, had turned, and taken flight.  
He dropped his mighty club, threw down his shield  
And then fled from the bridge, and from the field.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 21-25: BALISARDO SHAPE-SHIFTS TO A DRAGON'S FORM**

Dudon followed Balisardo inside,  
For the youth feared naught from his enemy,  
And thus entered a courtyard, long and wide,  
With a vaulted ceiling, set upon mighty  
Columns, adorned with gold on every side;  
The floor beneath was marble entirely.  
Here he found Balisardo, defenceless,  
Now unarmed, and in a state of undress.

The mage had shed both clothes and armour,  
And revealed his naked body to the air,  
His face changed to a serpent's mask however,  
In a moment, and his shoulders, once bare,  
With his arms, turned to wings, while his lower  
Limbs fused together, to his feet; and there  
A tail they formed, while from his breast and thighs  
Emerged short limbs, with claws of monstrous size.

Changed thus, little by little, as I've said,  
The treacherous giant became a dragon,  
Spewing flame and smoke about its head,  
From its ears and mouth, in such a fashion  
That the walls about the courtyard glowed red,  
While its mighty roars, echoed on and on.  
Enough to terrify the bravest knight,  
Its massive bulk was now a wondrous sight.

And yet, that valiant youth was not dismayed,  
A knight deserving of great praise, I say,  
Though the fierce dragon clawed his shield, and made  
To wrap its tail about its captive prey.  
Binding his legs from thighs to feet, it weighed  
Upon Dudon, and raised its head to slay,  
Yet, fearlessly, he dropped his iron mace  
The better to clasp the beast in his embrace.

He grasped its slender neck, close to the head,  
With his two hands, and squeezed the dragon hard.  
Though twas enough to fill the heart with dread,  
He choked the creature; its attack he marred,

Freed himself, and gripping the beast, instead  
Of being gripped, swung it high above the yard,  
Then hurled it down, to meet the marble floor,  
Intending that the beast should rise no more.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 26-31: THEN TO A STRANGE HYBRID BEAST WHICH DUDON PURSUES**

Yet the courtyard oped beneath it, as it fell,  
For the paving stones cracked from side to side.  
Though it vanished in the darkness, for a spell,  
It soon re-emerged, its form modified.  
For its body was changed, its mask as well,  
Now a wild-boar's jaws it opened wide;  
Below the boar's head, a bear's shape was seen,  
No stranger, fiercer creature has there been.

Balisardo could shift his shape to aught  
That he conceived; no poet's fertile pen  
Could describe the shape the enchanter brought  
To the fight; twas a boar's head he showed then,  
As to the rest, though I am quite untaught  
In such descriptions, I'll work mine again,  
And, from snout to tail, depict the creature,  
If I can, in every salient feature.

It possessed twin tusks, two palms long I'd say,  
While its fiery eyes burned with crimson light.  
Its hairy torso signalled 'bear' in every way,  
As did its powerful claws, designed to smite.  
It showed a serpent's tail to grip its prey  
Six yards in length (I shudder, as I write)  
A pair of wings, and horns upon its brow.  
Naught worse was e'er created, you'll allow.

It gave a bellow, and then charged Dudon,  
Who yet scorned to reveal his back in fear,  
But raised his shield and mace, whereupon  
The necromancer, each horn like a spear,  
Pierced the targe, and broke the thing, and drove on.  
The breastplate too he shattered, twould appear,  
While the knight himself was flung to the ground,  
Though he rose in an instant, with a bound.

Now Balisardo, in his transformed state,  
Charged again, and struck the youth in the side.  
One long tusk caught Dudon, now most irate,  
Bounced from his ribs, and winded him beside.  
He was forced, for a breath or two, to wait,  
Though betraying scant concern, out of pride;  
If his breath was less, his anger was greater.  
He raised his mace, and charged at the creature.

Our mighty paladin swung at the head  
Of that singular beast, with all his might;  
And one vicious horn, shattered, earthwards sped.  
Balisardo saw he'd lose to the knight;  
Swiftly, along the colonnade, he sped,  
No longer seeking to prolong the fight,  
But hastening from the castle, as Dudon,  
Bold as ever, followed where his foe had gone.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 32-33: DUDON IS  
TRAPPED, AND IMPRISONED ABOARD SHIP**

The creature flapped its wings, skimmed the ground,  
For its feet scarcely left the floor below,  
And sped forth from the castle, where it found  
A tall ship nearing harbour; that fierce foe,  
The evil enchanter, now safe and sound,  
Landed on its bridge; there, Balisardo  
Waited, as Dudon, who his death did vow,  
Pursued him, leaping high to the ship's prow.

Now around the bow there was looped a snare,  
And this bold Dudon tripped, as he landed.  
I know not how it happened, but the affair  
Concluded with our brave knight left stranded,  
Then swiftly caught, and chained like a bear,  
By the fierce crew, whom his foe commanded,  
Dragged to the hatch, and imprisoned below,  
Where I'll leave him; and speak of Balisardo.

**BOOK II: CANTO X: 34-42: BALISARDO,  
ASSUMING DUDON'S FORM, DECEIVES  
RINALDO**

Having quickly shed his previous form,  
He now assumed the likeness of Dudon,  
And, so that he might more closely conform  
To that seeming, did the youth's armour don;  
Once he was clad in that knightly uniform,

He dropped his club, took the mace, thereupon  
Changing his voice and manner, equally,  
That all might say: 'Tis Dudon, certainly!'

And then, in that semblance, the enchanter  
Crossed the bridge to the second keep,  
And found Rinaldo there, full of anger,  
Waiting by the bridge, who a watch did keep.  
He quickly enquired of present danger.  
Balisardo he would slay and bury deep.  
Was the rascal still at large? He believed  
He spoke to Dudon; by black arts deceived.

The other now replied: 'The giant has fled,  
And for three good miles I chased the fellow;  
And yet not before I'd clubbed him on the head,  
Broken his nose, and beaten him hollow.  
I pursued him to a flood; to its bed  
He plunged, and twas there I ceased to follow,  
For the flow there was a hundred yards wide,  
And you or I, in that torrent, must have died.

Yet I saw that the rogue survived the water,  
And landed on the shore (how, I know not).  
Iroldo is there, beyond the river,  
Imprisoned with Prasildo, a bow's shot  
From the bank, in a tent, you'll discover,  
Where Balisardo stopped; twas my ill lot  
To encounter so fast-flowing a stream,  
Too wide and deep for me to swim, I deem.'

Rinaldo waiting not to hear him further,  
Sought to cross the bridge to the other side,  
Saying: 'Than suffer your disgrace, I'd rather  
Drown in that flood, however deep and wide.  
No man shall hear it said of me, ever,  
That I'd desert my friends, as you've implied!  
Knight of little courage, if you so fear  
A little water, of my blazing fire stay clear!'

Balisardo, in the guise of Dudon,  
Feigned to be angered at Rinaldo's scorn,  
And answered him, thus: 'You should be beaten;  
A fool, as ever, and a madman born!  
You consider yourself a champion  
Of sorts; tis but a boast. Go, blow your horn;  
Yet it takes more than shouting that you're brave,  
While belittling how better men behave.

Go seek him. I choose not to follow.  
Cross o'er the raging flood; since you can swim.'  
But Rinaldo, deeming his words hollow,  
Crossed o'er the bridge, and so abandoned him.  
Balisardo stayed, and watched Rinaldo go,  
As if needing rest, and humouring his whim,  
But the wizard went about, treacherously,  
To murder bold Rinaldo secretly,

He crossed, and went another way, that led  
Behind the knight, to take him by surprise,  
And struck the other fiercely on the head,  
With a two-handed blow, in Dudon's guise,  
Designed to lay him low; and yet, instead,  
Of slumping to the ground no more to rise,  
Rinaldo, whose strength was beyond measure,  
Stood firm, and scarce registered displeasure.

Rather, the knight turned and asked, politely:  
'What are you about, lad? Were your father,  
The Dane, not one I respect, then surely  
I'd have slain you by now. Find another  
To vex, in some other, far-off, country!'  
So, Rinaldo spoke, and turned to recover  
His path, but, as he wheeled, Balisardo  
Struck the back of his head a second blow.

### **BOOK II: CANTO X: 43-48: THEY FIGHT, AND THE ENCHANTER FLEES TO HIS SHIP AGAIN**

Rinaldo raged, his face full of anger,  
Crying: 'May heaven witness this affair!  
I'm obliged to treat him as a stranger,  
For the life of a villain, I'll not spare!  
After that, he sighed aloud, however,  
For love and courtesy did wrath impair,  
Yet right, and his own safety, decreed  
That he should perform the deadly deed.

He drew Fusberta, and offered his reply,  
Still, believing twas Dudon that he fought.  
Should I describe their fight, I'll not deny,  
If the tale of the sword and club I sought  
To tell, and all that happened, by and by,  
In that fierce five-hour contest (though I ought)  
Then I'd have so much matter, this canto  
Would be filled, as would the next to follow.

So, in brief, to conclude, I'll simply say  
That although Balisardo, in disguise,  
Burned with rage and though his club did weigh,  
More than any other (twas vast in size)  
In the end, like a man of snow, that day  
He'd have melted, or been caught as a prize,  
Had not his spells, his artful trickery,  
Have yielded him the means to up and flee.

He transformed himself in a hundred ways,  
By use of his enchantments; now a panther  
With fierce eyes, intended to amaze,  
A tall giraffe, a slinking hyena,  
A tiger with striped coat and fearsome gaze,  
Revealing himself as many another;  
Contending in a gryphon's form, and then  
A crocodile's, with furtive acumen;

And then he seemed to wreath himself in fire,  
And sparkled like a furnace, burning bright.  
Yet Rinaldo, ne'er retreating, filled with ire,  
Leapt boldly towards that glowing light,  
Careless of the flames, in his desire  
To wield Fusberta and so end the fight.  
Thirty times he wounded Balisardo,  
Though in many a form he glimpsed the foe.

The latter faced defeat; blood sprayed the air,  
As he raced to reach the castle gate once more,  
Now as a bird, now as a beast clothed in hair;  
No man could count the many forms he bore.  
Rinaldo, still enraged, pursued him there,  
Quite determined to strike him to the floor,  
Balisardo reached his ship however,  
And leapt, to gain the prow, in sheer terror.

### **BOOK II: CANTO X: 49-54: RINALDO IS IMPRISONED IN MONODANTE'S REALM**

'Twas but three yards from the quay to the deck,  
A trivial leap for Balisardo,  
While, fully armed and so risking his neck,  
'Twas well-nigh too far for bold Rinaldo;  
As he landed, the net held him in check,  
That had ensnared Dudon now chained below,  
And its mesh wrapped about each leg and arm,  
As he tried, in vain, to escape from harm.

Then two evil sailors, swarming with lice,  
Picked him up, as he struggled in its grip,  
And dragged him off to the hold, in a trice,  
Down to the sunless bowels of the ship.  
Three ounces of hard bread, must suffice  
For his meal (with no fennel, on this trip)  
A feast fit only for a Florentine,  
And not a chance of dousing it in wine.

He lay, a good fortnight, chained down there,  
Bound hand and foot, deceived by spells and guile.  
That hold with friends, and others, he did share,  
As the ship journeyed to the Distant Isle,  
King Monodante's seat; twas far though fair.  
And so, they sailed many a long sea-mile,  
To that realm, where one cell housed Rinaldo,  
Brave Dudon, Iroldo and Prasildo.

Their guards allowed the knights to go unbound,  
Though they were imprisoned most securely.  
There, other captives lay within, they found  
And, among those whom they knew (full many),  
Was Astolfo of England, safe and sound,  
But a prisoner of the mage who, cunningly,  
Had transformed himself to a lovely maid,  
To lure him to the ship; his trust betrayed.

For, once he'd left the lake, where Aridano  
Had plunged with Rinaldo to the water,  
He'd searched the world, on Rabicano,  
With Baiardo and the damsels, though ever  
Filled with tears, and yielding sighs of woe,  
Since he feared his cousin lost forever.  
Journeying one day he'd reached a castle  
Where he'd heard a horn summoning to battle.

This keep stood where a circling river ran  
About the confines of a verdant meadow,  
And there a maid (such was the evil plan)  
Had ferried him to the bridge far below.  
The mage, in altered form for a brief span,  
For this was no maid twas Balisardo,  
Had lured him to the vessel and its snare.  
I'd tell the tale, if I'd but time to spare.

## BOOK II: CANTO X: 55-61: WE RETURN TO ORLANDO, MARFISA AND BRUNELLO

Yet now I'd have us seek Count Orlando,  
Who had parted from his friends, you'll recall,  
To return to that fair maid who tasked him so  
That day and night he laboured, in her thrall.  
Yet his love was undiminished, even though  
She thus burdened him and, despite it all,  
His love drew him to one who was, likewise,  
The sole object of his thoughts, and his sighs.

With Brandimarte to keep him company,  
He thus journeyed to seek Angelica,  
To tell her that the garden was wholly  
Destroyed, and then to accept whatever  
Fresh task she gave him. Thus, twas only  
The third day, at dawn, when, by a river  
They came upon a flowering meadow,  
And saw a man and maid, she his fierce foe.

Be still, and quiet now, if you would hear  
All the tale of the two that they found there,  
One that pursued, and one that fled in fear;  
For naught is more delightful, than this pair.  
I'll tell you who they are, that now appear.  
You'll recall the canto where I did share  
The wicked deeds of that thief, Brunello,  
Who stole Marfisa's sword; swift to follow,

She had followed the African till now,  
Crying out that she'd hang him from a tree,  
While he'd made her many a mocking bow,  
As he paused then ran, or gestured rudely.  
He'd deceived her, as only he knew how,  
And led the queen all about, most vilely,  
For a good six days already, as he played  
His tricks, and so teased the warrior-maid.

Her could have given her the slip, for he  
Was mounted on so fine and swift a steed,  
If it fled twas most difficult to see,  
It ran so fast; none better for pure speed.  
How he'd stolen the horse you've heard from me,  
Twas at Albracca he'd performed the deed,  
From beneath King Sacripante, he drew  
That brave creature; though naught the monarch knew.

Now, he was racing on, as I have said,  
With many a taunt, mocking the queen,  
While she, who longed to see the fellow dead,  
Pursued him swiftly o'er the meadow's green.  
If the maid were to catch him as he fled,  
The rascal's life would scarce be worth a bean,  
For a single blow from her and his chest,  
Belly, neck, would be crushed, and all the rest.

The Count, striding out with Brandimarte,  
As I mentioned, came upon this affair.  
They observed the pair, for a time, closely,  
Doing naught else but rein in, quietly, there.  
Now, I commend myself to you, wholly,  
Fair lords; these pages I have sought to share,  
Are complete, and oft proved is my theory:  
To speak for too long, doth ever weary.

BOOK II: CANTO XI: BRANDIMARTE TO THE RESCUE

ARGOMENTO.

*La spada, e il Corno l'astuto Brunello,  
Furo ad Orlando, e via forte camina,  
Troua questo Origille, e entro vn battello  
Col compagno ir al mal ponte destina:*

*Oue è da Brandimarte l'empio e fello,  
Gigante ucciso con molta rouina.  
Vanno da Monodante il Re sopraeng,  
E gli prometton dare Orlando in mano.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**P**ER la Spada e per il Corno furato ad Orlando, si dimostra che quando l'huomo fauio procede incautamente, troua in questo mondo il senso, ilqual lo priua della spada, cioè dello intelletto che penetra come spada, e del Corno, cioè del discorso ragioneuole, ch'è sentito da chi ha spirito.

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 1-5: MARFISA PURSUES  
THE THIEF BRUNELLO**

You, gentle folk, that here are gathered round,  
Solely to listen to my flowing verse,  
God, grant you joy; may good-fortune abound  
Where'er you are, and may He reimburse  
Your kindness with His grace; I now shall sound  
My voice once more, for better or for worse,  
And begin where I left the fair Marfisa  
Chasing Brunello, who aimed to tease her.

She was hunting the wicked thief, I mean,  
Whom Agramante sent to take the ring  
From Angelica. Ere he'd quit the scene,  
Having done so, the robber thought to cling  
To more than he'd been asked; stole, unseen,  
The brave steed of the Circassian king,  
(How and when, you know) and, from her hand,  
Marfisa's sword; the latter deed unplanned.

The warrior-maid was wondrously proud,  
As we've witnessed several times before,  
And she'd chased him o'er the ploughed, and  
unploughed,  
Fields and meadows, that fine weapon to restore,  
Though in vain, as yet, cursing him aloud,  
Her heart full of indignation and, more,  
Her head full of his scorn and mockery,  
Till she burned to punish such effrontery.

He fled her, and was seemingly afraid,  
Keeping out in front, not too far away,  
But, now and then, a sudden turn he made,  
And sped behind, the better to display,  
When he passed again, as if on parade,  
(Listen well!) his naked rear, to broad day,  
Having hoicked his jerkin o'er his head,  
To show her just how much he went in dread

Of all her threats. The Count watched in delight  
Having recognised the proud Marfisa  
Before Brandimarte; he, and that knight,  
Now laughed at the antics of the robber.  
The angry queen, though baffled by his flight,  
Was still out to catch the thief, however,  
And make him pay for all that he done,  
While he fled, swift as a dart, neath the sun.

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 6-10: HE STEALS  
ORLANDO'S SWORD AND WAR-HORN**

As the thief sped away, he turned his head,  
Wiggled his eyebrows, and stuck out his tongue,  
In mockery; passed the Count as he fled;  
And noted the latter's sword where it hung  
At his side, that thing of wonder and dread  
Wrought by Falerina, which he had swung  
To such effect. 'Twas forged in Orgagna,  
In that garden; none could match its temper.

Of rarest beauty, twas adorned with gold,  
And pearls and diamonds, thus a robber  
Could scarcely pass it by, not one so bold  
As Brunello, who, without a flicker  
Of hesitation, now had it in his hold,  
Mocking his victim, as he did ever:  
For, riding on, he shouted out in scorn:  
'Stay, sir knight; and I'll be back for your horn!'

Now, since his war-horn was, thus, under threat,  
Orlando failed to miss the stolen blade.  
The horn was ivory (lest I forget),  
From a tusk Almonte gained, it was made.  
At Aspromonte he lost it, where he met  
Orlando, beside the spring in the glade,  
Who, there, had won the steed Brigliador,  
And the sword Durindana, he once bore.

The Count held that war-horn very dear,  
So, he grasped the thing, tightly, in his hand,  
And yet that proved but a poor defence here,  
Against the African, you understand,  
He a thief beyond compare; tis unclear  
How the war-horn he, shortly, did command,  
But, I swear, tis no falsehood I recount,  
He stole it, blew it, and fled from the Count.

And though Marfisa, irate, still gave chase,  
He escaped with both the blade and the horn,  
Leaving Count Orlando red in the face,  
Wondering at how deftly he'd been shorn  
Of them both. The thief departed apace.  
As the Count stood there seeming quite forlorn,  
Brandimarte at his side; lost to sight,  
The queen hunted the rogue, now in full flight.



**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 11-14: ORLANDO AND BRANDIMARTE MEET ORRIGILLE**

Since they were on foot and could not follow,  
Cursing their bad luck, they journeyed on,  
Both clad in full armour, to their sorrow,  
Plodding slowly, and somewhat woebegone.  
O'er the plain they went, o'er hill and hollow,  
Till they came to a river, whereupon,  
They spied a damsel, riding a courser,  
Through a pretty meadow o'er the water.

Where folk disembarked by the shore,  
The maid dismounted, to argue fiercely  
With another maid, midst the flood, they saw,  
Who sailed the ferry; of vile treachery  
She accused the other, and scorn did pour  
Upon that maid, denouncing her loudly:  
'False deceiver' she cried, 'Why then did you  
Bear me to this prison; an act you'll rue!'

Other words passed between them, harsh and clear,  
As the maidens abused one another,  
And, while they argued, Orlando drew near  
To the shore on his side, across the water.  
The horse was Brigliador, it did appear;  
And so, it was; seized, if you remember,  
By that false maid, for Orrigille was she,  
Who'd acquired the mount through treachery.

She'd been hung from a pine-bough overhead,  
Twisting in the wind, and pinned by her hair,  
Yet was saved by our paladin, instead  
Of perishing; she stole the Count's steed there,  
And, not long after, from Orgagna sped,  
And its enchanted garden; for his care,  
Repaying him, by stealing the courser,  
Yet again, and his sword, Durindana.

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 15-18: THE COUNT FORGIVES HER FOR BETRAYING HIM**

Now, Orlando had found the maid once more,  
Quarrelling, as I've said, with the other.  
Know, fair lords, the river, mentioned before,  
Was the same that Rinaldo had sailed over  
To reach that bridge, close to the sea-shore,

With his three brave companions, thereafter  
To be lured to Balisardo's ship, and caught,  
Then prisoned aboard, when it sailed from port.

When the Count espied the maid, o'er the stream,  
On his horse, Brigliador, love again  
Smote Orlando, who, as if in a dream,  
Forgot the sly deceit she'd used to gain  
Both the courser and his sword, twould seem.  
He loved her even more, I'd maintain,  
And called to the maid aboard the ferry  
To bear him o'er the river, full swiftly.

Orrigille was convinced she would die,  
When she saw Count Orlando on his way,  
Turned a shade of pale, and cast down her eye,  
Embarrassed, for she knew not what to say.  
No bridge or ford was there, o'er which to fly;  
Yet her fear was unfounded, for betray  
The Count a thousand times he'd still love her.  
Twas a love beyond belief. O'er the river,

Came the Count, and proved that it was so;  
Speaking to her in the kindest manner,  
While she wept, or pretended to deep woe,  
As cunning maids are prone to do, ever.  
She then sought forgiveness from Orlando,  
While twisting stems and violets together,  
Like one used to twisting words; she looked pale,  
And found every excuse for her betrayal.

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 19-22: HE SETS OFF FOR THE BRIDGE, AS HAD RINALDO**

Twas while they were making conversation,  
In the meadow, with the river running by,  
That they heard a horn, and a commotion,  
From the castle on the hill that stood nigh.  
Then they saw the drawbridge set in motion,  
And the castellan descended, by and by,  
An old man, mounted, without a weapon,  
But with many a well-armed companion.

Reaching them, he addressed Count Orlando,  
Greeting the paladin with courtesy.  
Then as was his way, let the warrior know,  
Of the custom there, the deed of chivalry

He must attempt against Balisardo,  
Or perish there; in its entirety,  
He told the tale of the false enchanter,  
He'd relayed to Rinaldo, earlier.

Without prolonging the conversation,  
The Count then expressed his intent,  
He'd go at once, if, for the duration,  
The keeper housed his steed; and, once content,  
Had the maid set the ferry in motion,  
And down the flowing stream the vessel went,  
With himself, the wary Brandimarte,  
The ferry-maid, and fair Orrigille.

They soon reached the point where the flow  
Passed beneath the bridge to join the sea.  
Balisardo gazed down on those below,  
And tall as the towers upon it, was he.  
A fierce fight was at hand, for this foe  
Would be aided, in due course, infernally,  
While Orlando was so valiant and strong,  
That none could oppose his blade for long.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XI: 23-30: HE FIGHTS BALISARDO WHO TAKES ON DEMON FORM**

You will, my noble lords, recall to mind,  
How the bridge linked the twin keeps together.  
The Count disembarked where the bank inclined,  
And, mounting the slope, sought out the other;  
Yet none, guarding the entrance, could he find,  
The gates stood wide; naught did he discover  
To thwart him; he passed through, to seek his foe,  
While, upon the bridge, there stood Balisardo.

Though Brandimarte had sought to fight first,  
Orlando had refused him his consent.  
He challenged the giant to do his worst,  
And drew Durindana (given his intent,  
Orrigille had returned it, uncoerced)  
Upon his foe's annihilation bent.  
And so, a vicious duel now began  
Upon that bridge neath which the river ran.

If you had witnessed the destruction  
Wrought upon ringing helms and armour,  
With the giant's enormous club in action,

And Orlando wielding Durindana,  
And seen good steel-plate, of sound construction,  
And solid links of mail, break and shatter,  
You'd say that no heart could be so brave,  
As, chancing all, such fierce conflict to crave.

Their helmet crests were severed, in a trice,  
Their breastplates fell, in pieces, to the floor,  
Their shields were quartered, by many a slice  
Of the blade, or falling club; I'll say no more  
Of the power of their blows; the Count had twice  
The desire and will, and strength in store,  
Of the other, who soon was breathing hard;  
His foe's lack of speed gained the Count a yard.

Balisardo was wounded here and there,  
While a cut across the ribs pained him so  
The enchanter to his spells made repair,  
And so changed his shape as to thwart his foe.  
His armour gaped, while thick smoke filled the air,  
As the cracks emitted fire and steam, the glow,  
And the vapour, enveloping Orlando,  
As the bridge shook, and everything below.

Balisardo now took on a demon's shape,  
With a serpent's scaly skin covered o'er.  
Fresh flames from odd places did escape,  
While, above each ear, a sharp horn he bore.  
His limbs were changed, wide his jaws did gape.  
Though limbs, and mouth, were where they were  
before,  
His face was such as might have yet dismayed  
The bravest man, and rendered him afraid.

The mage had great batlike wings, which hung loose,  
Hands with hooked talons, fit to pierce strong mail,  
Legs like a bird, the feet webbed like a goose,  
And sported a baboon's long, curving tail.  
He'd a trident in his hands, for warlike use,  
With which he sought Orlando to impale,  
Gnashing his teeth, and breathing gout of fire,  
While his screams and cries rose ever higher.

Orlando merely crossed himself, and smiled:  
'I'd conceived the devil as much uglier  
And far fiercer; you'd scarce frighten a child.  
Back to Hell with you, and join the other

Damned souls, amidst the fires below exiled;  
Bake in the eternal flames; however,  
If you'd fight, let's see what tricks you know,  
As a demon, or as Balisardo.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 31-35: THE ENCHANTER  
GAINS HIS SHIP AND ORLANDO IS CAPTURED**

Then the two commenced to struggle anew,  
Neither one nor the other retreating.  
The Count swung Durindana, and sliced through  
Balisardo's trident; he, realising  
That his magic art twas vain to pursue,  
Turned, and headed for the shore, while beating  
Those wings upon his back, as if to soar,  
And sought to reach the harbour as before.

Orlando followed, staying close behind,  
Using every ounce of strength, he possessed;  
While the mage raced ahead, for in his mind  
His life was lost if he should fail the test.  
He raised his tail high, as he fled, to blind  
The Count, blowing foul smoke and the rest,  
Breathing hard, in fear, while, as if in drouth,  
Ten inches of tongue hung from his mouth.

Brandimarte pursued them, to be there  
For the end of the duel, as Balisardo  
Sped swiftly to the harbour, through the air,  
While chased, on the ground, by brave Orlando.  
That vessel wrought for prisoners to share,  
Was moored close by the quay, and his vile foe  
Leapt to the deck as Orlando drew near,  
And scarcely paused to breathe so great his fear.

Over the hidden snare, the wizard leapt,  
Shrewdly prepared for just such a flight;  
While Orlando into that trap had stepped  
Before he knew; it tripped and caught the knight.  
Once fallen to the deck, for he'd been swept  
From his feet, the crew perceiving his ill plight,  
Ran to pin him down, led by the master,  
Crying: 'Struggle not, you're our prisoner!'

He twisted, and turned, and writhed about,  
Ashamed to be caught by such as these,  
Lice-ridden, naked, half-starved, whom to rout

Should have been a task performed with ease.  
Yet what Fortune willed, pertained, no doubt,  
And, his face beetroot red, by degrees  
He was subdued and, grasped by brawny arms,  
Borne away, without use of magic charms.

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 36-43: BRANDIMARTE  
SLAYS BALISARDO AND FREES ORLANDO**

When Brandimarte reached the harbour wall,  
Racing after them, as I said before,  
He heard Orlando's voice (loud was his call),  
And sped to the rescue, leaping from shore  
To the slippery deck, careful not to fall,  
And so terrified the captors with his roar,  
The men abandoned the Count, one and all,  
And, granting Brandimarte victory,  
Fled to the stern, or leapt into the sea.

And, indeed, they were right to feel afraid  
For, in Bishop Turpin's book, I have read  
That Brandimarte, wielding his sharp blade,  
Halved one man at the waist, then, from his head  
Downwards, sliced another, and so put paid  
To their antics. Watching on, filled with dread,  
Trembling and sore dismayed, men leapt for shore.  
Then Balisardo appeared on deck, once more.

The giant emerged from beneath the poop,  
In his proper shape, with a scurvy gang,  
At his back and beside him; a sad troop,  
Their weapons rusted, barefoot, fit to hang,  
Some crippled; the crew now sought to re-group,  
With the fearful still feeling many a pang  
Of dread; yet those sailors knew how to wield,  
Their cross-bows, fire sharp darts, and use a shield.

They were braver with Balisardo there,  
Shouting, as one, till the cry was louder  
Than any yet; but, rising to the affair,  
Brandimarte raised his bright blade higher  
Counting them as but straw; without a care  
It seemed, he faced them all together,  
And backhand, forehand, whipped to and fro,  
His sharp sword, till blood stained the sea below.

So, Brandimarte fought, with bravery,  
Piercing a head, a paunch, and when he saw  
Balisardo, like an armoured tower (for he  
Stood a foot above the rest, or even more,  
And thus, was not only quite plain to see  
But, just as impossible to ignore)  
Brandimarte hastened to the encounter,  
And aimed a fierce blow at the enchanter.

He aimed at his waist but tis not easy  
To predict where a sword-blow may fall.  
He chopped of the mage's legs; suddenly  
The villain dropped, and o'er the deck did sprawl,  
Such that the vessel rocked, alarmingly,  
While his severed limbs, gone beyond recall,  
Tumbled to the water, his arts in vain,  
As Brandimarte stabbed him, once and again.

He called to his demons, Libicocco,  
Aliel, and the fierce Calcabrina,  
But Brandimarte beheaded his foe,  
And hurled the head to the blood-stained water.  
Now a deathly game began, to and fro,  
Ran the crew, forsaken by their master.  
They leapt into the sea, or down the hold,  
Or climbed to the masthead; none seemed bold.

All the wretched folk, abandoned there,  
Were scattered or slain, as I've portrayed.  
None were visible, for the deck was bare  
Except the Count, on whom the chains yet weighed.  
Balisardo was dead, none left to spare,  
Brandimarte coolly sheathing his blade,  
When the captain, who had hidden out of sight,  
Revealed himself, and knelt before the knight.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XI: 44-52: KING MONODANTE'S MISFORTUNE**

The wretched man cried endlessly for mercy,  
And, of pity, was pardoned, as was right,  
And then Brandimarte hastened, swiftly,  
To Orlando enchained, and freed the knight.  
Next, they both spoke to the captain, quietly.  
He summoned forth all those who'd hid from sight;  
They brooded not o'er what was done and gone;  
The dead were dead, and no man dwelt thereon.

Once all were reconciled, the captain said:  
'My lords, I know you must be wondering,  
About this wondrous vessel, and the dead  
Enchanter, he whom you were chasing,  
That changed himself, by magic, ere he sped  
On board the ship; he's done with conjuring,  
That vile wretch (his name was Balisardo),  
Transformed forever, and despatched below.

That you may clearly understand the tale,  
I'll speak plainly, if you'll attend to me.  
King Monodante, old, yet strong and hale,  
Holds court at Damogir far o'er the sea.  
His treasury's built on a mighty scale,  
For his wealth no mind can grasp readily,  
Yet great riches ne'er make a man content,  
Good-Fortune is but for a moment lent.

Because of his two sons, possessed of woe  
Is that monarch, for the first, in infancy,  
Was kidnapped, by a slave, one Bardino;  
A deceitful rogue, schooled in treachery.  
I've seen the man, a vile, pockmarked fellow,  
Red of face, his nose broken, while his ugly  
Mouth shows but few teeth. He took the child,  
And returned him not. A Faery beguiled

The younger son, destined to encounter  
Strange misfortune, as, indeed, you shall hear.  
For he's that Faery's mortal prisoner.  
She's named Morgana, and the youth is dear  
To that enchantress, who loves him ever,  
For his peerless angelic looks; the fear  
That some other might love him, has led her  
To keep him far from rescue, forever.

And yet she has promised Monodante  
That she will release him, safe and sound,  
If he'll render her that flower of chivalry,  
Orlando the Christian, tightly bound;  
For works of hers, wrought by necromancy,  
Roused by a horn the warrior had found,  
Were destroyed, when Orlando broke the spell,  
Though the story would take too long to tell.

Therefore, she'd capture him at any cost;  
And so, the Faery will, if I am right,  
Yet since, ne'er a fair battle, has he lost,  
Twill not be easy to secure the knight.  
Balisardo, once boasted he'd accost  
That warrior and conquer him outright,  
Telling Monodante he would beguile  
Him through his magic, and bear him to the isle.

Until now he'd had scant success, although  
He'd caught a host of brave knights, so many,  
I cannot name them all; there's one, Astolfo,  
That tripped the snare, another's Grifone,  
Then there's a recent captive, Rinaldo,  
And Grifone's brother, Aquilante.  
Rinaldo was caught, now I think upon  
The matter, with another, called Dudon.

Many a noble knight languishes there,  
Whose titles I recall not; though, below,  
There's a register I keep, you may share,  
That lists them all, where every name doth show.  
A poplar the November winds strip bare,  
Loses not so many leaves, when they blow,  
As the brave men that Balisardo caught  
And, in this ship, to Monodante brought.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XI: 53-58: ORLANDO SETS  
OUT TO DECEIVE THE MONARCH**

The captain outlined their situation,  
While Orlando's heart filled with pain and anger,  
For the noble knights he thought to mention,  
Were of Christendom the very flower.  
The Count loved them all, without exception,  
And grieved that they'd been taken prisoner,  
And so determined he would set them free,  
Or sacrifice his life, beyond the sea.

When the captain fell silent, for he  
Owned to little more they desired to know,  
Orlando conversed with Brandimarte.  
He swiftly shared his plan with him, and so,  
Displaying a pleasant face, he, shortly,  
Asked the captain, whom they'd pardoned, to show  
His gratitude and, that they might offer  
The king a service, convey them thither.

Thus, with a fair wind, they sailed that day,  
Touching, at last, upon the Distant Isle,  
Disembarking, to the palace made their way,  
And had audience with the king, awhile.  
His great hall was adorned with a display  
Of gold and silver figures, in strange style,  
Showing all on land, and in sea, and sky,  
In carved relief, or enamelled on high.

They made their offer to Monodante,  
Relating how they'd slain Balisardo,  
In self-defence, then sailed to his country;  
Swearing they could capture this 'Orlando'.  
And thus, the monarch welcomed them gladly,  
And lodged them nigh the palace, midst a row  
Of mansions, fine to dwell in, and to see,  
In rooms adorned with every luxury.

That deceitful maiden, Orrigille,  
Orlando kept ever in his sight;  
For, as you've heard me relate, the lady  
Was false but fair, and thus dear to the knight.  
He'd revealed all his plans on the journey,  
(How he would trick the king, and then take flight,  
Having freed the captives) for tis Love's art  
To extract, and share, the secrets of the heart.

Now, the maid still adored her Grifone,  
(As you'll recall; I wrote of it above)  
And she longed to see him, twas her only  
Thought, day and night she mused upon her love,  
Knowing he was captive there...but, surely,  
This canto's length you'll, one and all, reprove.  
Rest awhile, and wait while you recover,  
Ere I choose to grace you with another.

BOOK II: CANTO XII: DISGUISE AND DECEIT

A R G O M E N T O.

*Tradito Orlando rimane prigionie,  
Con Brandimarte : Grifon via si parte  
Mutansi il nome Orlando in mar si pone,  
Ter condur Ziliante in quella parte,*

*L'inganno mostra il figlio del Re Otone,  
Onde Brandimarte fu posto in prigionie,  
Un Drago morto piange una donzella,  
Ritroua il Conte Fiordiligi bella.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**P E R** la prigionia d'Orlando, si mostra che lo huomo per saurio ch'esso sia, resta qualche volta preso da'lacci del mondo, iquali sono infiniti, e chi non sà guar dar si inciampa spesso nel vizio che ha sembianza il più delle volte di virtù.

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 1-5: OF LOVE AND WAR**

Star of Love, you that governs the third sphere,  
You Venus, and red Mars, the fifth splendour,  
That orbits in but two years, bright and clear,  
Constraining the world to warlike labour,  
Shed both virtue and grace upon us here;  
Inspire my song, enhance, adorn it, ever.  
Let your influence add worth, as before,  
And strength, to my fair tale of love and war.

Tis both love and war exercise the young,  
Enemies to peace, while courting sorrow,  
Suiting those noble knights, by either stung,  
That welcome toil, and grave perils follow.  
They grant the spirit vigour, and so are sung  
By brave poets, though, unlike long ago,  
These days, I'd say, tis better just to speak  
Of arms and armour than such things to seek,

For, since the noble art of chivalry  
Has been debased, tis but a common thing,  
While Love's works go unpraised; they are merely  
Viewed as the fruits of vain imagining,  
Composed not of delight, but hollow only,  
Aroused by a glance, and a fair seeming:  
'For as he knows that's ever been in love,  
Fair women do but seldom constant prove.'

Ah! Lovely ladies look not with disdain,  
On one who but reports what others say.  
You war neath diverse banners, I maintain;  
One maid loyal, while another will betray.  
And I, by she who has my heart in train,  
Beg mercy of the rest, and peace this day.  
Aught that the verse above brought to your ear,  
Was meant for those false maids of yesteryear,

Such as Orrigille, the deceiver,  
Who, through the love she bore for Grifone,  
(Her fierce longing much like to a fever),  
Sought an audience with Monodante.  
She told him, the moment he'd receive her,  
Of what the Count had told her privately,  
Of how he'd free the knights, and all the plan,  
Feigning, the while, to be some other man.

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 6-9: KING MONODANTE CAPTURES ORLANDO AND BRANDIMARTE**

When the king found his guest was Orlando,  
Twas a greater pleasure than he'd e'er known.  
His delight banished every thought of woe,  
For the seeds of his son's release were sown.  
Yet he mused on the Count's strength also,  
His skill, the courage he was said to own.  
For the monarch was troubled, and foresaw,  
That a more than awkward task lay in store.

He turned Grifone over to the maid,  
As he had promised her, but the former  
Resistance and unwillingness displayed,  
Till the king agreed to free his brother,  
Aquilante. That concession was made,  
On the understanding they'd depart, forever,  
From that realm, and no longer linger there.  
Twas agreed; and on their way they did fare.

The trio left at night, in the darkness;  
I shall speak of their journey in due course.  
While the king, wary of the known prowess  
Of the Count, pondered o'er the use of force.  
Doubtful of the chances of swift success,  
He obtained a drug, from an arcane source,  
That rendered all who drank it as if dead;  
With dulled senses, to deep slumber they were led.

The knights, suspecting nothing, drank their fill  
Of doctored wine, when at dinner that night,  
And were later seized, once robbed of their will,  
Being dragged from their beds, without a fight.  
The drug, I mentioned, rendered them so still,  
They could be borne, silently, out of sight,  
And imprisoned, long ere the light of dawn,  
Not waking, indeed, till the early morn.

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 10-14: ORLANDO CONVERTS BRANDIMARTE TO CHRISTIANITY**

Bound tightly, and then carried there, unseen  
They were lodged in the castle's depths below,  
And on waking the Count realised he'd been  
Betrayed by Orrigille; she, his foe.  
'O King of the Heavens, O Virgin Queen,

He prayed, 'desert me not, your mercy show!'  
And he called on all the saints he adored,  
All the heavenly host that served the Lord.

He recalled statues he had seen, in France,  
And Rome, and other realms; paintings too.  
In fear and reverence, he sought to advance  
A fitting vow, with respect to each he knew:  
He'd fast, or he'd execute some penance.  
He knew the Scriptures by heart, could review  
Every psalm and prayer, and recited many  
Which were overheard by Brandimarte.

Now Brandimarte, born a Saracen,  
Was ignorant, his mind almost untaught,  
For he'd been raised among fighting men,  
And twas arms and horsemanship he'd sought.  
On hearing Count Orlando, once again,  
In prayer, who'd been nurtured at the court,  
Calling loudly to God, and every saint,  
He asked to know the substance of his plaint.

So, the Count, though lost in rapt devotion,  
Broke off to save that lost soul, and quoted  
The Old Testament; then, with emotion,  
Explained why the Gospels were promoted,  
And how Jesus Christ had set in motion  
Acceptance of the New, which denoted  
God's altered creed, until Brandimarte,  
Converted to the Faith, grasped it wholly.

Though he could not be baptised in that place,  
He received a firm grounding in the lore,  
And after musing, with a thoughtful face  
Addressed the Count, his voice firm and sure:  
'You sought to save my soul, and brought me grace,  
I, in turn, would save your life; therefore,  
Though I may risk my own, come, hear me now,  
For I'll explain the where, and when, and how.

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 15-19: BRANDIMARTE  
SUGGESTS THEY EXCHANGE IDENTITIES**

You know, as well as I, we're prisoned here  
Because of who you are; you terrify  
The Saracens, and ever will appear,  
Christianity's strong shield. What, if I,

Were to assume your name, while you adhere  
To mine, since we're unknown to the eye  
Of the guards about us; and, feigning so,  
I shall be held; and you, perchance, let go!

I will insist that I am Count Orlando,  
While you must claim to be Brandimarte.  
Hold strictly to my name, your own forego,  
Or the plan will be exposed, instantly.  
If you're released, recall me here below,  
And search, then, for some way to set me free;  
Or if I must die, in this darksome place,  
Pray for my soul, you soldier of true grace.'

Well-nigh weeping, that brave companion  
Ended his speech in the manner I've told.  
The Count, graciously, gave his opinion,  
Saying: 'The Lord wills not, that things unfold  
So; while Christians welcome their dominion  
Heaven's King's and the Virgin's and, of old,  
We live in hope. Of mercy, He will free,  
Us both; I'll go, if you can leave with me.

Yet if they release you, I'll stay, gladly,  
As long as you promise not to betray,  
Through prayer, threat, fear of your enemy,  
Or aught else, the faith you embrace this day.  
Our life is dust, that in the wind doth flee,  
Nor should be deemed of such great worth, I say,  
That to lengthen that life we should aspire;  
Such condemns the soul to eternal fire.'

Brandimarte replied: 'Brave paladin,  
Full many a time have I heard it said  
That those who serve will oft commit the sin  
Of asking more than they deserve; instead,  
I but seek, by God's passion, thus to win  
Your consent to His plan to which I'm led,  
And if you will not, you'll give me reason  
To embrace, once more, my old religion.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 20-25: FEIGNING TO BE  
ORLANDO, HE IS LED TO THE KING**

The Count, not wishing to say yea or nay,  
Made no reply; twas then that, suddenly,  
Soldiers, armed with halberds, made their way



Into their cell; the corporal spoke sharply:  
 'Whichever is the Count must come away  
 With us; so, exchange your farewells swiftly.  
 We're commanded to rouse him, and bring,  
 That bold Christian champion to the king.'

Brandimarte answered him, instantly,  
 Ere Orlando could speak, who only sighed,  
 And was obliged to look on, silently,  
 And, as the men drew nearer, move aside.  
 That he might not resist, Brandimarte,  
 Was kept in chains, his free movement denied,  
 And in that manner, the corporal leading,  
 Was taken up, and brought before the king.

Monodante was a civil soul by nature,  
 And addressed 'Orlando' with courtesy:  
 'Strange circumstances, and misadventure,  
 Force me to treat you less than generously.  
 Though you're a Christian, and must feature  
 In any list, of mine, as an enemy,  
 I know of your true virtue, and your worth,  
 And grieve to harm a man of noble birth.

But affection overcomes my chivalry;  
 Pure compassion for my own flesh and bone,  
 My youngest son; such that I must, sadly,  
 Demand you take his troubles for your own.  
 To be brief, ill chance and cruel destiny,  
 Have robbed me of my sons; I'm left alone.  
 A mere eighteen years the one doth enjoy;  
 Beneath her lake, Morgana holds the boy.

The Treasure Fay is she, this Morgana,  
 And because, it seems, you disdained one day  
 To hunt her stag (of pure gold each antler),  
 Yet destroyed her creatures, to her dismay,  
 Those dark enchantments (you will remember  
 All you wrought; that tale I need not relay)  
 She has searched for signs of you, everywhere,  
 Likewise demands you be sent to her, there.

I must exchange you for my son, that he  
 May be released from vile imprisonment.  
 And tis why I've had you seized, privily,  
 That I may see the Fay once more content.  
 Knowing she may do you harm, it grieves me;

I blush, you see, from sheer embarrassment,  
 For I would treat you more honourably,  
 Yet know no other means to set him free.'

## **BOOK II: CANTO XII: 26-30: ORLANDO IS RELEASED TO FREE THE KING'S SON ZILIANTE**

The monarch's head hung down in bitter shame,  
 His speech well-nigh reduced the man to tears.  
 The knight replied: 'My words would be the same  
 Were I a thousand miles from here; your fears,  
 I would allay, serve you, and swell your fame.  
 Though I am your prisoner, it appears,  
 You may command me as you wish, for I  
 Would wish to win your praise; on that rely.

Yet, I beg you, by the mercy shown on high,  
 That if, as I believe, there is a way  
 To achieve your son's rescue, by and by,  
 Without sending me there, that you delay.  
 But hear me, and my plea you'll scarce deny.  
 Set free my friend; and from this very day,  
 Allow him one full month to save your son.  
 I'll remain, as pledge for my companion.

And, as long as that knight, in chains yet bound,  
 Is freed at once, if, in the time I say,  
 Your son is not returned here, safe and sound,  
 Why then, upon the gallows let me sway.  
 For the knight has, before, an entrance found  
 To that place where one's prisoned by the Fay.  
 And, upon my faith, I swear that he will go,  
 Enter boldly, and return, and ease your woe.'

So, brave Brandimarte spoke, and offered  
 Assurances I'll not expand on here.  
 He was eloquent, and ever proffered  
 Cogent arguments, his mind swift and clear.  
 At last, the king was convinced, he said,  
 Though the month demanded would seem a year  
 Ere he could embrace his dear son once more;  
 Nonetheless, he agreed, and so he swore.

Bold Brandimarte, upon bended knee,  
 Thanked the king profusely, then was led  
 Away, while Count Orlando was set free.  
 Who can recount the loving words there said,

The fond farewells exchanged, most tenderly,  
Twixt those friends? Yet, the time was swiftly sped.  
And the Count obliged to go; both were grieved,  
And wept, as may be readily conceived.

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 31-36: THE CAPTIVE  
ASTOLFO HEARS OF THE QUEST**

Count Orlando recalled the terms expressed,  
He must return in one month, as agreed;  
So, to board ship, and sail upon his quest,  
He repaired to the harbour, with all speed.  
In a week or so, at the Count's behest,  
He was landed, with all that he might need,  
On a shore he knew, then travelled the strand  
Until he reached the Fey's enchanted land.

What he did there, I'll relate in due course,  
If you'll kindly lend an ear to my tale;  
But now to Monodante's court, perforce,  
I return, where upon a lavish scale  
The king feasted. All his folk had recourse  
To dance and song, preparing soon to hail  
His son's return, pledging, perfumes, silver,  
Cows and sheep, and aught that they could offer.

The absent youth's name was Ziliante;  
(I made mention of the fact a while ago).  
Anticipating they would see him shortly,  
They rejoiced; while the town was all aglow,  
For, on every tower, torches shone brightly,  
For their pleasure and delight, while below  
Loud the drums, and horns, and trumpets sounded;  
Earth seemed ablaze; the heavens confounded.

Astolfo, Otho of England's bold son,  
Was held, with many another, as you've heard,  
Within the castle, in a deep dungeon,  
Though even there the prisoners had word  
From the guards, of the outer commotion,  
And asked them of its cause as they conferred.  
One replied: 'In a month you'll all be freed,  
If all comes to pass as the king's agreed.

I'll tell the tale, in its entirety  
So, you'll not have to ask the like again.  
His need to hold knights in captivity,

By your exchange his son's release to gain,  
Will then no longer prove necessary.  
The knight, Orlando, is here, I should explain,  
Whom the king can now barter for his son.  
He's as fair as a lily is that one,

And so named Ziliante; yet, it seems,  
A Saracen, in the knight's company,  
Has been freed by Monodante, who dreams  
He'll return, as sworn, with Ziliante,  
In a month. I suspect the villain schemes  
To do no such thing; yet tis naught to me,  
And the king can exchange this Orlando  
If the quest fails, and see his son freed so.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 37-41: HE ASKS TO SEE  
ORLANDO**

Astolfo's gaze was troubled, and his heart  
More so when he heard of Orlando's plight.  
He pleaded with the guard: 'Use all your art,  
My brother, that I may see this brave knight.  
Bear a message to the king, take my part,  
Say I seek, of his courtesy, as is right,  
To speak with this Orlando, if I can.  
He's a peer, and well-nigh my countryman!'

Most men took a liking to Astolfo,  
I need not tell you all the reasons why.  
So, off, with his message, went the fellow,  
And twas relayed to the king, by and by.  
Now Brandimarte had a chamber below  
The King's apartments, and there he did lie.  
Though unarmed, he was guarded night and day,  
All the month his companion was away.

To this chamber went King Monodante,  
And asked, courteously, about Astolfo,  
The which greatly troubled Brandimarte,  
Who answered not, and yet no fear did show  
Though he realised he was ruined utterly,  
If Astolfo acknowledged him, and so  
Revealed his true identity; thereby,  
He would be exposed, and condemned to die.

At last, so as not to rouse suspicion,  
He said: 'I recollect one called Astolfo;  
I think I saw a knave whose condition  
Was most ill, and I think they named him so  
In France, of a foolish disposition,  
At least, at court, all sane men thought him so,  
Deeming him quite mad, a lord of misrule,  
Thus, they entitled him the English Fool.

He was large and blonde, noble in seeming,  
Pale of face and dark-eyed, a comely knight,  
At first glance, but then his wits were lacking,  
And when'er a waning moon lit the night,  
He would run through the halls, raging, cursing,  
Knowing not a single courtier on sight,  
Nor to pleasure or ease could he aspire,  
While all fled him, like the plague, or a fire.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XII: 42-58: BRANDIMARTE'S  
DECEIT IS EXPOSED**

'Tis the man,' replied King Monodante,  
'I would listen to his madman's chatter.'  
And, so saying, he sent a servant swiftly  
To find Astolfo, and bring him thither,  
Who did so, taunting that knight, mockingly,  
Saying the king ever loved a jester,  
And so Astolfo, one learned in that school,  
Would, no doubt, be lauded there, as a fool.

That he was such, he said, one Orlando  
A fellow Christian, had told the king.  
Astolfo angered instantly, swift to follow  
The servant, joined the royal gathering,  
And though the courtiers, standing in a row,  
Stared in horror, he advanced, shouting:  
'Where's that coward Orlando, where is he?  
Where's that rascal, that dares slander me?

Where hides that vain and fearful creature?  
I'll pay a thousand ounces of pure gold  
For a club to mar his every feature;  
He's a whoreson, and a liar, ever bold,  
False by practice, and e'er false by nature!  
The king and Brandimarte heard him scold,  
And swear, and revile Count Orlando,  
As he loudly cursed his now-absent foe.

Brandimarte felt relief; thus, the king  
He counselled: 'Let the fellow well alone,  
For the man himself is quite annoying  
Enough, then, he's a fool, as all men own.  
His wits are gone, the moon must be waning,  
Strong reason for such madness, as is known.  
I've seen him thus, before; I know the signs;  
Pity those who are duped by his designs.'

Monodante replied: 'See that he's bound,  
And tightly so, ere he attends the court.  
From lunacy I'd remain safe and sound.'  
By then, Astolfo their chamber had sought.  
As he climbed the stairs, then leapt around,  
The courtiers demanded he be caught,  
And from the room their angry voices cried:  
'The king commands this fool be roped and tied!'

When Astolfo found himself thus constrained,  
Like a madman, he reigned in his anger,  
And, though against his bonds he yet strained,  
He calmed his tongue, and called out no longer.  
He was brought before the king who maintained  
A calm and quiet demeanour as ever:  
'You are cruel in your language, I must say,  
You Englishmen; Brava's not far away,

From your country, and he's the Count thereof.'  
But Astolfo glanced about everywhere,  
Saying: 'Where is he then, who would prove  
That I'm a fool, when his scant estate there,  
Scarce earns a third of mine; I'd not approve  
Him as a groom for my horse; and beware,  
He slanders me for sport, he'll e'er behave  
So, to one who deems him less than a slave.

Where are you, you bastard? Show your face,  
You cross-eyed villain; come, I'll punish you.'  
The king cried out: 'Poor wretch, but give him space,  
Let him breathe, he is but a fool, tis true,  
For here's Orlando, that our court doth grace,  
And yet he fails to know him.' Then, anew,  
Astolfo searched the room, but saw him not:  
'Were he here, I'd unmask him on the spot;

Yet, of these, I know but Brandimarte;  
There's not a sign of Count Orlando.'  
Monodante, amazed, cried: 'Lord, help me,  
Is not this man the Count, your seeming foe?  
Surely you are mad!' Speaking boldly,  
Brandimarte, though dismayed, naught did show,  
And, concealing his fears, said to the king:  
'Why, tis how he is; the moon is waning.

Did I not say he seems as one insane?  
If you recall, his wits are oft astray  
When that orb's light is dim; you see it plain,  
For we view him by the broad light of day.'  
Now Astolfo began to heave and strain:  
'You, heathen dog! Vile wretch, I'll make you pay!  
I'll kick you so hard I'll leave my mark  
On your innards. Come dog, let's hear you bark!'

The king replied: 'Now, hold the madman tight,  
For his malady grows worse, his mind's a maze!  
Astolfo's wrath increased, so raged the knight  
That twas expressed in various odd ways,  
He threatened to pull down the roof outright,  
And then to set all Pagandom ablaze,  
He'd burn, he cried, five hundred miles of land  
And raze the villages on every hand.

The king commanded he be taken down;  
Whereupon Astolfo, as a last resort,  
Though he'd been named a madman and a clown,  
Displayed a firm grasp of rational thought.  
He spoke quietly and, addressing the crown,  
Begged that they not dismiss him, out of court,  
For he could show that, cruelly deceived,  
Twas a phantom in which the king believed;

And, if the king but sent word to the gaol,  
And had the corporal bring Rinaldo there,  
Or even young Dudon then, without fail,  
He would learn the truth; all would be laid bare.  
He wished to stay and listen, as if on bail,  
And, if he lied, the monarch need not spare  
The whip, but have him flayed for doing so:  
There, stood Brandimarte, not Orlando!

The king, fearful he'd been duped, now gazed  
At Brandimarte, who seemed much distraught,  
Provoking strong suspicion, his eyes glazed,  
Standing there, anxiously, and lost in thought.  
Now cornered, though, at first, he seemed but dazed,  
He revived, and confessed, to all the court,  
How he'd devised his plan to save the Count,  
Whose liberty he'd viewed as paramount.

Monodante rent his royal cloak in grief,  
And tore great lumps of hair from his beard,  
For he loved his son; now, twas his belief  
That he would ne'er return; his death he feared.  
In the town and palace, there was scant relief  
From cries and weeping; on the streets appeared  
Many that of their senses seemed deprived,  
Shouting: 'Quarter him, that this plot contrived!'

Brandimarte was arrested and, chained  
From head to foot, was shut in the tower,  
Confined in the condemned cell, while none deigned  
To call the prisoner living, from that hour.  
And if the Lord's mercy were not gained  
In time, and he be freed by God's power,  
Brandimarte would die. Now, Astolfo  
Regretted he had brought about such woe,

And would have sought to aid him, willingly,  
Performing all he could in word and deed,  
Yet his help was too late for Brandimarte,  
His idle tongue had injured him, indeed.  
For he'd condemned that noble knight, by simply  
Opening his mouth, when there was little need.  
Here I'll quit their tale, and seek Orlando,  
That, from the heights, could see the lake below.

## BOOK II: CANTO XII: 59-62: THE LADY AND THE DRAGON

Morgana's lake, I mean; there lay the river  
And the bridge, which the noble Orlando  
Now viewed with satisfaction, moreover,  
Since twas free of the vile Aridano.  
He saw a maiden, on drawing nearer,  
Her face a portrait of grief and sorrow,  
For she mourned a dead dragon that lay there,  
As if her love was lost; in deep despair.

Orlando wondered at so strange a sight,  
And halted to observe the grieving maid,  
Her cheeks like roses in a snowy light.  
Now hear a thing most strange: the maiden laid  
The dragon in her arms, and climbed outright  
Into a little skiff, that rocked and swayed,  
Then drifted, with the flow of the river,  
And sank to the depths, at the lake's centre.

Who could wonder that Orlando now sought,  
To witness the end of this adventure,  
For, at once, another maid that moment brought,  
Riding a palfrey, a most gentle creature,  
O'er the meadow. She, while pausing for naught,  
Called out: 'Orlando, fearless warrior,  
The Lord of Paradise, to whom I prayed,  
Has sent you here, to render me your aid.'

She who had just appeared, the fair lady  
Riding the palfrey, I mentioned above,  
Had but one lone servant for company.  
I'll tell her story, in full, if you approve,  
Though not quite yet; for of the other she,  
I would speak, that embraced her dragon-love,  
And sank into the lake. I'll halt here though,  
For I've reached the end of this fair canto.



BOOK II: CANTO XIII: IN THE REALMS OF MORGANA AND ALCINA

A R G O M E N T O.

Si affrontano gli eserciti a battaglia,  
Quel di Marsiglio e quel di Carlo Mano,  
Orlādo mostra a i Pagā quāto ei uaglia,  
Ne Rinaldo si uede stare in uano.

Ogniun mostra sua possa ogniū s'aguaglia  
A l'altro, ambedui menan ben le mano,  
Marsiglio, Rodomonte, e Ferraguto  
Forzati sono a suoi porgere aiuto.



A L L E G O R I E.

RINALDO, che per virtù di Baiardo giunse prima che Orlando a liberar Carlo, ne mostra quanto possi l'amore, nel spinger alcuno, a far quello accōpagnato dal suo pensiero, che un'altro difficilmente potria fare.

ORLANDO che veduto esser giunto tardi, riuolse lo sdegno uerso pagani, ci ammaestra che quando per colpa di alcuni facciamo qualche cosa mal fatta, douereffimo all'hora cercar di fuggire simil'errore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 1-8: THE TWO MAIDENS**

Many and various are folk's desires:  
 One takes up arms, another tends the sheep,  
 One is obsessed with all that wealth acquires,  
 One likes to hunt, while one love's fruits would reap,  
 One sails the seas and distant lands admires,  
 This man must preach, and that one fish the deep.  
 This one, the gossip of the court betrays,  
 That, joyous, ever dances, sings, and plays,

While you delight in many a noble deed  
 Wrought by knights of renown, in days of old.  
 Of your pleasure, chivalry is the seed.  
 You care for valour, and to such do hold.  
 They prize it not, that virtue's voice ne'er heed,  
 But you, who honour actions fine and bold,  
 Deck valour and virtue in true glory.  
 'Tis you at whom I aim my pleasant story.

I'll resume, then, from where I left the tale,  
 And turn back once more, to identify  
 The pair of maidens, one whose skiff did sail  
 Upon the lake then sink, one riding by.  
 For indeed, ignorance would long prevail,  
 If you heard not their names. I'll clarify  
 The matter; both the maids I'll dwell upon;  
 'Twas Morgana embraced the dead dragon,

While the second was fair Fiordelisa,  
 The maiden so loved by Brandimarte.  
 I shall turn, first, to the Fay, Morgana,  
 And, thereafter, tell the other's story.  
 The Faery was treacherous by nature,  
 And, by that lake where Aridano lately  
 Had perished, wrought a further enchantment,  
 Without which she could scarcely rest content.

With the juice of roots and herbs, collected  
 From the hills when the moon was in the sky,  
 And coiled stones, from the bared cliffs ejected,  
 To aid her, as she chanted there on high,  
 At dead of night, her arts she directed  
 To an evil end, transforming, by and by,  
 The youth, Ziliante, to a dragon shape,  
 To guard the bridge, that none, there, might escape.

She sought, thus, to change his form, utterly,  
 So that his dreadful aspect would strike fear  
 In all who approached the bridge, but sadly,  
 Through some error in her chant, twould appear,  
 Or some limit to her necromancy,  
 The youth was harmed, the outcome most severe,  
 For as soon as he assumed a dragon's hide,  
 He gave a mighty cry, lay down, and died.

Whence the Fay, who had loved him truly,  
 Thought that she herself would fail from grief,  
 Weeping o'er the dragon's corpse, piteously,  
 As I've described; next, seeking some relief,  
 She bore him in her skiff, and sank, deeply,  
 Beneath the lake to inter him; from that brief  
 Tale of seeming disaster, I'll turn now  
 To fair Fiordelisa, and speak of how,

On seeing Orlando, the maiden cried:  
 'The Lord of Heaven, in His mercy,  
 My fervent hope and prayer has not denied,  
 But has sent you to this place to aid me.  
 Brave baron, take position at my side.  
 You must reveal your fearless chivalry,  
 And, so that you may know what you must do,  
 Hark to me! I'll reveal your task to you.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 9-15: FIORELISA'S  
 TALE OF BRANDIMARTE**

Once I had departed from Albracca,  
 The which may yet be besieged, I say,  
 With great care, and wearisome labour,  
 I searched for Brandimarte, night and day;  
 And yet could gain no news of him, ever.  
 I returned to that place, and on the way  
 I found this man, who attends me now,  
 And a strange tale, to me, he did avow.

Mid-way on the road I met this Bardino,  
 Who journeys, as my sergeant, as you see,  
 And, by chance, he revealed that long ago  
 He had kidnapped a son of royalty,  
 ('Twas Brandimarte, as his tale did show)  
 And had borne the lad away o'er the sea.  
 From the Distant Isle he stole the child,  
 And sold him to the Count of Castle Wild.

After doing so, he joined the household there.  
And, when the lad was full-grown, his valour  
Was great, and there was naught he would not dare,  
For his strength too was such none would offer  
To oppose him. Now, the Count lacked an heir;  
His wife had died, he'd nor son nor daughter;  
Thus, he adopted Brandimarte; fate  
Saw him dead; the lad acquired his estate.

Brandimarte now toured the world around,  
O'er hill and plain seeking bold adventure,  
And left Bardino there, one seen as sound,  
To rule the land, in his place, as governor.  
But another lord coveted that ground,  
One cruel, inhumane, and full of anger,  
Who was Brandimarte's most bitter foe;  
And the name of that lord is Rupardo.

He's laid siege to Castle Wild, it would seem,  
With his vassals, and a host of fighting men,  
And refuses to desist from his bold scheme  
Till he's razed it to the ground, then again,  
He cries: 'Brandimarte, for sins extreme,  
Has been led to where Morgana doth reign,  
And thus, I come to take possession, here.  
Expect no aid; he'll not return, tis clear.'

Bardino then, sore afraid he would die,  
If Rupardo captured him (and concerned  
That his lord might still appear, by and by,  
And grant him the punishment he'd earned)  
Through the diviner's art, sought to descry  
His master's fate, and from its practice learned  
That Rupardo's news was free of mistake:  
Brandimarte is prisoned neath this lake.

I pray you, Count, if any lady ever  
Was graced with your favour, grant me aid,  
And do what must be done to deliver  
Him, from this ill place where he was waylaid,  
And may Angelica thus grant her lover,  
Whatever he desires, true love repaid,  
And Love himself fulfil your every dream;  
Your fame and glory e'er the poet's theme.'

### **BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 16-19: ORLANDO RE-ENTERS MORGANA'S REALM**

Orlando, briefly, told her all he knew  
Of Brandimarte, all that had occurred;  
All their scheme, and the aim he had in view,  
Young Ziliante's rescue, in a word;  
And that he must seek out that realm, anew,  
Where the unhappy lad remained interred.  
Returning the lad to Monodante,  
He'd then win freedom for Brandimarte.

With this fair Fiordelisa was content,  
And so, she dismounted from the palfrey,  
And kneeling on the river bank, she sent  
Her prayers up to the sky, most fervently,  
And prayed that the Lord grant His consent  
To Orlando's mission, and end it swiftly  
And happily. The Count now sought the door  
That he knew, having entered once before.

The portal was set there, above the ground,  
But concealed in the cliff, midst banks of thorn.  
Orlando descended, without a sound,  
Till he reached the stairway's end, nigh unworn  
By human feet, then walked a mile, and found  
Beyond that marble floor, the treasure-bourne,  
That chamber carved from out the rock, of old,  
Where sat the monarch wrought of gems and gold.

He saw the chair Rinaldo sought to steal,  
But had carried no further than the door,  
(I've told you quite enough of that, I feel,  
So much so, I shall speak of it no more.)  
The Count went swiftly, time was at his heel,  
To reach the magic garden, as before,  
Where Morgana dwelt; a swift review  
Showed the crystal wall splitting it in two.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 20-23: HE FINDS MORGANA, AND THE RESTORED ZILIANTE**

Near to that wall of glass where was a fount  
As I've described, there he saw Morgana,  
Close by the spring, and, wondering, the Count  
Found she'd revived, resurrected rather,  
Young Ziliante; he, on no account,



Was other than human; no longer  
In dragon-form did that fair youth appear,  
Though he seemed not a little faint, from fear.

The Fay, Morgana, was combing his hair,  
While often kissing him, most tenderly.  
Ne'er was painted, by any brush, so fair  
A vision as the young Ziliante.  
Of beauty and grace, he owned full share,  
His face revealed his true nobility,  
While his clothes were both delicate and fine,  
His speech courteous, his aspect divine.

No wonder that the Faery took delight  
In gazing at that face, as in a mirror.  
With him in her embrace, she felt the light  
Of Paradise itself shone about her.  
She idled there, unaware of the knight,  
Who suddenly appeared in full armour,  
And since he had played this game before,  
Lost not a breath in seizing her once more,

Grasping the lock of blonde hair at her brow,  
And holding tight. That deceitful maiden,  
Most fair, yet with a vulpine visage, now,  
With sweet looks, and ready words, again,  
Asked pardon of him if he could avow  
She'd ever shamed him or shown disdain;  
And then, to recompense him for his labour,  
Promised him great riches, and vast treasure.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 24-30: THE COUNT  
LEAVES WITH THE YOUTH, FIORELISA, AND  
BARDINO**

She vowed that he would gain all he desired,  
If he would but leave her beloved there,  
But twas to Ziliante's rescue he aspired,  
And naught else to him was worth a hair.  
Now who could tell of all the sighs suspired,  
The tears, the woe, Morgana sought to share,  
To influence the Count, yet all in vain.  
He would not hear, and showed her but disdain.

He had taken Ziliante by the hand,  
To lead him from the garden; while the knight  
Feared not the faery's spells, you understand,

Because, as yet, he gripped her forelock tight.  
She lamented, dragged along, at his command,  
But he showed little pity for her plight;  
She fawned, and begged, and threatened with intent,  
Yet, silently, towards the square, he went.

They crossed the court, and started to ascend,  
Climbing the stair, the Fay held by a tress,  
And when they reached the portal at its end,  
And were about to make a swift egress,  
Orlando turned, and told her to attend:  
'Morgana, come, your master now address:  
For I'd have you swear by Demogorgon  
Mighty ruler of the Faery kingdom,

That you will never harm or hinder me.'  
This Demogorgon (you may be aware)  
Commands and judges the realm of Faery,  
And he does as he wishes with all there.  
At nightfall, o'er the mountains and the sea,  
He rides, on a giant ram, through the air,  
And the phantom, and the witch, and the fay,  
He lashes, with live snakes, at break of day;

For if such are seen on earth, in dawn light,  
When they are all forbidden neath the sky,  
He whips them, furiously, with all his might,  
So that they truly wish that they could die.  
Now he chains them neath the sea, far from sight,  
Now barefoot on the wind they walk on high,  
Now he leads them through the fiery blaze,  
Tormenting them, in these and other ways.

And so, Orlando made the Faery swear  
By Demogorgon, who was her master,  
Threatening the Fay, till she did not dare  
Do aught but what he said; she, thereafter,  
Swiftly fled, midst the shadows, to her lair,  
Hiding deep beneath the lake, to recover,  
While the Count and Ziliante, at their ease,  
Returned to Fiordelisa, on her knees

In prayer, who, on seeing them once more,  
Rendered fervent thanks to the Lord on high.  
Then they walked, as one, to the nearby shore,  
And boarded ship, and sailed beneath the sky.  
Blown by a fresh breeze, onward thus they bore,

Their course north-easterly, till, by and by,  
Having journeyed, for many a long sea-mile,  
They made port, on reaching the Distant Isle.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 31-35: THEIR VESSEL  
REACHES THE DISTANT ISLE**

To Damogir, the capital, they'd come,  
Where twin towers flanked a noble harbour.  
When the young prince was seen, midst the hum  
Of the port, folk shouted in their ardour,  
Raising mighty cries of love and welcome,  
For they'd thought the fair youth lost forever.  
Both great and small sang aloud, as word spread,  
That Ziliante had returned from the dead.

The city was alive with the rumour,  
When Monodante heard the joyous sound.  
Clad in his gown, he hastened to the harbour,  
Free of both his cloak and crown, where he found  
A multitude, all crowding together.  
All from crone to maid were there, all had downed  
Their work; their arts, their crafts, were set aside,  
As young and old their exultation cried.

Such was the heaving crowd's density,  
It hid the marble paving there from show.  
First to disembark was Ziliante,  
Then Fiordelisa, then Count Orlando,  
While her sergeant came next, and full loudly,  
When they saw him, many cried: 'Bardino!  
'Tis Bardino! The king may learn the fate  
Of his eldest son, and his rank and state.'

Parting the crowd, Orlando forged ahead  
To reach Monodante, and greet the king.  
He paid his respects, and bowed his head;  
Then he asked for Brandimarte, seeking  
Him amidst the courtiers; with some dread,  
The monarch responded to him, feeling  
A pang of shame, while embracing his son,  
At how he'd dealt with the Count's companion,

Claiming Brandimarte was, safe and sound,  
Though, embarrassed, he was blushing visibly.  
He grasped Orlando's hand, then glanced around;  
Bardino, close behind, he chanced to see,

And cried aloud: 'Say now, you worthless hound,  
Where is my boy; the lad you reft from me?'  
And then he cried: 'Arrest him, bind the man  
That stole my eldest son, then upped and ran!'

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 36-41: BARDINO TELLS  
THE TALE OF BRANDIMARTE'S ABDUCTION**

In a trice, Bardino was seized, but then  
Requested only that he might be heard,  
And so was brought before the king again,  
And swore to confess the truth, every word.  
He told them how he'd fled, and how and when  
He'd reached land, and how he'd conferred  
A new name on the lad, whom men would know  
As Brandimarte, not Bramadoro.

Called Bramadoro, as a little child,  
This Brandimarte, now a prisoner,  
Was indeed, that fair prince, though long exiled,  
Unknowingly, from his land and father.  
Bardino claimed that, beaten and reviled,  
(I know not whether justly or in anger)  
By the king, he'd despaired and, in his woe,  
Had fled, with the infant Bramadoro.

He'd sold him to the Count of Castle Wilde  
(As I have said) and yet had repented  
Of the crime, and so had stayed with the child,  
To protect him, and dwelt there, contented.  
The lad matured, while he was reconciled  
To never leaving that realm, and consented  
When the Count died, to be the guardian  
Of the castle, and thus Brandimarte's man.

Now, Bardino told the tale to its end,  
Narrating all the history of the son,  
But the monarch (on this you may depend)  
Was grieved, long before, at what he'd done,  
In that he'd had him taken, and penned  
In the deepest and the coldest dungeon,  
Of the tower, bold Brandimarte I mean,  
And there his son lay, naked and unclean.

Though he'd commanded he be freed, before,  
Now, weeping constantly from affection,  
At the Count's wish he ordered it, once more,

Stunned, as yet, by this twin resurrection.  
Cries of joy echoed now beyond the door,  
Great the noise roused by the tale's reception.  
It rose from turret, roof, and balcony.  
With flaming torches folk ran, festively;

Men played on harp, lute or tambourine,  
And every other instrument in sight;  
For their king (much the happiest I ween)  
Had found his sons again; in their delight  
They filled the city square, and there was seen  
Such dancing to the music; while a flight  
Of roses and lilies fell, a sweet cascade  
Thrown high by many an amorous maid.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 42-49: BRANDIMARTE  
IS UNITED WITH ZILIANTE AND LEODILLA**

Now, amid all this joy and happiness,  
Brandimarte appeared before the king.  
He'd lain naked in prison; come success,  
And, his rank thus restored, fair in seeming,  
He bowed, while all wept with joy's excess.  
The king asked his mother's name; recalling  
That distant face, he replied: 'Albina,  
I believe, though I know not my father.'

Monodante wept now, without restraint,  
And said: 'My dear son, dear son of mine,  
What can I, that decreed your close constraint,  
Say in penitence; to God I resign  
All judgement, of naught can I complain.  
What he wishes is our will, we should consign  
The past to the past.' He wept endless tears  
Clasping his son, lost for so many years.

And then they both embraced Ziliante;  
All could see the likeness twixt the two,  
For the youth resembled Brandimarte  
Though their ages differed. And not a few  
Kisses passed between the latter, surely,  
And Fiordelisa, whom he clasped anew.  
Then, as all rejoiced (fled was all woe),  
The king pardoned the contrite Bardino.

They walked to the palace, of a richness  
Unequalled in all this wide world below,  
To celebrate, and all their joy express.  
Brandimarte, eloquently, sought to show  
How the Christian faith the land would bless,  
And his father, and the court, believing so,  
The Count baptised them, all that family,  
And the lords, labouring assiduously.

Those were released who'd been imprisoned,  
Astolfo and Rinaldo and the rest,  
In rich mantles they were caparisoned,  
Treated royally, and courteously addressed.  
A maid entered, from the chamber beyond,  
Tender-eyed, and with ample beauty blessed.  
She wore so many jewels in their honour,  
The hall was illumined by her splendour.

The knights scanned her bright face, but Orlando,  
And Brandimarte, alone, knew the maid,  
For they'd seen her elsewhere, long ago,  
Leodilla, who a cunning game had played,  
And had cheated her aged husband so,  
She whom, by the golden apples delayed,  
He'd won by means of that subtle device.  
Yet she'd had her revenge, not once but twice,

By having Ordauro tunnel underground.  
Tis an amusing tale but, since you know  
The story in full, here twill not be found.  
Tis mentioned but to say, with many a blow,  
Brandimarte had freed her, safe and sound,  
That time when he with Count Orlando  
Slew Oridante and Ranchiera,  
Though, then, he knew not she was his sister.

He knew it now, and with joy, and delight,  
They embraced, and he reminded her how she  
Had, with a sovereign herb, healed him outright,  
Salving his head, when twas wounded sorely,  
Nigh the spring, by Marfusto, in their fight;  
And thus had restored him, most completely.  
They spoke of many another thing beside  
Which I shall not tell here, and laughed and cried.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 50-53: RINALDO HEADS FOR FRANCE; ORLANDO RETRIEVES BRIGLIADOR**

When many a day has passed in song and dance,  
Dudon called the others to a chamber,  
And spoke of Agramante's bold advance,  
And of the armies he'd amassed, in anger,  
To sail the sea, and fall upon fair France.  
A host of warriors he'd clad in armour,  
Drawn from half the world, it seemed, to lay low  
The Christians, and Charlemagne his foe.

Rinaldo and Astolfo pledged to fight  
For Christianity, their faith, and its law.  
Each man upon his honour as a knight,  
To do so while yet life was his, now swore.  
But Orlando, though it might seem but right,  
Would not join with them; why, I am unsure.  
I deem twas his love for Angelica  
Deterred him from his true path, as ever.

Yet they sailed as one, o'er the foaming sea,  
And, once they'd safely landed, Rinaldo,  
Once more, mounted Baiardo, cheerfully,  
While Astolfo reclaimed his Rabicano.  
But the Count now implored Brandimarte,  
And Ziliante to return, for should they go  
To the war, they could but harm their father  
That might not, at his age, live much longer.

The Count failed to convince the elder son,  
But the younger of the two, Ziliante,  
Was so persuaded, and swiftly was gone  
Back to Damogir, while Brandimarte  
Swore that he would never thus abandon  
Count Orlando; the pair rode cross country  
To the keep where Brigliador had been left;  
Lacking his steed, the Count yet felt bereft.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 54-58: RINALDO AND COMPANY REACH ALCINA'S REALM**

The castellan paid them both due honour,  
And Brigliador was handed to Orlando.  
Meanwhile Rinaldo, Dudon, and the other,  
(That son of King Otho, Duke Astolfo,

Lance in hand, and clad in golden armour)  
Rode all along the coast, their pace but slow,  
Until at morn they arrived, one fine day,  
At the castle of Alcina the Fay.

Now Alcina was Morgana's sister.  
In the Atarberi's land, she did dwell,  
By the northern sea-shore; they were ever  
A wild, and barbarous folk, cruel as well.  
She'd created there a garden in flower,  
Green with trees, by means of a magic spell,  
Within it, a fine keep, small but noble;  
From summit to foot, twas wrought of marble.

One morning that fair company rode by,  
As I have said, and much admired the sight.  
That sweet flowering garden, neath the sky,  
Seemed heavenly to the eye, a sheer delight;  
And, as they looked about them, by and by,  
They spied the Faery, by the waters bright,  
Drawing creatures, by her art, from the deep,  
Like a shepherdess with her flock of sheep.

There were tunny-fish, there were dolphins there,  
Sword-fish, croakers, and many another  
Species, large and small, too varied to share  
With you the name of each, or its manner;  
And monstrous creatures, curious and rare,  
Pilot whales, and beaked whales, there did gather,  
With huge fin whales, and sperm whales, to that shore,  
Writhing sea-serpents, and a thousand more.

Among the whales there was one so mighty  
I scarcely dare to tell you of its size.  
Bishop Turpin claims (nor says it lightly)  
Twas a full two miles in length, tail to eyes.  
Its back alone showed clear above the sea,  
For eleven yards or more, the thing did rise,  
And seemed to any that a watch did keep  
Like an isle raised on high from out the deep.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIII: 59-66: ASTOLFO IS BORNE AWAY UPON A WHALE'S BACK**

Now the Faery was fishing, as I said,  
Though without the usual net or gear,  
Her incantations alone she cast ahead

To make that host of sea-creatures appear.  
But suddenly, the fair maid turned her head,  
And saw the company towards her veer,  
And angry that they'd viewed her witchery,  
Had half a mind to drown them in the sea;

And might indeed have fulfilled that thought,  
By means of a subtle root she possessed,  
And a gem, set in a ring by magic wrought,  
With which the very ground might be depressed,  
And all that shore submerged, had she not caught  
Sight of Astolfo's face, by beauty blessed,  
And was deterred, on seeing that fair vision,  
By pity, and an overwhelming passion.

She began to address the company,  
Saying, sweetly: 'Fair knights, what seek you here?  
If you would like to gather fish with me,  
Although, indeed, I have no net, I fear,  
Then something fine and wondrous you shall see,  
Many a rare sea-creature, rising clear  
From out the depths, large, small, of every size,  
The strangest things that ever met men's eyes.

For, beyond that isle, you'll find a Siren,  
Cross over to it, if you'd see her there,  
She's a fine fish; I think tis not often,  
Perchance ten times, she's been seen; such is rare.'  
Thus, false Alcina, tempted foolish men,  
And convinced Astolfo, the young and fair,  
To land aboard her whale, that isle so near  
He could ride through the shallows twould appear.

Neither brave Dudon nor bold Rinaldo  
Were swayed; they viewed the isle with suspicion,  
And called to that reckless son of Otho,  
But his courser he'd now set in motion.  
The Faery knew that she could trap him so;  
To toy with him later, was her notion.  
And seeing the knight fall for her ploy,  
She laughed aloud at him, and danced for joy.

At a few words now chanted by Alcina,  
The vast whale began to move out to sea,  
While Astolfo uncertain how to counter  
Its departure, gazed shoreward, fearfully.  
He prayed to God; Death seemed to hover  
O'er the waves, while the Fay he failed to see,  
Though she was there, upon the whale, concealed  
In some place not to human eye revealed.

When Rinaldo saw the knight departing,  
Wild with anger, he sought to grant him aid,  
Though Astolfo had ignored his warning;  
Twas a valiant effort the warrior made.  
He drove Baiardo through the waves, shouting,  
In desperation, launching a tirade,  
And was closely followed by bold Dudon;  
He, spurring his courser hard, urged it on.

The whale being ponderous, and vast,  
Moved its bulk quite slowly through the water,  
And Rinaldo thought he'd catch it, at the last,  
As he ploughed the waves on his brave courser.  
But, my sweet lords, my voice is fading fast,  
Its strength equal to my chant no longer,  
And, therefore, I must end this canto here;  
Yet, having rested awhile, will re-appear.



BOOK II: CANTO XIV: RINALDO RETURNS TO FRANCE

ARGOMENTO.

*Rinaldo arriva, ove il Re Filippone,  
Di Ongheri hauea gran numero adunato,  
Per aiutar Re Carlo ha egli il bastone,  
Et è da tutti General creato.*

*Giunge la oue i Christiani in fuga pone',  
Rodomonte, E Dudon preso, e legato  
Rinaldo vuol con l'African far guerra,  
Onde pien d'ira addosso à quel si ferra.*



ALLEGORIE.

**P**ER Rinaldo fatto generale, si dimostra che la virtù dell'huomo ha *sempre* luogo appresso qual si voglia persona del Mondo, & in ogni parte, *perche* il valore, e l'eccellenza dello intelletto supera tutte l'altre cose humane.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 1-8: ALCINA CONJURES UP A STORM**

With strange enchantments I've been occupied,  
Those wrought by Morgana and Alcina.  
Not a sword-stroke will my readers have spied,  
Not one shower of arrows, not a lance-splinter.  
Yet now o'er earth my air-borne steed must ride,  
And blood must flow o'er saddle, and armour,  
For, if I err not, by this canto's close  
There'll be fire and flame enough, steel and blows.

Rinaldo will meet with Rodomonte  
At the border, and in fierce encounter,  
Rank on rank, their weapons men will ready;  
Yet wait awhile; those knights I'd recover  
Immersed in the sea, and swimming slowly,  
(Or at least their steeds are, you'll remember).  
If I mistake not, Dudon and Rinaldo,  
Had plunged therein, following Astolfo.

The English Duke, borne onwards by the whale,  
Through Alcina's magic arts, was far ahead.  
Bold Dudon ploughed his way, without a sail,  
Through the waves behind Rinaldo, who led,  
So far out now, his steed's strength began to fail,  
(Dudon's that is) now like to drown instead.  
His horse floundering, the knight cried aloud,  
As he sank to the depths, though brave and proud.

For, as he sank, he had the wit to shout,  
As he crossed himself: 'Our Lady, aid me!'  
At this, Rinaldo turned his steed about,  
His comrade well-nigh lost beneath the sea.  
He was left for an instant in grave doubt,  
(Though only for an instant, certainly)  
For Astolfo was vanishing, o'er the wave,  
Yet Dudon he was forced to seek, then save.

And naught else but Dudon's mortal distress  
Could have made Rinaldo turn Baiardo.  
The steed was swimming like a fish, no less,  
And slicing through every foaming billow.  
When he reached Dudon, now in great duress,  
Finding his end was near, mighty Rinaldo,  
With Dudon scarcely able to draw a breath,  
And finding the sea a path to briny death,

Snatched the knight from the saddle, in a trice,  
And carried him to shore, now safe and sound.  
Having rescued the lad, he ne'er thought twice,  
But took up the chase, again, though he found  
That the whale could not be caught at any price,  
While a storm-wind now swept the cloud around.  
As endless distance hid the whale from view,  
Through darkening air, that icy tempest blew.

Prasildo and Iroldo, who were there,  
(Being still in Rinaldo's company)  
With Dudon, cried out to him to repair  
To the shore, till he, in tears, quit the sea.  
He stood upon the sand in deep despair,  
Doomed to feel that whate'er must be must be:  
His cousin lost; the waters hurled on high,  
As gusts of icy rain poured from the sky.

Now, you should know that this ruinous blast,  
That swallowed half the world it would seem,  
Was roused by a spell fair Alcina cast,  
To deter the knight from his valiant scheme  
Of reaching their strange vessel at the last.  
She and the Duke I must leave there; my theme,  
(Though of that knight I've much to tell) once more,  
Must be Rinaldo, weeping on the shore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 9-15: RINALDO'S JOURNEY TO PROVENÇE**

When he'd lamented awhile, on the strand,  
Standing, bare-headed, in the pouring rain,  
With nary a hut or shed on either hand,  
Since he knew little of the empty plain,  
Never having travelled o'er that far land,  
And wishing a safe passage thence to gain,  
He hugged the shore, where the waves did play,  
And journeyed westward, for many a day.

He left the realm of the Atarberi,  
And passed the heights of Mount Corubio,  
Reaching the River Don through Tartary.  
Bishop Turpin asserts that none do know  
His deeds there. To Transylvania, safely,  
He came, and crossed the Danube there, below  
Orsova, reaching Hungary, to find  
Men in arms, war in France, in their mind.

A host was gathering with sword and lance,  
An army strong and bold, second to none,  
Mustering to march westwards and aid France,  
Led by Otachier, King Philip's son.  
Concerned by Agramante's swift advance,  
Charlemagne had requested this be done,  
So, the king, aged and infirm, had said  
That Otachier should lead, in his stead.

Rinaldo entered Budapest, and there  
Was recognised and honoured by the king,  
As one whose valour was known everywhere,  
And whose praises many a man did sing.  
Otachier, heartened, swore he would dare,  
With Rinaldo at his side, everything  
That a knight should, to earn them victory.  
With this, Rinaldo joined their company.

The council named him captain of the host,  
And all were content that it should be so,  
The white and crimson arms (that they yet boast)  
Upon their fluttering pennants now did show.  
Philip ordered them to do their utmost,  
Entrusting his son to brave Rinaldo,  
Thus, neath the royal standard, together,  
They led the army into Austria.

They rode beside the Danube to Vienna,  
And, seeking to reach the Italian plain,  
Crossed the cold Alps, via Carinthia.  
The Ticino's banks, later, they did gain,  
And learned that but four days earlier  
Desiderio, with his troops in train,  
Had departed Lombardy, and that further  
He and his men were now in Savona.

Otachier and Rinaldo then chose  
To follow the path of the Lombard king.  
They had thirty thousand men, I'd suppose,  
And every one eager for the fighting,  
For none were unwilling, Heaven knows,  
To meet the Saracens. Boldly marching,  
They crossed the plain and hills, till they saw  
Fair Genoa, and Liguria's shore.

## BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 16-23: WE REPRISE RODOMONTE'S ATTACK SO FAR

Travelling on, for several days, they came  
To the borders of fair Provence, and there  
Admired the hills and gave their acclaim  
To the cedars, palms, and orange-trees, aware  
Of the noise, beyond those very same  
Sweet groves, of trumpet-blasts that rent the air,  
And many a distant martial cry, as well,  
As if the world warred at the gates of Hell.

Leaving the host, Rinaldo quickly sped  
With Otachier and Dudon to spy,  
From the hilltop the vale to which it led,  
Where Rodomonte's bold forces did lie,  
And the army of Lombardy now shed  
Its mortal blood neath the sounding sky.  
Twas our first defeat inflicted by the foe,  
While Duke Namus felt the heaviest blow.

The Bavarian's four brave sons lay dead  
Upon that blood-drenched field; with no way  
To mend their fate, their father now had fled,  
A broken man, his troops in disarray,  
While Rodomonte's army forged ahead,  
Scattering the French, and set to gain the day.  
The noble dukes of Savoy and Lorraine  
That madman had left, dying, on the plain.

Amone's bold daughter, Bradamante,  
Felt her valiant steed tumbling to the ground.  
More men were slain there by Rodomonte  
Than in any earlier war, I'll be bound.  
All this I've told you, if my memory  
Deceives me not; and how the pagan found  
Fresh anger when he saw his standard fall,  
Outraged, roused to a wrath beyond recall.

The heart of that gold and crimson banner,  
Finely embroidered with much labour,  
Showed a lion, and the Maid of Granada,  
Doralice; twas his greatest treasure  
That brave standard; naught to him was dearer,  
Sarza's king, or gave him greater pleasure  
For the one that he loved was pictured there,  
And his hopes rested on that maiden fair.



Rodomonte grieved the fall of that same  
 Brave standard, quite beside himself with woe.  
 His eyebrows bristled, while as red as flame  
 His eyes themselves appeared. He faced the foe,  
 In the manner of a wild boar set to maim  
 The hunters and the boarhounds, ranged below,  
 Trampling the stakes, its tusks striking blind;  
 Pity the fate of those that lag behind!

In such a manner Rodomonte charged,  
 And hurled himself at those of Lombardy.  
 The mounds of dead he constantly enlarged,  
 Till the plain around was well-nigh empty.  
 Despite the arrows, endlessly discharged,  
 He hacked at soldiers, and weapons, fiercely.  
 The sky rang, as, upon that bitter field,  
 The king smote plate and mail, helm and shield.

Meanwhile the army close behind him grew,  
 And his men, who had fled in fear before,  
 Cried: "Turn!" and then faced the Christian crew,  
 And gathered to their king upon the shore,  
 While our armies were astounded to view  
 That bold Saracen, his strength worth a score,  
 Who, everywhere he went, brought pain and woe,  
 And scarcely rested, dealing blow on blow.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 24-28: HE DOWNS RIGONZONE**

Now, in the Lombard camp there was a knight  
 Out of Parma, named Rigonzone,  
 Strong past belief, by nature born to fight,  
 As regards sense or reason, lacking any;  
 For his concern for life or death was slight,  
 Thus, where peril and ruin loomed, there he  
 Preferred to prove himself, or where escape  
 Was scarce an option; ever in some scrape.

Watching the bold Saracen charge around,  
 The violent battlefield, with lowered lance  
 He rode to meet him, seeking to astound  
 One whom he scorned, with a swift advance.  
 He cried: 'I come to fell you to the ground!'  
 As Rodomonte looked at him askance.  
 Rigonzone broke his spear, and cast it down,  
 As he passed Sarza's king, who gave a frown.

Undaunted, the knight now wheeled his charger,  
 And drove towards the monarch at full speed,  
 Convinced he'd swiftly down the latter  
 But Rodomonte grasped the reins of his steed,  
 And with his mighty strength stopped the charger,  
 In its furious course; despite the deed,  
 Rigonzone never paused, his lance was gone,  
 So, he drew his sharp blade, and laboured on.

He dropped his reins, and quickly dealt the king  
 A two-handed blow, scorned by the Saracen.  
 'Twas little use to strike that warrior, seeing  
 That his dragon's skin, proof against mere men,  
 Fuelled disdain for every mortal being,  
 For it turned every blade. The knight, again  
 Swung his sword, yet, at once, Rodomonte  
 Drove his horse aside, and downed him swiftly.

His strength was such the steed, nigh in the air,  
 Was hurled into a ditch, where it landed  
 With Rigonzone, half-stunned in that affair,  
 Trapped beneath its weight, and so left stranded.  
 We'll leave him still alive (and kicking) there,  
 And turn to the Saracen, who demanded  
 That the whole Italian army they surmount,  
 And who now confronted Cremona's count.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 29-30: AND WOUNDS AND UNSEATS ARCIMBALDO**

Arcimbaldo, Desiderio's son,  
 Approached the warrior, brandishing his sword.  
 Young and bold, and regal in his person,  
 He was fit for deeds suited to a lord.  
 I attribute little shame to him, for one,  
 Though he failed this sternest test, and was floored,  
 For the fierce Saracen's strength was so great  
 None could stand against him; cruel fate

Saw Arcimbaldo wounded in the head.  
 Then, unseated, he tumbled to the ground.  
 Here our ruin began; heaped high, the dead  
 From that final attack, lay all around.  
 As both men and horses fell, rousing dread,  
 The Saracen's sharp blade fresh victims found,  
 Swinging close to earth, falling from the sky.  
 Such a battle's rarely seen by human eye.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 31-35: RODOMONTE  
ROUTS THE LOMBARDS AND THE FRENCH**

Rinaldo reached a hill above the field,  
With Otachier and Dudon; there below,  
He observed, his wonder scarcely concealed,  
The sore effect of the king's every blow.  
The need for his prompt aid was revealed,  
He dared not risk delay, for, you must know,  
Hope had vanished on our side, filled with dread,  
The Lombards were routed, the Frenchmen fled.

Rinaldo saw their tattered banners fall,  
Torn to shreds, left on the blood-stained soil.  
The furious Rodomonte, midst it all,  
Raged like a storm-wind, that the sea doth roil,  
Wielding that wondrous sword, if you recall,  
That Nimrod saw forged, with endless toil,  
That mighty giant who once, in Thessaly,  
Sought to challenge God, in his enmity.

That proud man, in his vast arrogance,  
Ordered the Tower of Babel built on high.  
Hoping that to Heaven he might advance,  
And then, upon fair Earth, hurl down the sky.  
His faith in his own strength (such was his stance),  
He had the blade so tempered that, thereby,  
(The heat so intense, the steel thus so strong)  
No armour could resist its fury long.

Born of that ancient House, Rodomonte  
Wore the weapon, and to the battle bore  
That blade no warrior but him could bear;  
For ne'er, till that day, had it gone to war.  
His father Ulieno, who would dare  
Many a bold deed, owning it before,  
Though he knew its worth, would leave it behind;  
It burdened him too much, that king did find.

Rodomonte, as I said, bore it now,  
And, thus, wrought ruin o'er the battlefield,  
Destroying more valiant men, I would avow,  
Than there are fish in seas and streams concealed.  
The rest, o'er hill and dale, escaped somehow,  
Careless of where they fled, afraid to yield,  
Content, as they fled through unknown country,  
To be far from the fierce Rodomonte.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 36-40: RINALDO  
PREPARES TO ENTER THE FRAY**

Rinaldo, as I've said, from the mountain,  
Gazed down, now, upon the rout below,  
Where the dead were heaped high, and beaten men  
Turned their backs, to flee the exultant foe.  
Disconsolate, he grieved aloud: 'Lost, then,  
Is my content, alas; all here's but woe.  
Surely my lord lies dead upon the field,  
For would my valiant king have sought to yield?

What might I do, abandoned and forlorn?  
Can it be great Charlemagne has met his end?  
Many a battle have I seen, the ranks war-torn,  
But ne'er this ruin no man can amend.  
The king is dead, if he fought here this morn;  
And Amone, on that we may depend,  
For e'er such faithful love he bore the king  
He'd be there in death, as in everything.

Where is Oliviero, where the Dane?  
Where Bavaria's duke, Brittany's king?  
Where is that Maganza, proud and vain,  
So deceitful, and so often missing?  
No flag of ours is flying o'er the plain,  
No warrior of ours it seems left standing.  
All are dead, tis true; in the field they lie;  
And I would join them there, that all may die.

I know not that African who has slain  
So many valiant knights, unless it be  
Troiano's son, Bizerte's king, our bane,  
Bold Agramante; yet, if it be he,  
I must oppose him, counter his disdain,  
And punish his insolence. Friends, hear me!  
Otachier, Dudon, hold back your men,  
Preserve the army, so we may fight again.

I will descend, e'en from desperation,  
For I can scarce think, or feel, in this place.  
O you, my God, in the highest Heaven,  
Humble in your presence but grant me grace!  
Greatly I've sinned, I confess, yet, even  
Now, I'd stand penitent before your face.  
May my faith avail me, as oft before;  
For I, without your aid, am weak as straw.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 41-51: RINALDO  
UNSEATS RODOMONTE, AND THEY FIGHT ON  
FOOT**

While he spoke, Rinaldo wept bitterly,  
Then he set his spurs to brave Baiardo,  
And, grinding his teeth, furiously,  
He galloped down the slope to meet the foe.  
His two companions retreated, swiftly,  
To deploy along the ridge, while, below,  
Rinaldo sped towards the battlefield,  
As he lowered his lance, and gripped his shield.

He charged straight towards Rodomonte,  
Ever the easiest to recognise,  
Being taller than those in his army.  
He showed a pair of serpent-like eyes,  
In a face both fearsome and full of fury.  
Rinaldo sought to take him by surprise,  
Bearing his heavy lance, so dense and long,  
It could penetrate a wall, however strong.

Rinaldo's steed bore him on so swiftly  
The force of his charge could shatter stone,  
And he struck Rodomonte's hip, sharply,  
And left him on the ground; flesh and bone  
Striking the earth just as if some mighty  
Tower, or mountain-summit, were down-thrown;  
Such was the crash, making the earth resound,  
When wrathful Rodomonte struck the ground.

With a noise beyond description, his armour  
Rang with his fall; and, as far as the shore,  
The battlefield shook, so great the tremor  
As his giant frame tumbled to the floor.  
At that the Saracens, filled with rancour,  
Attacked Rinaldo, as one; more and more  
Sped to their fallen leader's aid, not slow  
To thwart all further action from his foe.

The knight now drew Fusberta from its sheath,  
And swung the blade at soldiers he disdained,  
Downing men, though they were armed to the teeth.  
Whoe'er they were, death or wounds they sustained;  
For, as I say, without respect, above, beneath  
Their armour, his sharp blade its arc maintained.  
Helms he shattered, legs he sliced, with scant grace,  
And, about him, carved out an empty space.

Yet Rodomonte, that fiery spirit,  
Had risen to his feet, his fierce anger  
So great that his fury knew no limit,  
Grieved now by the shame, and now the slaughter;  
For the warriors he led all sought to quit  
The field, routed by Rinaldo's fervour;  
But that proud African restrained their flight,  
And to Rinaldo's force opposed his might.

King Rodomonte, at once, aimed a blow  
At Baiardo's legs, while the valiant steed  
Was scarce in time to avoid pain and woe.  
He leapt high, or he'd have fallen, indeed.  
Then Rodomonte swung again at his foe,  
The blade delivered fiercely, and at speed,  
In his wrath, sans regard to man or horse,  
He lashed out, careless of the weapon's course.

'Ah, false Saracen!' brave Rinaldo cried,  
'It seems you were not born of noble race;  
Unashamed, a mad fool, devoid of pride,  
To wave your sword at a steed full of grace!  
Where mindless villains such as you abide,  
In those hot barren lands, that find no place  
For worth or virtue, tis the rule, perchance,  
To strike a horse; well, tis not so in France!'

In the king's native tongue he spoke, and so  
The latter understood, and gave him answer:  
'I'm not known as false or a villain, though  
You call me such, in my realm of Sarza,  
And with my sword, I've dealt many a blow,  
To those that the earth about us cover,  
Enough to show I'm of no lowly race,  
Yet it seems tis not enough; and disgrace,

Indeed, twould be, if I failed to leave you,  
Severed at a blow, to grace this plain.  
If I do not, I'll be but shamed anew,  
Nor fit to be viewed on this Earth again.  
But, as to rule and custom, why, tis true,  
I'll not spare your horse, for I maintain  
Scant concern for what you may do in France,  
I do my worst, my own cause to advance.'

As Rodomonte ceased, he aimed a blow,  
Swinging his blade, with such a turn of speed,  
That, if his sworn enemy had proved slow,  
His vengeance had been satisfied indeed.  
But Rinaldo rode, an arrow's flight or so,  
Towards the mountain slope, reigned in his steed,  
Dismounted and, leaving Baiardo there,  
Returned on foot, a further round to dare.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 52-58: RODOMONTE  
ROUTS THE HUNGARIANS**

The king, seeing him without the horse,  
That, being fleet of foot, kept him at bay,  
Was sure he would slay him, in due course;  
But now, upon the ridge, in close array  
Dudon and Otachier, with their force  
Of steel-clad Hungarians made their way  
Towards them, with lance, and bow, and shield,  
Their pennants fluttering, to take the field.

They descended the slope, with a great cry,  
Like some storm-wind, full of martial ardour.  
When valiant Rodomonte cast an eye  
On their feathered crests, and gleaming armour,  
He leapt in the air for joy, for by and by  
He deemed he would grip them tight forever.  
He whirled his sword about, on every side,  
Slicing the air, in an idle show of pride.

Then he advanced, with the very motion  
That a lion shows as it pads o'er the ground,  
To reach a herd of deer, in expectation  
That there a goodly meal will soon be found.  
Just so that fierce, serpent-hearted pagan  
Forgetting Rinaldo, paced towards the sound  
Of arms and armour, scornful, unafraid,  
Ready to see their shining ranks dismayed.

His valour rendered his own soldiers bold,  
They followed him, fresh courage thus revealed,  
Till the two sides met, a sight to behold  
As they charged together, o'er the flowering field.  
No greater noise was ever heard (I'm told,  
By the good Bishop) as lance struck on shield;  
A feast for the eyes, as the ranks compressed,  
Bright helm against helm, and breast against breast.

Trumpet and warlike cry, horn and drum,  
Sounded loud; Christian nor African  
Could move a single step, the earth did hum,  
With trampling feet, but the fierce Saracen,  
Rodomonte King of Sarza, venturesome  
Despite that crush, hacked at man after man,  
Till he had cleared a space on every side,  
Like a sickle that through the grass doth glide.

None has ever seen men so filled with dread  
As those who faced the fierce king, in that war.  
As a tempest, in the mountains overhead,  
Topples great beech-trees to the woodland floor,  
So that bold Saracen, to warfare bred,  
On foot, through the brave mounted squadrons tore,  
Rating them less than a bear does the pack.  
Hungarians, Wallachians, his attack

Dismantled; and, once routed, naught sufficed  
To stem the tide, and make them turn, and fight,  
Though Otachier tried, as with death he diced.  
Faced with the Saracen, they took to flight,  
While Rodomonte, all advantage sacrificed,  
Scattered them here and there, knight by knight,  
O'er the slopes, halfway up the mountainside.  
None could stand against him, while hundreds died.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 59-61: AND WOUNDS  
AND UNSEATS OTACHIER**

Otachier, Philip's son, thought he too  
Must die of shame, as his men fled the foe.  
The brave Dudon was no longer in view,  
Fighting fiercely, elsewhere, while Rinaldo,  
As I mentioned, was too tardy to pursue  
Rodomonte, having thought to save Baiardo.  
Thus, neither could provide the aid he sought,  
For himself or his men, yet on he fought.

Desperate, he lowered his gleaming lance,  
And charged the Saracen, true his aim,  
But his lance broke, in that swift advance,  
While he tumbled to earth, though not to blame,  
For he was wounded in the head, by chance,  
As giant Rodomonte struck, that same  
Pounding hard on his helmet as he swayed,  
And despatching him to the ground, dismayed.

Dudon, now closer to him, saw his fall,  
 And thought, perchance, Otachier was dead.  
 Loving him like a brother, a dark pall  
 His fate cast o'er his mind but, nobly bred,  
 He set his heart on vengeance, bitter gall  
 Though it brought to his mouth, so he sped  
 After Rodomonte, swearing, without fail,  
 He'd die with his friend, could he not prevail.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIV: 62-68: BEFORE  
 CAPTURING AND BINDING DUDON**

This young knight, Dudon, rarely used a lance,  
 Or so Turpin, the good bishop, has said.  
 A weighty iron-bound club, wrought in France,  
 Plate and mail, a shield, a helm on his head,  
 With these he met the cursed king's advance,  
 And, as if aflame with anger, in its stead,  
 He drove his body at the pagan knight,  
 And swung his heavy mace with all his might.

His two-handed blow struck Rodomonte  
 On the helmet, which though strongly made  
 Split; of the crown (its crest) not one ruby  
 Or pearl remained; proof against a blade  
 Nonetheless, the visor opened, widely,  
 At the mace-blow; the Saracen, dismayed,  
 Fell to his knees; his comrades helped him stand;  
 Indeed, the king required that helping hand.

They shouted a warning, shielding their lord,  
 And protecting him, while Dudon, in his rage,  
 With two-handed blows, challenged the horde,  
 Still seeking, though unwisely, to engage.  
 Whether great or small (their rank he ignored)  
 He swung at those who sought to hold the stage,  
 Striking and hammering at the foe, intently,  
 While hoping to carve a path to Rodomonte.

he had risen to his feet once more,  
 And whirling his sword about his head,  
 Broke valiant Dudon's shield, then, with a roar,  
 Cleft plate and mail; onwards the sharp blade sped  
 Baring the left side; wielding, as before,  
 That steel, Dudon's life hung by a thread,  
 But Rodomonte's strokes did little harm,  
 Though again and again he raised his arm.

Seeking now, to avoid a mortal blow,  
 Dudon, though outmatched, when he saw  
 That the Saracen was near, seized his foe  
 In both arms; the pair were strong, to be sure,  
 And tall and hefty, their movements slow,  
 Thus, they struggled on; but, to the floor,  
 Rodomonte threw the lad, when he tired,  
 And bound him, tightly, as was required.

Now, as God above, or Fate, decided,  
 At this juncture, Rinaldo joined the fray  
 And, since the struggle was so one-sided,  
 Mad with rage, he his mighty sword did weigh,  
 Gripped Fusberta, then gave undivided  
 Attention to the king, filled with dismay  
 At bold Dudon's capture; thus he, wildly,  
 Threw himself, in a trice, at Rodomonte.

Rinaldo was on foot, for, as you know,  
 He'd left Boiardo on the hillside there.  
 Both were so valorous, as foe met foe,  
 Who can say who fought best in that affair?  
 My present canto's nigh on finished though,  
 And, since Rinaldo so late did repair  
 To the battle, it cannot end today.  
 Return tomorrow, when perchance it may.



**BOOK II: CANTO XV: THE RIVER OF LOVE**



**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 1-10: RINALDO AND  
RODOMONTE CONTINUE THEIR DUEL**

You that love to hear of bitter conflict,  
Savage onslaughts, immeasurable blows,  
Draw forward, since the like I now depict;  
For none more fierce or ardent, I suppose,  
Than that pair, e'er sought death to inflict;  
To conquer, or to die, the path they chose.  
Rinaldo, I mean, and Rodomonte,  
Labouring for honour, and their country.

Both the combatants were filled with such ire,  
That the features of their visage altered,  
The very light in their eyes turned to fire,  
As from out each fierce dark face it glittered.  
Those men close to them now sought to retire;  
Drawing back in fear, at once, they scattered.  
Saracens and Christians fled the scene,  
As if, that pair, from out Hell's dark ravine

Had risen, two infernal demons, now  
Suddenly, revealed to the light of day.  
The squadrons fled; scant time did fate allow;  
Careless if steeds lost a shoe. Once away  
From the field though, distance somehow  
Made them turn, to gaze on, at that display;  
For, with naked blades, the warriors there  
Rendered shield, plate, and mail, beyond repair,

As they both pressed forward, furiously,  
To bring that desperate fight to an end.  
Their first stout blows, simultaneously,  
Struck each other in the visor, to send  
Sparks flying to the heavens, in fiery  
Showers. And, quite unable to defend  
Themselves for a moment, both retired  
A good ten paces, while fresh heart they acquired.

Yet both their helms were finely wrought,  
And not easily destroyed by a blow.  
Rinaldo wore Mambrino's when he fought,  
Of steel at least two inches thick; his foe,  
The Saracen, his magic casque had brought  
To French shores, forged with dark spells, below  
The earth, where rarest diamonds are found.  
Nimrod forged it, in that pit neath the ground.

As I told you, their first blows, landing square  
On their helmets, tore the visors away.  
Thereafter their sharp blades sought not to spare  
E'en an inch, as they let their weapons stray,  
Scattering steel-plate and an equal share  
Of fragments of fine mail; both held at bay,  
As their armour fell piecemeal to the field,  
While neither gripped more than half a shield.

Rinaldo, never pleased by such constraint,  
Swung a two-handed blow at Rodomonte.  
He'd decided to attack, first made a feint,  
Then delivered a stroke, more than fiercely,  
Such that their swords collided; the complaint  
Their steel blades made, rose high and, surely.  
Ne'er has a louder noise disturbed that land.  
The heavens rang, sparks flew on every hand.

Rodomonte, accustomed to conquer  
His opponents with one tremendous blow,  
Now received but verjuice from the other  
For his sour plums, as the bold Rinaldo  
Matched him stroke for stroke, till, beyond measure,  
The King of Sarza raged; he cursed his foe,  
Heaven too, calling out: 'No God can save you!  
I'll quarter you! I'll bury you from view!'

And, with this cry, the cruel Saracen,  
Launched a two-handed swipe, in his fury.  
But fierce Rinaldo, dealing the like again,  
Whirled his vicious blade, such that, momentarily,  
Their blades clashed violently; descending then  
To each other's shield, to split both neatly.  
And yet, despite ruin and destruction,  
They both kept their swords in constant motion.

Neither man wished to see his foe attain  
E'en the slightest advantage, if he could,  
Their armour shed like paper o'er the plain,  
The pieces piled about them where they stood.  
The air was filled with mail that fell like rain,  
On their heads, and amidst the distant wood  
Steel plates troubled the branches, with the sound  
A shower of hail makes as it hits the ground.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 11-16: CHARLEMAGNE'S  
ARMY ARRIVES, AND ATTACKS**

As I've said, those who'd fled now watched in fear,  
While that battle unfolded, ere evening fell;  
Judging the sword-strokes, though, it would appear,  
As regards an advantage, none could tell.  
Behold! An army on the ridge showed clear,  
That descended like a horde out of Hell,  
To the sounds of the trumpet, horn and drum,  
Shaking the sea and sky as they did come.

There was ne'er a more tremendous display,  
As this fresh force descended to the plain.  
In gleaming armour, neath the light of day,  
With bright lances and shields, the shore to gain.  
And, that you may know whom they did obey,  
Let me state they were led by Charlemagne,  
For that mighty ruler brought there the flower  
Of France and Christendom, in all their power;

Seventy thousand valiant knights and more,  
(The flower, I say, of every Christian land)  
All fierce and brave; not only on that shore,  
But, through the wide world, suited to command.  
The Marquis of Vienne was to the fore,  
Oliviero, while, at his left hand,  
Rode the Dane, then came the lords of the court;  
The fleurs-de-lys, on their flags, they did sport,

A golden lily on an azure field.  
The African who'd paused in his advance,  
Learned, from Rinaldo, that those revealed  
Rode with the army of the King of France.  
The Saracen, scorning them, scarce concealed  
His disdain, fuelled by matchless arrogance.  
He said no more, departing, instantly,  
Longing to meet with this bold enemy.

Swiftly, on his way, went the Saracen,  
At a pace Rinaldo failed to equal,  
With longer leaps than a leopard, and again  
Commenced to deal wounds light and mortal,  
And if the sun had not begun to wane,  
I'd have more to offer as a sequel,  
But the light drained from the darkening sky,  
And the fierce struggle ceased, by and by.

Nonetheless, the Dane was pierced in the arm,  
(Twas his left) and his thigh slashed also,  
While, though, in truth, receiving little harm,  
His gryphon shield lost, Oliviero  
Viewed the state of his armour with alarm,  
Twas cut to pieces, and meanwhile the foe  
Had wrought endless slaughter, the dead heaped high,  
Though Saracens and Christians there did lie.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 17-21: RODOMONTE IS  
MISLED AS TO RINALDO'S WHEREABOUTS**

As I've related, the shadows of evening  
Ended the battle, for the sunlight fled.  
I'm left to marvel at that valiant king  
That fought all day and, ever-restless, sped  
About the field, fighting without ceasing,  
For the conflict having ended, instead  
Of resting he searched, o'er hill and plain,  
For Rinaldo, the victory to gain.

He questioned every captive Christian,  
For he counted them, now chained, by the score,  
Searching swiftly for some news of the man.  
Some he thrashed, though he terrified far more,  
Till, at last (perchance fear was the reason),  
One claimed to have seen him, and was sure  
Rinaldo had fled to that great tract of trees,  
The Ardennes, yet might still be caught with ease.

The man lied (Rodomonte could not know,  
But his foe had gone to retrieve his steed,  
For, you'll recall, he'd abandoned Baiardo).  
Believing him, the king, now having need  
Of a valiant mount, seized Dudon's, and so,  
Saddling that fierce horse, whose turn of speed  
Was wondrous, the Saracen prepared  
To pursue Rinaldo, and first repaired

To his ship where his mighty lance was stored.  
Then, not waiting to enjoy the light of day  
Quite determined to overtake that lord,  
He grasped the weapon, and was on his way.  
His troops whom he'd abandoned on board  
The fleet, without orders, filled with dismay,  
Chose at last to set sail for Africa,  
And the masts were raised, to seal the matter.



They raced to load their captives, and their gear,  
And the young and courteous Dudon,  
Was among the first batch to disappear  
To the hold, his fierce captors bent upon  
Making sail; to their homeland they'd steer.  
To the tardy, there came swift retribution,  
For others, slow to climb aboard, soon saw  
Rinaldo, spurring fast, along the shore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 22-27: RINALDO SETS  
OUT IN PURSUIT OF HIM**

The knight was searching for Rodomonte,  
By the light of the moon; and everywhere  
Crying out the king's name, calling loudly,  
Gazing down on the strand through darkening air.  
Below, he could see the Saracen army,  
Gathering up its weapons, and here and there  
Labouring to load the ships speedily,  
Thence to pass to Africa, o'er the sea.

He chose to strike (it needed little thought  
Once he was certain of their true intent)  
And, on those wretches, swift revenge he wrought,  
While many fled, at the warrior's advent.  
A host clambered aboard, while others sought  
Safety in the waves, seemingly content  
To abandon their burdens, and their friends,  
Their efforts bent on serving their own ends.

Those vessels that stood ready to make sail,  
Now swung away, abandoning the shore,  
And so Dudon, a ship's hold now his gaol,  
Was trapped, amidst the captives that it bore.  
If Rinaldo had known this, without fail,  
He'd have mounted a rescue, seized an oar,  
Or swum to reach that prison, but merely  
Sought, in ignorance, for Rodomonte.

A Saracen, who knelt before the knight  
In fear, when he was asked about his king,  
Replied, and truthfully, that he'd had sight  
Of that monarch, on the cliff road, seeking  
A path which led, o'er the mountain height,  
To the Forest of Ardennes; not in flight,  
But, in pursuit, so ran the last account,  
Of Rinaldo, who had left for Merlin's Fount.

Merlin's Fount was a feature of that place;  
You'll have heard me remark on it before.  
The lover, that to drink there bent their face,  
Tasting enchanted water, loved no more;  
While distant from it, by a little space,  
A stream the opposite enchantment bore.  
Better tasting, yet worse, that draught might prove,  
For whoever drank there felt the fires of love.

Now Rinaldo, learning the king had gone  
In pursuit of him, to the gloomy wood  
Cared naught for the rest, and thereupon,  
Sped on his way to that neighbourhood,  
Faster than I can utter; hastening on,  
To find the man, and finish him for good.  
Galloping thus, a fine pace he could boast,  
As he rode westwards, all along the coast,

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 28-32: EN ROUTE TO  
MERLIN'S FOUNT, RODOMONTE MEETS  
FERRAU**

Rodomonte, at the same time, was en route  
For the forest and the fount, inwardly  
Saying, to himself, in his swift pursuit:  
'May the heavens grant this one gift to me,  
Of finding this bold knight; our dispute  
Will then end in his death; or peacefully,  
For, with him, I might conquer earth and sky.  
Yet I'll remain unmatched here, should he die,

For I doubt Orlando is his equal,  
Famous though he is; this warrior I've fought,  
Both with the lance and sword, his brave mettle  
Is such that he's the better, I'd have thought.  
Allah aid you Agramante, should you settle  
On invading this fair land, for, in short,  
You'll lose many a man, on that ill day,  
If, as now, I'm many a long mile away!

It seems Sobrino told the truth, indeed:  
"Trust to the man of wise experience".  
If Orlando can match him, deed for deed,  
This warrior I fought, with his immense  
Skill in warfare, and a like strength and speed,  
Let Agramante look to his own defence,  
When he lands! "I'll seize them all", was my boast,  
Yet this one man's more than enough, almost.'

So musing, Sarza's king went on his way,  
 Although the path, to him, was quite unknown,  
 And reached a wide plain, at the break of day,  
 O'er which a knight came, travelling alone.  
 Rodomonte (in his own tongue, I might say)  
 Asked the man (perchance native to his own  
 Country) the distance to the forest gate,  
 And had he taken the right path of late.

The warrior answered swiftly: 'I know not  
 The proper way; I am a stranger here,  
 As you appear to be; such is my lot  
 That I go weeping and in woe. I fear  
 I note not paths or roads, all are forgot,  
 For where fate carries me, there I appear,  
 Led, to destruction, death, and despair,  
 By faithless love, that strips the poor heart bare.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 33-37: THE KING LEARNS  
 FERRAU WAS ONCE IN LOVE WITH DORALICE**

That you may recall the facts of the case,  
 Let me say that the knight, lamenting so,  
 Was the lovelorn Ferrau, betimes the grace  
 And light of chivalry, now grieving though,  
 Who'd returned to France, seeking any trace,  
 Or news, of Angelica, while none did know  
 Of his presence there; he journeyed secretly,  
 Never declaring his name to any.

He loved that maid, as deeply as before,  
 (I told you of his passion, at the start)  
 But he'd heard naught of her, upon that shore,  
 After learning she'd chosen to depart.  
 Yet he hoped she might have returned, once more;  
 Asked all he met; and suffered, for his part;  
 Adventuring, while grieving, day and night,  
 Languishing, sighing, in a woeful plight.

Now, the young man met the king, on the plain,  
 And they passed the time together, awhile,  
 For each of Love's sorrows did complain,  
 Which neither could explain, or reconcile.  
 Ferrau mentioned that he was of Spain,  
 Bound for Granada after many a mile,  
 Which was a fair place in his own country,  
 And where he'd once loved a certain lady;

Sweet Doralice was this lady's name,  
 She, the daughter of King Stordilano.  
 'Speak not another word, here, of that same!'   
 Cried Rodomonte: 'Fight one, now your foe!  
 What brought you here, alas, but death to claim,  
 You man of misfortune, drowned in sorrow?  
 No other man shall e'er remain alive,  
 That loves the maiden; nor shall you survive!'

Bold Ferrau replied: 'You are so mighty  
 That your effrontery discredits you.  
 But since you seek battle, so politely,  
 For good or ill, we shall a duel pursue;  
 And the insolence you show, may rightly  
 Turn to pain and grief ere we are through.  
 I loved her; tis past now, and out of sight,  
 But I'd love her yet, to spite you, sir knight!'

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 38-41: RODOMONTE  
 AND FERRAU COMMENCE A DUEL**

In such angry words, and with many more  
 The warriors challenged one another.  
 They both had lances, as I said before,  
 Now, they wheeled around, and met together.  
 Their chargers, accustomed to bitter war,  
 Advanced; no crueller joust was there ever;  
 Chest encountered chest, and both steeds fell,  
 The thunderous sound of it too great to tell.

Their lances, though immeasurably strong,  
 Splintered wholly, and split along their length.  
 They moved to disengage and, before long,  
 Were wielding their sharp swords, with all their strength.  
 A hard-fought duel began, one worth a song,  
 Mighty swings despatching at least a tenth  
 Of their plate and mail to the ground below.  
 Like smiths, they struck many an anvil-blow.

The whirling blades rarely stopped or slowed,  
 For what one promised the other would deal.  
 While that fight was heard all along the road,  
 And the trees, and hills, echoed, peal on peal.  
 I'll not say who the greater daring showed,  
 Or proved superior in strength, or zeal,  
 So high were both their hearts, so great their power,  
 The world's not seen their equal, to this hour.

Their pride was immense, their anger hot,  
 They fought with pure disdain, both filled with ire,  
 Each one determined to endure his lot.  
 Yet, for now, no more, such is my desire  
 To find Rinaldo, ere he be forgot.  
 I'll return, to tell of all that did transpire,  
 (Such is my way) and the outcome of the fight,  
 For the end to it will surely bring delight.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 42-46: RINALDO  
 ENCOUNTERS THE LOVE-GOD WITH THREE  
 MAIDENS**

Rinaldo sought, as you already know,  
 The Forest of Ardennes, towards the west.  
 'Twas Rodomonte he thought to follow,  
 But the former had gone astray, at best,  
 Had somehow lost the direct path, and so,  
 Had met Ferrau, and was put to the test.  
 Rinaldo, riding onwards, passed them by,  
 Though the duel was taking place nearby.

One he'd reached the leafy forest, our knight  
 Made his way to Merlin's Fount, swiftly,  
 Whose waters extinguish Love's delight,  
 Or will kindle that same, he rode directly  
 To the place, but came on a wondrous sight,  
 That captured his attention, completely.  
 For, a meadow full of flowers met his view,  
 Of white, and crimson, and of every hue.

And in this meadow stood a naked boy,  
 Singing, for his pleasure, a cheerful air,  
 And the love of three maids he did enjoy,  
 Who danced, naked, all about him, there.  
 Neither sword nor shield did the lad employ.  
 His eyes were dark, his flowing locks were fair.  
 Whether a downy beard he did display,  
 Was unclear, some might say yea, and some nay.

With violets, roses, flowers of every sort,  
 In woven baskets, dancing they did go,  
 Those three amorous maids, who paid him court.  
 Entering upon the glade, came Rinaldo.  
 They cried: "The traitor comes! The beast is caught!  
 Here's a man that finds joy in pain and woe!  
 Behold! The one that prizes not delight,  
 We have yet ensnared, in his own despite!"

With their baskets, they approached Rinaldo,  
 One threw roses, another, violets,  
 One hyacinths and lilies, while each blow  
 Struck at his heart, engendering regrets.  
 Pain to the marrow of his bones did flow,  
 ('Tis how a man that scorns love pays his debts)  
 As if each flower, each leaf, a fire did start,  
 Kindling a searing flame, in every part.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 47-51: THE GRACES  
 PUNISH HIM FOR SCORNING LOVE**

Once the three maidens' baskets were empty,  
 The naked youth drew near to Rinaldo,  
 And with the long, leafy stem of a lily,  
 Struck his helmet, once worn by Mambrino.  
 Not that the helm was of aid; instantly,  
 Helpless as a child, he fell to the blow,  
 And he had scarcely tumbled to the ground,  
 Ere Love seized his feet, and dragged him around.

Each maiden had a garland on her head,  
 A wreath of roses, white and crimson in hue,  
 Which she now removed, and employed instead  
 Of a lash, with which to strike him anew.  
 Though Rinaldo begged for mercy, as he bled,  
 They whipped the knight, till they were weary too,  
 Circling round him on the grass, where he lay,  
 Thrashing him with thorny stems, till midday.

Neither his breastplate nor his coat of mail  
 Protected his body from their assault.  
 The fallen knight they continued to assail,  
 Nor for a moment did they think to halt,  
 Till he was a single bruise; of no avail  
 His fierce writhing; suffering, for his fault,  
 More than a damned soul burning in Hell's fire,  
 Ready from fear, pain, anguish, to expire.

Unsure if they were human or divine,  
 In vain, our knight begged and prayed for mercy.  
 Lo, from their shoulders, wings, of strange design,  
 Unfolded, without warning; things of beauty.  
 In white and gold and crimson these did shine,  
 And, set in each plume, an eye showed clearly,  
 Not like those that peacocks show, but truly  
 Like those of some fair and gracious lady.

The maidens lingered not, but rose in flight,  
Lifting, in turn, to the skies, high above.  
Alone, upon the grass, remained the knight,  
Weeping bitterly, scarce able yet to move,  
For anguish filled his heart, sore was his plight.  
Little by little, his spirit sought to prove  
That he still lived, as, robbed of all pride,  
He lay upon the ground, like one that's died.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 52-56: TWO DEPART BUT  
PASITEA RETURNS TO INSTRUCT HIM**

While he was lying thus, among the flowers,  
Believing that his death must now be near,  
One of those three celestial powers  
Returned; and goddess-like she did appear,  
Too fair to portray in such verse as ours.  
She said: 'I am Pasitea, yet have no fear;  
Though I attacked you first, as you deserve,  
I am Love's companion, and him I serve.

'Twas he that struck you, and made you suffer  
That fall from your steed, like some enemy.  
Yet if you'd oppose him, you'd be in error,  
In times ancient or contemporary,  
None, could succeed, in so doing, ever.  
Now listen to what I tell you, carefully,  
For I seek to save you from a painful death.  
Fail me, and you'll ne'er take one peaceful breath.

This is the law and statute, Love conceived:  
Those who are loved, and love not in return,  
Must, themselves, feel love; yet ne'er be believed;  
Thus, with the fire they kindled, they must burn.  
No torment, no ill wound that you've received,  
No dreamed-of punishment, that one may earn,  
Can weigh in the scales against such disdain;  
Heartache strikes deeper than all other pain.

To love someone yet not be loved, I say,  
Is the greatest hurt of all, that one can know.  
This you must prove yourself, if you, someday,  
Would be free of Love's disdain, here below.  
That you may learn, you must wander, astray.  
Through this shadowy woodland, you shall go,  
Until you find, where a fountain flows free,  
A lofty pine, and a green olive tree.

From there a river rises and, joyously,  
Sparkles amidst the flowers and fresh grass.  
Its waters hold the sovereign remedy  
For the pain no other will e'er surpass.'  
Such were the words of that lovely lady,  
Who, like a bird, through the clear air, did pass,  
And, rising higher, as she gained the sky,  
Vanished, in a trice, from Rinaldo's eye.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 57-60: RINALDO DRINKS  
FROM THE RIVER OF LOVE**

In his anguish, he knew not what to do,  
On encountering so great a misadventure,  
Nor could the warrior comprehend, tis true,  
How such beings could exist in Nature;  
How, through the air, such lovely creatures flew,  
That could so prevail against strong armour.  
Those naked maids had robbed him of his power,  
With lilies, roses, many a fair flower.

Wearily, he raised his aching body,  
From the meadow-grass on which he lay,  
And through the leafy woods, dense and shady,  
He, painfully, set out upon his way.  
He found the tall pine, and the olive tree  
By whose gnarled, twisted roots, by night and day,  
A clear water's distilled, sweet to the taste,  
But bitter to the heart by love thus graced.

For, love's bitterness strikes deep at the heart  
Of one who drinks of that delicious stream.  
Thus, Merlin wrought a fountain, by his art,  
Nearby, that counters the first, so twould seem,  
Removing what the former doth impart,  
All this I told you, on the day, I deem,  
That Rinaldo drank deep from Merlin's fount,  
And loathed Angelica, on that account.

Now Rinaldo had lost all memory,  
Of that past moment, at the present time,  
And when he reached the stream, in agony,  
(So rudely punished for his former crime,  
That every bruise tormented him sorely)  
He lay down on the turf, amidst the thyme,  
Then that valiant prince, resting on the bank,  
In his great thirst, bowed his head, and drank.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 61-66: REPENTANT, HE  
SETS OUT TO SEEK ANGELICA IN INDIA**

When he'd drunk the water, he raised his face  
And found that all his former pain had gone,  
Though his thirst was not yet slaked, twas the case  
The more he drank, the more he would go on  
Drinking thus, and so thanked God of His grace;  
Then, content, his mind, at ease, dwelt upon  
The former time, now gradually recalled,  
When he'd been there before, and, unenthralled,

While sleeping there, in the flowering grass,  
By Angelica's lilies and roses,  
Had been roused; and then how he'd fled, alas,  
Though now he repented, one supposes,  
For his heart was wounded; love for the lass  
Possessed him, with all that love imposes.  
Now humbled, he longed for what was not,  
That maiden midst the flowers, erstwhile forgot;

And, blaming himself for his cruelty,  
And the hatred towards her he'd displayed,  
And all the times he'd treated her badly,  
He deemed that, pitiless, he should be flayed.  
An hour before he'd loathed her intensely,  
Now, far more than himself, he loved the maid,  
And feeling a deep longing to see her,  
Wished to travel, once more, to India.

But to see fair Angelica, once more,  
To India he now longed to journey.  
He mounted brave Baiardo, as before;  
He was saddled, and waiting patiently.  
Now, as he rode on, a damsel he saw,  
Though unable to view her face clearly,  
For she rode midst the wood, beyond a stream,  
Beside a fount, much like a maid in dream.

Her hair flowed down, on her left-hand side,  
Falling loose, and blowing with the breeze.  
One a white, long-maned palfrey she did ride,  
Caparisoned with gold. She rode with ease,  
An armoured knight, beside her close allied,  
Accompanied her, boldly, through the trees.  
Mount Etna's image formed his helmet crest,  
And adorned his shield, and his over-vest.

The emblem, I mean, that the rider showed,  
Was of a mountain, spurting crimson flame,  
And the caparison of the mount he rode,  
And his shield, bore a likeness of that same.  
Now, most gentle lords, my own steed has slowed,  
And I must leave their story; cast no blame  
For I must end one half-told earlier:  
That of Brunello, chased by Marfisa.

**BOOK II: CANTO XV: 67-70: WE RETURN TO  
MARFISA, PURSUING BRUNELLO**

That proud warrior-maid, relentlessly  
Pursued the wicked thief, both day and night,  
O'er high hills, through torrents raging wildly,  
Marshland, and forest, she pursued his flight.  
But his speedy courser, Frontalate,  
Rendered her quest vain; he fled from sight.  
That horse was Sacripante's, and ever  
Flew like a bird, galloping on before her.

For fifteen days she had pursued the steed,  
And chewed a leaf or two; twas all she ate.  
The cunning thief was better off, indeed;  
He'd other means of maintaining his state.  
Being much speedier, when he found need  
For sustenance he briefly chanced his fate,  
By entering some inn, and dining there;  
Then fleeing, never paying for the fare!

And when the host, and the servants, pursued  
With pots and pans, he simply sped away,  
And licked his lips, and smiled as he reviewed  
His pleasant meal, reluctant to delay.  
He smirked at them all; such his attitude,  
Spoleto's women, and Foligno's, they  
That serve the breakfast egg for dinner,  
Could scarce escape the tricks of that sinner.

Yet still Marfisa followed at his back,  
Now far off, now labouring to draw near.  
'Stop, thief! Stop, thief!' she'd cry, and 'Woe, alack,  
Some voice would rise: A thief he is, I fear!'  
The glutton brought them grief, his least attack  
Purloined the choicest morsels they held dear.  
Naught could they do but give him the finger!  
No more. This canto's done. I'll not linger.

BOOK II: CANTO XVI: THE TOURNEY AT MOUNT CARENA



ARGOMENTO.

Dietro Brunel correndo tutta via,  
Troua Marfisa vna Dama, e vn guerriero.  
Ad Agramante il ladro dà in balia  
L'Anello, e il corno di tal magistero,  
Onde s'acquista vna corona. Inuia  
Sua gente il Re per ritrouar Ruggiero,  
Fassi vn vago torneo. Dà il Re Brunello,  
A Rugier l'armi, il brando, e il destrier snello.



ALLEGORIE.

Si nota come per Brunello ilquale dona ad Agramante l'Anello, e il Corno, che'l suddito debbe sempre procurare ogni ben al suo prencipe, conciosia che i Prencipi ne sono dati da Dio per nostra conseruatione, & gouerno.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 1-7: MARFISA PURSUING  
BRUNELLO MEETS A LADY AND A KNIGHT**

This fair history I relate in song,  
Will prove far more delightful to the ear  
When Count Orlando reaches France, ere long,  
And Agramante and his troops appear.  
But to a later canto they belong;  
Tis enough to deal with Brunello here,  
Brunello, that rascal of evil race,  
Still on the run, Marfisa giving chase.

He'd stolen Orlando's horn that morning,  
As you've heard before, and Balisardo,  
That charmed blade of Falerina's forging.  
And, as I've explained in the last canto,  
He was in and out the taverns stealing  
From every kitchen, every host his foe,  
Not waiting to seek an invitation;  
Helping himself to some rich collation.

When he'd quaffed his drink, he'd purloin the cup,  
And would then declare the bill had been paid,  
Calling out: 'Luck, be with you, when you sup!'  
As his swift steed the whip and spur obeyed.  
Marfisa swore she'd string the rascal up,  
If ever that cunning fellow were delayed.  
He'd stop; when she thought she had him pinned,  
He'd be off again, fleeing like the wind.

The angry maid chased him for fifteen days  
As I've said, growing weaker as she went,  
For she'd but grass and leaves to eat always,  
While upon that furious mission intent,  
Though she was ever steadfast, to her praise,  
And would seize the rogue yet ere she was spent.  
Yet twas no easy thing to stay the course,  
Since she was on foot, he astride a horse.

Her own steed had perished on the way;  
On the sixth eve the beast had upped and died;  
So, she now employed her legs, night and day.  
Though still clad in full armour, out of pride,  
So swift was she, a greyhound, I would say,  
Off the leash, an arrow, or some sharp-eyed  
Falcon, swooping, from the sky to the vale,  
She'd have left far behind her, without fail.

But, debilitated, tiring of the chase,  
She soon found her armour a heavy weight,  
And, proof against Brunello, upped her pace  
By doffing all, thereby easing her state.  
She ran so fiercely, with threatening face  
Free of that burden, and at such a rate,  
That she gave Brunello many a fright,  
Though his steed sped on, like the breeze in flight.

Oft, she came so near she thought to mount  
His horse's crupper, while he upped his speed,  
Racing furiously, on his own account,  
Spurring the heaving flanks of his fine steed.  
The steadfast queen, deterred by no amount  
Of trickery on his part, would ne'er concede.  
Yet, suddenly, she faced a fresh distraction,  
Who'd have died ere leaving off the action.

For the chase led towards a maid in white,  
She was travelling slowly o'er the plain,  
Of wondrous beauty, while a handsome knight  
Rode beside her; fair indeed were the twain.  
Their story I'll tell later, if I might,  
For I must hunt Brunello, once again,  
Who sped o'er hill and dale, in a fever,  
Thinking he still fled the bold Marfisa.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 8-15: BRUNELLO  
REACHES BIZERTE (HIPPO), AND TELLS HIS  
TALE TO AGRAMANTE**

She remained behind, and there caused trouble,  
Of which I'll tell you, when I've time to spare,  
Though the conflict failed to lead to a battle.  
Brunello, meanwhile, far from that affair,  
Rode his swift steed, clad in gleaming metal,  
(The steed that is; a mount, beyond compare)  
Reached the coast, boarded ship, as he had planned,  
And sailed for Africa, his native land.

He landed at Bizerte where his king,  
Agramante, eager to fight the foe,  
Fretted that none would think of leaving  
Till they'd discovered young Ruggiero,  
A fair knight whom a wizard was hiding,  
(The enchanter, wise Atlante), and so  
Could not be found, or seen you understand,  
Till fair Angelica's ring came to hand.

Brunello, the thief, arrived and, smiling,  
Went off to seek a royal audience.  
Once done, he doffed his cap to the king,  
And, speaking in many a fine sentence.  
The lords and princes, swiftly gathering,  
Heard him tell (beside a deal of nonsense)  
How he'd gained the ring from Angelica,  
(Though he paused oft, to indulge his laughter).

Next, he told how, unseen, he'd snatched a steed  
From beneath the King of Circassia,  
And stolen a mighty sword; for that deed,  
Being chased by the furious Marfisa,  
Yet had escaped, by a rare turn of speed,  
(All this he told the king, so I gather),  
And how, ere that, he'd gained a sword and horn  
From some fine knight or other, in the morn.

Once the thief had completed his story,  
He gave the horn to King Agramante,  
Whereupon twas recognised, instantly,  
As borne in Africa, by Almonte,  
And then owned by Orlando, thus every  
Prince and lord there marvelled, greatly,  
Speaking, among themselves, of chance and fate;  
Though the thief Brunello could not wait

To place the ring in Agramante's hand,  
That little ring endowed with such power,  
In its presence, no enchantment could stand.  
The king rose; came now Brunello's hour:  
On his head the king set the royal band  
Of Tingitana, for twas in his dower,  
All that realm, and all that it contained,  
The castles, and the people it maintained,

Which country was on the western border,  
And inhabited by a dark-skinned race.  
With the ring, the court was in a fervour;  
Agramante and his men left apace.  
Brunello, newly-crowned as a ruler,  
Rode beside them. All hoped Allah would grace  
Them with a sight of young Ruggiero;  
O'er the sands to Carena they would go.

## BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 16-20: AGRAMANTE AND COMPANY REACH MOUNT CARENA

Immeasurably vast is Mount Carena  
And its summit almost touches the sky.  
On the top a goodly plateau, with a cover  
Of leafy shrubs and trees, extends, on high,  
For a hundred miles, border to border.  
O'er this plain, runs a stream, that, by and by,  
Descends the steep slopes, to the coast below,  
Forming a natural harbour, with its flow.

On the plain, I've described, by the river,  
Rose a mighty rock, a good mile in height,  
Which a wall of glass circled, and never  
A pathway could be seen there, nor a flight  
Of stairs, or none the eyes could discover,  
For naught but sheer cliffs rose towards the light.  
Yet, if one looked through the crystal, one saw,  
A lovely park, with a green and wooded floor.

On the mountain summit, in this garden,  
Grew leafy palms, and verdant cedar-trees.  
Mulabuferso, versed in that kingdom,  
Said he'd never seen the rock, if you please,  
And, therefore, twas wrought by incantation,  
A work of necromancy, built to please  
The mage Atlante, who'd hid it from all eyes.  
The ring had revealed it, to his surprise,

The ring that abolished all enchantment.  
Then all were certain that Ruggiero  
Dwelt upon that summit; with discontent,  
The cunning old Atlante gazed below,  
And, divining Agramante's intent  
His thoughts were sad, his heart filled with woe,  
For he knew that he might lose the young knight,  
Whom he had hoped to keep from their sight.

He paced about, unsure what he could do  
To keep that sovereign youth from their eyes.  
He wept, while begging him to hide from view,  
And not descend from the heights, in any wise.  
Agramante realised, unless they flew  
To the summit, like birds amidst the skies,  
There was naught that he could do or say  
That would serve his purpose, in any way.



**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 21-24: BRUNELLO  
CALLS FOR A TOURNAMENT, TO DRAW  
RUGGIERO FORTH**

Brunello, now King of Tingitana,  
Since his efforts to climb had proved in vain,  
(Though he'd tried his spidery skills, as ever,  
He'd found the glass too smooth) upon the plain,  
Sat, and pondered, seeking to discover,  
Some pathway to success; he rose again,  
Full of calm self-assurance: 'God be praised!'  
He cried: 'I've found the means! Be ye amazed!

But everyone must give a helping hand,  
And obey the instructions I'll supply.  
A hundred of you knights, I now command  
To start a pleasant tourney, by and by.  
Show that you are the finest in the land,  
Let your valour and your ardour, rise on high.  
Charge at each other, as you've done before,  
Sound the trumpets and horns, as if in war.'

The knights replied: 'Well, that's easily done!'  
Though not a lord there understood his plan.  
They spread out next the stream, everyone  
Beneath his own banner, ere, they began.  
Then Agramante chose his company, none  
But monarchs, dukes, and barons to a man,  
Trained in war; fifty champions he found,  
And their steeds' caparisons swept the ground.

Sobrino King of Garbo; Gualciotto,  
Bellamarina's king; then Arzila's  
Bambirago; Oran's Marbalusto;  
Constantine's Pinadoro; and Bolga's  
Mirabaldo; with the king of Fizano,  
Mulabuferso; all those warriors,  
Charged at Agramante, brave and bold;  
While there were fifty noble knights all told.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 25-29: AGRAMANTE  
DOWNS MALABUFERSO, MIRABALDO AND  
GUALCIOTTO**

The two ranks met with a wondrous crash;  
They drove together with a noise like thunder;  
The cries, the war-horns, the almighty clash

Of steeds and armour, split the sky asunder.  
Agramante's squadron, perchance too rash,  
Had the worst of that very first encounter;  
Twenty of his champions were grounded,  
With only seven of their foes confounded.

Agramante nearly lost the royal banner,  
Carried just ahead of that valiant king.  
The battle, conducted with such fervour,  
Scarcely seemed the careless and playful thing,  
Intended. Sobrino, fierce as ever,  
King of Garbo, large of limb, there did bring,  
His ensign, a tongue of fire; and, though old  
And grey, fought like a lion, strong and bold.

Agramante, his surcoat blue and gold,  
Bearing a quartered shield, rode Sisifalto,  
His great steed and, like a wolf in the fold,  
Moved furiously against the humbler foe,  
And there he downed Fizano's king, knocked cold.  
Struck by the king's mount, Mulabuferso,  
Was halted, by the impact, in his course,  
And tumbled to the ground, beneath his horse.

Agramante, with scarcely a delay,  
Wheeled his charger and struck Mirabaldo,  
Likewise unseating him, for down he lay,  
Bolga's noble king; he, you should know,  
Showed a ram on his ensign; night and day  
That emblem o'er his castle's walls did blow,  
For the banner, on a white field, did unfold  
A ram as black as coal, with horns of gold.

Yet he fell, while Agramante raged on,  
Swinging his mighty blade, and filled with ire,  
Gualciotto in a moment was gone  
To ground, Bellamarina his empire,  
Struck by a single-sword blow, whereupon  
He dropped like a stone, tumbled in the mire.  
His black shield, and crest, bore a dove in white,  
An olive-branch in its beak; woe the knight!

**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 30-33: AND MANY  
OTHERS, INCLUDING ARZILA'S BAMBIRAGO**

Agramante wrought many a wondrous deed,  
And, though he rode amidst valiant men,

None equalled him in strength, all there agreed.  
Tremizon's king, Alzirdo, was then  
At his side (his shield, on a golden mead  
Showed a crimson rose) and, worth any ten  
Other knights, Folvo, King of Fez, was there,  
A gold bar, o'er azure, his flag did bear.

Many more were in that fight I'll not name;  
I would rather wait and give, at leisure  
All the details of how, to France, they came,  
Their arms, their titles, and take their measure,  
At that time; for now, I'll defer the same,  
And return to the tourney (fought for pleasure!)  
Where the Saracens charged at each other,  
And Agramante sought to show his valour.

He turned his steed about, to left and right,  
Struck this man, sent another to the field;  
Spurred his horse and won clear, seized a knight  
By the wrist, by the helm; forced both to yield.  
His comrades regrouped, that is, ceased to fight,  
And quit him, so his prowess was revealed;  
He engaged in battle, striking men at will,  
Showing his strength, his chivalry, his skill,

Bambirago of Arzila's crest, he seized,  
(That monarch was unseated to his shame),  
Overjoyed, and yet, in a sense, displeased,  
To find no man his equal at that game.  
From the rock young Ruggiero was pleased  
To gaze upon the scene, and view that same;  
Beside Atlante, by whom he'd been raised.  
The ardent youth, in wonder, stood and gazed.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 34-38: RUGGIERO BEGS TO VIEW THE TOURNAMENT MORE CLOSELY**

The field seemed small, from that distant height.  
Watching the knights perform their tournament,  
Ruggiero was restless, his eyes alight,  
His hands twitching, his eager gaze intent;  
Admiring the encounters, knight on knight,  
While kicking his feet about in discontent.  
He asked to descend to witness it, in vain;  
Longed to be nearer, and so asked again.

'Ah, my dear son!' Atlante now replied,  
'A sinful game it is you gaze on here!  
Calm yourself, let the impulse be denied  
To go amongst these warriors, for I fear  
Ascendant planets may not be defied.  
If astrology's art speaks true, then clear  
Warning it yields, and of this I am sure,  
That you will be betrayed, and die in war.'

The youth replied: 'I do believe the skies  
Influence our lives; but if what is to be  
Must be, what safety in denial lies?  
Gainst destiny there is no remedy.  
And if, by use of force, your will denies  
Me satisfaction, that same destiny  
Shall yet be fulfilled, some day and hour,  
If your art, and your skill therein, have power.

Therefore, I beg of you, sir, let me go,  
For I long to see the joust more clearly;  
Or I'll hurl myself to the depths below,  
And so, defeat the claims of prophecy.  
For the longer I view this martial show,  
And the more I see of this chivalry,  
The greater my hope of dwelling, thereby,  
Midst those great warriors, though I may die.'

When the old wizard realised that his ward  
Would descend, whether he wished it or no,  
He crossed the garden, to avoid discord,  
And unlocked a little door that led below,  
Then, through a long tunnel that would afford  
Access to the plain, led the youth, and so  
They came to an exit beside the stream,  
Where Brunello was waiting, it would seem.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 39-48: BRUNELLO TEMPTS HIM WITH THE STEED FRONTALATE**

He was alone there, close to the water,  
When Atlante and the youth came in view.  
And, watching the lad approach the river,  
Knew he was Ruggiero; they spoke true,  
Who told of his noble looks and manner,  
And handsome form; but a swift review,  
Assured Brunello he had found the boy,  
And that he might, therefore, his tricks employ.

He was astride his courser Frontalate,  
And now his mount's agility displayed,  
By having the creature leap, wondrously,  
In great long arcs, that ease and power conveyed.  
Young Ruggiero watched, admiringly.  
So deep an impression those antics made,  
He was seized by such longing for the steed,  
He'd have traded his blood for it, indeed.

He begged his guardian, Atalante,  
To acquire the horse for him if he could.  
I'll not keep you in suspense, unduly,  
But give you the conclusion, as I should.  
Though the mage was opposed to it, wholly,  
And gave him many reasons, ill and good,  
As to why a wretched fate would ensue,  
Why steeds and weapons he had kept from view,

Ruggiero, of his speech, heard no more  
Than the ground beneath his feet, I'd say;  
Yet he felt a deep pang of woe and, more,  
His whole visage now turned a deathly grey.  
The old mage yielded up his ground, therefore,  
And when the thief repeated his display,  
(Though a king, now!) he sought to buy the steed,  
With its saddle and trappings, if agreed,

For any sum Brunello might mention.  
He, cunning past belief, saw his plan  
Was maturing, and said: 'My intention  
Is not to sell this horse to any man.  
Our king is soon launching an invasion,  
And every knight who'd win renown, and can,  
Will join him, and thereby gain fresh honour;  
For, there, all may show their skill, and valour.

And now, the time, indeed, has drawn near  
That every man of courage must desire,  
When, in their own true colours, folk appear;  
Some men will hide, others will rise higher,  
For the heart of every knight will show clear.  
Some will prove brave, as others flee the fire,  
While those who stay behind will reap but shame,  
Scorned by little boys in some warlike game.

Because King Agramante now would sail  
O'er the sea, to face Charlemagne in France,  
The sea is filled with ships, our armies hail  
His preparations for a swift advance.  
The time has come, if victory shall prevail,  
For men to show their skill with sword and lance.  
Every true knight, his banner once unfurled,  
May hear his deeds proclaimed, o'er all the world.'

While this brave speech flowed from King Brunello,  
Ruggiero listened, most attentively,  
His expression ever-changing, while the glow  
Of his brave martial thoughts shone forth, brightly.  
His heart pounded, he felt each hammer-blow,  
As the thief spoke on, his manner sprightly:  
'More men are gathering, on land and shore,  
Than e'er seen in such vast numbers before.

Thirty-two monarchs meet, with great display,  
Each leading an army, from his realm, to war.  
Even old men and boys bear arms this day,  
And well-nigh shame the women at their door.  
Therefore, be not surprised by what I say,  
That I'll not sell my steed, you may be sure,  
For all the treasure on Earth; one so bold,  
So swift; the creature's worth his weight in gold!

Yet if I thought, fair youth, that you must stay,  
For lack of a horse, and be left behind,  
I promise you, I'd give the steed away,  
With all its trappings; all to you consigned.  
Tis in good faith, I swear it, not in play,  
For such a purpose fate may have designed;  
While neither Rinaldo nor Orlando  
With such a mount, or sword, will meet the foe.'

## BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 49-52: RUGGIERO ASKS IT AS A GIFT

They youth was scarcely slow in his reply,  
Not waiting for permission from Atlante.  
He felt a thousand years must pass by  
Ere he could mount the courser, thus, swiftly,  
He made answer: 'Grant me the steed, and I  
Will walk through the fire for you; I, simply,  
Request, above all else, this one favour,  
Do what you will, sooner, and not later.

For I watched the men fighting on the plain,  
From the heights, as they proved themselves below,  
And every moment seemed a day, I maintain,  
Till I could ride, sword in hand, gainst the foe.  
Your oath, if you care for my life, sustain;  
Grant me the arms, and the steed, and know,  
If I receive them now, to me they'll lend  
The strength to win fame, or a worthy end.'

With a little smile, Brunello replied,  
'Fear not, none here ride to destruction.  
Those, that you see, by Allah's law abide;  
We are Africans, and all of that religion,  
The tourney but a game, on either side.  
Harsh penalties forbid the use, in action,  
Of the point of the weapon, while the sword  
Only blows with the flat may, here, afford.'

'Grant me the armour, swiftly, and the steed,'  
Ruggiero cried, 'be not concerned, for I  
Promise you I shall learn the game, with speed,  
And play my part amongst them all, thereby.  
You'll keep me here till nightfall, and indeed,  
I'll ne'er reach the field (here, he made to sigh),  
Tis ill to hold back, yet ne'er count the cost,  
For a gift that's too late is a gift that's lost.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XVI: 53-57: HE RECEIVES THE  
STEED AND ARMS FROM BRUNELLO**

Old Atlante, who was standing close by,  
Now cursed every star and planet, loudly,  
Saying: 'Fate, and the high heavens, hereby  
Wish Allah above, and fierce Trivigante,  
To lose this light amongst lords; he will die,  
Betrayed, in woe, perishing evilly.  
Well, whate'er must be must be; tis his fate,  
And what must be, will happen, soon or late.'

Weeping, as he spoke, the necromancer  
Called (his voice breaking) to Ruggiero:  
'My son, to Allah I commend you, ever!'  
Then vanishing, midst the thorns, he did go.  
Ruggiero took the sword, donned the armour,  
And seized the mane of his horse, not slow  
To mount; and, with a leap to the saddle,  
Youth and steed were, in a trice, fit for battle.

The world ne'er possessed a horse so fine,  
As I've said, in praise of his mount, before.  
And with Ruggiero astride, I would opine,  
No finer sight was e'er seen, shore to shore.  
Twould have proved hard, I think, to divine  
By gazing at the steed, and him it bore,  
If they were painted or alive, such the grace,  
And elegance, that, there, the eye could trace.

The horse, as I've said, was from Granada,  
For I've described its qualities before.  
Sacripante lost it at Albracca,  
When Frontalate was the name it bore.  
But Ruggiero, ever called that charger  
Frontino, from the moment that he saw  
Its white forehead, and hocks, blond tail and mane;  
From its pale brow the title it did gain.

To tell the deeds of the youth, on that steed,  
And how he disturbed the tournament,  
Just as soon as he'd reached the level mead,  
Arriving swiftly, and with martial intent,  
A much longer space of time I would need,  
Than this canto offers, tis almost spent;  
I'll end it here, and leave the next to express  
All that occurred there, neither more nor less.



BOOK II: CANTO XVII: THE TALE OF NARCISSUS



ARGOMENTO.

*Ruggier abbatte ogni guerrier a terra,  
Et è perciò ferito a tradimento,  
Onde egli irato al tra ditor si serra  
E al fin l'occide con molto tormento  
Torna ad Atlante . Fanno molta guerra  
Sacripante , e Isolier pien di ardimento ;  
Al fonte ou'è il sepolcro di Narciso ,  
Gli acqueta Orlando gionto a l'improniso .*



ALLEGORIE.

**Q**UANTO l'invidia sia cagione di male a gli huomini , ne lo insegna l'esempio di Bardulasto , e la morte che ei per questo patisce , ne dimostra il merito che per ciò si guadagna.

**S**ACRIPANTE , che uestito da pellegrino , essendo suillato da Isolieri fa guerra seco , ci ammaestra non giudicar dell'huomo a prima vista , perciò che spesso si inganniamo .



**BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 1-4: AGRAMANTE,  
GRADASSO, AGRICANE, AND MARSILIO UNITE  
IN WAR**

Like to the man who first acquired the art,  
And the skill, of navigating o'er the sea,  
That at first, sail-less and with fearful heart,  
Rowed all about, near to shore, cautiously,  
And then, gaining courage, dared to depart  
O'er the deep and, of cliffs and shore once free,  
Set his course by the stars, and came to view  
Things fair, and grand, and glorious, and new;

So, I have seldom, thus far, in my song,  
Left the coast, and sought the open water.  
And yet, now, I must journey wide and long,  
Brave the waves, and speak of endless slaughter;  
For Africa comes hither, thousands strong,  
And the world, in arms, doth gleam and glitter,  
And in every place, in every region,  
Fire and the sword bring death and destruction.

In the East, Gradasso forms his army;  
In the West, Marsilio, King of Spain,  
Grants safe passage to King Agramante;  
He, in the South, commences his campaign.  
All of Christendom is roused; Germany,  
England, France, now the wounds of war sustain.  
Nor does peace bless the North; Agricane,  
Mandricardo's son, advances boldly.

They all move against King Charlemagne,  
From all parts of the world, in great fury.  
Soon streams of blood will drench both hill and plain,  
And the high heavens hear the threnody,  
Neath the roar of battle; yet I toil in vain,  
For I must first continue with my story,  
So that you may the vital details know  
Of all that involves the young Ruggiero.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 5-16: THE COURSE OF  
THE TOURNEY AT MOUNT CARENA**

I left him, fully-armed, upon his steed  
Frontino, Balisardo at his side,  
The fair blade, wrought with such deep art indeed,  
That the power of all enchantments it denied.

Now, so you may hear all that you need,  
And I speak of those knights, in all their pride,  
Listen, as I portray the tournament,  
That was hotly fought, and with fierce intent.

The King of Constantine, Pinadoro,  
And Puliano of Nasamona,  
Witnessed the ruin that, fighting solo,  
Agramante wrought; Bellamarina,  
Bolga, and Arzila, and Fizano,  
Might have viewed their kings, savaged so  
By the blows from his mighty lance and sword,  
As Agramante sought to sweep the board.

His companions waited to one side,  
As if his deeds concerned them not at all,  
Thus, his opponents undisturbed did ride  
(Pinadoro and Puliano, as you'll recall)  
In an arc round the meadow, long and wide,  
And, at the gallop, on those knights did fall,  
Driving through them in a forceful manner,  
Then, swiftly, downing the royal banner.

By Getulia's king, one Grifaldo,  
It was guarded, that their path sought to bar,  
And by a rogue named Bardulasto,  
With a wicked heart, King of Alcazar.  
Neither withstood their fearsome on-surge though,  
And the standard was felled in the fracas.  
From his horse to the ground went Grifaldo,  
Toppled from his seat by Puliano.

Bardulasto, struck fiercely on the head,  
Half-dazed, was on the point of falling too,  
For Pinadoro, young and ardent, sped  
Between the pair, that fierce stroke to pursue.  
The violent blow left him mazed, and half-dead,  
As his horse bore him rapidly from view,  
While Pinadoro tackled all he found,  
Knocking every opponent to the ground.

He encountered the King of Fez, Folvo,  
And, from his gleaming helmet, cut the crown,  
Which fell, in pieces, to the earth below;  
And then he crashed against, and so brought down,  
The King of Tremizon, the brave Alzirdo,  
Who fell, unconscious, boosting the renown

Of bold Pinadoro, King of Constantine;  
He now brought ruin, all along the line.

Pinadoro, was the son of King Balante,  
(By Rugiero the Vassal he was slain),  
And, arrogant, and proud of his beauty,  
He drove the knights before him, o'er the plain,  
Like a tribe of goats, now scattered swiftly,  
As that mighty charge he sought to maintain;  
For not a soul would meet him face to face,  
None were so bold, regardless of disgrace.

Agramante was at work, some way away,  
And so knew naught of his fallen banner,  
For twas King Sobrino, who held him at bay  
Whom he sought to down, in martial manner.  
Then, from afar, he saw that fierce affray,  
Midst rising dust, from which brief encounter  
His comrades fled, chased by Pinadoro,  
And, at that sight, knew anger and sorrow.

He altered course, gripped the sword in his hand,  
And struck Pinadoro a mighty blow,  
On his helmet; the latter, nigh-unmanned,  
Unconscious, to the solid ground, did go.  
But Puliano, on his king, did land  
A counter-blow, that cracked his helm also,  
And descended, on his back, with such force,  
That it almost downed the king and his horse.

Yet such was Agramante's strength, the man  
Gripped his steed, and so retained the saddle,  
While a most vicious duel now began  
With Puliano; to this fresh battle,  
Came Bambirago (mount-less for a span  
Now astride), Sobrino, full of mettle  
Despite his age, Bolga's Mirabaldo,  
And Fizano's king, Mulabuferso.

They all now attacked King Agramante;  
One promised a blow, another dealt one,  
With near-mortal hatred, and savagery.  
They fought on, without restraint or pardon,  
Sliced through the king's helmet crest completely,  
Shattering the crown, its royal emblem;  
Five kings, as I said, hammering away,  
Their monarch striving to keep five at bay.

And they might have captured him despite  
His valour, and his wish to stay alive,  
(For he would happily have sought to fight  
Any one of them, indeed, but not all five)  
But, at this point, our young and untried knight,  
Ruggiero, descended, there to strive  
Against the five assailants in plain sight,  
Crossing the plain in his shining armour  
(That bore the emblems of Tingitana!)

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 17-27: RUGGIERO JOINS THE FIGHT, WEARING BRUNELLO'S EMBLEMS**

When he entered the joust, he fell upon  
Those who were ranked gainst Agramante.  
He urged his valiant steed Frontino on,  
With all the ardour of youth, and neatly  
Struck Puliano's head; that king was gone  
To solid earth, half-dead, downed completely.  
And then he knocked Malabuferso flat,  
As he had the first, and, not content with that,

He made Frontino soar above the ground.  
Leaping like a stag; thus advanced the steed,  
While the many knights who wheeled around  
Marvelled at this Brunello's every deed!  
Then King Sobrino, old, yet strong and sound,  
Lowered his lance, and charged him, at full speed.  
Twas Sobrino who tumbled to the field,  
He and his mount, forgoing lance and shield.

Prusione, of Alvarracchie  
(The Isles of Larache), was the next to fall.  
As when a hawk in merciless display  
Swoops through the air to strike and maul  
A flock of rooks, that flee in disarray,  
Scattering, midst the trees, with strident call;  
So, all those in the tourney sought to win  
Free of this fierce, and ruthless, paladin.

Arzila's king, the mighty Bambirago,  
Whose crest was a dragon, as I've said,  
Had that emblem sent, by Ruggiero,  
Spinning earthwards, cut from the royal head.  
The youth continued on, to meet Tardoco,  
Then Marbalusto, both laid flat, half-dead;

The first was the valiant King of Djerba,  
The monarch that ruled Oran, the other.

Next King Baliverso of Normandy  
Flew far from the saddle, against his will.  
Watching these duels, King Agramante  
Marvelled greatly at the knight's strength and skill.  
'This is Tingitana's king,' he mused, wholly  
Deceived by the emblems, thinking them still  
Borne by Brunello, whom he had conceived  
To be no such force as he now believed.

You may recall the rules of engagement,  
In such a tourney, that all there obeyed:  
That none might be wounded, of intent,  
All must utilise the flat of their blade.  
And if one cheated, who had shown consent,  
A shameful death was the price to be paid.  
Ruggiero knew the penalty sought there,  
For any that the edge or tip might dare.

With the flat of the blade, he dealt fierce blows,  
Thus, at Dardinello, Almonte's son,  
Whose arms were quartered with Orlando's.  
Ruggiero downed him, in a trice twas done.  
'Allah be praised! I ne'er thought Brunello's  
Value rested on the jousts that he'd won!  
Cried Agramante, 'He's a man of honour,  
Right worthy to be crowned an emperor!'

With that, he turned aside so he might view  
Every fearsome stroke, and each skilful deed,  
Many more than I dare describe to you;  
Lo! Before his eyes Ruggiero, whose speed  
And strength was great, downed Argosto, too,  
Argosto of Marmonda, now decreed  
Commander of his navy, by his king,  
A ship's rudder was his heraldic bearing.

Now, King Arigalte of Amonia,  
With Noritia's king, Manilardo,  
And Dudrinasso of Libicana,  
Charged together at this fearsome foe.  
Of the pagan lands, the very flower,  
These three cared not a fig for all below,  
Hence, seeing the havoc wreaked by this knight,  
They vowed to change the martial odds outright.

They each attacked our bold Ruggiero,  
Who first unseated King Arigalte,  
His shield was white, and there did show  
His emblem, the head of a fair lady.  
This first joust brought the young knight little woe,  
And so, he struck Dudrinasso fiercely,  
Slicing through his crest, and his royal crown,  
Rendering him half-dead, as he tumbled down.

Last of the three, he faced Manilardo,  
Who did no better than the first had done,  
Remaining outstretched on the field, although  
Stronger than the rest; that the knight had won,  
Riled Agramante, observing their foe,  
For he wished to end there as he'd begun,  
And so found himself more than envious,  
Lessened by one who seemed as valorous.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 28-36: HE IS WOUNDED BY BARDULASTO, WHOM HE SLAYS**

He vowed to see if this King Brunello,  
Could suffer encountering him in the field.  
He flew like a hawk at Ruggiero,  
And dealt a blow that well-nigh made him yield,  
For it struck him in the side, to his woe,  
And almost made him lose both sword and shield,  
But he gripped his horse's flanks tightly,  
And turned, and then swung at Agramante.

Three spindles and a distaff were displayed  
On Agramante's shield, and formed his crest.  
Ruggiero sent this flying, and repaid  
The monarch's blow with a stroke that expressed  
His wrath; he struck the visor with his blade,  
(At least the flat) which disturbed all the rest  
Of the king's friends, who charged him; Alzirdo,  
Joined Bardulasto, and Sorridano.

The latter ruled the far Hesperides;  
Tis where the Balcana flows, a river  
That folk mistake for the Nile, if you please,  
Though simply from ignorance, as ever.  
Now, as I said, his foes (who came in threes)  
Charged the young knight, and sought to deliver  
Some punishing stroke; to and fro they sped;  
One sword-blow struck his arm, and one his head.



Ruggiero turned to counter Alzirdo,  
Striking the latter with such skill and force  
He sent him flying; then struck Sorridano,  
A back-hand blow that knocked him from his horse,  
And laid him prostrate, like his previous foe,  
Yet was nigh undone by Bardulasto,  
For, lacking courage, that traitor, declined  
To face the knight, but struck him from behind.

He wounded Ruggiero in the side,  
Betraying him with that treacherous blow.  
The bold youth, feeling the pain, swerved wide,  
Then, enraged, turned to face Bardulasto.  
The latter, wheeling, rode at him, and tried  
To deal a second stroke and lay him low,  
Or such was now the content of his thought;  
Yet the outcome was other than he sought.

For, coming face to face with Ruggiero,  
Now advancing to meet him, furiously,  
Bardulasto was struck with fear and woe;  
While earth and sky seemed threatened equally.  
Thus, he wheeled his steed, turning from the foe,  
And fled, while Ruggiero chased him wildly,  
Speeding swift as an arrow through the air,  
And crying: 'Turn, traitor! Turn, if you dare!'

But the latter, it seemed, cared not to wait,  
And raced for a woodland glade nearby,  
Seeking, thus, to escape the traitor's fate;  
But brave Frontino like a bird did fly,  
And Bardulasto's efforts came too late,  
For Ruggiero overtook him, by and by,  
Close to the treeline; and once there, hard-pressed,  
He was forced to reply, and face the test.

He turned around then, in fear and fury,  
And struck at the youth, once more, but in vain.  
The contest between them ended swiftly,  
Bardulasto cleft in two, despatched in pain.  
Thus, Alcazar's king, who'd treacherously  
Flouted the tourney's rules, was caught and slain;  
While Ruggiero's blood poured from his side.  
He, weak and faint, was roused by his pride,

To seek some immediate remedy,  
And rode to the cliff, knowing the power  
Of the herbs deployed by old Atlante;  
The virtues of each were in his dower.  
Ruggiero sought the mage, and quickly,  
Believing he might not outlast the hour;  
For the wound pained him, more than I can say,  
And the lad could scarce endure long delay.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 37-40: WE RETURN TO ORLANDO AND BRANDIMARTE**

Thus, Ruggiero, wounded, left the field,  
Yet the rest of the knights in that tourney,  
Unaware that he had gone, still revealed  
Their apprehension, while Agramante,  
Wholly discomposed (though this he concealed),  
Remounted his steed, disgraced utterly;  
And while he felt discomfort, even pain,  
His shame was such, he'd rather have been slain.

But let us leave him and his company,  
For I've spoken of them enough, for now;  
While Count Orlando, and Brandimarte,  
Require me to conduct them, with a bow,  
To France, so that each disparate story  
Gathered in, may be united, somehow,  
To all the rest; then, we may turn again  
To such worthy deeds as few books contain.

Bold Brandimarte and Count Orlando,  
Had gone to seek the fair Angelica,  
Leaving behind Rinaldo, Astolfo,  
And Dudon; I now turn to the former,  
For through far lands and realms they did go,  
And met with many a strange adventure,  
In which they found many a deed to do,  
The gist of which I would relate to you.

One day, in India, while travelling  
Those two comrades came upon a great stone,  
And there, beside a fountain, was sitting  
A queen, who hung her head, and wept alone;  
While upon a bridge nearby, defending  
The way o'er, as if the ground were his own,  
Was a knight, mounted, clad in full armour.  
To meet him seemed a matter of honour.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 41-45: IN INDIA, THEY  
ENCOUNTER SACRIPANTE**

Now Brandimarte and Count Orlando,  
Each maintained they should be the first to fight.  
And, while they conferred, and eyed the foe,  
A lone pilgrim with a staff came in sight.  
He seemed weary and much travelled, although  
He strode by, unspeaking, and neared the knight  
As if to cross the bridge, quite lost in thought.  
At once, the latter his attention sought.

‘Turn back, now, if tis not your wish to die.  
Turn back, you rogue!’ cried the warrior.  
‘Even a valiant swordsman passing by  
Would scarcely commit so vile an error!  
Turn not to your side, or a fond goodbye  
You’ll receive from me, such that you’ll never  
See such a bridge and stone again but you  
Will recall my farewell, and weep anew!’

The pilgrim, who looked much like a beggar,  
Thus replied: ‘By God, sir knight, let me go;  
For I journey to the shrine in Sericana  
By the shore; that is sacred to Apollo.  
If you know another bridge however,  
That I might use, and so pass o’er the flow,  
Reveal it, and be praised and thanked this day,  
For if not, I cross here; nor can I stay.’

‘Yet stay you will, you kitchen scullion!’  
The knight, now angered, shouted in reply,  
And charged at him, in a fit of dudgeon,  
To send him flying from the bridge thereby.  
The pilgrim, though, now revealed a weapon;  
For a sword he had; twas sheathed at his thigh,  
And, throwing off his cloak, showed the armour  
Beneath, all set to defend his honour.

No leopard, nor no whippet was e’er seen  
To be as swift in leaping to the chase,  
As that pilgrim, who was rangy and lean,  
A man of courage, bold and fierce of face,  
That showed him scant regard (the knight I mean).  
Each the fight, with fury, did now embrace,  
And landed many a fierce and cruel blow.  
In charging forward, neither man was slow.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 46-48: WHO DEFEATS  
THE KNIGHT OF THE BRIDGE**

From his saddle, now, descended the knight,  
Fearful that his courser might be slain,  
And had he not been valiant in a fight,  
The pilgrim would have downed him, I maintain.  
Brandimarte and Orlando, at the sight,  
Were astounded that either could sustain  
Such blows, and agreed no two on earth  
Were fiercer, or seemed of greater worth;

While, they thought, they recalled the pilgrim’s face,  
From some quite other time and location,  
Though his beard and apparel, for a space,  
Had consigned his name to oblivion.  
The duel was hand to hand, and fought at pace,  
For the windblown leaves in their motion,  
Nor rain nor snow ever fell as densely,  
As the blows from those swords, or as fiercely.

Slowly the pilgrim o’er the bridge advanced,  
Revealing both his courage and his strength,  
Wondrously fierce, now to and fro he danced,  
While the knight, revealing scarcely a tenth  
Of the other’s skill, seemed as if entranced.  
Cut about head, arms, and belly, at length,  
Forced to retreat, despite his valiant show,  
He abandoned the bridgehead to his foe.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 49-58: THE TALE OF  
NARCISSUS**

Beyond the bridge, there lay a level plain,  
All about the rock and fount; there, did stand  
A marble sepulchre, of subtle grain,  
One not fashioned by any human hand.  
Bright, polished letters, a fair golden vein,  
Ran o’er its surface, like a glittering band:  
‘Vain is that soul that loves its own fair face;  
Of Narcissus, behold the resting place.’

This Narcissus was a handsome young man  
Of times past; so fair, his form so graceful,  
That no painted portrait even began  
To compare with a face so beautiful.  
Yet his vanity, as it often can,

Matched his beauty; of pride the lad was full.  
Pride and beauty are seldom found apart,  
Boding painful death for the loving heart.

The then Queen of the Orient loved  
The handsome Narcissus beyond measure.  
But the boy to vain cruelty was moved  
For he scorned her passion altogether,  
Till but a creature of sorrows she proved.  
From morn to night, in grief and displeasure,  
She wept, and prayed to the disdainful one,  
In words that had the power to veil the sun.

Yet twas as if she cast them to the breeze,  
For, in his great pride, he heard them no more  
Than deaf asps do the sage enchanter's pleas.  
Day by day, she drew closer to death's door,  
Until, ere her tormented breath did cease,  
As she gave her parting sighs upon that shore,  
She prayed to Love, and the heavens on high,  
For just vengeance, since unjustly she must die.

Her wish was granted; Narcissus, one day,  
Came suddenly upon the fountain there.  
Chasing a deer, he, o'er that plain, did stray.  
And stopped to drink, and saw a face so fair  
(Twas his own, scarce viewed till then, I say,  
Now seen reflected, in the sun's bright glare)  
That gazing at this vision of true grace,  
He fell in love, yet with his own fair face.

Who has ever heard of so strange a thing?  
O, how Love, truly, strikes to bring distress!  
He sighed beside the fount, desire took wing,  
He craved for that which none can e'er possess.  
That soul so cruel, that such deep pain did bring  
To maidens, praying on their knees no less,  
Adoring him as twere some deity,  
Loved himself alone, and perished swiftly.

For, astonished at his own fair aspect, he  
Languished away, consumed by deep delight,  
Finding no equal to his peerless beauty,  
Like a lily, or a cut rose, once so bright,  
Fading in but a short while, utterly,  
Until his fair visage, its red and white,  
His dark eyes, that fair glances once unfurled,  
Death destroyed, that destroys all the world.

By mischance, the Faery, Silvanella,  
To her woe, came upon that very place  
Where they beheld the youth's sepulchre;  
Midst the flowers, the Fay perceived his dead face.  
She who'd loved the lovely boy with ardour,  
Bewept that loss of beauty, form, and grace,  
Neither able to remain there nor depart,  
Burning still for him, in her anguished heart.

Though he lay dead, she longed for him, alas.  
Her mind yet conquered by love and pity,  
And she lay down beside him, on the grass,  
And kissed that face, those lips, pale and icy.  
She knew, full well, that mortal things must pass,  
That twas foolish to love a soul-less body,  
Yet, while no blood within his veins did move,  
Though she would not love, she was forced to love.

She spent that eve and night, and all next day,  
Consumed by her grief, and then the Faery  
Created, by enchantment, where he lay,  
The marble tomb in the meadow, then she  
Wept and mourned by the fount, till the Fay  
(No great length of time passed, assuredly)  
Melted, like the snow in spring in the sun,  
No longer to be seen, her life here done.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 59-62: OF CALIDORA AND LARBINO**

Yet, ere that, she sought company, and relief  
From the sorrow that, thus, consumed her heart.  
And angered by a love that brought but grief,  
Cast a spell on the fount, with subtle art,  
Such that the man who passed that way, in brief,  
And, halting there, drank and gazed, for his part,  
Saw the faces of fair damsels in that glass,  
Gentle, and sweet, and beautiful, alas.

For those maidens had eyes that shed such grace  
That the man who perceived them was held fast,  
Fated to pine away, in some short space,  
And die of heartbreak, by the fount, at last.  
Twas by mischance there came, to that same place,  
A noble king, in wisdom unsurpassed,  
Brave, and ardent, with a lady doomed to woe;  
She was Calidora; he, Larbino.

Larbino chanced on the spring, as I say,  
Knowing naught of its enchanted nature,  
And languished, and died within a day,  
Entranced by that vision in the water.  
The fair lady, who loved him, chose to stay  
Beside the fount, bereft of her lover,  
Grieving upon that bank till, by and by,  
She too, languishing, should sadly die.

This was the maiden weeping by the stone,  
Who had set the knight as a guardian there,  
So that those to whom the tale was unknown,  
Were made to halt, and of the fount beware.  
For, having seen Larbino overthrown  
By the enchantment, and been forced to share  
His pain and woe, she had vowed, from pity,  
To stay, and warn others, by her story.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVII: 63-67: ORLANDO RECOGNISES SACRIPANTE**

This history, that I've recounted, briefly,  
Of fair Narcissus, and his strange demise,  
She related, in its entirety,  
To the Count, and Brandimarte likewise.  
She pointed out that the pilgrim, fiercely  
Engaged in battle, in more martial guise,  
Was waging war with such ire and might,  
He was surely about to slay her knight.

In fear of this, she asked that Orlando  
Might forge a peace twixt the two, and explained  
That, in pity for others, he should know,  
She'd barred the bridge, and that guard maintained.  
Thus, right and reason jointly should bestow  
Honour upon him, and not see him pained;  
For what the young knight did there was no crime;  
It had saved good men's lives, many a time.

Orlando knew she spoke the truth, and so  
He stepped between the pilgrim and the knight,  
And ended their fierce duel without a blow,  
Telling the former why he should end the fight.  
Then, observing him closely, Orlando  
Recognised Sacripante, with delight;  
While, sporting several wounds now, the other,  
Proved bold Isolier, Ferrau's brother.

That youth had come from India to Spain  
To guard the bridge for Calidora;  
(I would weary me to tread his steps again!)  
Twas Love that had brought him there, moreover.  
Sacripante his search did yet maintain  
For Gradasso, sent by Angelica  
To seek aid from that king, when Brunello  
Stole his horse, and her ring, to both their woe.

I told you how he started on his journey:  
Though I know not how closely you recall  
The pilgrim's clothes he donned; now full many  
A far land he'd crossed, ere it did befall  
That he reached the bridge, in this same country.  
Fair lords, who've listened to my verses; all  
That desire to hear a further measure,  
With my next canto, I'll seek your pleasure.

BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: THE FALL OF ALBRACCA

ARGOMENTO.

Orlando, Fiordiligi, e Brandimarte.

Vanno ad Albracca, ma la notte istessa

Con Angelica insieme ogn'vn si parte,

Son sopraggiunti con le Dame in pressa.

Và Orlando. Resta l'altro armato Marte

Per far battaglia. Il Còte strage espressa

Fa de fier Lestrigon. Salua sua dama.

Com'anco Fiordiligi, fa chi l'ama.



A L L E G O R I E.

**C**HE amore sij bastante a far credere a chi lo segue, il nero per il bianco, ce lo dinota Orlando, alquale, desando Angelica di veder Rinaldo, con bel modo dimottra che conuien partirsi, & andar in Francia.

**L**E Dame salue dai Lestrigioni con l'aiuto di Orlando e Brandimarte, ne dimostra che se ben il Demonio cerca spesso tirarne alla cattiuà strada, pure la virtù, di modo ne aiuta, che senza temer di lui, sempre restiamo superiori.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 1-3: LOVE AS THE SOURCE OF GLORY**

Britain was once the land of love and glory,  
Famous for her knights, and many a lover;  
Whence her name is honoured still in story.  
Tis why King Arthur's fame resounds ever,  
From those times, when, in all their vainglory,  
With their ladies, his lords sought adventure,  
And their worth, in many a fight, to display;  
Brave men, whose deeds are spoken of today.

And later, Charlemagne held court in France,  
It bearing scant semblance to the other,  
Though twas strong enough, and proof against chance,  
Owning Rinaldo, and the Count, moreover;  
Yet the cause of Love, it failed to advance,  
And Holy War became its sole endeavour,  
No longer could it boast the worth and fame  
That the former, King Arthur's court, could claim.

For tis Love that grants us glory; Amor  
Adds worth and honour to our mortal span.  
Love gains the victory, for Love is sure  
To add ardour to the heart of every man.  
Hence, I'll speak of Orlando's love, once more,  
And thus, take up the tale, as I began,  
And turn to where I left Sacripante,  
In the last canto, wearied from his journey.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 4-5: ORLANDO REACHES ALBRACCA**

Once Sacripante had told Orlando  
Of the nature of his quest; how, in fear,  
Angelica had ordered him to go,  
And seek aid, for no other would appear,  
Orlando gave a sigh, of gentle woe,  
On hearing of that lady, he held dear,  
Quit Isolier and Calidora,  
And set out for the walls of Albracca.

Meanwhile Sacripante donned his mantle,  
Grasped his wallet, and took his staff in hand,  
And went to seek Gradasso's aid in battle,  
By journeying to that king's distant land.  
One morn, the Count approached the citadel,

Brandimarte in his wake, yet his planned  
Entry to Albracca was now denied,  
So vast the host besieging those inside.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 6-11: HE TELLS ANGELICA OF HIS ADVENTURES**

Torindo, the king of the Turks, was there;  
Caramano, king of Santaria;  
And Menadarbo, the Sultan, his care  
All the lands of Egypt and Syria.  
Many a tent the open plain did share,  
For the host was greater now than ever,  
And all those warriors their might displayed  
To bring suffering and death to one fair maid.

This for one, that for another injury,  
Was present to besiege strong Albracca.  
The Turkish king, Torindo, was angry  
That Truffaldino once gained his capture;  
The Sultan, Menadarbo, was completely  
Enamoured of the fair Angelica,  
Yet by her had been rejected and scorned,  
A situation which, at first, he'd mourned,

But later hatred had replaced his love,  
And he attended there to cause her pain.  
Orlando had viewed the host from above,  
And closer to, camped on the hills and plain.  
And though their valour in battle he'd prove,  
Willingly, he would see his love again,  
And so, he sought, in peace, to circumvent  
The force; to reach the maid his sole intent.

He therefore hid within a grove nearby,  
Until the dark of night, then made his way,  
Since the place was familiar to his eye,  
To the citadel, avoiding all affray.  
Seeing him the maid gave a joyful cry,  
And felt her fears and cares melt away.  
Ask not if she was pleased and relieved,  
For that the Count had been slain, she'd believed.

Warm were her caresses and her greeting,  
On his return; their speech open-hearted,  
For Orlando told her of everything,  
That had occurred, from the day they'd parted

Till that moment: the Count spoke of finding  
Marfisa, and how his horn had departed,  
How Orrigille had sought the occasion  
To trick him, and of Monodante's prison,

And of how Rinaldo had left for France,  
With Dudon, and England's Duke Astolfo.  
From first to last he gave each circumstance,  
Every detail, while pacing to and fro.  
When she'd heard all his tale of fate and chance,  
And had learned that the noble Rinaldo,  
Was once again upon his native shore,  
She burned to see that handsome knight once more.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 12-16: THEY FLEE THE CITADEL**

So, she began to work upon Orlando,  
Offering him a thousand reasons why  
They should look to France, and escape the foe.  
Their stores would be depleted by and by,  
And there was little to be gained below.  
The citadel could not survive; they'd die;  
Thus, some new remedy they now must seek,  
To escape from the siege; the future bleak.

She would ride with him, in company,  
To any place to which he chose to go.  
She said naught with which he could disagree,  
(Though he gave it scant thought, he loved her so),  
And that very night they prepared to flee.  
They left bright torches burning, high and low,  
On towers and spires, so the foe might believe  
The fortress was guarded, ere they did leave.

They fled through the dark and shadowy air,  
And so passed unhindered amidst the host;  
But when the stars dimmed, and the sudden flare  
Of light, that heralds dawn, the sky did boast,  
They halted, briefly, to re-order the affair,  
Ere onwards, and in safety, they might post.  
Their band was composed of well-nigh twenty  
Ladies, knights, and sergeants, in company.

Orlando thought to go a separate way,  
The rest chose their own paths; Angelica  
Rode next the Count, in the clear light of day,

With Brandimarte, and Fiordelisa;  
The quartet advanced, brooking no delay,  
And journeyed till mid-afternoon, never  
A soul in sight to hinder their swift flight,  
Quite free of impediment, to their delight.

The air by then was warm, the weather fine,  
And they descended from their mounts awhile,  
To rest in a fair meadow, neath a pine.  
The knights, though heated from many a mile,  
Retained their weighty armour, by design.  
Thus, unafraid of harm, in pleasant style,  
They spoke of love, seated, at their ease,  
Till sounds came to them, carried on the breeze.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 17-21: BRANDIMARTE SEEKS TO DELAY THEIR PURSUERS**

They rose, and viewed, some distance away,  
A band of riders in tight formation,  
Galloping o'er the plain (and not in play!),  
With banners flying, keeping close station.  
Twas Menadarbo, the Sultan, who'd repay  
The maid's scorn, and, of the Turkish nation,  
The king, Torindo; their troops had seized  
And burnt Albracca, entering as they pleased.

For, at dawn, they found they'd been deceived,  
And, realising none were left within,  
Twas but a simple thing, and soon achieved,  
To ope the gates, and that great fortress win.  
Menadarbo swore, by all that he believed,  
He'd have the maid; and did the chase begin,  
And was swiftly followed by Torindo,  
And the rest, among them Caramano.

The Count was disconcerted to behold,  
That armed squadron galloping o'er the plain.  
For though valiant himself, and ever bold,  
To protect the two ladies, he was fain;  
Yet Brandimarte, quite unworried, told  
Orlando not to fret: 'Ride on, again,  
And leave the rest to me; this rabble here  
Are worth not a straw, there's naught to fear.

I own, as you can see, a valiant steed;  
 He's as good as any horse in the East.  
 And there's not a knight amongst them, indeed,  
 That could trouble my defence, in the least.  
 Let me remain behind, if we're agreed,  
 And then your chances will be much increased,  
 For, by word or by deed, I'll find a way  
 To offer our foes diversion, and delay.'

Though the Count was persuaded, in the end,  
 That Brandimarte's plan was good and sound,  
 He was nonetheless loathe to leave his friend,  
 By honour, and long association, bound.  
 Yet, at last, his hand to him he did extend;  
 They all mounted, prepared to change their ground,  
 And, twixt the ladies, Orlando rode away,  
 Yet left bold Brandimarte still in play.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 22-30: HE DEALS WITH THE SULTAN AND THE KINGS**

Towards the knight, advanced that hostile band,  
 Unaware of his presence, o'er the plain.  
 According to their horse's speed, unplanned  
 Each man, now, his progression did maintain,  
 Satalia's king was closest to hand,  
 Marigotto he was called, bound to gain  
 On the others, since his great, dappled steed  
 Flew like an arrow, e'er granting him the lead.

As if shot from a bow, the courser ran,  
 Bearing the king on, while Brandimarte,  
 Observing him, was thinking: 'That bold man  
 Is keen to die; he'll pay his debts full swiftly.'  
 He waited, for delay was still his plan,  
 Till he came close enough to see him clearly,  
 Then hunched his shoulders, and lowered his lance,  
 Spurred his steed, and began his own advance.

Marigotto responded, as on he came,  
 And charged full speed at Brandimarte  
 Whose sharp lance drove savagely through that same,  
 Piercing front to back, skewering him neatly;  
 While his steed the better of the joust did claim,  
 (Brandimarte's steed I mean) full heavily,  
 It struck the other, and so downed the pair,  
 Marigotto, neath his mount, floundering there.

Brandimarte had quickly drawn his blade,  
 And now swung it, right and left, ceaselessly,  
 Scattering the knights, leaving men dismayed,  
 Or carving them to pieces, ruthlessly.  
 Those to the front now wished that they'd delayed,  
 On viewing the cost of arriving early,  
 Halting nervously, showing scant concern,  
 If others, there before them, took first turn.

Now Menadarbo arrived, filled with anger,  
 That one knight should stall so many men;  
 Clasp his lance to his side, no stranger  
 To such fierce encounters, he paused, and then  
 Spurred his courser, seeking not to linger,  
 Struck Brandimarte's ribs, and turned again.  
 Yet the former scarcely moved in his seat,  
 The broken lance fell; once more they did meet.

Brandimarte raised his bared sword on high,  
 With both hands he dealt the other a blow,  
 Helm and shield sought to block that reply,  
 Yet neither protected Menadarbo.  
 Shield and helm were severed; with a sigh  
 The Sultan fell, dying, to the earth, below,  
 Wounded in the head; that death struck fear  
 In all of his company, their caution clear.

They still circled about Brandimarte,  
 Threatening from afar, with extended lance.  
 But our knight charged the squad, fearlessly,  
 And scattered them all, with his swift advance.  
 He chased now this, now that, relentlessly,  
 While granting not a one the slightest chance.  
 King Torindo then engaged in the fight,  
 With Caramano, who wheeled about the knight.

Torindo chose to charge with lowered spear,  
 And struck Brandimarte on the shield;  
 The lance was shattered, our knight saw clear  
 To cut at the king's shoulder, and revealed  
 The flesh neath the armour; the blade fell sheer  
 And sliced him to the belly; to the field  
 He fell, while, when King Caramano saw  
 That stroke, the latter fled. His courser bore



Him swiftly, yet his speed had proved in vain,  
 Though his steed had soared like a bird in flight,  
 Had evening shadows not fallen o'er the plain;  
 Our knight had fought some hours, and now the bright  
 Sun declined; 'twas late the chase to maintain.  
 Caramano escaped and, in the night,  
 Swam a river, in his fear, till, midst the trees  
 Of a dark wood, at last, his flight did cease.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 31-33: HE HEARS THE  
 CRY OF A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS**

Brandimarte, who had sought to pursue  
 Caramano, till he saw the king had fled,  
 With no urge to capture him, turned anew  
 To seek the path deep in the forest that led  
 To the field of conflict, now lost from view.  
 Yet he'd lost his way, so swiftly had he sped  
 Through the dense uncharted glades, while the light  
 Had faded, shadows darkening all in sight.

He rode amidst the trees, for a mile or so,  
 Yet found no route that revealed the sky,  
 So, he halted, having failed to find the foe,  
 Dismounted, and upon the ground did lie,  
 There to sleep, and was slumbering when, lo,  
 His rest was troubled by a sudden cry  
 Not far away; a woman's cry it seemed,  
 Calling on God for aid, unless he dreamed.

Who was that damsel in such sore distress?  
 If you'll but wait and listen, you shall hear.  
 For I've talked of Brandimarte to excess,  
 And must seek Orlando whether far or near.  
 He had journeyed westwards, more or less,  
 (Having left Brandimarte) twould appear,  
 And yet had scarcely gone six miles or so,  
 Ere he found further trouble, pain and woe.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 34-40: ORLANDO IS  
 CAPTURED BY THE LESTRIGIONI**

Orlando had entered a deep valley,  
 The sun now declining towards evening.  
 Midst its rocks dwelt the Lestrigioni,  
 Fierce, and cruel, and pitiless, possessing  
 The talons and fangs of lions, yet simply

Giants otherwise, with beards adorning  
 Their faces, and noses a span in length:  
 From human flesh and blood, they gained their strength.

In the vale, he saw them seated round a board  
 Set with plates of silver and cups of gold  
 Containing food and drink (to be abhorred,  
 If he'd but known it!) The Count, being bold,  
 Immediately, pricked his horse toward  
 The table and its banqueters, and told  
 The ladies (suffering from thirst and hunger)  
 To keep close to him, and follow after.

All three trotted on to seek their dinner,  
 (Of which they'd soon enough have had their fill!)  
 Orlando, his face serene as ever,  
 Hailed the villains, that there did gorge and swill:  
 'Your good health! Since Fortune brings us hither,  
 We would dine here, if such should be your will.  
 For some payment, or of your courtesy,  
 We request that we may join your company.'

Lo, the king of these Lestrigioni,  
 Antropofagon, at this, raised his snout.  
 His eyes, like some vile dragon's, burned redly,  
 While a beard adorned his face, all about.  
 To see another die, amused him greatly,  
 And twas his custom, day in and day out,  
 To murder folk, and drink their blood while fresh,  
 And feast later, at table, on their flesh.

Noting that Orlando seemed well-armed,  
 And was mounted on a fine steed, he feared,  
 Should he seize him, he himself might be harmed,  
 And so, requested he dismount, and cleared  
 A space for him (he might, thus, be disarmed).  
 Now, the Count had decided, as he neared,  
 To join the feast, if invited so to do,  
 Or else take what he needed ere he flew.

So, the Count slid from his steed to the ground,  
 And waited, standing, for the ladies to draw near,  
 Who had started after him; while, all around,  
 Rose a murmur of voices; with a leer,  
 One muttered: 'Tasty morsels, I'll be bound!'  
 Another rogue replied: 'So twould appear,  
 Though a bite or two yields more certainty;  
 Let's wait until they're cooked. and then we'll see.'

Orlando gave their talk scant attention,  
Looking to attend on the ladies closely.  
Meanwhile, Antropofagon took action,  
Rising from the table, well-nigh silently,  
And setting an enormous club in motion  
Behind Orlando's back, two-handedly,  
Striking the Count fiercely on the head,  
And knocking him to the ground, as if half-dead.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 41-44: THE TWO  
LADIES FLEE, AND ORLANDO ESCAPES**

Many of the rest now took a pace toward  
The maidens, filled with anticipation,  
Longing, to see their flesh upon the board,  
Tastily cooked for their delectation.  
The ladies wheeled their mounts, with one accord,  
Disturbed by those looks of expectation,  
And fled, one this way and one that, quite blind  
To their course, while the villains chased behind.

Lamenting loudly, they both went their way  
Weeping and fearful, through that unknown land,  
Till in the darkening woods they went astray.  
Meanwhile the Count, unconscious on the sand,  
Antropofagon stripped, where he lay,  
Removing all his armour, as he'd planned,  
Ere the knight had recovered from the blow  
That, landing on his head, had laid him low.

The cruel king prodded him with a talon,  
And said to the rest: 'He's all skin and bone!  
There's scarce enough for me to feed upon,  
And what's there's not worth the trouble, I'd own.'  
Orlando felt that claw; ere it was gone,  
He'd revived, leapt to his feet, and then flown  
In haste, thus escaping, as God had willed,  
Being served up for dinner, freshly-killed!

The king chased after him, and demanded  
That the Lestrigioni block his way.  
Some grasped clubs, while others, as commanded,  
Threw rocks, though he kept them all at bay.  
He was trapped in that valley; all were banded  
Against him; what might have been, who can say?  
But, Durindana, unsheathed, he now saw,  
That, once seized, the king had cast to the floor.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 45-49: HE SEIZES  
DURINDANA, AND SLAYS THE THRONG**

He ran amidst the throng, and grasped the blade.  
Conceive his joy, that weapon in his hand!  
Where the dale-foot the open plain displayed,  
A hundred of those villains took their stand.  
Unarmoured, and in savage clothes arrayed,  
Without shields, or swords, that treacherous band  
Yet held their massive clubs; the skins they wore  
Were the worn pelts and hides of bear and boar.

Charging amongst them, Count Orlando,  
Swung Durindana; many a man he slew.  
With each blow, fore or back-handed, the foe,  
Side to side, or lengthwise, were sliced in two.  
Their clubs or arms severed, even so,  
Many were so stubborn midst that crew,  
That, with hands and feet lost, like dogs they bit,  
And chewed him badly, ere he ended it.

He turned, and spun about, in his course,  
As they clawed at him from every side.  
Their king struck with the greatest force;  
While the heaviest club, that villain plied.  
Bark covered him all over, thick and coarse.  
Spume from his beard sprayed far and wide,  
While the drool from his mouth wet the ground  
Like the foaming spittle of a rabid hound.

Two feet taller than the rest, the king stood,  
A malicious creature, as I've explained.  
The Count took a swing, as if chopping wood,  
Struck him fiercely on the head, and brained  
The fellow, his blade ending him for good,  
While Durindana its path yet maintained,  
And split the man in half, amidst a fount  
Of blood; none there could now escape the Count.

In a brief while, Orlando wrought such harm  
To that vile, and accursed, company,  
That, though some had tried to flee in alarm,  
Not a one remained alive that he could see.  
Pity those that lingered; now, cool and calm,  
The Count worked his blade ceaselessly,  
Slicing and cutting, so precise his blows  
Not one piece was left larger than a nose.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 50-52: THEN  
SEARCHES FOR ANGELICA AND FIORELISA**

He was quite alone in that empty vale,  
And the fair light of day had almost fled.  
He donned his armour, left lying in the dale,  
Then to the abandoned board turned his head.  
The sight appalled him (he well-nigh turned pale)  
For the feast, on which that vile crew had fed,  
Consisted of the heads, and arms, and feet  
Of human victims, baked or broiled complete.

Had he been starving, he'd have spurned that meal,  
Lacked all appetite for that most cruel fare,  
Wrought by such folk as ne'er did pity feel.  
He mounted his steed, resolved not to despair,  
But to search, till the forest might reveal  
Some trace of the maidens, vanished there.  
Twas his sole thought; "Too great the cost,  
If my lady amidst these woods be lost!

Who will grant me aid or courage then?  
Vain would be the deaths of that monstrous crew.  
If I find her not, I'll wish them here again  
To slay me with their clubs; twould be my due.  
Eternal Father, Heaven's King, maintain  
My strength and valour, comfort me anew!  
Help me to find her, Virgin in Paradise,  
Mother of God, so merciful, so wise!

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 53-56: HE RESCUES  
ANGELICA**

Orlando was weeping now, as he spoke.  
He journeyed through the forest all that night,  
Wandering here and there, till the sun awoke,  
Yet of the maids had neither sound nor sight.  
He heard a voice cry out, as morning broke  
And through the leaves fell the dawning light:  
"There! Go there! She'll not escape the pass.  
Tis a steep climb, and there we'll catch the lass!"

Orlando rode, at speed, towards the sound,  
And, in a little while, perceived its source.  
The vile Lestrigioni he had found,  
Who'd run from him in fear, yet in their course,  
Pursued Angelica, o'er all that ground,

And driven her, for they were there in force,  
Towards a narrow pass where she must yield  
Or plunge six hundred feet, to the field.

Ask me not if the Count raged at the sight.  
His face turned red, seeing her in danger.  
Well-nigh crimson, once he realised her plight,  
Close to, it seemed afire. Filled with anger,  
He urged on his bold steed, and then the knight  
Drew his sword, and whirled it ever higher,  
And left there many a sign so all might see  
That no surgeon such blows could remedy.

I would imagine no less than forty,  
Of those villains, had trapped her at the pass,  
Yet not a single man of those many  
Remained unharmed, to tread upon the grass,  
And claim he'd escaped; for all paid fully.  
Had there been twice the number, en masse,  
All would have borne his mark, on head or face,  
While severed limbs adorned many a place.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 57-61: FIORELISA IS  
SAVED BY BRANDIMARTE**

Now Angelica had fled towards the west,  
And was rescued from those who had chased her,  
But Fiordelisa rode eastward, and the rest  
Of those vile scoundrels had followed after.  
All night by their pursuit she was oppressed,  
Till the sun rose, and the scene grew lighter.  
She thought her body would be eaten whole,  
And prayed to the Good Lord to save her soul.

The morning sun, as I've said, now lit the sky;  
All the heavens were clear, the day was bright.  
And there, in the flowering grass nearby,  
Lay fair Brandimarte, that valiant knight.  
He awoke from deep sleep, and oped his eye,  
And so perceived the weeping maid outright,  
Hunted by the cruel Lestrigioni,  
Terrified, and fleeing on her palfrey.

He mounted his courser, spurred the steed,  
And rode towards them at a fearsome pace,  
His blade drawn, to work some handsome deed,  
And struck the leading villain in the face.

He spared not an inch of the rogue, indeed,  
Chopped him down, without a moment's grace,  
And not lingering to see the rascal fall,  
Sliced another's chest, scarce pausing at all.

There were thirty cannibals there, or so,  
(Perchance a few less, if the truth be told)  
And all were pointing their clubs at the foe,  
And even hurling stones, if they felt bold,  
While Brandimarte, slicing high and low,  
Severed heads and legs. Away they rolled  
Those brainless orbs, his blows strong and sure,  
Until his sword grew heavy with the gore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XVIII: 62-63: SHE TELLS HIM  
THAT SHE SAW ORLANDO FALL**

When at last he believed the scene was free  
Of every accursed and brutish creature,  
And none was hiding there behind a tree,  
He ran to clasp his fair Fiordelisa.  
For half an hour, they embraced, silently,  
Ere they could say a word, then his lover  
Told the knight she had seen Count Orlando  
Lying dead on the ground, and shared her woe.

This she said having seen Orlando fall,  
Prostrate, amidst the Lestrigioni.  
While, Brandimarte, whom the news did apall,  
Rode away, to the Count's aid, full swiftly.  
But the end of my canto's here; now, all  
You lords and ladies that gave ear, kindly,  
To my words, God keep you well, and ever  
Inclined to return, and seek more pleasure.

BOOK II: CANTO XIX: BARIGACCIO THE ROBBER



ARGOMENTO.

*Marfisa uol gettar di un alto fasso  
 Fiordiligi. Onde l'armi e'l suo destriero  
 Brandimante di ciò lassa; di passo  
 Si parte, & è assalito su'l sentiero  
 Troua il forte Agrican di uita casso  
 De l'armi sue si ueste il huon guerriero  
 Uccide Barigaccio, e ogni assaffino  
 S'imbarca Orlando col Re Norandino.*



ALLEGORIE.

*Brandimarte, che lascia l'armi, e'l destriero a Marfisa per saluar  
 la sua dama, ci ammaestra che sempre douiamo de dui mali  
 elegerli il minore, e quel sopportar allegramente.  
 Brandimarte che assalito da' ladri ueste delle armi di Agricane,  
 si mostra che l'huomo sempre dee accomodarsi circa il tempo.*

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 1-3: BOIARDO HUMBLY ADDRESSES HIS AUDIENCE**

I found myself one fair morning, in May,  
In a meadow, decked with many a flower,  
On a brave headland, where the breeze did play  
Upon the waves, displaying their bright power.  
And, midst briar-roses, in the grass, that day,  
Singing of love, a maiden passed the hour,  
Moving her lips so sweetly there, to fill  
The air, the sweetness moves my poor heart still.

My heart it stirs, prompts me to remember  
The great delight that I found in listening.  
And could I but some fair means discover  
To produce that sweetness in my singing,  
Then my verses, to you, I'd gladly offer,  
Rather than upon your wish attending,  
When, aware of my small worth, I must still  
Sing for your pleasure, though against my will.

But whate'er I am worth, little or much,  
Such as it is, tis all at your command;  
So, with greater will and pleasure, I'll now touch  
On the splendid history I have to hand,  
Which, if I have it still within my clutch,  
I left, as Brandimarte scoured the land,  
With the fair Fiordelisa, beauty's fount,  
In his efforts to locate and free the Count.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 4-7: BRANDIMARTE AND FIORDELISA MEET MARFISA AND BRUNELLO**

That bold knight, Brandimarte, rode ahead  
Of Fiordelisa, and at noon they met  
A dwarfish rider, fleeing, in some dread,  
From a dishevelled maid (lest we forget  
That pair!) and at a goodly speed he fled,  
Faster than a bow sent any arrow yet,  
Or crossbow its bolt; so swift down the track,  
To either dart he'd but have shown his back.

Pursuing him on foot, the warrior-maid  
Was still, as yet, a fair distance away.  
The knight rode to encounter them, and bade,  
Fiordelisa ride beside him, lest she stray.  
The pursuer, on seeing her, displayed

Great anger 'Treacherous whore, this day  
Your escort will prove little use to you,  
For you must die, and here receive your duel'

Fiordelisa dropped the reins, in a fever,  
And, anticipating death, in cruel pain,  
Wrung her hands; she'd recognised Marfisa!  
That fierce maid was yet pursuing, in vain,  
(The details of the chase you'll remember)  
The insolent Brunello, o'er the plain.  
Determined still to catch him, when she met  
The mounted pair, and shouted out her threat.

Indeed, Brunello was the horseman who fled.  
Spurring his steed again, in headlong flight,  
He raced on, and was soon so far ahead,  
They could barely keep the rascal in sight.  
Marfisa turned, her serpent's eyes dark red  
With grief and wrath, upon the valiant knight  
And his lady, and, wounded to the heart,  
A vicious glance at both of them did dart.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 8-11: BRUNELLO FLEES; MARFISA SEEKS TO SLAY FIORDELISA**

She threatened Fiordelisa as before,  
And, though she'd doffed her suit of armour,  
And neither her stout shield nor sword she bore,  
Nor was mounted on a warlike courser,  
While Brandimarte arms and armour wore,  
Her courage was such that she drew closer  
And challenged brave Brandimarte to fight,  
Though she drew scant response from the knight;

He thought it shameful, twould be deep disgrace,  
To strike at a defenceless maiden so.  
Marfisa saw a vast rock, in that place,  
On the plain o'er which had fled Brunello,  
Twas three hundred feet, at least, round the base,  
And ninety feet high, while its face did show,  
A kind of broken stair where one might climb,  
Lacking wings to soar to such heights sublime.

The angry maiden gave it but a glance,  
And paused not an instant for further thought,  
But on Fiordelisa made a swift advance,  
Dragged her from her palfrey, and then sought

The rock, quick as the breeze, seized her chance  
To float upwards like a bird, fearing naught,  
And outpaced Brandimarte who pursued,  
Yet lost ground (his weight of armour he rued).

The rock-strewn stairway grew so steep  
That Brandimarte, clad in plate and mail,  
Could scarce ascend, nor his charger keep  
Its footing, their attempt was bound to fail.  
He began to pile his arms in a heap,  
While Marfisa up the rough path did sail,  
Bearing Fiordelisa, to the very top,  
Ready to despatch her, and there did stop.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 12-15: MARFISA FREES  
HER IN EXCHANGE FOR BRANDIMARTE'S STEED  
AND ARMOUR**

When Fiordelisa saw that she was close  
To a most dreadful death, she called aloud,  
While Brandimarte's cries likewise arose,  
Of grief and anger, then his head he bowed,  
For his armour did yet his frame enclose,  
And he'd no means to rescue her, that proud  
Lover, for if he climbed twould be in vain,  
She would still be hurled downwards to the plain.

So, with tears and sweet pleas, Brandimarte  
Commenced to beseech the fierce Marfisa,  
To be kind, and not act so spitefully,  
Offering himself instead to her anger,  
The proud warrior-maid smiled, mockingly,  
And said: 'Come leave off all this chatter:  
If you'd rescue the lady, then you'll need  
To grant me your weapons, and your steed.'

This the pair now agreed, without delay,  
Since each would be better for the trade.  
Brandimarte thought it fair, in its way,  
For he'd have given his heart for the maid.  
Marfisa kept her word, yet won the day,  
For she took both his arms and horse, and paid  
By returning the lady she'd taken.  
A fine bargain, if I'm not mistaken!

She armed, then mounted swiftly, and was gone,  
Like one forever minded to advance,  
And, galloping o'er the plain, came upon,  
Two well-mounted, equipped with shield and lance.  
Of bold Marfisa, you'll hear more anon,  
For those two will guide the warrior to France;  
But Bishop Turpin's tale now speaks further  
Of Brandimarte and Fiordelisa.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 16-21: BRANDIMARTE  
DEALS WITH A GANG OF ROBBERS**

Brandimarte mounted on the palfrey,  
And set Fiordelisa on the crupper,  
And thus, they rode through the country, slowly,  
Till they came to a stream and a poplar.  
From its summit, a lookout cried loudly:  
'On, Malcompagno, Spinamacchia!  
On brave fellows, strike a fruitful blow,  
There are travellers to rob, here, below!'

The knight, who was fluent in their tongue,  
Halted at once, uncertain what to do.  
The lookout was a robber, who now hung  
Midst the branches, Brandimarte knew.  
Since they rode but a palfrey, now among  
These thieves, and were nigh defenceless too,  
For he lacked his sword and shield, plate and mail,  
He thought to fight would prove of small avail.

For at once, seven men or more appeared,  
Some came on foot, and some astride a steed.  
'No need to wait for them; tis as I feared!'  
Brandimarte thought, departing at speed,  
Riding swiftly through the trees, as they neared.  
Yet they proved a menace, and, in their greed,  
Shouted: 'Stand, and deliver!' threateningly,  
Till the two were chased by more than thirty.

Oh, the shame that oppressed our valiant knight,  
As, before that scurvy crew, the palfrey ran!  
If he'd had his horse and arms, in that plight,  
He'd ne'er have thought to retreat half a span.  
Now, as they rode, they reached, in their flight  
(Down that narrow path, devoid of any plan).  
A fair meadow, surrounded by a wood,  
Where, to one side, a lofty pine-tree stood.

The knight, who fled most unwillingly,  
As I said, both discontented and dismayed,  
Saw a king, by a fountain, near the tree,  
Clad in armour, who lay dead amidst the glade.  
Brandimarte paused, but only briefly,  
Then towards the armed monarch's corpse he made,  
Leapt from his mount, and seized the naked sword  
And then turned to face the advancing horde.

Our knight wrapped his left arm in his mantle,  
And ran to meet the brigands with his blade.  
Ne'er was there a man of finer mettle;  
He sliced one, pierced another, then displayed  
His skill, struck a chest, a side; the battle,  
Scarcely lasted much longer; I've conveyed  
The gist of it; he laboured with his sword,  
Till all that crowd lay dead upon the sward.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 22-28: HE TAKES THE  
ARMS OF THE DEAD KING AGRICANE**

All but for one unfortunate survivor  
(Already doomed, not long escaping fate)  
Who fled, wounded in the thigh, for cover,  
Minus an arm, and in a dreadful state.  
He sped to the hideout where his master  
The savage Barigaccio dwelt, of late,  
Offspring of Taridone, the corsair;  
The son a brigand, this his secret lair.

Barigaccio was bigger than his sire,  
And strong and fearsome; the wounded robber,  
In his dread, ran to him, his suffering dire,  
And told him of the band's fatal error,  
In copious detail, ready to expire.  
Indeed, he could barely speak thereafter,  
And, with blood pouring from every vein,  
Collapsed to the ground, ne'er to rise again.

The savage Barigaccio, swelled with anger,  
To a wondrous degree; seized his weapon,  
A weighty club; donned his leather armour,  
And then to his steed, Batoldo, he was gone.  
This horse of his was strong beyond measure,  
Its eyes were crimson red; with fire they shone;  
Its hide was black as Nature would allow,  
Coal-black, but for a white spot on its brow.

Barigaccio, once astride his mount,  
Never ceased to spur on fierce Batoldo.  
Brandimarte had returned to the fount,  
After slaying all the thieves, every last foe,  
And knew the dead king by his shield; the Count  
Had slain him; twas Agricane. As you know,  
Orlando had killed him beside the spring,  
For, of that deed, I've told you everything.

His royal crown was yet upon his head.  
'Twas of gold, set with many a fine gem;  
But Brandimarte ever honoured the dead,  
And refrained from touching that diadem;  
He took the armour (the surcoat, instead,  
He replaced, and smoothed it then, from neck to hem)  
Then he kissed the king's face, respectfully:  
Saying: 'I could do naught else, pardon me!

I take your armour not for fear I might die,  
But I could not bear the death of my lady;  
'Tis impossible to stand idly by,  
When at hand lie the means for remedy.  
If you could hear me, assured am I,  
That you would demonstrate the chivalry  
For which you e'er were famed, were I to pray  
For your aid, knowing my need this day.'

So, the knight spoke, with pity in his heart,  
To the dead king, still fair and undecayed,  
As if twere but three hours since he did part  
From this life, and naught there did lapse and fade.  
As Brandimarte pondered there, apart,  
He heard a mighty trampling in the glade;  
Twas Barigaccio, that lord of thieves,  
Tormenting the branches and the leaves.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 29-37: AND THEN  
FIGHTS BARIGACCIO, LEADER OF THE ROBBERS**

Swiftly, our knight donned the dead king's armour:  
Plate, mail, and that helm Solomon had wrought,  
Then grasped in his hand the sword, Tranchera,  
Fresh from its previous fight, and, in short,  
Was scarcely done, when the savage robber  
Reached the killing-place that he had sought;  
Where, everywhere upon the meadow, lay  
His comrades, slaughtered in that brief affray.



Barigaccio paused but a moment,  
Crying: 'The Devil take you, foolish swine!  
Your loss scarce brings me discontent,  
If but a single sword could thus consign  
You all to death. Better that it has sent  
(Allah be my witness!) this dross of mine,  
To feed the worms. I aim to hang the knight  
And you, you sorry fellows, in plain sight!'

And, with that, he rode towards the pine-tree,  
Where Brandimarte, on foot, was waiting.  
The thief, approaching, dismounted swiftly,  
From his valiant steed, and left it standing,  
Not in some display of chivalry,  
Twas rather he loved the creature dearly,  
And was concerned that the knight might slay  
His horse, once their weapons were in play.

He made no further threat; as he drew near,  
Brandimarte viewed his mighty frame.  
He was a giant in stature, that was clear;  
All in scaly leather was clad that same.  
With a shield made of bone, and a sphere  
Of iron on a shaft (his club), he came.  
Without a word, the rogue charged at the knight;  
He, equally, now hastened to the fight.

The robber's blow struck Brandimarte's shield,  
Dealt two-handedly, and, where it fell,  
A shattered fragment tumbled to the field,  
Much like a piece of gourd; thus, it was well  
That the knight all his strength and skill revealed,  
And cleft the shaft, like a reed, to compel  
The other to retreat, his cudgel lost.  
Barigaccio scarce counted the cost,

But leaping back, six feet or so, in scorn,  
Drew his sword in a moment, threatening,  
The 'damned' knight, who'd 'wish he'd ne'er been born',  
Or so he claimed, while swearing and cursing.  
With the weapon that Solomon had borne,  
Brandimarte charged him, both exchanging  
Many a stroke and thrust, above, below,  
Varying their attacks, with blow on blow.

Brandimarte was quite amazed to find  
A mere brigand possessed of such rare skill.  
He'd ne'er in all his life been so confined  
To defending, while the other struck at will;  
Yet he responded, and the two combined  
To slice at each other's cladding, until  
They well-nigh fought without; neither gave way,  
As more and more fierce grew their affray.

The violent duel had increased in force;  
Endless the dire and dreadful blows that fell.  
Barigaccio, the Cruel, stayed the course,  
Grieved that the warrior endured so well.  
Brandimarte swung Tranchera, a source  
Of strength, and swung wildly, for a spell,  
Destroying the last of his foe's 'armour';  
He, in turn, destroyed the knight's, however.

No metal could resist that fierce onslaught,  
Not steel breastplate, nor coat of gleaming mail,  
Nor yet the mountain-goat's coarse hide, in short,  
That the robber wore, in lieu; all such must fail.  
It baffled Brandimarte, as they fought,  
That brigandry, with all it did entail,  
Was this bold robber's trade; he drew aside,  
And addressed him, while yet his blade he plied.

## BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 38-43: PAUSING THE FIGHT, THEY CONVERSE

'I know not who you are, or why,' he said,  
'Fortune has led you to your line of work,  
But I think you the boldest man e'er bred  
Upon this earth, that neath the moon doth lurk.  
I see the die is cast, for, head-to-head,  
We labour, and neither man will shirk  
Till one doth fall, ere eve or dark of night;  
I trust twill not be I, who serve the right.

Yet if you wish to leave this life of crime  
That you're engaged in, this brigandry,  
I'll be your knight, and I'll declare that I'm  
Conquered; and honour you, of chivalry.  
Come now, have you not thought, from time to time,  
That of far more than this you stand worthy?  
Leave off your trade, for I've little doubt,  
That such as you will scarcely go without.'

The brigand answered: 'Why, all that I do,  
Is done by every lord of noble birth.  
They kill their enemies, and rob them too,  
To enrich the state, and increase their worth.  
I steal from half a dozen, end one or two,  
While ten thousand corpses litter the earth,  
That they slay; unlike myself, in their greed,  
They steal that for which they have scant need.'

'Tis a sin to rob others', said the knight,  
'So, all the world believes, yet, when tis done  
To serve the state, then tis thought to be right,  
And is excused; tis thus all spoils are won.'  
Replied the brigand: 'E'er pardoned outright  
Is the sinner who confesses; I am one  
That accuses himself: make no mistake,  
I take, from the weaker, all that I can take.

But to you, who preach so beautifully,  
I'll do less harm than I would otherwise,  
If you'll grant me your arms, and the lady  
And what the inside of your purse supplies.  
I've a certain lack of ready money,  
So, you'll aid me greatly, if you're wise.  
For I'll let you go, and none the worse,  
If we exchange our coats, while we converse.

My own's now full of holes, as you can see  
But you could patch its fabric, by and by.'  
Brandimarte, as he listened, silently,  
Thought: 'Sinners can't reform, if they try.  
As long as evil keeps them in plenty.  
Whether tis June or December, say I,  
Whether tis cold, or the sun's boiling hot,  
The frog will never quit his muddy spot.'

#### **BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 44-46: BRANDIMARTE ULTIMATELY SLAYS THE BRIGAND**

Without deigning to answer the robber,  
He gripped his shield, and defied the man.  
The contest was more furious than ever;  
They struck each other's targes, and then began  
To drench their garments in blood; their fervour  
Waxed far greater than before, for a span.  
There was no more talk of their agreeing.  
Each man's desire was his own well-being.

Brandimarte with both hands gripped his sword,  
Resolved to win himself a little space,  
And with a two-handed blow he ensured  
It struck Barigaccio, pierced the face  
Of his shield, made of bone, and explored  
The cloth, and the arm beneath; dealt at pace  
It sliced right through the hip, from to back;  
Naught could blunt the sheer force of that attack.

Barigaccio toppled to the ground,  
And cursed like the very devil, as he fell.  
The knight now tried to comfort him, but found  
Still fouler oaths commended him to Hell.  
Brandimarte would not his sins compound,  
By killing him, and bid the man farewell.  
He left him lying there, slain in his pride,  
For, in a while, Barigaccio died.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 47-49: HE TAKES THE HORSE, BATOLDO, AND HE AND FIORDELISA DEPART**

Abandoning, thus, the dying fellow,  
Brandimarte, leaving with the lady,  
Heard, o'er the field, the courser, Batoldo,  
Yield a soft whinny, to greet their palfrey.  
Since the steed was a fine one, as we know,  
The nearby sound prompted Brandimarte  
To say to Fiordelisa: 'With the weight  
Of my armour, we two are tempting fate

Sharing the one horse; I propose to take  
That steed, as I did the arms and sword.  
Twould be foolish, a most unwise mistake,  
To leave behind what Fortune doth afford  
As a gift; for, indeed, the dead can make  
Scant use of them, who've passed beyond the ford,  
Where there is naught to fear.' And, speaking so,  
He soon grasped the reins, mounting Batoldo.

Thus, he went his way, with Fiordelisa.  
A duel, strange and fearful, he'll witness  
That will no doubt cause our warrior  
To employ his sword, with great success.  
But all that tale I'll postpone till later,  
For I must turn to Orlando who, no less  
A knight, has defeated, in our story,  
Antropofagon's Lestrigioni.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 50-52: ORLANDO AND ANGELICA REACH BEIRUT**

Having rescued Angelica the Fair,  
Count Orlando was content with his lot.  
Conversation, on the road, they did share,  
But he was cautious, and embraced her not;  
For he so loved the lady all his care  
Was to show her respect, no matter what.  
Bishop Turpin, calls the Count, however,  
A baboon, and rightly, as a lover.

Journeying on, in this polite manner,  
They traversed all of Persia, day by day,  
Then Mesopotamia, its neighbour;  
(To the northern side Armenia lay)  
And thereby reached the coast of Syria,  
A rich and fine realm, where on their way  
Not a single battle did they encounter,  
Not one fight requiring sword and armour.

They reached the sea, as I said before,  
And, at the port of Beirut, found a ship  
About to sail from that pleasant shore,  
A host of courtiers aboard for the trip,  
For a king, and his folk, that vessel bore,  
He being bound for Cyprus, in courtship  
Of a lady whom he loved for her charms,  
There to show his worth, and his skill in arms.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 53-54: NORANDINO OF DAMASCUS, AND LUCINA**

This monarch was the King of Damascus,  
And the name of the youth, Norandino.  
He was noble, handsome, and courageous  
As bold as any that his land could show.  
Now, you should know, the island of Cyprus,  
Was ruled, at that time, by Tibiano,  
A Saracen; and his daughter, Lucina,  
Was more beautiful than every other.

This young lady was so wondrously fair  
That hundreds had sought her hand, in vain,  
For her beauty was renowned everywhere,  
And many hoped her favour they might gain.  
The talk was of her looks (beyond compare),

From the mountain heights to the coastal plain,  
And many a suitor on her name did call,  
Though Norandino loved her best of all.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 55-56: TIBIANO, KING OF CYPRUS ANNOUNCES A TOURNEY**

Tibiano, possessed of the intent  
To see his daughter wed, had this thought,  
To arrange a most splendid tournament,  
Such as were oft held, at many a court,  
To which bold kings, and lords, and knights, all went,  
To display their strength, and worth, as they fought.  
He invited all the queens and ladies,  
From a host of near and far-flung countries.

Many a knight sailed for Cyprus, when they heard.  
Some went to prove themselves, on that fair field,  
Some journeyed just to watch, and some were stirred  
By thoughts of the daughter. With lance and shield,  
Norandino hastened, on receiving word,  
To cross the waves, his ardour scarce concealed,  
Furnished, moreover, with all he might need:  
Helm, and armour, and trappings for his steed.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 57-58: NORANDINO INVITES ORLANDO TO JOIN HIS COMPANY**

A score of men, each one a valiant knight,  
Went with him, and formed his company,  
And the king was on his ship, and in sight,  
When Orlando, and his lady, reached the sea.  
He in turn saw the Count, and, in forthright  
Speech, to his comrades said: 'It seems to me,  
That the flower of chivalry meets our eye,  
For such looks, and bold manner, cannot lie.'

He had the captain ask him, politely,  
If he would join them at the tournament,  
And Count Orlando replied, presently,  
That, indeed, he would serve the king, content  
To joust, or fight for him in the tourney,  
Or in war, if such proved the king's intent.  
As long as he might serve in his own way  
He was happy to oblige, and obey.

**BOOK II: CANTO XIX: 59-60: THE COUNT,  
HAVING AGREED, GIVES HIS NAME AS  
ROTOLANTE**

The king then asked him for his name,  
His rank, and condition, and his country.  
Count Orlando replied: 'Unknown to fame,  
I come from Circassia to the tourney.  
For I've lost all I had with me, in that same  
Vile land, in war, except for this lady,  
And the arms that cruel Fortune has left me.  
I am yours to command: Rotolante.'

Norandino, as pleased as he was before  
By the Count's chivalry, was charmed anew,  
Welcomed him, and asked about that war,  
And of his journey, till a fair wind blew,  
Which carried them swiftly from the shore.  
Lords, ladies, I commend myself to you;  
This canto's done, yet the next to appear  
Will bear far lovelier things to your ear.

BOOK II: CANTO XX: THE TOURNAMENT IN CYPRUS



ARGUMENTO.

Orlando giunto in Cipri al torneo.  
 Giostra con Aquilante, e con Grifone,  
 Valorosi ambi, ambi pien d'ardimento,  
 Ma da i Baron scoperto è il fier campione,  
 Vien persuaso con falso argomento,  
 Partir veloce, onde nel mar si pone,  
 Và in Francia; e là per Angelica bella.  
 Fà con Rinaldo vna battaglia fella.



ALLEGORIE.

Quanto la virtù, & il valore douete bbon esser tenuti in pregio da ciascuno, poi che di quello è adornato, e quasi per ogni luogo conosciuto, si vede nelle valorose proue d'Orlando, per le quali, è da Grifone, e dal fratello conosciuto.

Rinaldo che combatte con Orlando per amore di Angelica, ci manifesta la gran potentia d'Amore che fa scordate la beneuolentia che suole esser tra' proprij parenti.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 1-3: NORANDINO,  
ORLANDO AND ANGELICA JOURNEY TO THE  
CYPRUS TOURNEY**

In that season (when the sky's most serene)  
That adorns the trees with their fresh verdure,  
And fair flowers, and love, fill all the scene,  
While the birds flaunt their amorous nature  
In sweet song, I too am led, midst the green,  
To sing of love, aroused like every creature,  
And speak of deeds the chivalrous approve,  
That Orlando once wrought, urged on by Love.

I suspended my tale as Norandino  
Secured his assistance for the tourney,  
And, longing to set forth, thus, Orlando  
Boarded ship, with Angelica, gladly.  
This was the season when such winds do blow,  
North-easterlies, as drive vessels, swiftly,  
To Cyprus, o'er the sea, where a host  
Of knights had gathered to that pleasant coast.

Greeks and Saracens came for the tourney,  
From neighbouring lands, and from far away,  
Many a lord and knight, in company,  
Armed for the joust, in their finest array.  
But of them all, the flower of chivalry,  
Midst those who had assembled, all did say,  
Were two named Basaldo and Morbeco,  
Both Turks, and the Greek king, Costanzo.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 4-8: COSTANZO OF  
GREECE ARRIVES, WITH GRIFONE AND  
AQUILANTE**

Costanzo's sire was Avatorone,  
Who'd ruled the Greek kingdom, previously,  
While the Turks possessing realms, equally,  
In Anatolia held sovereignty.  
Costanzo had brought with him, Grifone,  
And his worthy brother Aquilante,  
And tis possible you've already heard,  
Of how those two were raised. In a word,

The Black Fay sent the young Aquilante,  
To Costanzo's court, having set him free  
From the claws of a fierce bird that surely

Would have slain the lad, though twas not to be;  
And no doubt you know all their history,  
How Aquilante was raised there, Grifone  
In Spain; you'll have heard all this before,  
So, as to their youth, I'll say nothing more.

Freed by King Monodante, they'd set sail  
From the Distant Isle, and had journeyed on,  
Past far-off lands, blown my many a gale,  
Until at last their vessel touched upon  
Constantinople's shores (so runs the tale),  
At Blachernae's harbour, whereupon  
They were greeted, warmly, by Costanzo,  
And by the Emperor equally so.

Now, Costanzo was keen to join the tourney,  
And so welcomed the arrival of the pair,  
Knowing them for brave knights who, clearly  
Could but gain his court honour over there.  
Grifone though was grieved that Orrigille  
(Who'd swayed Monodante in that affair)  
Had fallen ill, her health such, in a breath,  
As to have brought her to the point of death.

Once she'd improved a little, he left her,  
Though it tormented Grifone so to do,  
And, in tears, boarded ship, with his brother  
And Costanzo, and o'er the sea they flew,  
To the Xanthus' mouth, and from that harbour  
They made Cyprus, when an easterly blew.  
The company on board were well-supplied  
For the tourney, with fine coursers to ride.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 9-II: NORANDINO  
ENTERS NICOSIA**

Many another whom I shall not name,  
Lords and ladies, and many a fair knight,  
To Cyprus, in all their splendour came,  
Their clothes, and arms, and steeds, a wondrous sight,  
Norandino the finest, for that same  
Looked so handsome, his armour gleaming bright,  
So richly adorned, there, and so well-dressed,  
He was hailed and praised, above all the rest.

His ship docked in Famagusta's harbour,  
And he then rode forth to Nicosia,  
The royal city where Lucina's father,  
King Tibiano, held his court that year.  
The King of Damascus, in full armour,  
Entered with great pomp, to many a cheer,  
While the trumpets announced his retinue,  
With barons, counts, and dukes, and knights in view.

His shield revealed a mountain wreathed in flame,  
His helmet crest displayed that emblem too,  
And the surcoats of all that with him came  
Bore the like, and their numbers were not few.  
With due ceremony, worthy of his name,  
He was received, admired, and praised anew,  
Above all by Lucina; at first sight,  
Far more than her own life, she loved the knight.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 12-16: THE TOURNAMENT BEGINS**

Time passed; the day arrived for the tourney,  
And, at three in the afternoon, it began,  
When all the knights, in one vast company,  
There displayed, ere ever a joust they ran,  
Their arms, steeds, and gear, in all their beauty,  
For marvellously dressed was every man.  
Pressing close, to view all, an eager crowd  
Filled the square, as horns and drums echoed loud.

At one end, a tall platform had been raised,  
Erected for the queens and ladies; there,  
Lucina sat, dressed regally, much praised,  
As were the maids by her side, young and fair;  
Though but few (you will surely be amazed)  
Showed a face free of art, for most did share  
A need to paint and tint (I but relay  
What Turpin says, yet some do so today).

Angelica was fairest midst the rest;  
Among a host of stars, a risen sun,  
All in white, adorned with gold, she was dressed,  
The flower of maidens, surpassed by none.  
Tibiano sat, neath the royal crest,  
With his council, on a stage, where silk-spun  
Drapes, and cloth-of-gold, adorned the scene,  
Opposite the ladies, that king was seen.

The knights began to enter, each man shone,  
In his rich surcoat, sporting arms and crest.  
Each showed confidence, in his own fashion,  
And spurred his courser on, to join the rest  
Of his martial team; on this occasion,  
The captains of the sides (each was a guest),  
Were the Greek monarch, noble Costanzo,  
And the Syrian king, Norandino.

Trumpet and castanet, shrill horn and drum,  
Echoed o'er the heaving square. All around,  
The high heavens trembled, the crowd struck dumb,  
Hell shivered, and the earth quaked, at the sound.  
All the maids turned pale as doves, at the thrum  
Of the horses' hooves thudding o'er the ground,  
As the knights, yelling, rode to the attack,  
Head-to-head, and at full speed, the reins slack.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 17-21: NORANDINO UNSEATS THE TURKS, MORBECO AND BASALDO**

One knight, there, could scarcely see another  
As they charged onward, for each valiant steed  
Snorted dense steam, that commenced to hover  
Over all; great clouds filled the air, indeed;  
While their hooves sent up a dusty cover  
Of fine sand, that sifted down, to impede  
The knights' view of their enemies, whereby  
Each was led to attack some man close by.

But, once the action had calmed somewhat,  
They were able to see the man they fought,  
And the square was a show (the intent forgot),  
Of merciless strokes, scarcely dealt in sport.  
From one end to other, in every spot,  
Knights fell as some vicious blow they caught,  
Tumbling from their saddles, fierce the fight,  
While those trapped by their steed bemoaned their  
plight.

Keeping apart from the throng, Orlando,  
Observed what was passing o'er that field,  
Meanwhile that most skilful Turk, Morbeco,  
Well-versed in tourneys with lance and shield,  
Ventured, on his steel-clad mount, midst the foe,  
And, soon, his wide experience revealed;

Earning praise for his deeds with spear and sword,  
Scorning all, no matter whom, knight or lord.

He downed six, who followed Norandino,  
And, never pausing, sped about the square,  
Causing such destruction, this Morbeco,  
It made King Norandino's temper flare.  
He spurred his valiant steed against the foe,  
With loose rein, and then aimed his lance with care,  
In the Turk's direction; his mark he found,  
And toppled the warrior to the ground.

Close behind Morbeco, came Basaldo;  
A two-handed blow felled him outright,  
Which struck his helm; against Norandino,  
His plate and mail seemed but flimsy and light.  
The young king struck, and downed, every foe  
That he fought, till none would confront the knight,  
While Lucina's happiness seemed complete,  
As she watched her love perform each brave feat.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 22-26: ORLANDO DOWNS KING COSTANZO**

The Greek king, Costanzo, saw the downfall  
Of his men, conquered by the Syrian,  
And, his anger mounting beyond recall,  
Upon Norandino an attack began,  
Charging, sword in hand, to chop and maul,  
Each blow counting, dealt fiercely, man to man,  
Till with a stroke, better aimed than the rest,  
Costanzo felled the young king's fiery crest.

That fine blow drove him back on the crupper,  
And was followed by a second, without pause,  
For Costanzo struck his helm and much further  
He'd have fallen, thus abandoning his cause,  
Had not the Count moved to block the other,  
So, saving, well within the tourney's laws,  
And propping up, the king, he'd thus rescued,  
Till, taking breath, the king's strength seemed renewed.

The Count's swift action angered Costanzo,  
And he threatened to land a telling stroke,  
While the Count, unconcerned by his foe,  
As if bound to his seat, thought him a joke;  
Yet when he felt he'd nursed Norandino

Quite long enough, his own temper awoke,  
And he turned to meet the bold warrior,  
Striking hard, at the steel of his visor.

One blow like that, and no man asks for more,  
He who waits for a second must be mad.  
Costanzo fell, and struck the earthen floor,  
Leaving his saddle empty; I might add  
That Orlando shouted: "That's for you, you boor,  
For troubling me, as I aided the lad.  
Rise up now, if you wish, and we'll duel,  
'Tis a pleasure, ever, to instruct a fool."

Costanzo answered not, he'd fallen flat,  
Struck his head, and lay prostrate on the ground.  
Orlando turned elsewhere, since that was that,  
And sent another flying, skywards bound.  
Grifone, tangled in a distant spat,  
And Aquilante who likewise could be found  
Afar, knew nothing of the king's defeat,  
As yet, or that he'd tumbled from his seat.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 27-33: AND FIGHTS AQUILANTE AND THEN GRIFONE**

Grifone was the first to turn, on hearing  
The shouts of those nearer to Costanzo,  
And, from his own bout swiftly retreating,  
Sped to where the Count had downed his foe.  
Knowing naught of the matter, on arriving  
He perceived his leader, and Norandino,  
And so, wrathfully, spurred on his courser,  
Aiming to wreak revenge on the latter.

From the other side came Aquilante,  
And seeing King Costanzo on the floor  
His anger roused, he looked about swiftly  
And found Orlando (the culprit, he was sure).  
He now charged at the Lord of Anglante,  
His sharp sword against the Count he bore,  
Without knowing that he faced Orlando  
Wearing the emblems of Norandino.

Nor did the Count recognise the other;  
Aquilante wore those of Costanzo.  
Now, my lords, I'll not ask you to offer  
A view on whether they fought well or no,



Such was the damage done to their armour  
And such the whistling sound at every blow.  
Their fierce contest exceeded every bound,  
Yet neither man a clear advantage found.

Aquilante was the wilder; in fact,  
He often showed the greater force, and strength,  
But as things grew more heated, what he lacked  
In power the Count replaced with skill; at length,  
The blows rained down, as both the pair attacked,  
Until it seemed that the world, by a tenth,  
Of those blows might be destroyed, with ease;  
While the final strokes on each side were these:

Aquilante struck Orlando on the brow,  
And sent him backwards on his steed's crupper,  
Yet the latter replied, I will allow,  
With a mighty blow that made all wonder,  
So fierce a stroke that Aquilante now  
Lost strength and courage, spirit and ardour,  
Rocked to and fro on his mount, legs stretched wide,  
Then almost fell, as he swayed from side to side.

He was as helpless as a child, and surely  
Must have fallen, were it not for the fact  
That he was swiftly aided by Grifone,  
Though that left Norandino still intact.  
The Syrian king, responding weakly,  
Might have swiftly been thwarted in the act  
Of defending himself; to his brother  
Grifone now turned, and left the other.

He spurred his steed to reach Orlando,  
At full gallop, the reins slack in his hand.  
Grifone and the Count fought, blow by blow,  
A duel beyond all others, o'er the sand,  
It lasted till dark shadows hid each foe,  
Only ending at the heralds' command,  
That now blew their horns, ending the first day  
Of that tourney, in Cyprus, by the bay.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 34-36: GRIFONE TELLS COSTANZO THAT HIS FOE WAS ORLANDO**

At dusk they returned to their lodging.  
They talked, there, of the deeds each had wrought;  
And Grifone gave this news to the king:

'I saw, amidst the ladies of the court,  
Angelica the Fair, seated, watching,  
If twas she, then the warrior you fought,  
The one who well-nigh slew you in the field,  
Would be Orlando, his true arms concealed.

I felt that twas he, in our encounter,  
For he grew much stronger near the end;  
I'd advise you to leave, ere you suffer,  
He'll prove too powerful for you, my friend.  
I say, as one true knight to another,  
None can outlast those blows, that descend  
Like lightning; spare your own embarrassment;  
This hurt and shame; and quit the tournament.'

Costanzo replied: 'Would it give you heart,  
And help you win renown, with lance and shield,  
If I ensured this cavalier would depart,  
While you deployed my banner, in the field?'  
Grifone answered: he would play his part,  
Out of love for Costanzo, and not yield.  
All that he could do, all that, he would do;  
And e'en hold his ground against any two.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 37-40: COSTANZO DECEIVES THE COUNT, WHO LEAVES THE TOURNEY**

Now the Greek, who was cunning in his way,  
(As many are, by nurture and nature)  
When the setting sun stole the light of day,  
In the darkness, like a furtive creature,  
Left his lodgings and, by its parting ray,  
Went to seek Orlando, on his courser,  
And when he found him, drew the Count aside,  
And spoke to him, as one with naught to hide.

He warned him that the king, Tibiano,  
Was secretly arming his followers  
Because of a message from Count Gano  
To hold the Count midst his prisoners.  
And if he, Costanzo, were Orlando,  
He'd leave ere those unwelcome visitors  
Appeared. He'd thought it best to so advise;  
He'd help him depart, if he thought it wise.

His armed sloop was anchored by the shore,  
And concealed in an inlet, that could fly  
O'er the waves, and carry him once more  
To France or some other coast nearby.  
The Greek was so persuasive (he foresaw  
All objections, and the means to set them by)  
That the Count believed everything he said,  
And thanked him, being courteous and well-bred.

The Count had Angelica don a veil,  
And travelled with her to the place assigned.  
King Costanzo met them there, without fail,  
And brought them to the sloop, as he'd designed.  
The captain, who'd asked where he should sail,  
Had been told that where'er they were inclined  
To go, twas there he should transport the pair.  
They departed, swiftly, for the wind was fair.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 41-43: ORLANDO  
ENDURES A STORM, AND LANDS IN PROVENÇE**

What befell Norandino thereafter,  
Or befell King Costanzo, I know not,  
(Bishop Turpin's silent on the matter)  
But as to Count Orlando, and his lot,  
Journeying, on that sloop, o'er the water,  
I can give you the gist, and the upshot,  
Fortune left him at risk of dying soon,  
For seven days he saw nor sun nor moon.

Driven by ill gales through darksome air,  
He endured it (there was naught else to do),  
Patiently, mere wind and waves everywhere,  
Till, in time, a favourable breeze blew,  
And they reached, at last, Provence the fair.  
It seemed a thousand years must then ensue  
Ere he could reach Paris, where Orlando  
Might present his compliments to Gano.

There, I promise, he'd have used the fellow  
In the manner that wicked cur deserved,  
Had it pleased the Devil that he did so,  
(The ill master, whom this Count Gano served).  
For the miscreant would have been laid low,  
Five months or more, only from death preserved  
By Lucifer, who'd have guarded his bed;  
But, now, gave the Count a fresh task, instead.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 44-46: ANGELICA  
DRINKS AT MERLIN'S FOUNT, AND NOW HATES  
RINALDO**

It so came about that, on his journey,  
Midst the mighty Ardennes Forest, the Count,  
By mere chance, or guided by destiny,  
Came, one day, to the site of Merlin's Fount.  
I'll not speak again (lest you should weary),  
Of its purpose, of which I gave account,  
Except to say its creator, Merlin,  
Wrought it so love or hatred lay within.

Thus, Orlando, and fair Angelica,  
Reached its twin streams one day, as I have said,  
And she, far thirstier than the other,  
Dismounted and towards the water sped.  
Drinking of the Stream of Loathing rather  
Than the Stream of Love, in her heart it bred  
Hatred of Rinaldo, and quenched the fire;  
Unenamoured, she was freed from desire.

She recalled the stubborn pride and disdain  
That he had shown, and his features seemed,  
In her memory, less handsome, even plain,  
That, enamoured, she had once so esteemed.  
And he, who'd had power o'er joy or pain,  
Whom noble, and most worthy, she had deemed,  
Montalbano's lord, seemed slight and small,  
And of worthless men, the basest of all.

**BOOK II: CANTO XX: 47-51: RINALDO  
APPEARS, AND ADDRESSES ANGELICA**

It was soon cool enough for them to leave,  
The fierce sun having declined somewhat;  
Yet, ere they started, the pair did perceive  
A well-armed knight. Now, lest you have forgot,  
(Though I've explained this before, I believe)  
Twas Rinaldo, who had come upon the spot,  
Having chased Rodomonte through the wood,  
And drawn near to where Merlin's Fountain stood.

He'd not reached it, but had drunk of the stream  
That caused, by so doing, love and longing.  
Tis hard to describe in verse the extreme  
Delight he found in their present meeting,

How fortunate he thought himself, his dream  
Before him, whom he thought still as loving  
Towards him, as he now felt towards her;  
For he'd heard so, and seen so, moreover.

He knew not the armoured knight, who stood by,  
And bore the emblem of a fiery mount;  
For he'd not have revealed himself, say I,  
If he'd known that warrior was the Count.  
As he drew near the maid, he gave a sigh,  
Roused to do so by the stream from the fount,  
Gave a little smile and said: 'My lady,  
I must speak or die!' then added, humbly,

'I know the savage manner I betrayed  
In behaving as I did, before you,  
And that the villainy I thus displayed  
Makes me unworthy to utter anew,  
But tis ever kindness you've portrayed,  
So, forgive my disdain; I shall prove true  
To my repentant self; all such was folly,  
That I'll regret forever, my sweet lady.

And, though naught can undo what I have done,  
I throw myself at your feet, and pray,  
(Knowing that I cannot now, my fair one,  
Earn such a love as yours, in any way,  
Or by any deed performed neath the sun)  
That I may be your servant, of a day,  
And let me love you as I have before.  
That is my sole request, I seek no more.'

## **BOOK II: CANTO XX: 52-60: ORLANDO AND RINALDO QUARREL**

Now, the Count stood and heard the thing entire,  
Listened, yet failed to bear it patiently.  
He cried out: 'To reveal your whole desire  
In this way, before me, shows your folly.  
I'd scarcely have believed it of a squire,  
If such a base thing had been told to me.  
By my faith, I'd have sworn it was untrue,  
And yet I hear that very same from you.

I have sought your love and honour, sir knight,  
Though you travelled the waves to hinder me,  
Yet I cannot now, and still pursue the right.

And you did so, I recall, that you might see  
Me pronounced insane, a madman outright,  
Deeming me slow, out of some comedy,  
Simple; a fool in love; and now I know,  
Twas undeserved, yet you did think me so.'

Rinaldo, on finding twas Orlando,  
Was torn between two courses of action,  
To keep on talking, or to flee his foe.  
At last, he said: 'It was naught but fiction  
To think me, though you deem it not so,  
Other than yours on every occasion  
To command; yet still need not scorn, tis true,  
This maiden that, by chance, pleases you.

Think not she's less fair to some other's eye,  
Than to yours, this sweet and lovely maid.  
Understand that others won't stand idly by,  
If they love in the manner you've displayed.  
You're a madman indeed if you would try  
Your luck in battle with everyone that's paid  
Court to the lady; you must fight the world;  
Twere far better to keep your banner furled.

That man is but base who fails to love her.  
If you can show some proof of your right  
To be her sole suitor, and none other,  
You may silence, and obstruct me, sir knight,  
But may my body be drowned in deep water,  
And my spirit hurled to the flames outright,  
Ere I cease to adore the lovely maid;  
For that I cannot do, nor will be swayed.'

Orlando answered him: 'She is not mine,  
Though I would that she was, for hers am I!  
Yet to be her sole love is my design,  
And that being so, the world I'll defy,  
Good and ill. All courtesy you resign,  
When you choose to treat a lord like a spy.  
We are cousins, hence I loved you loyally,  
But you've betrayed me, treacherously.'

Rinaldo replied thus: 'Well, there, you see,  
You're always calling me a traitor,  
And yet you never were betrayed by me,  
And any man that claims so is a liar.  
We'll fight, if that's your wish, certainly,

Anywhere you may choose, or desire,  
You may be thought the finest knight, elsewhere,  
But I fear you not, nor the arms you bear.'

'Twas Orlando's custom and nature,  
To employ the fewest words that he could,  
And, his face darkening in every feature,  
He merely drew his sword, for ill or good,  
And sighed and said: 'A shameful measure  
Is this! What led us to this fatal wood,  
Where one must kill, and the other must die?  
Yet, let God judge the right of it, say I!'

When Rinaldo saw that Count Orlando  
Was prepared for the contest, for he'd drawn  
Durindana, he his own blade did show,  
Fusberta, and a rare duel thus was born.  
I'll return to speak, in my next canto,  
Of that fierce fight, foolish and forlorn,  
And of other things, fine and beautiful.  
May God preserve you; forever joyful.

BOOK II: CANTO XXI: ATLANTE'S PROPHECY

A R G O M E N T O.

*Mentre fà con Rinaldo aspra battaglia      Vuol che s'acquisti la dama di uaglia,  
Orlando, Fugge Angelica veloce,      Per Brunel fa Ruggier pugna feroce,  
Carlo co' suoi Baron coperti a maglia,      S'appreseta il Re d'Africa & Atlante,  
Gli acqueta. E chi di lor più a pagà noce.      Narra di lui la stirpe alma, e prestante.*



A L L E G O R I E.

*Che molte volte auenghi vna allegrezza senza pensarui punto, lo mostra Oliuieri, al quale all'improuisa Angelica da noua di Orlando, & di Rinaldo.  
Brunello che ingiustamente è accusato della morte di Bardulatto, essendo condoto alla forca fu da Ruggier liberato, ne insegna che l'huomo innocente giamai douerebbe disperarsi di non esser della sua innocentia riconosciuto.*

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 1-6: ORLANDO AND RINALDO COMMENCE A DUEL**

Sovereign Power of that orbit neath the Sun,  
 You, that guide the turning of the third sphere,  
 Grant me sweet song, eloquence that has won,  
 With gentle words, many a listener here;  
 So that those who would hear all that was done  
 In days of old, and noble deeds hold dear,  
 May the tale of those brave knights approve,  
 That fought each other, in the name of Love.

In my last canto, they met together,  
 Amidst the leafy trees, by Merlin's fount;  
 One gripped Fusberta, one Durindana;  
 You know the pair, Rinaldo and the Count.  
 Amongst all knights in this world, wherever  
 Such are spoken of, in chivalric account,  
 None has equalled them, nor ever will,  
 In strength or courage, confidence or skill.

Truly, they were the flower among men,  
 And brought such fire and ardour to the fight,  
 That the heavens shook, and then shook again,  
 Earth trembled, and the very air took fright.  
 Every armature and piece of plate was fain  
 To shatter, and fall, as knight battled knight,  
 Striking tempestuously at each other,  
 Till the sky and the forest seemed to shudder.

Rinaldo swung Fusberta, and let fly,  
 And struck a blow at Count Orlando's shield,  
 With a sound as if a bolt from out the sky,  
 Had landed there, its fiery power revealed.  
 Bishop Turpin says no bird was seen to fly  
 From the scene; all fell, stricken, to the field,  
 And the creatures of the forest, so I read,  
 With howls and cries, fled in fear of the deed.

Orlando swung hard with Durindana.  
 At that crash, in the forest far and near,  
 Leaves and branches fell; it struck the armour  
 That clad Rinaldo's chest, and split it sheer.  
 Those two mighty strokes affected neither,  
 Though, it seems, the fount's water, bright and clear,  
 Was now rendered dark, well-nigh opaque,  
 And the marble surround was seen to shake.

Their blows grew fiercer still; such a fight  
 Had ne'er been seen before, and the maid,  
 Angelia, who watched the duel, in fright,  
 Turned pale; twas a bitter game they played.  
 A feeling of deep dread urged her to flight,  
 For she felt she'd die herself, if she stayed.  
 Neither lord was aware of her departure,  
 Each man fought in rage, like some mad creature.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 7-10: THE FLEEING ANGELICA ENCOUNTERS OLIVIERO**

The maid turned away, and urged her steed,  
 As best she could, to depart from the place,  
 While her palfrey, born of a noble breed,  
 Flew along, as if engaged in the chase.  
 When from the forest she at last was freed,  
 By her mount's intelligence and its pace,  
 She found herself in a field, midst a host  
 Pitching camp and, there, among the foremost,

She saw a knight, standing and watching on,  
 And, desiring to know who these might be,  
 She turned her steed towards him, whereupon  
 He greeted her, and she asked, politely.  
 He replied: "The host you have chanced upon,  
 Rides with Emperor Charlemagne, for he,  
 The King of France, gathers men against the foe.  
 As for myself, I am Oliviero.

The Saracens, led by one Rodomonte,  
 Have crossed the sea, and routed Duke Namus.  
 Their leader has now vanished, utterly,  
 Along with his men, greatly troubling us;  
 While Rinaldo, who came from Hungary  
 To join the fighting force (the knight is famous),  
 Leading fresh troops, has disappeared also,  
 For there's not a sign of our lord Rinaldo.

The whole court is dismayed, and then Orlando,  
 The Count of Anglante, is absent still,  
 Who won us great renown, amidst the foe,  
 For all respect his strength and martial skill.  
 I swear to God, could I but see one blow  
 From his death-dealing blade, then let them kill  
 Me where I stand (that is, if such folk can)  
 For more than I love life, I love the man.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 11-15: SHE TELLS OF THE DUEL, AND CHARLEMAGNE RIDES TO THE FOUNT**

Once the maid understood their need to know  
Where Orlando and Rinaldo were, she said:  
‘You prove so courteous, that I would show  
Myself as impolite, and most ill-bred,  
If I were to keep silence, now, and so,  
I shall tell you of those you seek, instead:  
Rinaldo and the Count fight each other,  
Midst the Ardennes Forest, by the water.’

On hearing the news, Oliviero,  
Was filled with joy and swiftly sped away,  
Hastening to let his brave comrades know.  
Few in the camp there lingered, I may say.  
In mounting, King Charlemagne proved not slow,  
As, with Angelica leading the way,  
He rode to the fount, with his court and more,  
Some riding behind him, and some before.

As they sped on, he learned the reason why  
Those cavaliers were fighting with such fury.  
Charlemagne marvelled that the Count should sigh  
For love, and prove the offending party,  
For he thought him the least inclined to die  
For a lady, though Rinaldo he, clearly,  
Considered prone to do the like, or worse,  
Since such follies he’d seen him oft rehearse.

They reached the woods, still in conversation,  
The leafy Forest of Ardennes, I mean.  
Some searched here, some there, in agitation,  
To find the hidden fount amidst that scene.  
Soon they heard the sound of swords in action,  
A fierce battle, somewhere midst the green:  
A clash of arms, plate and mail, appalling  
All, as if the very skies were falling.

From every direction came lord and knight,  
By many a path, and the first man there,  
The Dane, Uggiero, that man of might,  
Was soon joined by Salamone the Fair,  
And Bishop Turpin, who tells of the fight,  
Which continued without cease; none did dare,  
To interrupt the warriors, that was clear;  
While all watched the ill contest, full of fear.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 16-18: CHARLEMAGNE HALTS THE DUEL**

When Charlemagne appeared, they paused awhile,  
For though the pair possessed hearts of fire,  
And paid scant regard to the rank and file,  
They respected the king, so quenched their ire.  
The combatants parted, without a smile,  
And for the moment hid their one desire,  
While Charlemagne, the royal face benign,  
Embraced them and wept (perchance by design!).

The lords and knights now circled them about,  
Urging the quarrellers to make their peace.  
Voicing different arguments (though some did shout)  
Such as they felt fitting, and bade them cease,  
While the king sought to talk the matter out,  
With bold words, and flattery, and fervent pleas.  
Now he issued his command, and now he prayed  
That a truce between them be swiftly made.

Indeed, they might have reconciled, and quickly,  
Were it not that each loved Angelica,  
And till that question was settled, fully,  
Both commands and pleas were altogether  
Useless in the matter, while the lady  
Had vanished, though I know not why, other  
Than that, perchance, she so loathed Rinaldo  
That the knight’s very presence brought her woe.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 19-22: HE ORDERS DUKE NAMUS TO ACT AS ANGELICA’S WARD**

Yet, realising she had left, Orlando  
Followed, and sought to keep her in sight;  
Nor was the other asleep, bold Rinaldo,  
For he now hastened to pursue the knight.  
The rest of the king’s company also,  
Fearful of what might happen, taking fright,  
Hastened, with Charlemagne, upon their trail,  
Ready to ensure that the truce prevail.

They found the combatants not far away,  
In a dale, with naked swords, face to face,  
Though neither’s gleaming blade was yet in play,  
For the court had followed at a rapid pace.  
Some few lords that along the vale did stray,

Found Angelica, in a narrow place;  
Some cave in which to hide she'd been seeking,  
And they led her, once more, before the king.

Duke Namus was now appointed her ward;  
He should treat the lady with great respect.  
The king then sought to forge an accord  
Between that pair of knights, to some effect.  
He promised: a solution he'd afford  
To the matter twixt the two, and reject  
Aught that might be judged unreasonable;  
A fair solution, true, and just, and legal.

On their return to the camp that evening,  
The lords and knights chose to celebrate,  
For Orlando had seemed lost, and now the king  
Was thinking of a means to terminate  
His war with Rinaldo. The next morning,  
The royal court set out for Paris, while fate  
Sends us, instead, to seek Agramante.  
We must cross the waves to his far country.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 23-27: WE RETURN TO THE WOUNDED RUGGIERO**

I left that monarch at Mount Carena,  
Amidst his knights, at the tourney there.  
Deeply he sighed, the mighty warrior,  
At having being unhorsed in that affair,  
And what disturbed him greatly, moreover,  
Was how Ruggiero's side was laid bare.  
I've related the tale, as you'll recall,  
So, I'll turn to that which did next befall.

I'll simply add that, wounded in the way  
I've said (a lawless deed, that injury!),  
Ruggiero had made Bardulasto pay,  
For his act of malicious treachery.  
He'd left him dead in the woods, and away  
Had gone, to find his mentor Atlante,  
Who was waiting by the rock, where a king,  
Tingitana's Brunello, was yet standing.

When Atlante perceived that the young knight,  
Had been wounded, cruelly, in the side,  
He felt as though he had been knifed outright  
Deep in the heart: 'Ah, woe is me!' he cried,

'Tis no joy to me that, with second sight,  
I foresaw your death; I take little pride  
In that, if you must die so soon!' And yet,  
On seeing the lad's bright eyes, he ceased to fret;

While the youth said: 'Weep not, I shall be cured  
By your medicines and salves, for I know  
That many a remedy you've explored;  
I'll not suffer this for long, tis but a blow.  
I think the wound less harmful, be assured,  
Than when that fearsome lion laid me low,  
I once slew in the hills, or when my chest  
Was pierced by that elephant I addressed.'

The old mage examined his hurt with care,  
(Twas not grave, having wrought but little harm)  
Sewed the wound, and applied a goodly share  
Of soothing unguent, rare herbs mixed with balm.  
By then Brunello had been made aware,  
Of how the tourney had ended in alarm  
At the youth's exploits, and now saw a way  
To claim the lad's deeds, and thus win the day.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 28-31: BRUNELLO REVEALS RUGGIERO'S PRESENCE**

He grasped his armour, surcoat, and shield  
That Ruggiero had borne in the fight,  
Though stains of blood and gore they revealed,  
And upon Frontino leapt the little knight,  
Ere riding, swiftly, to the battlefield,  
Where the rest still fought on with all their might;  
Though when those warriors saw his shield and crest,  
They thought a wise retreat might yet prove best.

Agramante, much angered by his fall  
As I said before, sheathed the royal blade,  
And cried: 'Enough was done here by you all,  
To lure Ruggiero forth, much skill displayed,  
And yet he's failed to answer to our call.  
He'll not be found, I think; be not dismayed.'  
Then he called for Brunello, who appeared  
In his armour; while the king's wrath he feared.

Said Agramante: 'After this pleasant tourney,  
Which you claimed would draw forth the boy,  
I'll not believe he's hereabouts, unless he



Dwells in the clouds, or some means doth employ  
To live, without breathing, deep in the sea.  
Yet I swear, that the weapons you deploy,  
Are enough for us, watching blow on blow,  
To forego the need for Ruggiero.'

Bold Brunello replied: 'Twas in your honour;  
All that I've done, and do, is wrought for you.  
If you are pleased with my skill and valour,  
Then, Sire, I am, indeed, contented too.  
Yet twill give you more joy to discover,  
That the boy is found; what I claim is true;  
For he quit the rock above to join the fight,  
And he shall be yours, ere the fall of night.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 32-36: BUT IS THEN  
ACCUSED OF KILLING BARDULASTO**

This news delighted King Agramante,  
And, neglecting the former tournament,  
He mounted, and, riding in company  
With his lords and knights, to the cliff he went.  
Many, who were there, were less than happy,  
To see Brunello, but quelled their discontent,  
(He to whom they had yielded in the field,  
Not knowing twas Ruggiero there concealed).

Now, as they rode, they traversed the glade  
Where lay Bardulasto of Alcazar,  
Cleft from head to chest by the young lad's blade,  
And they halted on viewing him afar.  
Agramante, drawing nearer, now displayed  
Great anger, that some sorry knight should mar  
The tourney by slaying another so,  
And recognised the face of Bardulasto,

Damaged though it was; in displeasure  
He shouted: 'Who is he, that disobeyed  
My strict command, and flouted my measure,  
Making such ill employment of his blade?'  
None said a word, but every warrior  
Gazed at his comrades, mortally dismayed.  
None dared to breathe while the wrathful king  
Menaced them, there, all gathered in a ring,

And, as is oft they case, they looked around  
Seeking the culprit, glancing here and there,  
And in behaving so, their eyes soon found  
The blood and gore Brunello's arms did bear.  
'Behold!' arose the cry: 'Let him be bound;  
For the traces of his crime, he yet doth bear!'  
The words had scarcely been uttered, when lo,  
Those nearest to him seized King Brunello.

He spoke swiftly, and needed to indeed,  
For his glib tongue alone could aid his case,  
Claiming Ruggiero had done the deed,  
Bearing his arms, having taken his place.  
None believed him, whate'er he might plead,  
Since the truth so rarely his lips did grace,  
While all around him shouted their counsel  
To the monarch: 'Let us hang the rascal!'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 37-43: BRUNELLO IS  
RESCUED BY RUGGIERO**

Finding himself accused, thus, of the crime,  
He complained loudly to the king and court,  
Reminding them, in frenzied pantomime,  
How he'd gained the ring Agramante sought,  
And risked his life, to do so, on a time.  
They mocked him, calling him a thief, in short.  
So, a courtier's service may please tonight,  
Yet is viewed as naught come the morning light;

A lord seems of some age long-dead, if he  
Recalls today the deeds of yesterday,  
For the message now is: 'In serving me,  
Lies your whole reward, my friend; but obey!'  
And so it was with Brunello, as we see,  
Who was scorned, in that ungrateful way;  
Those reviled him that once had sought his eye,  
As happens to those folk that climb too high.

King Grifaldo now received the order  
To hang this Brunello without delay.  
Grifaldo who was prompt to serve his master,  
Declared: 'If I can find no other way,  
With my bare hands I'll slay the murderer!'  
And the miscreant was soon led away,  
Along the cliff nearby, towards the wood,  
Neath where Ruggiero and Atlante stood.

The young warrior saw them drawing near,  
And, on viewing the dwarfish king, he grieved,  
Not being one (unlike the many here!)  
That soon forget a favour they've received.  
'Though I may die,' Ruggiero said, 'tis clear,  
I should aid him, for I was ne'er deceived,  
He loaned me both his armour and his steed;  
'Twere wrong to scorn him in his hour of need.'

But Atlante argued strongly gainst the plan,  
Saying: 'Where go you, son, without armour,  
Lance, or sword, or shield? To assist the man?  
He'll hang from the highest branch, whatever  
You may attempt to do, or think you can.  
Would you, weapon-less, now seek to conquer  
A whole host? 'Tis too perilous a task.  
What would you seek to do there, I might ask?'

Ruggiero replied not, but ran, swiftly,  
To reach the field, and snatched a weapon  
From a passing knight, unexpectedly.  
In barely an instant, the thing was done.  
Grifaldo's company comprised many  
A man, but boldly he now dealt with one,  
Next, he slew another and, from the dead,  
Took a sword, then a shield, and onward sped.

Imagine how he led those knights a dance,  
Once that gleaming blade he had in hand!  
Ne'er had any of those knights, perchance,  
Received such wounds, there or in any land.  
King Grifaldo and two more, by happenstance,  
Escaped the blows from that whirling brand,  
And, quaking at the onslaught, ran to free  
Brunello, ere he dangled from a tree.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 44-50: WHO EXPLAINS TO AGRAMANTE WHAT HAS OCCURRED**

Grifaldo, quite dismayed, returned to find  
Agramante, and, uncertain what to say,  
Was so mortified, and confused in mind,  
He cared not if he died that very day.  
The king wondered at his tale, and assigned  
Him, to lead them there by the shortest way.  
For it seemed to him most novel and strange  
That a mere youth could such a force derange.

When he'd viewed the wounds, he marvelled  
At his deeds, for every knight showed some trace  
Of his passing, and many a man still bled,  
While some, motionless, now adorned that place.  
Sneering, 'Rest there!' the ruthless king now said,  
'Or where'er the damned lie, in deep disgrace,  
For, by Allah, I give not a fig to lose  
Such fools, that arms and armour but abuse!'

On seeing Agramante, Brunello,  
Sought to escape by any means he could,  
But was swiftly seized by Ruggiero,  
Who cried: 'Do as I say, and as we should,  
For to stand before that lord, we must go,  
And make clear to him, and all, that the blood  
Of Bardulasto's on my hands, for I  
Slew the man, and I'll give the reason why.'

With that, he went and knelt before the king,  
Brunello by his side, and said: 'My lord,  
I know not why this man pays for a thing  
That I myself enacted, for, be assured,  
The blame is mine, and mine the sin, being  
The one who did that villain death afford;  
If sin it can be called to slay a foe,  
In self-defence, as I slew Bardulasto.

For I was assailed, in a sudden attack,  
Most treacherously, by that very knight,  
Who struck at me, from behind my back,  
With the edge of his blade, with all his might.  
He fled, and him I killed, nor did I lack  
The right to do so. Any that would fight,  
(Save the king, and his own) and so deny  
That the wretch deserved it, come, let him try!'

When he'd spoken, they gazed at each other,  
In amazement, questioning: 'Is he the one,  
Destined to acquire great worldly honour?  
Truly, 'tis fitting, that such deeds be done  
By a knight of such beauty and such valour.  
Ardour, strength, and nobility, have won  
To worthy place, in the form of one so fair,  
'Tis well that such courage true grace should share.'

Fierce Agramante, beyond all the rest,  
 Could not remove his eyes from the lad.  
 'This, must be Ruggiero!' he confessed  
 To himself, and thanked heaven, and was glad.  
 No further words needed to be expressed,  
 And he embraced the boy, nor thought it sad  
 That a king, Bardulasto, had been slain.  
 He cared not; his own law he would maintain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 51-52: AGRAMANTE  
 FORMALLY DUBS RUGGIERO A KNIGHT**

The youth, who e'er sought the path of valour,  
 Spoke humbly of the matter, and said this:  
 'I have learned that the demands of honour  
 Ask of the knight, in chivalry's service,  
 That he should defend law and truth, ever.  
 Since that has been my aim, tis now my wish  
 To save this fellow, and, if I must fight,  
 Beg that you dub me your loyal knight.

Let me receive his arms and steed, my lord,  
 For he promised to grant me them, before,  
 And I deem I have earned them with the sword;  
 I risked my life to save his, what is more.'  
 Agramante replied: 'And rest assured,  
 'Twill be done; right valiant the deeds we saw!  
 And taking arms and steed, from Brunello,  
 With due ceremony, dubbed Ruggiero.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXI: 53-61: ATLANTE'S  
 PROPHECY**

Atlante was there; he stood nearby,  
 And was roused to tears by the monarch's deed.  
 'King Agramante,' he said, with a sigh,  
 'Hear my words, such as heaven has decreed,  
 For all that shall come to pass, by and by,  
 I divine, and view the future, at need.  
 The heavens speak true, as they do ever,  
 And pronounce, as I do, on this matter.

To win the day, this fair youth you must take,  
 At all costs, with you, o'er the sea to France.  
 He'll discomfort Charlemagne, for your sake,  
 Such that in pride and boldness you'll advance.  
 Yet, of him, a Christian they will make;  
 And not honourably, with sword and lance,

Shall he be slain, but by foul treachery,  
 Wrought by the ill-conceived Maganzese.

Nor is that the final grief we'll endure,  
 For Ruggiero's offspring will remain  
 Among the Christians for evermore;  
 As great the honours that they will gain  
 As any seen amongst us, on this shore.  
 All that is fine and worthy they'll maintain,  
 With goodness, courtesy, love, joy, and grace,  
 The flower of the world in that far place.

Ugo Alberto, of Saxony, I see,  
 Encamped there, on the Paduan plain,  
 Of arms, and of intellect, the glory,  
 Noble, and generous, and humane.  
 He who rides neath that banner, Italy,  
 Is your salvation; I shall say again,  
 He will bring all his strength and aid to you,  
 And, thus, fill all Italy with his virtue!

Azzo the Seventh; Aldobrandino  
 The Second; which lord shall prove the greater?  
 One will conquer the traitor Ezzelino,  
 One Henry the Seventh, the emperor.  
 Behold another knight named Rinaldo,  
 Not ours! He Treviso, and Verona,  
 And fair Vicenza shall rule, and the crown,  
 From mighty Frederick's head, send tumbling down.

Nature shall reveal her future treasure;  
 Leonello, the Marquis, all virtue his!  
 O happy world, blessed beyond measure,  
 Where all shall live in freedom, as they wish;  
 A time when the white eagle shall feature,  
 Joined with the golden lily, naught amiss,  
 And mount the sky; within whose boundaries,  
 All that is best shall flower, twixt two fair seas.

And if Amphitryon's second bold son  
 To wear the ducal robes, wise Ercole,  
 Shall follow the good, flee the evil done,  
 Like Leonello, not just men, but every  
 Bird above, spreading its wings neath the sun,  
 Shall bow to him; yet why should I foresee  
 More of the future; know you will destroy  
 All Africa, great monarch, through this boy!

For you'll bear our virtue's seed, o'er the sea,  
O King Agramante, from which the flower  
Of a fair race will be born, for such must be,  
And doth weigh upon my heart, at this hour,  
Since naught can be otherwise, assuredly.'  
The old man wept as he spoke, his visage dour,  
While the king waited on his every word,  
Yet understood little of what he'd heard.

Rather he replied, when this speech was done,  
Half-smiling: 'I believe the love you bear,  
Towards the lad, as if he were your son,  
Darkens your prophecy, fills it with care.  
Yet an end to this business shall be won;  
You shall go with him, and our journey share.  
You too shall sail. Come, cease your tears and woe.'  
Farewell, my lords, here, I'll end this canto.

BOOK II: CANTO XXII: THE CATALOGUE OF KINGS

ARGOMENTO.

*Trenta dua Re son entro di Biserta ,      Fà il Re di Sarza a Ferraguto offerta  
Per distrugger la Francia, e Carlo Mano,      Dopò ch'ogn'un di lor pugnato ha inuano  
Di Rodomonte la gente disferta ,      Prendono con Viniano Malagigi ,  
Vi giunge, e Dudon preso hanne le mano      Ponendo in fuga, quei de i regni Stigi.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**L**E gran proue che fanno Orlando , e Rinaldo , essendogli stato promesso da Carlo a chi di loro meglio si portasse nella battaglia per premio de l'hauuta fatica Angelica la bella , ci ammaestra che non u'è cosa che piu sproni l'huomo a far cose honorate, che la speranza di conseguirne il premio meriteuole.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 1-3: BOIARDO ON THE POWER OF FAME**

If those who upon this Earth win glory,  
Such as Caesar, or renowned Alexander,  
Who both gained victory on victory,  
From the shores of our sea to the farther  
Bounds of Ocean, were lost from memory,  
In vain had flowered all their strength and valour.  
All their ardour, and intellect, and power  
Would have fled, in the passing of an hour.

Fame, you that emperors do follow,  
Nymph that sings of mighty deeds, in sweet verse,  
You honour folk whom vile death has brought low;  
Yet live on in the praise that you rehearse.  
What is your role now? Once, great love to show,  
Or warring Giants, for better or for worse  
Such was your task, such the world in your day,  
Which seeks virtue and renown, no more, I say.

Leave the green verdure of Parnassus,  
Since the path is lost that once soared so high,  
And below, with me, sing the glorious  
Tale of Agramante, proud neath the sky,  
Who boasted that he would come among us,  
And seize King Charlemagne, or have him die.  
His ships the sea, his men the land, did cover;  
Thirty-two kings he called to Bizerte.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 4-33: THE ROLL-CALL OF AGRAMANTE'S THIRTY-TWO SUBJECT KINGS**

Once Ruggiero had been found, the flower  
Of beauty and daring, kings and lords vied  
To be the first to sail, and show their power;  
Such commotion had ne'er before been eyed.  
Now let King Charlemagne beware the hour,  
For a mighty storm approaches with the tide;  
All the names, and prowess, I shall now advance,  
Of those summoned there, to sail for France.

From Libicana came King Dudrinasso,  
With his dark-skinned troops, a giant of a man.  
Unarmoured in battle, fierce against the foe,  
Curly-haired were they. An Arabian,  
His fine charger, was all clad in steel though,  
From head to tail, its height many a span.

The emblem that this king bore on his shield  
Was a naked boy upon a crimson field.

Sorridano was the second that I name,  
And his realm the distant Hesperides,  
For well-nigh at the Earth's end lay that same.  
His men too were as swarthy as you please.  
His lips were full, his eyes red; he came  
Riding an Arab steed, with skill and ease,  
Like the first, and behind him rode a third,  
Cruel and fierce his every deed and word.

Tanfirone of Almasilla, he  
Was known more widely as the Desert King,  
Boasting not a house or hut in his country,  
For his subjects roamed the land. Could I sing  
With the Sybilline art of prophecy  
To inspire my song, and was asked to bring  
Before you the finest of his mighty host,  
I could not; of scant courage could they boast.

Marvel not then that, jostling one another,  
The retreated before Orlando's sword,  
And that the Count marred their flesh all over.  
They fought almost naked, like their lord.  
More enjoyable the chase we discover,  
When the quarry is free to flee abroad;  
But I stray too far from my subject; forth  
Went the third; the next dwelt in the north,

King Manilardo of Noritia,  
(A thousand miles from Ceuta it lies)  
Whose wealth was in goats and sheep, as ever  
His vast army seemed the like to comprise.  
They lacked coinage, abjured gold and silver,  
Yet no wonder tis they chose to despise  
Such things, for the bulls and rams that graze here  
Seem likewise to scorn riches, twould appear.

The fifth mighty king was Mirabaldo,  
Lord of Bolga, far distant from the sea.  
Scorching hot was his land, and there the foe  
Were vicious snakes not men. His folk lived free,  
Neath the sun all day, and at night did go  
To their tents, closed gainst every enemy.  
They lived on grass, tis Bishop Turpin's claim,  
And, at times, on locusts, declares that same.

The sixth monarch came from Fez, King Folvo,  
There was scarce a band of troops worse than they,  
They would hide from the burning sun's noon glow,  
Cursing its maker, and the light of day.  
Those dregs of the earth emerged, to the woe  
Of the emperor Charlemagne, men did say.  
(Advance, you wretches! Every Christian  
Will seize and bind a hundred, man by man).

Next Puliano of Nasamona  
Led forth his subjects, though you'd scarcely see  
A single man among them wearing armour,  
Some carried stakes, some a mace, as did he,  
A leader possessed of strength and valour.  
No horns or trumpets announced his army,  
But his troops were well-equipped and well-fed,  
While he, strong and ardent, rode on ahead.

From Alvaracchie came Prusione;  
The Fortunate Isles his kingdom was named,  
Though, amongst the ancients, his fair country  
Caused much confusion, variously claimed  
To be here or there; he led his men boldly  
That went naked, without armour, all untamed,  
Each bearing a great long staff in his hand,  
And a pelt o'er his back; such his rough band.

Arigalte came from Amonia,  
Amidst the desert dust, his kingdom lay,  
And many a fierce head followed after,  
On which the lice hid from the light of day.  
Behind him, the King of Garamanta,  
Martasino, led his men on their way,  
With no better weapons than all the rest,  
For never a lance or sword they possessed.

After the old King of Garamanta  
Had died, Agramante gave the country  
Held by that sorcerer and enchanter,  
To Martasino, whom he loved dearly.  
Now, beside him, marched the King of Ceuta,  
With a stronger squadron, Dorilone,  
Whose sheltered bay and harbour brought him trade.  
In ordered ranks, a valiant sight they made.

Then Argosto of Marmonda with his host,  
Arrived, a king much esteemed in war,  
His waters great shoals of fish could boast;  
His border stretched along the ocean shore,  
Then bore away towards the northern coast.  
On his right, Arzila's king led score on score,  
Bambirago his name, his men the hue  
Of charcoal when the fire's no longer new.

Grifaldo I've neglected to mention,  
Unnoticed midst those of Getulia,  
His hot realm, in an inland direction,  
Held sad folk, all poor as one another.  
Bardulasto having died in action,  
A new lord, as fiery as the other,  
Now led in the bold troops of Alcazar;  
For none their passage would be like to bar.

Tis true they had no iron-ore to hand  
In their country, so they used dragon-bone;  
Lion-heads for helms they wore, that band,  
And every man there bore a sharpened stone.  
Strange and wondrously his host was manned,  
And all would die in France, all overthrown.  
Their arms and legs were bare, every last man,  
While scarce a face in their ranks seemed human.

Their new master was named Bucifaro,  
The third in prowess neath Agramante,  
And behind him came Baliverzo,  
King of Normandia, bold and weighty.  
The strangest but for those of Brunello,  
The king (as we know) of Tingitana,  
The folk he led; for to the deaf and lame,  
And one-eyed, Brunello had laid claim.

None uglier were ever wrought by Nature,  
Who'd set each at the world's end, as was right,  
Since all who came upon such a creature,  
In the dark, were quite like to die of fright;  
While their king, loathsome in every feature,  
Was that swarthy dwarfish fellow, the knight  
Whom I've spoken of enough; I'll pass by,  
(Or rather he will!) and say no more, for I,

Must turn now towards the western shore  
Where the lands appeared more civilised,  
Though the warriors there were scarcely more  
In height, nor more handsome, nor had devised  
Better weapons, while their dress was as poor.  
Maurina's Farurante, I'm advised,  
Their king, led in his men; following on  
Came Alzirdo, the King of Tremizon;

His warriors held spears and shields, and bows.  
From Oran, King Marbalusto, brought more;  
That accursed soul's ranks were filled with those  
Blaspheming folk, that ever spat and swore.  
Their king had informed them (I suppose  
To inspire their courage, or rouse it more)  
That they'd have France as their reward, for they  
Marched willingly, like mad things, on their way.

Gualciotto of Bellamarina,  
Ready, with his well-armed band, for battle,  
Whose realm Marbalusto's land did neighbour,  
Was strong in arms, and most wise in council.  
King Pinadoro of Constantina,  
Ruled that city sited high on a hill,  
Named for Constantine the Great, long before,  
When rebuilt, after being razed in war.

My lords, has all this not proved sufficient  
To weary, each new kingdom and its king?  
Tis never-ending? I'm not yet content!  
Behold Sobrino, who his men did bring  
From Garbo, war and victory his intent.  
Of no wiser Saracen might poet sing.  
Tardoco, King of Djerba, was the next;  
And three more were summoned (so reads the text).

The troops of Rodomonte (still in France),  
Were there, that valiant King of Sarza,  
None on earth could match with shield and lance,  
Or sword, it seems; then came Bugia's ruler,  
His fine troops, with spear and targe, did advance,  
Branzardo was that ancient warrior.  
And last of all came Malabuferso,  
Who'd marched the furthest, King of Fizano.

Dardinello, had already joined the court,  
Born of noble blood, of the royal line.  
This young man was Almonte's son, in short,  
As if winged, his martial skills seemed divine,  
He was handsome, courteous, and well-taught,  
Agramante loved him, did to him incline,  
And, preferring him to many another,  
Made him lord and monarch of Zumara.

'Twill be the dark of night I am sure  
Before I finish naming them entire,  
Since never neath the moon, on any shore,  
Have so many kings, at one man's desire,  
Gathered thus, to promote the cause of war.  
Cardorano to their ranks did aspire;  
Who can remember them all? Not the least  
Came Balifronte, he too from the East;

For the first, Cardorano, reigned in Cosca,  
And, in Mulga, Balifronte ordered all.  
Now all the mighty host of Africa,  
Stretched round Bizerte's defensive wall,  
Varied in their language, they did differ  
In face and dress, on diverse arms did call,  
And were so many one could sooner count,  
The stars, or grains of sand in vast amount.

The kings had been lodged by Agramante,  
So that they might ready themselves for war,  
In Bizerte, resting there gratefully,  
While their men caused a suitable uproar,  
With dance, and song, and endless revelry,  
Each crowd noisier than the one next door.  
Trumpets sounded, weapons rang, the horses neighed,  
And each hour there entered a new parade

Of knights, from Tolometta, Tripoli,  
Or Bernica or wherever; knights aplenty,  
The elite and well-mounted cavalry  
From every place, ten, a dozen, twenty,  
In gleaming armour. Further royalty,  
The Canaries' king, the cognoscenti  
Expected; his name was Bardarico,  
Such his stature, he struck fear in the foe;



His troops used no metal in their spears,  
Goat's horn tipped their lances, and not iron.  
Now whenever have such men, in past years,  
Met for such a venture as I dwell upon,  
And with such diversity as now appears?  
Land and sea, thus, they clothed, whereupon,  
King Agramante felt overweening pride,  
To have such valiant monarchs at his side.

He might command, yet not all might obey;  
King Gordanetto's Arabs for example.  
They lived as wild creatures do alway,  
With neither house nor hut, the desert ample  
For their needs, and quite lawless in their way;  
None could read the stars, or show a sample  
Of their writings; they threatened many lands,  
Gaining spoils, then vanishing midst the sands.

Those who sought to follow, did so in vain,  
Their time and trouble wasted; for they knew  
How to live on dried dates and thus maintain  
Their bodies; their requirements being few.  
In chasing them, there was little to gain  
But harm, naught but starvation one's due.  
And for fear of all this King Agramante  
Left them alone, shunning them completely.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 34-37: RODOMONTE AND FERRAU ARE STILL ENGAGED IN THEIR DUEL**

While he himself was resting in Bizerte,  
As I have said, in comfort, and at ease,  
Word was brought to him, by a messenger,  
Of vessels mooring now, from overseas;  
Rodomonte's ships; of him, however,  
They brought scant news, rather naught that did please,  
Knowing not if he was alive or dead.  
One Dudon was their prisoner, they said.

The king wept, thinking Rodomonte lost;  
Yet I shall leave him to lament a while,  
For in distant Provence, the waves once crossed,  
I'll seek two knights, duelling in fine style,  
With strength and valour, ne'er counting the cost.  
Not those two that each other sought to rile,  
The Count and Rinaldo, fighting fiercely;  
I speak of Ferrau and Rodomonte.

No pair of Saracens e'er showed such force,  
Such vigour, as those two lords in affray,  
For they had waged, and were still on course  
To wage, cruel war, all their skills on display,  
Till one was slain, their own will to enforce.  
The ground was littered; neither I may say,  
Knew the other's name (clad in full armour)  
Yet swore he'd ne'er met a finer warrior.

Ferrau was much the shorter in stature,  
Yet the knight would not yield an inch of ground;  
For, like many a small man, by nature  
He was ardent and bold; such oft is found,  
With reason too, for their limbs are nearer  
To the heart, the body compact, if sound.  
Nonetheless, should he lack courage within,  
A little dog, if fierce, needs the thicker skin!

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 38-42: THEY HEAR OF THE SIEGE OF MONTALBANO**

While still engaged in this most cruel fight,  
Landing vicious strokes, fearsome to behold,  
A mounted messenger now came in sight,  
Who stopped, a moment, and the tale he told  
Was this: 'If either is a loyal knight  
Of King Charlemagne's court, then know that bold  
Marsilio, the pagan lord of Spain,  
Is besieging Montalbano, and fain

To take the fortress; for Duke Amone,  
Defeated, has now fled within the wall,  
With his sons, and Angelieri, and Ivone,  
Though Alardo, indeed, was seen to fall.  
He's dead or captive. That stretch of country  
The Spaniards have stripped, burning all.  
This I have seen, and haste to ask the king  
For aid; destruction and death they bring.'

The man declined to wait, spoke, and rode on.  
Fierce Ferrau was dismayed that he might miss  
Joining in the siege; and when he was gone,  
He brooded on the fact. Was aught amiss?  
Asked Rodomonte, as he mused thereon.  
Was he involved, in some way, with this?  
For unless a partner to that affair,  
It need not be such as required his care.

Bold Ferrau replied that Marsilio  
Was in truth his uncle. Of courtesy,  
He asked a favour of his valiant foe,  
Seeking a swift truce with Rodomonte.  
He swore the daughter of Stordilano,  
Doralice, he'd renounce, instantly;  
Not that he was daunted by the knight,  
But he desired to join the larger fight.

Rodomonte who admired his boldness  
And his ardour, answered him politely,  
Agreeing, and then wished him all success.  
The martial pair embraced, chivalrously,  
And swore an oath of brotherhood no less,  
To bind themselves, true friends eternally,  
The affection shown equal to, or more  
Than, the warmest such men e'er showed before.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 43-50: THEY MEET  
VIVIANO, AND HIS BROTHER MALAGISI THE  
WIZARD**

Having sworn they would ne'er quit each other  
While they yet lived on Earth, the path they sought  
That led to Montalbano; together  
They rode, travelling with no other thought;  
But met Viviano, and his brother  
Malagisi, who were journeying to court.  
They too were seeking aid from Charlemagne  
To counter those Saracens out of Spain,

For twas their own Montalbano, indeed,  
That was besieged, as I've explained to you.  
Malagisi begged his brother to give heed,  
And draw aside, as the pair came in view,  
Saying, softly: 'By God, if you're agreed,  
I would know the names and ranks of those two,'  
Then, entering a grove that stood nearby,  
Drew a circle on the ground, and, by and by,

He took his book and opened it, and found  
The pages he desired, and cast a spell.  
The grove filled with a rustling sound,  
As two hundred fierce demons, out of Hell,  
Rose from every page, and swirled around.  
Yet the wizard could control them, as well,  
Holding them there, awaiting his command,  
While of one, Scarapino, he made demand.

This Scarapino, was one of the fiercest  
Of the devils below, small but gluttonous,  
Full of malice, yet far fatter than the rest.  
In taverns, where his kind dwell among us,  
And wherever the wine was of the best,  
Where folk gambled, and the food was plenteous,  
He lived, in the fumes from roasting meat,  
And laboured hard to tempt the indiscreet.

Malagisi demanded, of him, the names  
Of the two travellers, which the imp supplied.  
The mage decided, then, to play his games,  
And seize them both and, not to be denied,  
Summoned his demons, born amidst the flames,  
And turned them into warriors fit to ride  
Brave steeds, with banner, crested helm, and lance;  
Thus, a thousand fierce troops made their advance.

Amidst the tumult, he and Viviano,  
Taking separate ways, departed the glade.  
Ferrau cried: 'Brother, hear the storm-wind blow,  
For no greater noise than this e'er was made,  
King Charlemagne is riding gainst his foe,  
I deem; now our valour shall be displayed.  
While I'll follow your lead, and willingly,  
I've but little inclination to flee.'

'Flee from the wretches?' cried Rodomonte,  
'Is that your true opinion of my worth?'  
I'd fight alone, whoe'er these folk may be;  
Charlemagne and every Christian on Earth,  
Or the warriors of Spain; tis naught to me.  
If to Mohammed this plain had given birth,  
And all of Paradise and Hell entire,  
I'd not run from such, to escape the fire.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 51-59: RODOMONTE  
AND FERRAU FIGHT THE DEMONS**

In these, and like words, the warriors spoke  
Of their prowess. Meanwhile, Malagisi  
Quit the glade for, swift as a lightning-stroke,  
Those demons swarmed the place, so noisily  
So thunderously, that all the woods awoke,  
And the ground shook, while the heavenly  
Reaches were, in a trice, obscured and veiled,  
By all the fumes, and vapours they exhaled.

They were led by the evil Draginazzo,  
Who rarely dealt with the common crowd,  
The haughtiest of the haughty, down below  
He preferred to hold court amidst the proud.  
He wore a horned helm, disdained to show  
A shield, but spear, sword, pennant did allow.  
Against Rodomonte he made advance,  
And struck him on the forehead with his lance.

Now the iron of that lance-tip was aflame,  
And burned through the visor, easily,  
Singing the monarch's eyebrows as it came.  
Roused, and amazed, by this, Rodomonte  
Cried out: 'Hold fast awhile, if that's your game!  
Hold there, you rascal, your face is surely  
That of the Devil. Let me view it, close by.  
It seems his foul mask, indeed, to my eye!

With that the king swung his mighty sword,  
His strength enormous, as was his prowess,  
And, with a fierce blow, struck the demon lord,  
Which pierced that creature a span deep, no less.  
Draginazzo felt the sharp pain, and roared,  
Though the stroke was all in vain, I confess.  
It sank in but left no trace, while all that crew  
Of imps boiled with rage, and round him flew.

They fought the king, but the man was bold,  
Think not that he called for help, indeed  
He routed all those creatures and, all told,  
Dismissed them; they fled away, at speed.  
Draginazzo, their lord, was first to fold,  
But some others, fighting Ferrau, disagreed  
With flight; one amongst them, Malagriffa,  
That wielded his iron hook with fervour.

He used it to catch usurers, and then lead  
The wretches anywhere he chose to go.  
In his power were all such men, whose greed  
Was great; he roasted them there, down below.  
He hooked many a priest and friar, that breed  
Are, full oft, his close followers, as you know.  
Now he flourished it to attack the knight,  
Though Ferrau was accustomed to a fight.

He struck the imp such a forceful blow  
I can tell you his foe chose not to wait;  
Then he charged at the others, though the foe  
Were close-packed together, and so irate,  
Their cries and screams alone nigh brought him low.  
Another, bent on sealing Ferrau's fate,  
Came on; Falsetta, full of every vice,  
Fraud and deception his, and, in a trice,

He had Ferrau in knots, ne'er drawing near,  
But weaving about the brave Saracen,  
Tormenting him, then fleeing, as if in fear,  
And then returning, to torment him again.  
Yet ne'er cut the cloth (twill cost you dear),  
If you can't sew the garment; it was plain,  
Falsetta thought his feints and his deceit  
Would fool Ferrau, who still was on his feet.

Now, Rodomonte, with a swingeing blow,  
Chanced to strike the demon on his head.  
The blade fell twixt his horns, then below  
It sank, down to his chest; filled with dread,  
Falsetta screamed, and gave a howl of woe,  
And departed (I know not where he fled)  
While Rodomonte attacked those who were left,  
With savage blows, and one or two he cleft.

The demons fled, with many a strident cry,  
In pain awhile, though they could not be slain.  
Thousands about the knights had sought to fly,  
Yet but few of them now chose to remain.  
Malagisi wished to keep those devils nigh,  
As long as he could, there, upon the plain,  
But, in the end, was forced to let them go  
To seek their place amidst the damned below.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXII: 60-61: AND CAPTURE VIVIANO AND MALAGISI**

Seeing how ill his plan had gone, he fled  
With Viviano, though it brought no good,  
For Ferrau caught them; riding as if wed  
To his charger that galloped from the wood  
And like a winged creature swiftly sped  
In pursuit, to overtake them, as it could.  
He was quickly joined by Rodomonte,  
The cousins thus confounded, completely.

The warriors now bound them to a horse,  
And then rode on, to reach Montalbano,  
And so, King Marsilio, in due course.  
My lords, and all you that such grace now show  
Towards me, I must pause my tale, perforce,  
Then, with fine verse, fill up the next canto,  
To suit the war to which my tale gives birth.  
God grant you joy above; but first, on Earth!

BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: THE SIEGE OF MONTALBANO

ARGOMENTO.

Si affrontano gli eserciti a battaglia,  
 Quel di Marsiglio e quel di Carlo Mano,  
 Orlando mostra a i Pagā quāto ei uaglia,  
 Ne Rinaldo si uede stare in uano.

Ogniun mostra sua possa ogniū s'aguaglia  
 A l'altro, ambedui menan ben le mano,  
 Marsiglio, Rodomonte, e Ferraguto  
 Forzati sono a suoi porgere aiuto.



ALLEGORIE.

**RINALDO**, che per virtù di Baiardo giunse prima che Orlando a liberar Carlo, ne mostra quanto possi l'amore, nel spinger alcuno, a far quello accópnato dal suo pensiero, che un'altro difficilmente potria fare.

**ORLANDO** che veduto esser giunto tardi, riuolse lo sdegno uerso pagani, ci ammaestra che quando per colpa di alcuni facciamo qualche cosa mal fatta, douereffimo all'hora cercar di fuggire simil'errore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 1-4: FERRAU AND  
RODOMONTE ARE WELCOMED BY MARSILIO**

The dire battle with the demons, that horror  
Which I related, so fearsome in its way,  
So pleased me (if that's not a mortal error),  
That I truly wish I'd been there that day.  
Then I'd know if every ugly feature  
Of the Devil is as foul as they say,  
Differently portrayed in every place,  
Larger horns here, longer tail there, viler face.

Yet I have little fear of the Devil,  
He only harms sad, foolish, sinful men,  
And I think he'll ne'er convert to evil  
One who crosses himself (now and again!)  
I choose to leave them, simmering there still  
Midst the infernal fires, that grant them pain.  
And return (to delight you, not bring woe)  
To the tale pursued in the last canto.

I told you Ferrau and Rodomonte  
Were upon the road to Montalbano,  
Leading there the captive Malagisi,  
And the equally captive Viviano.  
They now came upon that vast company,  
Of men, and knights, and noblemen also,  
Whose tents hid its hills and plain from view,  
Kings and counts, dukes and marquises, too.

Ferrau, to seek his monarch, now did go,  
And, finding him, the knight knelt on the ground;  
And told how he'd captured Viviano,  
And Malagisi (both still tightly bound),  
And praised Rodomonte. Marsilio  
Who loved him like a son, his love profound,  
Embraced him, and kissed him and, moreover,  
He welcomed Rodomonte with honour.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 5-10: THE WARRIORS  
OF MARSILIO'S COURT**

Balugante, and bold Falsirone,  
The king's brothers had arrived also,  
From Castile and Léon, respectively,  
With Andalusia's king, Maradasso,  
And, from Calatrava, Sinagone,

And, from Volterna, King Grandonio,  
That later slaughtered many a Christian  
(All Morocco was ruled by that madman).

Galicia's king, named Maricoldo,  
Arrived on foot, since he owned no steed,  
He came bearing his club. King Alfonso  
Ruled Biscaglia, a Christian whose seed,  
His true scions, would light, with their bright glow,  
Not merely Spain, but all the world indeed.  
Known as a valiant knight against the foe,  
He would not aid the Moor, Marsilio.

I've not heard, nor read in the histories,  
Nor think that there exists a nobler line.  
Sardinia's proof, the Two Sicilies,  
And parts of Barbary. Not only mine,  
Is that defensible opinion which sees  
A Gothic origin for their bloodline.  
I'll not trace here, their genealogy,  
But the earth knows, and the encircling sea.

The claims of Truth, and honest sentiment,  
Have led me some distance from my theme,  
So, I'll return now to my first intent.  
To tell the names of those (such is my scheme)  
The king had summoned. Larbino was present,  
Of Portugal, and he who ruled supreme  
In Granada, I speak of Stordilano.  
There too was Majorca's Baricondo.

Such was the court of King Marsilio,  
Much esteemed for its worth and chivalry.  
He 'of the Star' was there, Serpentino,  
And the king's bastard son Folicone,  
Almeria's count, and Isoliero,  
From Pamplona; these last two only  
Seemed, midst the other Spaniards, out of place,  
One's hair was blonde, the other pale of face.

Yet why should I linger here to display  
Their names and provinces? For, in the war,  
You will hear them all again, as I relay  
Their noble deeds, midst those of many more.  
King Charlemagne would soon arrive, I say,  
And they'd all have much to do, such is sure,  
But since none, as yet, expected him there,  
Joy and delight that company did share.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 11-14: RODOMONTE AND DORALICE**

Midst the pagan kings twas customary,  
And it remains the custom to this day,  
For a lord to bring to court his lady  
When summoned to fight, near or far away.  
I know not what prompted it, for surely  
Embers mix not well with straw, many say,  
Yet, on the other hand, Love, for his part,  
Swells the warrior's courage, gives him heart.

And so, the queens and princesses were there,  
In the king's camp, from almost all of Spain.  
One beyond all the others, though, was fair,  
The finest flower that country did maintain;  
Doralice. As the rose, midst the air,  
Shines among the leaves, and the thorns (our bane!)  
So, amongst the other ladies shone this maid,  
In face and form a goddess; divinely made.

Now Rodomonte loved her so deeply,  
He performed impressive deeds for her, each day.  
He jousts or duelled, fighting fiercely,  
And fresh robes and turban did e'er display,  
While Ferrau sought her favour, equally;  
Though it seemed no other, I may say,  
Could match the skill of Rodomonte,  
Whose strength was great, and his agility.

To honour him, the king, Marsilio,  
Ordered many a triumphal feast,  
And Rodomonte, celebrated so,  
Was favoured by the ladies not the least.  
So, it continued till, one morning, lo,  
Ere the sound of the blaring trumpets ceased,  
They heard the shouts of their fierce enemy,  
Come to relieve the siege, a vast army.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 15-17: CHARLEMAGNE PROMPTS RINALDO AND THE COUNT TO VIE FOR ANGELICA'S HAND**

King Charlemagne descended on that field,  
Bringing the very flower of Christendom,  
The best that France and Hungary could yield;  
Of knights of Germany, a goodly sum.

Yet ere he went abroad, with sword and shield,  
Against the men of Spain, and Pagandom,  
He informed Rinaldo that Angelica  
Would not be won by the Count thereafter,

If he, Rinaldo, confirmed, in the fight,  
That he, indeed, deserved the lady more,  
And of the two men was the better knight.  
But then he called on Orlando, and swore  
In private to him, he would own the right  
To wed Angelica, if in that war,  
He fought so well that the king could say  
Rinaldo was the lesser man that day.

Those two lords, therefore, were set to compete.  
And prove who was the finer in the field,  
Ah, the wretched Saracens they would meet!  
What could such poor victims do but yield?  
That pair would wreak a havoc so complete  
There ne'er was greater with lance and shield.  
Now silence, my lords! Come, cease your prattle,  
While I describe that great and bitter battle.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 18-26: KING SALAMONE'S TROOPS ENCOUNTER THOSE OF BALUGANTE**

His troops were ordered by Charlemagne  
With close regard to each leader's status.  
These I'll name as they enter on the plain,  
And tell of flags and emblems various.  
Salamone was the first that field to gain,  
The wise King of Brittany, his deeds famous.  
With him rode many a valiant knight,  
For, with banners chequered black and white,

Came the Norman troops, led by Ricardo,  
And those forces were strengthened moreover  
By those under Guido and Iachetto,  
Lords of Monfort, and the Riviera.  
Thirty-six thousand men gainst the foe  
Went this host, fierce and daring as ever,  
Throwing up the dust, like the Greeks at Troy,  
That Saracen camp to seize and destroy.

Marsilio ordered Balugante,  
His brother, to delay the foe's attack,  
So that his scattered forces might swiftly  
Gather, and drive the charging Christians back.  
The Amirant (the Emir) and his army,  
And Serpentino followed on his track,  
And King Grandonio, that fiery spirit,  
Galoped onwards with them, to begin it.

The trumpets sounded; with many a cry,  
The two sides hastened to the encounter,  
Lowering their sharp lances from on high,  
And with a vast noise crashing together.  
Harsh the conflict, splinters rose to the sky  
From those spears; like hail in fierce weather  
They fell again, while shields and weapons clashed,  
For with vicious thrusts those opponents clashed.

At first, but a spectacle it had seemed,  
Armour, and lance-tips, shining brightly,  
Steeds in their carapaces, crests that gleamed  
But once Guido, and then Salamone,  
Commenced the fight, beside the esteemed  
Band of knights led by Ricardo swiftly  
To the fray, and those of bold Iachetto,  
That pleasant stage turned to a scene of woe.

Horses and riders wounded now, or slain,  
Turned the blood-drenched field a crimson hue.  
Now helmets, without crests, littered all the plain,  
And shattered armour; a melancholy view.  
Torn horse-cloths, men stumbling to gain  
A footing, caked with blood and dust (no few),  
The noise, the tumult, many a cry and yell,  
Might have amazed a devil out of Hell.

Ricardo was the first of ours to charge;  
Upon his helm was set an eagle's nest  
As emblem; Salamone was at large,  
In a moment, midst the foe, then the rest,  
Iachetto's and Guido's men, to discharge  
Their duty and win honour, fought with zest,  
But then they met the Emir and Grandone,  
Serpentino, and the bold Balugante.

The Saracens did our men outnumber,  
That should have had the worst of the fight,  
For the foe possessed both strength and valour,  
And seemed to more than match us, knight for knight.  
Some Christian soldiers fled, in dishonour,  
And at that painful, and most woeful, sight,  
Oliviero was sent, by Charlemagne,  
To their aid, with Namus, Gano, and the Dane.

Brave Avino, with Belengiero,  
And Ottone, and (though rated lower)  
Avorio, rode forth to meet the foe;  
While Bishop Turpin followed the latter.  
Then the wild skirmishing, toe to toe,  
Steed to steed, began again, only fiercer.  
While naught could be heard but trumpet and fife,  
As lances snapped, and each fought for their life.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 27-28: CHARLEMAGNE GIVES BRADAMANTE AN ASSIGNMENT**

Charlemagne called Bradamante aside,  
(The very flower of warrior-maids was she)  
And Gualtier, a man of worth and pride.  
The king addressed the lady: 'Do you see,  
That hill before us? I would have you hide,  
With Gualtieri, and brave knights a-plenty,  
In the denser woods there, and stay concealed,  
Till I command your forces be revealed.'

Bradamante led them there, while the fray  
Close-fought, engaged the foes; twas crueller,  
Than e'er the human mind and tongue could say,  
The Moors and their allies proving fiercer,  
Than the Christians had expected that day.  
Oliviero was fearsome, as ever,  
Slaying left and right, but the foe held, still,  
As another squadron charged, at the king's will.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 29-31: BALUGANTE SLAYS IACHETTO**

Stordilano replied, and Baricondo,  
With Malgarino, and Sinagone,  
While close behind them rode Maradasso;  
Those five were led by King Falsirone,



(A pine-tree, as his emblem, he did show,  
All its trunk and branches burning fiercely)  
That mighty host akin to pouring rain,  
As they countered the knights of Charlemagne.

That fiery spirit, bold Grandonio,  
Who as yet had scarce entered on the fray,  
Sought to protect his soldiers from the foe,  
As they re-deployed; he sent on its way  
His great charger, aiming his lance low,  
At King Salamone, to wound or slay,  
And striking the latter upon his shield,  
He hurled that monarch backwards to the field.

King Serpentino, meanwhile, downed Guido,  
(The Count of Montfort I mean, and not Guy  
Of Burgundy, a peer at court also;  
King Arthur's court) and thus made Guido sigh.  
While his father, Balugante, with one blow  
Killed brave Iachetto, as he passed him by.  
He pierced the latter's side, and laid him low,  
Nevermore to fight boldly gainst the foe.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 32-33: THEN FIGHTS UGGIERO THE DANE**

When Uggiero the Dane saw the manner  
In which Balugante had slain Iachetto,  
His visage revealed his bitter anger,  
And he spurred his great charger gainst the foe,  
Whose elephant's-tusk crest, now, to utter  
Ruin fell, as he destroyed the helm below;  
And if Uggiero's aim had proved straight,  
Twould have cleft head and chest, and sealed his fate.

But his vigorous sword-stroke went awry,  
Merely grazing Balugante's beard and cheek,  
Striking his shoulder, after passing by,  
Cutting through plate and mail where they were weak.  
His bone-shield failed that fierce blade to defy,  
Which sliced at the bare flesh it seemed to seek,  
While inflicting a wound so deep and wide  
That, from the harm it wrought, he almost died.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 34-36: OLIVIERO AND GRANDONIO SHOW THEIR SKILL**

Balugante, however, wheeled his steed,  
And, kicking hard with his spurs, he rode on,  
Till he reached Marsilio, in sore need  
Of swift aid; I'll say more of that anon.  
Oliviero launched a fierce blow indeed  
At Sinagone's helm, and thereupon  
Sliced through his head, down to the teeth below,  
Then turned to pursue bold Malgarino.

The latter was so afeared he did not wait,  
On seeing Sinagone cruelly slain,  
But had the sense to flee, and not tempt fate.  
Grandonio, like a snake, struck again,  
Hitting young Avino, the blow full straight,  
Such that the youth landed on the plain,  
And next his brothers: Belengiero,  
Then brave Ottone, and Avorio.

Serpentino, elsewhere, charged Ricardo,  
That courageous and valiant paladin,  
Knocked him from his saddle, at a blow,  
And then, he encountered Bishop Turpin,  
Whom, though he prayed to avoid the foe,  
The Saracen unseated (for some sin!),  
And threw the bishop's troops in disarray;  
Some retreated, and some he chased away.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 37-45: OLIVIERO FIGHTS AND WOUNDS GRANDONIO**

Grandonio of Volterna seemed  
Supreme in the field, Oliviero  
Now thought; for a paragon he deemed  
That warrior, blood-drenched from head to toe.  
Oliviero cried: 'Midst the redeemed,  
Eternal Lord above, I fain would go,  
So, grant me strength against this enemy,  
To defend the Creed, and its sanctity.'

He grasped a second lance as he rode by,  
And then to the charge he spurred his valiant steed,  
Yet I know not if he'd have won thereby,  
For the Count of Maganza struck, at speed,  
Launching a sudden sword-stroke from on high,

That wounded the pagan deeply indeed,  
(Perchance Grandonio saw not the Count)  
Pierced his side, and swept him from his mount.

Ask me not if fierce Grandonio  
Chewed at the bit, when he was unhorsed.  
He rose and gripped his shield, and gainst the foe  
He swung his blade, while Gano now was forced  
To retreat; wheeled his steed, and dodged the blow.  
Grandonio mounted, then he coursed  
O'er the field, with drawn sword, amidst the host,  
And, though wounded, of many a stroke could boast.

No Saracen was e'er as fierce as he,  
Some men he slew, some he knocked to the ground,  
But that blade of his, midst the enemy,  
Many a helpless victim, swiftly, found.  
Oliviero struck Falsirone,  
Split his helmet and shield, both now unsound;  
But Grandonio hastened to his aid,  
Ere Ferrau's valiant father's debt was paid.

Grandonio reached him (well, he did so,  
Since Falsirone could scarcely survive  
Further wounds) and faced Oliviero  
Who left the other, more dead than alive,  
And the pair exchanged blow after blow.  
The Saracen was strong; though both did strive,  
Oliviero had the greater skill,  
Was quick, and agile, and unwounded still.

The Marquis was struck, by Grandonio,  
Under the lower edge of his stout shield,  
Where the armour beneath the targe did show.  
Plate and mail, with a crash, were forced to yield,  
And the sword-blade then grazed the thigh below.  
I'll let you conceive of the strength revealed  
In that fierce blow, since it struck the saddle,  
Cleft the bow, and hit the steed he did straddle.

It caught the charger on the left shoulder,  
And drenched all about in crimson blood.  
Oliviero gripped, all the tighter,  
And then swung, his sword, as hard he could,  
With both hands, battering at the other,  
Till his foe's shield was splintered in the mud,  
While not a plate of his hauberk was unmarred;  
And then struck his flesh, evading his guard.

Where his sword, Altachiera, landed,  
It left the breastplate shattered there, and so,  
The keen blade passed on (the blow two-handed)  
And, in his flank, wounded Grandonio.

The pair of combatants still commanded  
Their weapons, and held to their steeds, although  
Both were wounded. Neither yielded an inch,  
Nor, at each mighty stroke, did either flinch,

While the bitter conflict grew, and the pain,  
As the steel was dented, by blow on blow.  
Meanwhile, elsewhere, Uggiero the Dane,  
Hunted, o'er the plain, bold Malgarino,  
Who would ne'er have escaped, I maintain,  
Had he not been helped by Serpentino,  
He 'of the Star', in enchanted armour,  
Young and daring, who now brought him succour.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 46-49: UGGIERO FIGHTS SERPENTINO, AS THE MOORS GATHER FOR AN ATTACK**

On reaching him, he saw that Uggiero  
Had the Moor, Malgarino, on the rack.  
So, he dealt the Dane a thunderous blow,  
That struck his helmet, to the left and back.  
The steel was strong, but not unduly so,  
And left him somewhat open to attack.  
Uggiero swung round, full of anger,  
And, with good reason, charged the other.

They began a fierce battle, swung their arms,  
Now face to face, though Uggiero's blade,  
Curtana, could do naught gainst the charms  
That protected Serpentino; dismayed,  
He yet fought on. Now came sundry alarms,  
Shouts, and cries, as a fresh attack was made.  
A Moorish squadron, larger than the last,  
Charged down the hill, to the trumpets' blast.

Ahead of them all rode Folicone;  
He was King Marsilio's bastard son,  
And ruled Almeria, and the country  
All about that place. Larbino too made one,  
Portugal's king, spurring his steed, proudly,  
And beside him and, not to be outdone,  
The Caliph; Galicia's Maricoldo;  
And King Morgante sped to meet the foe;

Count Alanardo of Barcelona  
Followed, with the fierce Dorifebo,  
(He bore the crown of Valencia)  
Beside Gerona's Count Marigano,  
While bold King Calabrun made another;  
He ruled Aragon, nor was ever slow  
To join the fight; the hill now joined the plain  
It seemed; onward drove the men of Spain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 50-53:  
CHARLEMAGNE SENDS FORTH ORLANDO AND  
RINALDO**

Their thunder was so loud, it seemed the sky  
Was falling. Charlemagne thought of victory  
Alone, and the praise to be won thereby.  
He called Rinaldo and the Count. Said he:  
'This day is yours, my sons!' And, by and by  
Sent word to the patient Bradamante  
To move, secretly, at the enemy's back,  
And launch, if she could, a surprise attack.

Having sent his message, he turned again  
To Orlando and Rinaldo, brave and true,  
Saying, affectionately: 'Now maintain  
My honour; Christendom will honour you,  
Evermore, for the victory you shall gain.  
And, here, I shall learn which of you two  
Is the better man. I knighted you both,  
And know not whom I'd see win, by my oath!

Ride now, my paladins, to the battle!  
Behold the enemy! Keep them in view,  
And make me a high-road through that rabble,  
So, all the wide world shall remember you.  
I hold them all as but straw and stubble,  
When I gaze at your fierce faces anew.  
For your very look tells me that the foe  
Are already vanquished, and sent below.'

Neither hesitated a moment longer,  
As Charlemagne's word now set them free,  
But like lightning sped to the encounter,  
Or like twin gales combining o'er the sea;  
Racing their steeds against one another,  
Set to vie in braving the enemy.  
Pity the man that met with Rinaldo!  
Or the foe that fought against Orlando!

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 54-56: RINALDO  
SLAYS LARBINO**

Rinaldo's charger owned to greater speed,  
Thus, he outraced the Count; half-way there,  
He lowered his sharp lance, and spurred his steed,  
Eager to prove himself in that affair.  
Now, the King of Portugal was proud indeed,  
Like the rest of his countrymen, I declare.  
Seeing Rinaldo, set upon his course,  
'Who is this? he cried, 'and on so fine a horse?

See how it flies, as if the beast had wings!  
And with an armoured buffoon on its back,  
Who'll cost me, indeed, no more than he brings,  
Tis scarcely worth one mounting an attack.  
Yet since I must (tis the duty of kings)  
Hear the fellow cry, alas and alack,  
I'll run him through, ere he begs me no,  
Though it be Orlando or Rinaldo.'

Speaking thus, that proud and valiant king,  
Lowered his enormous, and weighty, lance,  
And, as Prince Rinaldo was progressing  
Towards him, sought to halt his swift advance.  
The one broke his mighty spear in charging,  
The other ran him through, and not by chance;  
Twas Rinaldo striking home, true and hard,  
Whose shaft drove on through his foe, a full yard.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 57-61: ORLANDO  
KILLS CALABRUN AND MARICOLDO**

Abandoning his lance, he let him fall;  
Then Rinaldo swung Fusberta at the rest.  
Meanwhile Calabrun, both strong and tall,  
The king in Aragon, Orlando addressed.  
For the monarch, who'd proved himself, in all  
The battles he'd fought, as among the best,  
Saw the Count approaching with lowered lance,  
And galloped to meet him in his advance.

Whoever had viewed both kings, Larbino  
And Calabrun, would have said the field  
Held none prouder. The latter charged Orlando,  
And drew sparks aplenty from the Count's shield,  
Twould have been better if some other foe

He had chosen, and his great pride concealed,  
For the Count's spear, piercing him, front to back,  
Drove him, dead, from his mount in that attack.

Orlando drew his sword, Durindana,  
Since his lance was now lost, and faced the rest.  
As a river meets the sea, that flower  
Of France, cleft the Spanish ranks four abreast.  
Amidst the Moors and Saracens that hour  
He showed his strength and courage gainst the best,  
Vanquishing every knight that met his eye,  
Sending plate and mail soaring to the sky.

He saw a giant on foot among the foe,  
Twas Maricoldo of Galicia,  
Wreaking such havoc, marching to and fro,  
He left his victims dead, or in terror.  
Orlando looked askance, as blow on blow  
That king landed (it seemed mere slaughter),  
Thinking 'You're tall enough, my great mooncalf;  
Let me trim you by a foot and a half.'

And, with that, he put an end to his sport,  
For where the Count had aimed, he sent a blow,  
That severed the monarch's neck, as he'd sought,  
And shortened him, by a good foot or so,  
Leaving, above his chest, little or naught,  
Then returned his attention to the foe  
Beyond, destroying them, like to the fire  
In the June stubble, that leaps ever higher.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 62-63: THEN ATTACKS STORDILANO, BARICONDO AND MARADASSO**

He soon overcame King Stordilano,  
And Baricondo, their steeds in a heap;  
Struck one in the face, the other below  
In the groin. Like a flock of frightened sheep,  
The Moors fled, routed. Next Maradasso  
The monarch who held Argina's keep,  
(An Andalusian he, his sign and crest,  
An ostrich) he chased amidst the rest.

He pursued, as I say, Maradasso,  
(And, thus, chased that same ostrich from the field)  
Then he turned to seek a more valiant foe,  
Since the king's haste to leave was unconcealed.

Many a skilful blow to down his prey,  
(Who knows how many blows?) the Count revealed,  
Cleaving some lengthwise, some men side to side,  
(Drenched in blood, head to toe); thus, many died.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 64-65: RINALDO SLAYS MARIGANO**

Nor was Rinaldo's tally less in that chase.  
He gripped his mighty sword, Fusberta, tight,  
And swung it high against the Moorish race,  
Cutting to pieces many a valiant knight.  
His blade never ceased to strike at chest and face.  
Marigano, ever strong in the fight,  
Count of Gerona, as you may recall,  
Attacked the warrior; he watched him fall.

Mighty Fusberta struck him on the head,  
Cracked his helm, and shore away his crest,  
Cleft his face, his beard now crimson red,  
And descended to mid-way through his chest.  
His soul to the infernal regions fled;  
His accursed body on the earth did rest.  
Abandoning it there, fierce Rinaldo  
Now hunted after Count Alanardo.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 66-69: HE DOWNS ALANARDO, DORIFEBO, THE CALIPH, FOLICONE AND MORGANTE**

Alanardo held sway in Barcelona,  
Though Rinaldo knew naught of his power there.  
He dealt with every Moorish warrior  
In the same manner, and with equal care;  
For Dorifebo of Valencia,  
Rinaldo also felled, in that affair.  
The first, senseless, in a trice was downed,  
The other was sent flying o'er the ground.

Sometimes a fire's set midst the juniper,  
So as to flush out the deer and the hare,  
The flame leaping higher and higher,  
As all the ground it scorches, and lays bare.  
So, Rinaldo terrified each warrior,  
And drove them o'er the plain, none did he spare;  
For, as the fire pursues the hare and deer,  
So did our knight the Moors, who fled in fear.

The Caliph was unhorsed, then Folicone,  
While King Morgante, too, quit his steed.  
The first wounded in the thigh, and deeply,  
The second in the chest, the third did bleed  
From his face. Rinaldo, moving swiftly,  
Drenched in blood, wrought many a bold deed,  
What warrior there could escape defeat?  
No destruction was ever more complete.

When I say, my lords, that brave Rinaldo  
Was drenched in blood, I seek not to say  
That he was harmed, though stained from top to toe,  
For his flesh was not marred in any way,  
And the blood was ever that of some foe.  
Yet I must leave him there, and veer away  
To Balugante, much hurt, as we know,  
Who'd arrived before King Marsilio.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 70-72: KING  
MARSILIO LAUNCHES A MASS ATTACK**

His head was wounded, his mouth was marred,  
His shoulder cut, while his shield was gone,  
And he swayed in his saddle, holding hard  
To the reins now, while the monarch looked on.  
Though he could barely speak, that most ill-starred  
Warrior cried: 'Send help to those, upon  
The field, for now this bold King Charlemagne,  
Brings defeat to your knights, o'er all the plain!'

When he'd heard the tale, King Marsilio,  
With both his hands, beat hard upon his face,  
And cursed Allah aloud, who'd brought him woe.  
Fists joined he made (to his lasting disgrace),  
Foul gestures to the sky; then, against the foe,  
He sent all his troops. Ferrau led apace,  
While Malzarise and Rodomonte  
Followed him, with the bold Folvirante.

This last was from the East, and not of Spain,  
Though he ruled the fine kingdom of Navarre,  
A gift from the monarch, but now again  
To be re-earned, on the field where we are;  
Fiercely that host descended to the plain,  
And looked a million strong seen from afar.  
The foe ever seems greater in number  
Than one's own force, at the first encounter.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 73-75: THE MOORISH  
LADIES ENCOURAGE THEIR MENFOLK**

Down to the plain they swept, as I say,  
And the ground well-nigh sank beneath their feet.  
In disordered ranks they sped on their way,  
The charge launched ere their order was complete.  
King Bovarte was present on that day,  
And Languirano, co-rulers of one seat,  
With Doricante and Baliverzo,  
And the Devil's servant, old Urgano.

'Twas as if earth and sky met one another,  
And flowed on. Each man vied to be the first,  
While his lady's sad gaze followed after,  
As she grieved, sighed for him, and feared the worst.  
The proud queens all clapped their hands together  
And called out to those men in warfare versed:  
'For love of us, show bravery this day!'  
And praised them, as they saw them on their way.

'In your strong hands,' they cried, 'Allah has placed  
Our lives and liberty. Ride on, and fight  
Valiantly gainst the foe; be not disgraced!  
War that we may be free; defend the right!  
Let not those dogs seize us (the true and chaste),  
And lead us to dwell in shame's endless night.  
If our persons you would gain, heart and soul,  
Let honour for yourselves be ere your goal.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIII: 76-78: RODOMONTE  
AND FERRAU CHAMPION THE MOORISH CAUSE**

Not one king or knight, galloping bravely,  
But was stirred by what the court ladies cried.  
Yet, more than all the rest, Rodomonte,  
Could not have endured aught but to ride.  
He was grateful the monarch had, promptly,  
Sent both he and Ferrau forth, in their pride,  
For a messenger had found them, to say  
That the king sought their aid, without delay.

So those two brave Saracens descended,  
The flower on earth of boldness and valour.  
O how many Christians, ill-defended,  
They will slay! O grant aid, Holy Mother!  
Lead not the latter, ere this be ended,

Into those toils that bind many another.  
Orlando and Rinaldo, fire and flame,  
Must earn their pay and more, all the same.

As those Saracens rode forth to the plain,  
(Famed were they all for strength and bravery)  
The world seemed ablaze, the ground, again,  
Shook, as if twould split apart completely.  
But this canto grows long. Lest you complain  
That excess annoys, I'll end it briefly;  
And pause awhile, which may well delight you,  
Ere, to the next canto, I invite you.

BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: THE CLASH OF MONARCHS



ARGOMENTO.

Gran proue fa Rodomonte. Il Spagnuolo,  
Ferraù Carlo abbatte dal destriero,  
Rinaldo giunto quasi che di volo,  
Torna a cavallo il valente Imperiero,  
Con Ferraù si attacca a mezzo il stuolo,  
E Carlo con Marsilio il Re sì altiero  
Orlando giunto tardi, il suo furore.  
Mostra contra i Pagan pien di dolore.



ALLEGORIE.

PER Rodomonte che fa gran proue contra l'esercito de Christiani, ci dinota che molto più vale vn'huomo ualoroso, che cento minimi.

Rinaldo, che rimonta a cavallo Carlo, ci dinota che l' vero seruo non deue mai abbaudonare il suo signore.

Orlando che giunto tardi ne l'esercito di Carlo, e fa grãde strage di Saracini, significa che l'huomo corragioso gioua più nel fin delle imprese, che nel principio.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 1-3: CHIVALRY'S  
POWER TO DELIGHT THE ARDENT MIND**

When the bugle, in the thick of battle,  
Sounds the alarm, and summons to cruel sport,  
'Tis then the proud charger, in fine fettle,  
Lifts his head, paws the ground, gives a snort,  
Then shakes his mane, afire, on his mettle,  
Stirs impatiently, to high tension wrought,  
And kicks at any man who draws too close,  
Neighing endlessly, a creature grown verbose.

Likewise, to listen to some lordly deed,  
Of chivalry, recounted midst the crowd,  
Pleases the noble mind, which pays it heed  
As if it were itself involved; the proud  
And manly heart is made manifest indeed,  
In all that delights the spirit e'er unbowed.  
Thus, I detect your daring, and your ardour,  
You that read my words, with joy and pleasure.

Should I not therefore try my best to please  
So kind, and courteous, an audience?  
I ought to do so, must, and shall not cease;  
And so, recall that final stanza's sense,  
(It closed my canto): Ferrau (to reprise)  
And brave Rodomonte, his pride immense,  
Rode out, their faces owning such a look  
As if the heavens fell, and the earth shook.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 4-8: CHARLEMAGNE  
LEADS HIS COMPANY INTO BATTLE; OTACHIER  
IS SLAIN**

That pair of warriors led forth the rest,  
A good bow's shot ahead, to reach the plain  
Like lions moving from their place of rest,  
On viewing a herd of deer, some prize to gain.  
They spurred their trusty mounts, in armour dressed,  
Towards the Christians and Charlemagne,  
That scorned the enemy, disdained them still,  
Though they swept on, in splendour, down the hill.

The king had seen them gathering on the height,  
Those Saracens, led by Marsilio.  
Although he knew not who they were, by sight,  
He laid his plans to counteract the foe;

Deploying many a foot soldier and knight,  
And of them formed a large brigade, and so  
Summoned every sound man to his banner;  
Rank and status being of no matter.

Then he led forth that mighty company,  
His steed's caparison sweeping the ground,  
As the trumpets and the drums played loudly,  
And the earth beneath trembled at the sound.  
Marsilio, rode down the hill proudly,  
Though, as I said before, all girt around  
By troops, while Ferrau and Rodomonte  
Rode ahead. To face this hostile enemy,

Count Gano and brave Otachiero  
(He of Hungary) spurred now o'er the field,  
But Rodomonte struck first, at Gano,  
And broke the Maganzese's solid shield.  
The proud pagan despatched it, at a blow,  
Pierced the breastplate, and all his flank revealed.  
Turpin (from whom this whole tale I derive),  
Claims that the Devil kept the man alive.

No doubt he did him a service that day,  
To save that lord for fresh torment later.  
Ferrau meanwhile Otachier did slay,  
Piercing the latter's shield, and his armour,  
Driving his lance, a yard or more, I say,  
Through Otachier's back, in his ardour.  
Both Christians, thus, tumbled to the plain,  
Though one was half-alive, the other slain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 9-16: FERRAU AND  
RODOMONTE DOMINATE THE FIELD**

The pagans left them lying on the ground,  
And galloped onwards, to attack our force.  
That damned soul Count Gano, though unsound,  
Recovered such that he could mount his horse,  
And vanished from the field; while, all around,  
That Saracen pair's cruel mission ran its course.  
Who'll help me tell of it? I doubt, alone,  
I can describe that war on flesh and bone.

A tongue of iron, the loud cannon's roar,  
Were needed to relate all that fierce tale.  
The air seemed ablaze, as if lightning tore



The earth below, their swords the heavens' veil.  
 Charlemagne seemed doomed, by Fate's dark law,  
 To die, with his whole court, in that wide vale.  
 They could do naught to halt the pagan foe,  
 Though the strong and brave traded blow for blow.

That pair attacked, parting flesh and armour,  
 One against the right flank, one against the other,  
 While Charlemagne gave many an order,  
 Trusting in God, yet his mind no clearer  
 Than any of his troops, all lost together.  
 Fearful the cries his dying men did utter,  
 The shouts and screams so loud that none could hear  
 The monarch's commands, whether far or near.

Each man took position as he thought right,  
 Hastening desperately to join the fray,  
 While God indeed kept Charlemagne in sight,  
 Or surely the emperor had died that day,  
 And left France bereft. Full many a knight  
 On that battlefield in his own blood lay,  
 Though that pair, Ferrau and Rodomonte,  
 Took the lives of common men aplenty.

Rodomonte on the right, with Nimrod's sword,  
 Gripped tight in both hands, slew Ranibaldo,  
 A good Christian, and Anversa's lord;  
 Then robbed Alverna of its Count Salardo,  
 Ran him through, left him dead upon the sward;  
 Slew Ugo, and Raimondo, midst the rest,  
 (Piercing the one's neck, and the other's chest),

The first from Cologne, the second Picardy.  
 The Saracen king left them lying there,  
 And rode on, slaying others randomly;  
 The very crown of prowess he did bear.  
 Ferrau was no less powerful; equally,  
 In those nigh-wondrous deeds he too did share.  
 Ranier of Rheims he downed (the father  
 Of brave Oliviero) who fought no longer;

Likewise, that bold German, Count Ansaldo,  
 The lord of Nuremberg, he struck in haste,  
 With a fierce, and vicious, two-handed blow  
 That cleft that valiant warrior to the waist.  
 Christians, all o'er the plain, fled the foe;  
 Who would not fear that cruel blade to taste?

With a single stroke, he wounded, mortally,  
 The luckless dukes of Cleves and Saxony.

One's head flew off, complete with helm and crest,  
 The neck clean-severed at a single blow,  
 While the other duke was pierced in the chest.  
 Then, that fierce pagan charged another foe,  
 Filling Charlemagne with such deep unrest  
 He could do naught but contemplate his woe.  
 As Marsilio and his troops drew near,  
 The Christian king was beset with fear.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 17-20: FERRAU UNHORSES KING CHARLEMAGNE**

He lacked brave Orlando, and Rinaldo,  
 Who were now fighting elsewhere on the field,  
 As were the Dane, and Oliviero,  
 Each forced to make good use of sword and shield.  
 Glancing round, the king saw none but the foe,  
 While his own troops now seemed about to yield.  
 He made the sign of the cross, and sat tall,  
 Then aimed his lowered lance at them all,

All those pagans, and cried: 'God Almighty,  
 Abandon not the man who trusts in you,  
 As my army here has abandoned me,  
 Leaving their king naught but his sins to rue.  
 Better to die, and dwell midst all that's holy,  
 Among the blessed, than have shame be my due.  
 Aid me Lord, let me not be disgraced,  
 For in you all my faith and hope I've placed.'

He gripped his lance more tightly in his hand,  
 And, still calling on God to help His own,  
 He spurred his mount against the Saracen band,  
 Aimed at Ferrau, and made that warrior groan;  
 For upon the latter's brow the blow did land,  
 And Ferrau well-nigh toppled, but the bone  
 Was strong enough there to withstand its force,  
 And though stunned awhile, he held to his course.

The king's lance split, the splintered pieces flew,  
 While Ferrau, reviving, burned with anger.  
 His fighting rage now rose within him, anew,  
 For he'd ne'er been struck, and shaken harder.  
 He turned and hit the king's helm, as he flew

Towards him, and knocked him from his charger.  
All that gazed on believed the king was slain.  
Our troops, dismayed, trembled as if in pain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 21-24: BALDUINO  
FINDS ORLANDO, WHO RACES TO THE RESCUE**

Brave Balduino, of Gano's false clan,  
Cried out in woe, and wept, beyond the rest.  
He galloped o'er the ground, his instant plan  
To find the Count, and that dire news attest.  
While Dardona's Ugetto, that brave man,  
Viewing Ferrau's ill deed, now thought it best  
To seek Rinaldo, and spurred on his steed,  
Crossing before the Moorish ranks, at speed.

Meanwhile Marsilio had joined the fray,  
With trumpets, drums, horns, and many a yell  
His troops shouting, screaming in such a way  
As seemed to send Heaven tumbling to Hell.  
Our men scattered swiftly, or turned at bay,  
As the Moors pursued, and upon them fell,  
Hacking away shattering helm and shield,  
Till as many as could run fled the field.

Balduino, at last, found Count Orlando  
Who had now slain the knight Balgurano,  
Staining the earth with the blood of his foe,  
As if from some dark fountain it did flow.  
Balduino beat his brow, and wept with woe,  
And spoke of Charlemagne now laid low,  
Dead, or wounded in perilous manner,  
And like to die (twas all he could utter!)

Count Orlando, at this, nigh ceased the fight,  
His heart sore pierced with grief, and then he turned  
His eyes, and face, ablaze, and from the knight  
The site of his bold monarch's fall he learned;  
Then he spurred his mighty charger outright,  
And rode to where the king's defeat was earned,  
While, as that fiery spirit pierced the fray,  
All that met with his savage gaze gave way.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 25-30: MEANWHILE  
UGETTO FINDS RINALDO, WHO DOES THE  
SAME**

Those repented that yielded too slowly,  
For he swung his great sword without warning,  
Careless if twas friend or foe, his angry  
Blade, wielded wildly, now hot and smoking.  
Many he slew, trampling them in fury,  
While elsewhere Ugetto was still searching,  
High and low, for Rinaldo whom he found  
Drenched in his victims' blood, as was the ground.

Ugetto scarcely knew him, such his state,  
Crimson staining his armour and his shield.  
He told him, in tears, of his monarch's fate,  
And the nature of his tumble to the field,  
Thus, his life was in doubt, the peril great,  
(Not a detail of his danger he concealed)  
Unless, perchance, by then Count Orlando  
Had reached him, and saved him from the foe;

For as he came, he'd seen good Balduino,  
Turning back, with Orlando at his side,  
Who no doubt had revealed an equal woe,  
And thus, to rescue their king, both did ride.  
Rinaldo groaned on learning it was so,  
And, then, aloud: 'Alas for me,' he sighed,  
If all that you tell me proves true, then I  
Have lost the fair Angelica thereby;

For Charlemagne will wed her to the Count,  
Should he rescue the king ere I am there.  
I'll be left, as ever, to weep a fount  
Of tears, abandoned, shamed by this affair.'  
And then: 'You may as well, the sheer amount  
Of time you've taken to arrive, I swear,  
Have trotted, ambled, walked your idle steed;  
The beast's ne'er broken sweat, so slow his speed!'

'Nay, I galloped, I spurred the horse along,  
Cried Ugetto, 'tis you who linger here!  
Who knows? Perchance my passing thought was wrong,  
And, ere Orlando can at that scene appear,  
He'll be much delayed, for the foe is strong.  
You, then, should try your fortune, and not fear  
To fail, ere you've ventured midst the throng.

Your charger is so swift and sure that he  
May reach Charlemagne first, it seems to me.'

Rinaldo, persuaded by Ugetto  
To move swiftly, now galloped o'er the plain,  
Spurring on his valiant steed, Baiardo,  
And, since that fierce pace he did maintain,  
He wrought havoc amidst both friend and foe,  
Parting the ranks of Christendom and Spain,  
While never ceasing, in his wild advance,  
To cleave a path towards the King of France.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 31-34: RINALDO SLAYS  
MARCOLFO, FOLVIRANTE, AND BALIVERZO**

Marcolfo, a gigantic Saracen,  
Who served at King Marsilio's court,  
Chased behind, and harried, our fleeing men.  
He met Rinaldo, and the warriors fought;  
The latter swung Fusberta, once again,  
Two-handedly, and cut the fellow short.  
Speeding on, our knight met Folvirante,  
King of Navarre, gazed at him intently,

Then skewered him; the blade went through his back,  
Full three palm-widths beyond, it did go,  
Then he spurred Baiardo to the next attack,  
While leaving far behind his outstretched foe.  
He swung Fusberta (naught did that blow lack)  
At a large and hefty Moor, Baliverzo,  
Whose head was wrapped in a turban; his face  
He sliced, and his neck, and away did race.

He left those two to die, and urged his steed  
Onwards, swiftly, to seek King Charlemagne.  
An abbot crossed his path, so fate decreed,  
The king's chaplain, as he sped o'er the plain,  
Whose mule was fat, though (swollen by greed)  
The man was fatter and, with half a brain,  
Stood stock still, scarcely knowing what to do,  
So great his fear. Baiardo fairly flew

O'er the ground, and the steed knocked him flat,  
Trampling the winded priest, with the mule below,  
Though indeed I know no more of it than that,  
Since Turpin further comment does forego.  
The bold peer of France, with that coup d'état,

Leapt o'er the obstacle, and many a blow  
Then delivered, for heads and arms he skied,  
And so cleared himself a path good and wide.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 35-41: AND THEN  
SAVES CHARLEMAGNE**

Behold, he saw before him a vast throng,  
Encircling Charlemagne to slay the king,  
Now concealed, by that host that did belong  
To the Saracen ranks. They formed a ring,  
While those behind, pressing in, made a strong  
Barrier to movement, thus few could swing  
A sword. They might have slain him, there and then,  
Had he not fought back with the strength of ten.

That fierce battle went unseen by Rinaldo,  
The monarch himself hidden from his view,  
But he urged on his great steed, Baiardo,  
And soon the state of play within, he knew.  
Twas then Rinaldo moved against the foe,  
Showed his valour as a knight, strong and true,  
While Charlemagne cried out: 'Aid me, my son,  
God sends you here that justice may be done!'

As he spoke, the king swung his trenchant blade,  
His body yet protected by his shield,  
Though, truly, he was desperate for aid,  
Such a host encircled him, on that field.  
A count from Cordoba a thrust now made,  
Towards him, and sought to make him yield,  
While he attempted to slay that same.  
Partano was that lively fellow's name;

Unaware of our knight breaking through,  
He was startled, and made but poor defence.  
His fate was sealed. Rinaldo swung anew  
And his sword robbed the man of all sense,  
For the blow to his helm, was good and true,  
And cleft him, head to chest, its force immense.  
Rinaldo then attacked, with might and main,  
That ring of blades encircling Charlemagne.

He struck the Count of Alva, Paricone,  
Unseated him, and quickly seized his steed.  
He laid about him, the reins grasped tightly,  
For of that fresh mount his monarch had need.

He'd driven back the throng successfully,  
And within the circle wrought many a deed  
So, allowing the king to mount, despite  
The attentions of many a Moorish knight.

And he was none too soon in the saddle,  
For he was scarcely seated on the horse  
When Ferrau appeared, that man of mettle,  
Followed by Marsilio, in due course.  
That king rode commandingly to battle,  
Dealing hammer blows without remorse,  
Scattering our troops who fled his blade.  
All about them swift destruction they made.

Our men fled before them, in a trice.  
Terrified, by blows to the head and face,  
Not a man wished for that encounter twice;  
Ne'er was there such woe as in that place.  
But Charlemagne was there to cut and slice  
At the foe, by God's and Rinaldo's grace,  
And on his appearance stemmed the flow;  
While they welcomed the prince, on Baiardo.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 42-44:  
CHARLEMAGNE FIGHTS MARSILIO, RINALDO  
FIGHTS FERRAU**

The shouts rose on high, the war-trumpets blew,  
The conflict revived, and fresh battle flamed.  
Those about Charlemagne, heartened anew,  
Turned about to fight, lest their flight be blamed  
For defeat, and sought to show they were true.  
King Marsilio, who many a life had claimed,  
Witnessing that resurgence, slowed his pace,  
And, with Ferrau beside him, ceased the chase.

Both reined in their chargers, and were still,  
Though neither feared the Christian advance,  
Then rode on, fiercely, as if to the kill,  
Headed for those foes, massed with sword and lance.  
They say men are created by God's will,  
Yet men choose their enemies, perchance,  
And here Ferrau sought to slay Rinaldo,  
While Charlemagne faced King Marsilio.

O the mighty blows, the clash of armour!  
He that saw it with his own eyes, I think  
His soul, dismayed, would have cried for succour,  
And in fear cried: 'Aid! Aid!' on the brink  
Of death, and when that soul, thereafter,  
Left the flesh that, alone, to earth must sink,  
Ne'er would it wish to see that place again,  
Where those pairs of knights clashed, in rage and pain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 45-51: THE LATTER  
PAIR DUEL FIERCELY**

I'll leave the king to fight Marsilio,  
(Their duel proved the lesser of the two,  
In my opinion) and to Rinaldo  
And Ferrau, and ardour's heights, turn my view.  
My heart now dreads to commence it though,  
This song of bitter conflict, I renew.  
How start? How end it? Twin flowers of valour,  
Twin hearts of fire, battling there together.

The pair began with many a mighty blow,  
Both seeking destruction, weapons clashing,  
As if they'd not been fighting some foe  
From the dawn light, to the fall of evening;  
For each man held his ground, nor would he go  
From that place or e'er be caught retreating.  
They swung with such fury, as they drew near,  
The hearts of the onlookers quaked with fear.

Ferrau took a fierce blow to the forehead,  
And if his helm had not been charmed, truly  
T'would have shattered to tiny fragments, spread  
O'er the plain, lost to the sand, completely.  
Fusberta against Ferrau's shield now sped,  
(T'was made of hide and iron plate) neatly  
Slicing through it, to carve at his saddle.  
Rarely was such a stroke seen in battle.

The Saracen responded to his game,  
Striking hard at the helm once Mambrino's.  
It yielded scintillating sparks, and flame,  
But stayed intact, beneath his savage blows,  
That pierced the knight's shield in the very same  
Manner as his own had been; then Rinaldo's  
Saddle he hacked away at, sending more  
Than a quarter down to the earthen floor.

Nor did he stop, but swung his sword again,  
And struck Rinaldo's helmet on one side.  
Conceive the strength of that blow, and the pain!  
Stunned, Rinaldo nigh from his mount did slide.  
Confused, he struggled his seat to regain,  
His wits addled, and half-blinded beside.  
Baiardo leapt high, and carried him clear.  
While a cry: 'Lo, he falls!' rose from those near.

Yet reviving, reviewing the danger  
He'd encountered, his closeness to disgrace  
Rendered both his cheeks a crimson colour,  
For a blush of shame reddened all his face.  
'A Saracen, to down me?' in his anger,  
He cried aloud. 'No, I'll ne'er quit this place  
Unavenged; I'd rather be a soul in Hell,  
And leave my flesh to the dogs, ere I so fell!'

Rinaldo paused not, while he was speaking,  
But at Ferrau he again swung his sword,  
And struck his foe on the helmet, stretching  
Him back, on his crupper, flat as a board.  
No blow was ever fiercer. Deaf, unseeing,  
Ferrau, for half an hour, the world ignored,  
And, bright blood pouring from his mouth and nose,  
Was forced to rest, recovering from those blows.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 52-55: ORLANDO GRIEVES AT ARRIVING LATE TO THE SCENE**

Yet I must leave my account of that fight,  
And turn my steed's head towards Orlando,  
Who'd arrived somewhat later than the knight.  
Brigliador, slower than Baiardo,  
Had strained away, with all his will and might,  
But, though valiant, no faster could he go,  
And, thus, he had delivered his master  
To the spot, with the king out of danger,

He found Charlemagne secure, in his seat,  
And fighting strongly gainst Marsilio.  
That monarch he'd brought well-nigh to defeat,  
For thrice now he'd wounded his royal foe.  
And the Count's discomfiture was complete,  
When he saw Ferrau, stunned by Rinaldo.  
He moaned and groaned, and visibly changed hue.  
'Ah, me!' he cried, 'What's left for me to do?'

It seems that every role's already taken:  
A curse on that traitor, Balduino,  
Most aptly, born among the God-forsaken  
Maganzseses, the worst the world doth know!  
Tis through that sad wretch, lest I'm mistaken,  
That hope of love is gone, and I'm brought low;  
To lose the joys of paradise, my fate,  
Because that fool brought me the news too late.

Charlemagne will declare I only came  
Idly, out of duty, and too slowly.  
But you, you cursed pagans, all the same,  
Shall suffer cruel punishment, for, hear me,  
My dire vengeance upon you all I'll claim.  
Though I bring the heavens down about me,  
I'll match Rinaldo's deeds, upon this plain,  
Or nevermore may face King Charlemagne!'

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 56-62: HE DEFEATS A STRING OF SARACEN WARRIORS**

With this he wheeled about, and rolled his eyes,  
In scorn and rage, and, as a mighty gale,  
A dark, howling tempest that stirs the skies,  
(Such that the peasant's heart it doth assail,  
Who, dismayed by its advent, weeps and cries)  
Comes, riding the preceding winds, to flail  
At the trees, beat down the crops, passing o'er  
The ruined fields, to strew the forest floor,

So came Orlando, wielding his great sword,  
In those powerful hands, full fierce to see.  
No Saracen but did him space afford,  
None daring to do aught, but up and flee.  
Those sad cowards vanished, with one accord,  
While, as yet, the Count galloped furiously  
Spurring Brigliador, cursing the creature,  
Blaming on that poor beast his own failure.

The first knight he reached was Valibruno,  
Count of Medina, whom he cleft in two,  
From head to saddle, and then Orlando  
Passed from the dead and silent, to the new.  
He found Alibante of Toledo  
Much the cleverest scoundrel midst that crew,  
And sliced the thief across, side to side,  
Then pressed on to the next man, as he died.

This was the treasurer, Baricheo.  
 He handled all the wealth of his king.  
 He'd been a Jew, a Christian also,  
 And now was a Saracen; if anything,  
 He'd grown worse with each new religion, though,  
 No god at all was most to his liking.  
 Orlando cleft the man from head to chest,  
 Nor do I know where his damned soul has rest,

Whether among the sinners, down in Hell,  
 Or the demons, in some fiery corner.  
 The Count left his corpse lying where it fell,  
 And, among the pagans, hunted another.  
 If, in Apulia, some ne'er-do-well,  
 Starts a blaze, that soon the field doth cover,  
 And which the wind serves to spread, so burning  
 All the ripe crops there, the harvest ruining,

The harm is like that wrought by Orlando,  
 Cleaving and scattering their vicious kind.  
 Origante was his next prey, midst the foe,  
 Though the Count would not strike him from behind,  
 As he fled, so he passed him, turning slow,  
 To strike his shield, then the sinews that did bind  
 The man together, and cleft him side to side  
 Like Alibante, then onwards did ride;

Origante, of Malaga the master,  
 Now parted in twain, he left there to die.  
 Orlando cleft Urgino, another  
 Proud Saracen, who fell with scarce a cry.  
 Yet Rodomonte now heard of the matter,  
 Far off amidst the plain, from one nearby,  
 Where he was fighting; heard how the foe  
 Now threatened Ferrau, and Marsilio.

## BOOK II: CANTO XXIV: 63-66: RODOMONTE IS ALERTED TO THE DANGER

He quit Brittany's King Salamone,  
 Who'd remounted despite his wounded thigh,  
 And the cuts, on his face, Rodomonte  
 Had dealt him, bravely seeking to defy  
 The furious monarch, who had simply  
 Made him soar from his saddle to the sky,  
 Once again; he was thus beyond rescue,  
 Had that king not sought to battle anew.

Rodomonte left him, and met another,  
 William of Orleans, of noble breed.  
 The monarch cleft him, his helm and visor  
 Both useless in preventing that fierce deed.  
 And then the king, progressing further,  
 Hurl'd dead men about like scattered seed.  
 Where'er the man passed by, the more he found  
 The more he slew, and left upon the ground.

He hammered at, and beat down, Count Ottino,  
 Lord of Toulouse, and as he rode away,  
 He downed Bourbonne's mighty duke, Tebaldo,  
 Though neither of that pair he chose to slay.  
 Thence he came to those killed by Orlando,  
 Heaps of dead men and steeds, across his way,  
 Piled high, on the blood-stained field, score on score,  
 Left by the Count to deck that killing-floor.

He heard the screams the cries, the loud lament,  
 Resounding from where Orlando now fought,  
 Drenched in blood, but, nonetheless, not content  
 As yet with his tally; still more he sought.  
 Yet I've been upon my verse so intent  
 I failed to see my canto I have brought  
 To its planned conclusion, for, in the next,  
 The Count gainst Rodomonte is my text.



BOOK II: CANTO XXV: FEBOSILLA'S PALACE



ARGUMENTO.

*Pugna con Rodomonte il Sir d'Anglante  
Mostrando contra l'altro ogn'vn sua possa  
Il Conte tramortisce . Bradamante.  
Giunge, e uer l'African'in furia è mossa,  
Occide Brandimarte il fier gigante  
Il drago . e'l caualier che pugar'ossa .  
Molte historie dipinte il magno Sire  
Vede nel muro c'haueano a venire .*



ALLEGORIE.

*Il gigante e'l Serpente che essendo l'uno morto , si muta nell'altro , è figurato per lucifero, ilquale in uarij modi cerca tirarne a es, e condurne al fondo d'ogni miseria .*

*La donzella che narra a Brandimarte la forma di quella auentura, ne dimostra, che tutte le imprese benche difficili, si possono condurre a fine da un'huomo ualoroso, e gagliardo.*

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 1-3: ORLANDO AND  
RODOMONTE COMMENCE THEIR DUEL**

If e'er proud verse, and noble rhyme, I sought  
In which to speak of conflict dark and dire,  
I need them now, to pen the battle fought  
Between two warriors, their hearts afire,  
Ready to bring down Heaven's ruined court  
Upon a ruined Earth. 'Tis my desire  
To tell their tale, though war is all around,  
And I have news of other duels to sound;

For, here, Marsilio fought Charlemagne,  
Oliviero met Grandonio,  
There Serpentino battled with the Dane,  
While bold Ferrau and valiant Rinaldo  
Wrought more than those combined, upon that plain.  
Yet now the Count, amidst duels aplenty,  
To bring more ruin still, faced Rodomonte.

As I've related, in my last canto,  
The combatants advanced amidst the fray,  
Carving a path, careless of friend or foe,  
Striking, and downing, all who blocked their way.  
The ranks that beheld them progressing so,  
Granted them space, lest they choose to stay,  
Scattering, like starlings before the falcon,  
All cried: 'Make room, make room!' and wished them  
gone.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 4-9: THE COUNT  
TEMPORARILY STUNS RODOMONTE**

Boldly, pausing not, they met together,  
And attacked at once. Each man broke his lance,  
And then with his sword began to labour,  
Dealing tremendous blows at every chance;  
Till all who watched on, in hope or terror,  
Could scarcely draw a breath, so fierce the dance,  
So fearsome and immense each mighty blow  
Wrought by those warriors to crush the foe.

Their blades broke shield and visor, plate and mail,  
At every stroke, as if the heavens fell,  
And, midst the falling fragments like fierce hail,  
Brought fresh destruction to both Earth and Hell.  
Bright steel, cut to pieces, away did sail,

Landing I know not where, for none could tell,  
So small the splinters vanishing from sight,  
Ne'er to be seen again, lost from the light.

Were it not for the magic helms they wore,  
And thick armour, they'd not have lasted long,  
In that dire, dark conflict, where to endure  
Seemed all; each man's desire was fierce and strong,  
And measureless blows they dealt, by the score,  
(Such as to scare me, absent from the throng).  
When those blades met, it seemed the clouds on high  
Oped, and twin lightning-bolts clashed in the sky.

Rodomonte, though, was burning to go,  
Fearing, should he be delayed in bringing  
Aid to Ferrau and King Marsilio,  
That he'd arrive too late. So, fiercely swinging  
His sword, two-handedly, at Orlando,  
He struck the summit of his shield, slicing  
From top to bottom, and through the saddle,  
Close to the Count, where he sat astraddle.

When Orlando felt the force of that blow,  
His rage and his disdain were multiplied.  
With both hands, he raised his sword gainst the foe,  
Dark with anger, and struck the shield aside,  
(Severed in two, half fell); not pausing, though,  
He dealt a backhand stroke that, falling wide,  
Yet struck upon the cheek-guard, viciously,  
And stunned that pagan king, Rodomonte.

'Twas a stroke so immeasurably great  
That the king was almost knocked from his steed,  
Clinging to his horse's reins, tempting fate  
As he swayed about, conquered by that deed,  
His sword, yet chained to his arm, a dead weight,  
Dragged beneath, as he wheeled about, at speed;  
While Orlando's blow had so sapped his strength  
He well-nigh fell backwards, outstretched full length.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 10-12: WHO RESPONDS  
IN TURN, STUNNING THE COUNT**

When the king revived, his senses restored,  
Fiercer than ever, his revenge he sought.  
He struck at the Count, delivering his sword  
To the latter's steel visor, which it caught,



Then hurled to the sky, and so high it soared,  
That it well-nigh dwindled in size to naught,  
Less visible than a mere speck of sand,  
Soaring beyond the sky, ere it did land.

Almonte's helm proved, luckily, so strong,  
It saved Orlando's life, although the blow  
Nearly ended it; the helm, like a gong,  
Echoed and rang, and he nigh fell below,  
Losing his stirrups, to tumble headlong,  
While, though he remained upright, even so,  
His sword left his hand and, held by its chain,  
Swung, as the pagan's had, above the plain.

Those who saw the stroke, had much to say  
About its power, and the fall of that blow,  
But sudden cries arose: 'Aid us this day!'  
As men fled, at the advent of the foe,  
The Saracens saw, as they joined the fray,  
A mighty host (from whence they could not know),  
For Gualtiero of Monleone,  
Rode forth, with the valiant Bradamante.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 13-18: BRADAMANTE  
MAKES HER MOVE**

She had led them from their hiding place  
As soon as Charlemagne sent the order,  
Urging on ten thousand knights, apace,  
That had scarce done more than rest, and wonder.  
The foe dismayed at what they now might face,  
Flinched at that sudden lightning and thunder,  
And, daunted by the speed of her attack,  
Turned and ran, Bradamante at their back.

For at full tilt rode the warrior-maid,  
A bow-shot ahead, racing o'er the field,  
And such a look of arrogance displayed,  
That many a frightened man sought to yield,  
A banner here, a standard there, she laid  
Upon the ground, as if their cloth concealed,  
The only foe she sought now, Rodomonte,  
Urged on by many a shameful memory.

He, in Provence, had killed her brave charger,  
And slaughtered her troops, thus, she was keen  
To avenge those deeds, and filled with anger;

And so, she galloped on, amidst that scene,  
Scorning the Saracens, and every danger,  
Passing, at speed, amidst their ranks, I mean,  
As if she scarcely saw them, mid the rout;  
Yet, as she went, still swung her blade about.

Archidante, Count of Sanguinto,  
And Olivalto of Cartagena,  
The latter slain, the former knight laid low,  
Fell before her, as they looked to hinder  
Her advance. To deal with Olivalto,  
She pierced his shield, and then burst asunder  
His breastplate; her lance, entering the man,  
Cracked steel like glass, and sank in nigh a span.

She left him, and meeting Archidante,  
Swung two-handedly, in her fierce anger,  
At the warrior's face, the sword, luckily,  
Turning, so as to lessen the danger.  
His feet flew from the stirrups; abruptly,  
He fell to the ground, to groan and suffer;  
Where he remained, as the proud maid flew on,  
Charging the rest, urging them to be gone.

The Saracens were now in full retreat,  
As she scattered one band then another,  
And where she had passed, a path replete  
With severed arms and legs, showed her anger,  
A trail of heads and torsos, hands and feet.  
While the Christian ranks, who followed after,  
Were forced to ride, as on some darksome shore,  
Through many a pool of blood, and stream of gore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 19-22: SHE RENEWS  
HER FIGHT WITH RODOMONTE**

Viewing such destruction, Narbinalle  
Count of Algeciras, a fierce pagan,  
(He was strong and dextrous, riding swiftly,  
Though a bold corsair by occupation)  
Viewing, as I say, the damage that she,  
The warrior maid, wrought, the devastation,  
Confronted her, and halted her advance,  
With the tip of his huge, unpolished lance.

Yet the maid remained unmoved, kept her seat,  
And swung at the pagan's helm; her bright blade  
Sank to beyond his teeth, his doom complete.  
He fell from his mount, and in the dust was laid.  
When the Saracens saw him fall at their feet,  
They were swift to depart, their souls dismayed.  
They ran, in a moment, being of one mind,  
Leaving the joyful Christians behind.

The lady chose, rather, to seek the right,  
Not the left, of the field by which they fled!  
And so, she reached the spot where our bold knight,  
Orlando, slumped in his saddle, half-dead.  
While Rodomonte gazed on, at the sight,  
Unmoving, and unmoved. Onwards she sped,  
For she recognised him, his name revealed  
By his crest, and the emblem on his shield.

Thus, she galloped, straight to the encounter,  
And there, at once, renewed the bitter fight.  
That pair cut and thrust, shattering armour  
With cruel strokes twixt the maid and the knight.  
Yet I'll pause, and not speak of their ardour,  
For tis now that Bishop Turpin sheds more light  
On Brandimarte, whom Fortune did advance,  
Till, at last, she saw him, safely, to France.

#### **BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 23-26: BRANDIMARTE AND FIORELISA REACH FEBOSILLA'S PALACE**

Now, once he had slain that treacherous foe,  
Barigaccio, he and Fiordelisa,  
Mounted on his steed, the brave Batoldo,  
Had ridden on, slowly, at their pleasure,  
And so reached a palace as they did go,  
Whose garden, designed for joy and leisure,  
Faced a balcony on which stood a lady,  
Dressed in gold, possessed of wondrous beauty.

When she saw the knight, and the fair maiden,  
She signed, with looks and gestures, that they  
Should pass by the palace and the garden,  
And pursue their path, by a different way.  
Now, my lords, I know not (I seek pardon)  
If Brandimarte understood what she did say  
(By her gestures) but he chose not to wait,  
And his charger soon reached the palace gate.

When they arrived before the ornate door,  
He could see a spacious courtyard within,  
With painted archways, and a marble floor,  
A hundred yards on each side, and therein  
Stood a giant; neither sword nor club he bore,  
Nor wore aught that might serve to save his skin,  
No stout suit of armour, no plate or mail.  
Though the giant held a serpent by the tail.

It comforted our cavalier to find  
That he had come upon a strange adventure,  
For, there, a verdant garden lay, behind  
And beyond the first door, through another.  
And there a knight stood, his task confined,  
It seemed, to guarding a fair sepulchre;  
This sepulchre was set beyond the sill  
Of the second door (by who knows whose will).

#### **BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 27-31: BRANDIMARTE SLAYS THE GIANT WHO WIELDS A SERPENT**

The giant was engaged in a fierce struggle,  
As I said, with the snake, to small avail,  
Since neither could progress in the battle,  
For the former kept tight hold of the tail  
Of that golden-scaled snake, while its muzzle  
Struck at his head, yet could not prevail;  
For however hard it struck, he could check  
Its movements, and unwind it from his neck.

The giant caught sight of bold Brandimarte  
As he whirled the serpent round and round,  
And, full of scorn, came at him, angrily,  
Trailing the snake behind him o'er the ground.  
May Heaven help the warrior, and swiftly!  
An adventure indeed, that knight had found,  
For it seemed an enchantment, strange and great  
As any seen, would now decide his fate.

The giant raised the serpent up on high,  
As if it were a weapon, and then swung  
The fierce creature at the knight, by and by.  
He, since it was long and thick, was stung  
By that huge blow, and felt that he might die.  
Yet he knew no fear, and though its coils hung  
About him a moment, struck the other,  
The giant I mean, fiercely, on the shoulder.

His blade had cut a wound a yard in length,  
Or a little less; the giant swung the snake,  
And, so employing his tremendous strength,  
Forced Brandimarte swiftly to forsake  
His saddle, and while scarce using a tenth  
Of his might, gave the serpent a shake,  
Then knocked the steed, Batoldo, to the floor,  
As the stunned knight revived, and rose once more.

He met the raging giant, sword in hand,  
Trusting in the powers above, for aid,  
As the former swung furiously, to land  
A second blow that nigh the man unmade.  
Yet brave Brandimarte still had command  
Of his sharp sword, and drove the gleaming blade  
A span deep in the giant; thus, they fell  
Well-nigh together, and the serpent as well.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 32-34: THE DEAD  
GIANT BECOMES A SERPENT, THE SERPENT A  
GIANT**

The snake's mask now became a human face,  
That of the giant, while it grew legs and arms,  
Till its altered frame thus served to replace  
The latter (with all his features, and charms!)  
The dead giant, meanwhile, in but a brief space,  
Became a serpent, used to war's alarms  
It seemed, and being wielded like a flail;  
For, once again, it was seized by the tail.

The giant turned again to Brandimarte,  
And swung the snake as he'd done before,  
While the knight who, unafraid, had swiftly  
Regained his feet, wielded his sword once more.  
He cut and thrust with the blade, ceaselessly,  
Aiming carefully, its direction sure.  
How ardent Brandimarte was, and brave!  
To the giant, four painful wounds he gave,

Though he himself was beaten, now and then,  
With that accursed snake. The fight was long,  
And fierce (the giant possessed the strength of ten;  
Twas a good thing Bradamante was strong)  
Yet it had to end at last; once again  
The knight drove Tranchera, like a prong,  
At the giant, to pierce his chest, who became  
A serpent, while the snake replaced that same.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 35-38: THE  
TRANSFORMATION OCCURS SIX TIMES, BEFORE  
HE DESTROYS THEM**

As before the fierce giant whipped the knight  
With the heavy snake, having seized its tail,  
And they, once more, resumed the bitter fight,  
As, once more, the warrior sought to prevail.  
He struck the giant's shoulder-blade outright,  
Sliced through the flesh, and watched his sharp blade  
sail  
Down the giant's frame, falling from on high,  
To come to rest, deep in the other's thigh.

The snake and giant, transmuted as before,  
Took up the fight again, the duel fiercer;  
Thus, they fell, and rose again, three times more,  
For Brandimarte could finish neither.  
Six times the knight had them on the floor,  
But failed to slay the one or the other,  
So discomforted, so filled with despair  
He doubted not that he must perish there.

But, being one of the valiant, the flame  
Of his courage still burned, and so the knight  
Swung again and, dealing more of the same,  
At the serpent sent a daring blow to smite  
The creature on its mid-part; down it came,  
Or rather just its front half; taking fright,  
The giant, seeing that great stroke, now threw  
The tail end to the ground, and off he flew,

Bound for the sepulchre, beyond the door,  
Groaning aloud and, rightly, terrified.  
Brandimarte caught him, and then, once more,  
Cleft his head to the waist, and thus he died.  
For his companion lay dead upon the floor,  
Thus, there was naught to look to on that side.  
The monstrous creature fell, his life ended;  
The ground there shaking, as he descended.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 39-41: THEN SLAYS THE  
KNIGHT OF THE SEPULCHRE**

The giant had scarcely fallen when the knight  
(Not our knight, but the one beyond the door)  
Charged in, and sought to extend the fight,

So, our warrior took up his blade once more,  
And the pair cut and thrust, with all their might,  
Though Brandimarte, the stronger, made sure,  
To end the bout with a flourish, and the foe  
Beside the giant and the snake, he laid low.

Fiordelisa had followed Brandimarte  
Into the courtyard, and viewed all, there.  
On witnessing that last blow, she, swiftly,  
Offered thanks to the Lord, hands joined in prayer.  
Then, they sought, but failed to find, the entry  
Through which they both had come. Though the pair  
Looked all about the place, they searched in vain;  
Not a trace of that portal did remain.

Uncertain what to do, they, patiently,  
Set their hopes on the lady they had seen,  
She that had signalled to them, urgently,  
(Believing she might bring them aid, I mean),  
And, while waiting there, and wandering, idly,  
About the place, they traced each frescoed scene  
That adorned the courtyard walls; many a hue,  
Enhanced them, as did gold leaf, bright and new.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 42-45: THE PROPHETIC  
PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS: ALDOBRANDINO II**

On each side of the square, were displayed  
Frescoes, showing many a mounted knight.  
Like giants they seemed, the folk there portrayed,  
And all bore crests and emblems to the fight.  
Each was well-armoured, as forth he essayed,  
And so fierce of face, that meeting that sight  
Unprepared, those who entered were surprised,  
And startled, by the wonders they now eyed.

Whose was the hand that wrought them, I know not;  
But, there, a fine artist had sought to show  
True prophecies, that naught might be forgot,  
Though how he'd learned of them no man did know.  
In the first scene, on his charger did trot,  
A brave lord, one refined and humane, though,  
And he for Holy Church would win honour  
Gainst Henry the Seventh, the Emperor.

The River Adda in the Brescian field  
Was depicted, likewise that furious fight,  
The German dead all nakedly revealed,  
Beside the Ghibellines (full half their might).  
There the black eagle, beaten, wretched, wheeled  
Away o'er the plains and mountains, in flight  
Before the white eagle's outstretched talons,  
Whom Fortune favoured, with its companions.

The name of that lord was writ o'er his head,  
Inscribed in gold upon an azure ground,  
Though the painting made clear, as I've said,  
His title: Virtue's treasury, there, was found.  
Others of that kin, of the same root bred,  
Were displayed, whose valiant deeds would resound,  
All painted, and chronicled, on that façade  
To their right, forming one wall of the yard.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 46-49: THE  
PROPHETIC PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS: AZZO  
VII D'ESTE**

On the second wall a young man was seen,  
(His great-grandfather) whom Nature would show  
To this world for but a short time, I ween,  
Heaven coveting such on Earth below.  
Sovereign virtues must soon depart the scene;  
All were joined in him: valour gainst the foe,  
Boldness wed to wisdom, and rare beauty,  
And strength, and valour, and true chivalry.

Against him, there, beyond our River Po,  
Were the Bohemians, and Ghibellines,  
And Ezzolino, named 'da Romano'  
Though made in Treviso (by no means  
Natural, spawn of the dark Inferno!)  
Upon that wall were shown horrendous scenes  
Of massacre, and bloody butchery;  
Women and children slaughtered, ruthlessly.

Eleven thousand Paduans would die,  
Given by that evil hound to the fire,  
None in Italy or elsewhere, say I,  
Would e'er prove worse, or wreak havoc more dire.  
Further down the wall, there, painted on high,  
Were the Second Frederick's flags; his desire  
Would be to end God's Holy Church on Earth,  
To which end, the Devil would give him birth.

An eagle, white upon an azure field,  
Guarding the sacred keys, was there displayed,  
And soldiers were shown, with sword and shield,  
At war, in a mountain pass, while, dismayed,  
Cruel Ezzolino, in flight, was revealed,  
His left foot pierced by a shaft, as he made  
His retreat, his head wounded, his army  
Routed, running midst the woods, swiftly.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 50-53: THE PROPHETIC  
PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS: NICCOLO III  
D'ESTE**

The second wall of the courtyard was replete  
With fair pictures, of a similar nature;  
But, on the third, with deeds the eye did meet  
As of some super-natural creature,  
So polished, of a beauty so complete,  
None might rival him in face or feature.  
Fair lilies, and roses, and April flowers,  
Fell upon that noble spirit, in showers.

A mere child, on becoming their master  
Kith nor kin were seen to grant him aid;  
He was shown beset by many a creature,  
For two lions (Venice and Florence) made  
Their presence felt, while a serpent-monster  
(Visconti's) menaced him twice; there displayed,  
His own white eagle's (Azzo's) threat seemed greater,  
Besides that, posed by the panther (Lucca).

Here, he slew the serpent, drove the eagle out,  
There, ceding much land, appeased one Lion,  
(Venice), showing the panther (I've no doubt,  
She's still aware of it!) his every talon.  
Next, twas a journey he was seen about,  
Accompanied by knight, count, and baron,  
Pictured setting sail, so that he might view  
The Holy Land, and kingdoms old and new;

Then returning, as if on wings, to see  
All the western shores, and all of Spain.  
The French court receiving him, joyously,  
As though some close-relation they did gain.  
Yet naught there showed his deep humanity,  
(The artist's sole mistake, I would maintain)  
His kindness, his infinite capacity  
For love, and generosity, and mercy.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 54-56: THE PROPHETIC  
PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS: ERCOLE I D'ESTE**

The third wall was adorned in that manner.  
On the fourth, was revealed that ruler's son,  
One who, as a boy, ill Fortune ever  
Would hound. Pale as a lily neath the sun,  
He was shown, fair-skinned like his father,  
With that aquiline nose. Virtue, once won,  
(His sole concern) he would bear away;  
All else he'd leave behind, another's prey.

Next, he was seen (having ripened slowly),  
Mature in fame, wisdom, and in valour,  
His heart, ever moved to clemency;  
Shown in the tourney, striving for honour,  
And in war, burning like a flame, fiercely;  
One wrought for triumphal laurels ever.  
Through many a region, his enemies  
Would flee his ire; peace he'd win by degrees.

On the wall, o'er his head, was writ in gold,  
(Or such the tenor of the inscription):  
'If, through art, I could make your eyes behold  
The heart's virtues blazoned on the person,  
No more fine or worthy tale could be told  
In all this world than by that depiction;  
Yet, by mortal hand, naught can be designed  
To show what's far beyond the human mind.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXV: 57-58: BRANDIMARTE  
IS EXHORTED TO OPEN THE TOMB**

Brandimarte was viewing this painting,  
With admiration, when the lady appeared,  
She who'd signalled to them. Descending  
From her balcony, she cried: 'As I feared,  
You waste precious time in idle gazing;  
Know you not what you must do?' As she neared  
The knight, she said: 'This sepulchre, you need  
To open, or starvation death will breed.

Yet, once the tomb lies open, you must show  
A brave heart; you'll be ruined otherwise,  
And the two of us, as well, you should know;  
The flame that burns but weakly ever dies.'  
Now, my lords, tis true (or I deem it so),  
That my canto's end appears in ill guise.  
Are you not yearning now to hear the rest?  
In the next, fear not, all shall be addressed.

BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: DORISTELLA'S TALE

A R G O M E N T O.

*Bascia la Serpe Brandimarte, e quella*      *Di là si parte, e uà con Doristella*  
*Cangia l'aspetto, e fassi Flebosilla,*      *Laqual mentre ne già di villa in villa,*  
*Che l'armi, e il buò destrier la Fata bella,*      *Narra il suo caso. Il valente campione*  
*Gli incanta, e la fortezza in quell'istilla*      *Occide i ladri, e prende il lor patrone.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**C**he delle imprese dalle quali noi speriamo douerne hauere danno, e uergogna, spesso, ne auenghi utile, & honore, ne lo dimostra nel presente canto **Brā** dimarte, che dopo molto timore pure alla fine assicurato, baciando la **Serpe** la vede mutarsi nella Fata Flebosilla, laqual poi gli incanta l'armi, e'l destriero.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 1-3: BOIARDO'S  
INVITATION TO HIS AUDIENCE**

The wondrous love once borne, in ancient days,  
By knights towards their sovereign ladies,  
Their strange adventures, that do oft amaze,  
Their armoured duels, and jousts, and tourneys,  
Assured them endless fame, and shall always.  
We listen, eagerly, to tales that please,  
Honouring this one more, or that, at will,  
As if those warriors lived amongst us still.

Who is there, that hears the tale of Tristan,  
And his lady, Iseult, and is yet unmoved,  
Their heart not prompted to praise the woman,  
The man, so bitter-sweet their ending proved,  
As, face to face, hand in hand, their brief span  
They ended, hearts as one, beloved and loved.  
Finding rest, at last, in each other's arms,  
Conjoined in death, yet past all death's alarms?

And of Lancelot, and his queen so fair,  
That showed such care for one another,  
That, where'er their story true lovers share,  
The very heavens are alight with ardour.  
Draw forward then, sweet ladies, everywhere,  
And every fine knight who seeks true honour,  
And hark to my verses, wherein are told  
The deeds of ladies and their knights, of old.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 4-7: BRANDIMARTE  
OPENS THE TOMB**

From where I paused, I'll commence again,  
With Brandimarte's strange adventure.  
The maiden, I described, sought to explain  
What he must do, beside the sepulchre,  
Saying: 'Release whate'er it may contain,  
But show no fear of it, whatsoever.  
You must be brave and bold, whate'er it is,  
For whate'er may issue forth, you must kiss!'

'Kiss the thing,' cried the knight, 'is that all?  
Is there naught worse to do in this place?  
No devil from Hell could so my heart appal,  
That I'd not dare to kiss the creature's face!  
Fear not; on me, you may for aught such call;

I'll kiss it ten times, and its visage grace,  
Be it what it may; that brave task I'll own!  
Enough! I now must shift this weight of stone.'

With that, he grasped a ring of solid gold,  
That was set in the surface of the tomb,  
Whereon, amidst its noble work, behold,  
He saw letters engraved, that spoke of doom:  
'Not beauty, that soon withers and grows cold,  
Nor wealth, strength, nor wisdom that doth illumine  
All the world, nor heart's courage, could suspend  
My fate, or save me from this bitter end.'

After reading these words, with all his strength  
He drew aside the lid, and there could see  
A vile serpent, in all its fearsome length,  
Emitting foul noisome breath, stridently.  
Its eyes blazed fiercely, and though but a tenth  
Of its teeth there showed, he recoiled swiftly,  
Then stepped backwards, his hand on his sword,  
Stunned by the sight the tomb did now afford.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 8-13: AND KISSES THE  
SERPENT WITHIN**

'Put up your blade!' the anxious maiden cried,  
'For God's sake use it not, my valiant knight!  
Or you'll bring danger to us all, this side  
The grave, and, to the abyss, lost from sight,  
You'll plunge us. Lest in the depths you'd abide,  
This is the fearsome creature of the night  
You must kiss; now let your lips draw nearer,  
Or this is the place where you'll lie forever.'

'What? Behold you not how it grinds its teeth,  
Yet you'd have me kiss its muzzle, you say?'  
The knight replied, 'I fear what lies beneath;  
For a most savage form those depths display.'  
Said the maid: 'Return your sword to its sheath;  
For she will ask a boon of you, this day,  
And others are trapped in that sepulchre.  
Fear not, valiant warrior; approach her!'

Brandimarte, step by step, drew closer,  
Though the knight did so less than willingly,  
And then he leant down towards the creature,  
Much dismayed by that of it he could see.

His face was still as stone, every feature.  
He thought: 'If she wants my death, then surely  
This ploy serves as well as any other;  
There's no need to seek it myself, however.

I'm as certain there's a Paradise above,  
As that, if I should lean o'er that snake,  
It would grasp my face, in some sudden move,  
Or sink its teeth elsewhere. A vile mistake  
'Twould be to do so; why should I approve  
Her plan? Let some other greater fool take  
The chance. She lures me on to play this game,  
To vindicate her knight, who did the same

No doubt, and died.' He therefore retreated,  
Determined not to draw any closer.  
The maiden was distressed, thus defeated,  
Crying: 'Coward of a knight! Whatever  
Holds you back? Your courage all depleted,  
At the moment of truth, you'd fail forever!  
I tell him he's safe, yet he trusts me not!  
Like all of little faith; faith soon forgot.'

Hearing this, Brandimarte felt ashamed  
And drew close to the sepulchre once more.  
Pale of face, he was irked by what she'd claimed,  
That he felt fear; and yet was still unsure.  
One moment twas 'yes', next twas 'no', he named  
As his counsel. His head and heart at war,  
Twixt courage and despair, twixt and this,  
He leaned down, and then dealt that maw a kiss.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 14-17: THE SERPENT IS TRANSFORMED TO FEBOSILLA, WHO SEEKS A BOON**

When his mouth met that of the vile creature,  
It seemed as though he'd touched a block of ice;  
The serpent was transformed, in every feature,  
And became a lovely maid, in a trice.  
The name of this Fay was Febosilla,  
And by magical means, to be precise,  
She'd wrought the garden and the sepulchre,  
Where she'd been confined, it seemed forever.

Now, although a Faery can never die,  
At least until the Day of Judgement's here,  
When she's lived as a fair maiden, say I,  
For a thousand years or so (plus a year),  
She must assume the shape (I tell no lie)  
Of a serpent (as this one did appear  
And, in that form, inhabited the grave)  
Till she's kissed by one sufficiently brave.

This Faery, now a maiden once more,  
Was dressed in purest white, while her long hair  
Was golden; rosy-cheeked, dark eyes she bore,  
And was, in every aspect, wondrous fair.  
She spoke, and Brandimarte did implore  
To inform her what fine enchantment there  
She should perform; she could charm his steed,  
Or his suit of armour, if he agreed.

Then she begged him to escort the lady  
(Who'd greeted the knight and Fiordelisa)  
O'er the sea, to Syria, in safety;  
That fair lady's name was Doristella.  
Her father was old, and she, his daughter,  
Was his sole child; he the King of Liza,  
And a mighty lord, by any measure,  
Rich in land, and great armies, and treasure.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 18-21: BRADAMANTE ESCORTS DORISTELLA AND FIORELISA**

Brandimarte accepted her offer  
To cast a spell o'er his armour, and steed,  
And then he took great pains to assure her  
He'd escort Doristella; twas agreed;  
Upon which, the portal oped before her,  
(That of the palace, if you've taken heed!)  
Then she ran to his charger, Batoldo,  
That had earlier fallen to that blow.

Indeed, it would have died, but the Faery,  
The beautiful, and clever Febosilla,  
Now restored the poor creature, instantly,  
With herb extracts, and a magic philtre;  
Then discharged her debt to Brandimarte,  
Enchanting his bright mail, and his armour.  
When all was done, that they'd agreed upon,  
He commended her to God, and was gone.



Between the two ladies, rode the knight.  
Perchance some thought was troubling his head,  
For he spoke not a word; a pensive sight;  
Whereupon, Doristella smiled, and said:  
‘Well, I see there’s a need for something light,  
To while away the hours that lie ahead,  
And make our lodging-place seem the nearer;  
A tale makes short the road, for its hearer.

I’ll tell you my story, willingly,  
Through which you may learn in what manner  
I was conducted to that palace we yet see,  
And there was confined; it seemed, forever.  
I think the tale will amuse you greatly,  
And so, bring our destination closer,  
For you’ll learn how we cheat a jealous man.  
As he’s earned it, let all do so who can!

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 22-26: DORISTELLA  
BEGINS HER TALE**

Two daughters had my father, Dolistone,  
And the elder one, when she was but a child,  
Was stolen, by force, from our dear country,  
Borne o’er the sea, from Liza’s shores beguiled.  
It had been designed that she should marry  
An Armenian prince, had Fortune smiled;  
Yet, though our men searched the wide world over,  
Not a trace of her could they discover.’

Fiordelisa caused an interruption,  
Asking if she might know the mother’s name,  
But Brandimarte turned, at her question,  
And said: ‘Lord, we can live without that same!  
Let us grant the tale our full attention,  
And let the lady a fair hearing claim.’  
So Fiordelisa, who loved him greatly,  
Fell silent, and rode on with them quietly.

Doristella said: ‘The prince of Armenia,  
Whom my sister had been pledged to wed,  
Grew to be a handsome lord, and was ever,  
(Since his city was not far, it should be said,  
From my father’s halls) a kind visitor  
To our dear home, as if he had been bred  
Among us, though indeed, tragically,  
He was not, by marrying, true family.

The prince would come and go at any hour,  
When we were not out visiting somewhere,  
And he pleased me so, I felt Love’s power;  
I found him courteous, I thought him fair;  
And I know he deemed me beauty’s flower.  
Perchance my own love caused his love to flare,  
For that man’s heart is surely made of steel,  
That, when he’s loved, does not a like love feel.

My father’s endless hospitality  
Led him often to our halls, as I’ve said,  
And, at last, he revealed his love to me,  
For he imagined me still free to wed;  
But that treacherous rogue you, recently,  
Slew in the courtyard, gained me instead,  
For he’d asked for my hand that very day,  
And my father pledged to give me away.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 27-30: SHE  
COMPLAINS OF HER FATE**

When I learned of it, you may well believe  
I cursed Heaven above, I cursed Nature,  
I cried: “Allah wished me not to receive  
The blessing of his true law and measure,  
For female he made me, that I might grieve  
My ill-fortune, while every living creature,  
Every bird and beast, that lives neath the sky,  
Feels less pain, and is freer, than am I.

The doves and the deer are free to love,  
I see examples round me everywhere;  
With whomsoever they desire, they move,  
And yet a man for whom I do not care  
Will have me. Cruel Fortune, false you prove,  
And treacherous to yield me to this bear,  
This barbarian, to be kept from sight,  
Never to view again my true delight.

Yet it shall not be; that I know for sure.  
I know what to do, despite my father.  
As the proverb says there’s ever one law  
For the host, another for the drinker.  
I’ll love whom I please, yet shall ensure  
None knows of it, twill stay secret ever,  
And if we’re discovered, tis certain still:  
A day’s pleasure is worth a month of ill.”

Such the pledge I made to myself, but then  
 The time arrived when I was to be wed;  
 A maiden despatched to the dragon's den.  
 I felt neither living, nor yet quite dead.  
 While Teodoro, handsomest of men,  
 My knight remained in Liza, I, instead,  
 Was denied him, and borne off to Bursa,  
 In Anatolia; my fate the crueller.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 31-35: HER ADULTERY**

The Soubashi of Bursa was my spouse,  
 And a Turk he was by birth, and nation,  
 Deemed a valiant man and not a mouse,  
 Yet useless in bed (mere procreation  
 Was his intent, and furthering his House),  
 Though I might yet have endured my station,  
 Had he not proved to be the jealous kind;  
 And sought to rule my body and my mind.

For he never left my side, night or day,  
 While kissing me seemed his only food.  
 From morn to eve, I was locked away,  
 Never to see the sun, such was his mood.  
 He trusted none, yet scarce beside me lay.  
 Heaven helps the oppressed though (as it should)  
 The Turks made war on Avatarone,  
 King of the Greeks, and sailed against his country.

Duty, not desire, made my husband go;  
 He joined the invading force, leaving me  
 Alone to run the household; even so,  
 He commanded a slave of his to guard me.  
 This man, named Gambone, you must know,  
 Was a horror to behold, vile and ugly,  
 One eye squinted, the other wept ill tears;  
 All scabs, his nose was clipped, and both his ears.

My husband left me in the care of this slave,  
 Ordering him to observe me closely,  
 And commanding him, lest I misbehave,  
 Not to leave my side, or he would surely  
 Be punished, and his torment would be grave.  
 Imagine how I felt, gripped securely  
 So, to speak, regardless of my desire.  
 Cast now from the frying pan to the fire.

Now, there came, from his land, Armenia,  
 My Teodoro, whom I greatly loved,  
 To reignite our flame there in Bursa.  
 The bribe he gave Gambone was approved,  
 Gold enough to satisfy my gaoler,  
 And, all constraint being thus removed,  
 That ill slave, once pacified as I've said,  
 Left the doors ajar, and saw us both to bed.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 36-40: HER HUSBAND, USBEGO, RETURNS FROM THE WAR**

Then there came an event, that spoiled our scheme,  
 For my spouse suddenly appeared, one day,  
 And none knew of it in Bursa, it would seem,  
 Until he reached the house. Imagine, pray,  
 Our distress; indeed, I stifled a scream,  
 While Teodoro nigh cried out in dismay,  
 Who had only arrived an hour before,  
 And now heard this beating on the door.

Gambone knew my husband's voice, and said,  
 In a tone that was filled with doubt and fear:  
 "Usbego's here; the three of us are dead"  
 While my lover sought at once to win clear.  
 Thus, aiding his escape, I quietly led  
 My lover to a stairway, good and near,  
 That led below, and told him: "When my spouse  
 Makes his entry, fly quickly from the house;

And once you're outside, and fully dressed,  
 Where's the evidence of aught that we've done?  
 Let that fellow seek to hear the sin confessed,  
 I'll say naught; he can yell, I'll have my fun.  
 He can claim I'm deceiving him, at best,  
 Yet I'll swear, on oath, he's the only one.  
 Death to the woman that can ne'er pretend!  
 I'll trim his beard, that rascal, in the end."

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 41-44: ESCAPE AND OUTRAGE**

My husband was shouting at the gate,  
 Suspicious of the untoward delay,  
 While the slave Gambone feigned to be late  
 Because the precious key had gone astray:  
 "Cursed be Allah, I'll be there sure as fate,

'Tis lost somewhere in the straw, where I lay.  
Ah, there now; I've found the foolish fellow.  
I'll be with you, in a moment!" Once below,

Having tiptoed, somewhat slowly, down the stair,  
He trod towards the door stomping loudly,  
(Teodoro concealed himself with care)  
Then opened it. My lover fled swiftly,  
Once my spouse had entered, with time to spare,  
For the latter had climbed above, quickly,  
To find me feigning sleep, free of strife,  
The very model of a faithful wife.

He lit a torch, and looked beneath the bed,  
Searched all the chamber, the wardrobe and more,  
While I was thinking: "Horns upon your head  
I've planted, and will yet, you may be sure!"  
Meanwhile my spouse, on jealousy's fare fed,  
Scoured the room, and espied, upon the floor,  
The cloak that belonged to Teodoro,  
Which he'd left behind, in his haste to go.

Once Usbego's eyes lit upon the cloak,  
He abused me quite outrageously,  
I controlled myself, though it made me choke,  
And denied his accusations calmly.  
Gambone, though, found the thing no joke,  
And on his knees, he begged for mercy,  
I thought the fool might blurt the whole thing out,  
But scarce was heard, so loud my spouse did shout.

By this time, the sun was shining brightly,  
And he had poor Gambone seized and bound,  
Crying that, when the sentence was rightly  
Pronounced, and the horns on high did sound,  
The treacherous imp should be led, swiftly,  
To the gallows. After circling them round,  
He needs be hung; immediately, they went  
To execute my husband's firm intent.

For my spouse was so angry, tormented  
By outrage and pride, he could scarcely wait  
(You could tell the man was half-demented)  
To see that wretch Gambone meet his fate.  
He followed his men, groaned, and lamented,  
In that same righteous and wrathful state,  
Having dressed himself in a robe and hood,  
To pass, unknown, through the neighbourhood.

## BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 45-48: TEODORO'S DECEPTION

Now Teodoro was free of all fear,  
Till he recalled to mind his missing cape,  
At which remembrance fresh terror drew near.  
For he'd forgot it, while making his escape.  
He hoped Gambone, might shortly appear,  
Which he did, alas, in a dreadful scrape,  
The worst there is, except for being dead,  
With Usbego behind (nigh off his head).

My husband sped after the little band,  
Enveloped, hidden, by his robe and hood.  
Teodoro, seeing him, put out his hand,  
And stopped them as they passed the place he stood.  
A blow, on Gambone's nose, he did land,  
And one on the jaw, crying: "I'll have blood,  
You thief, you rogue; hanging's too good for you,  
Though tis deserved; you're evil through and through!

Where's my cloak, vile robber? Come, confess!  
Last night, you stole it from me, at the inn.  
Would that your master was here, no less;  
I'd list your crimes for him; where to begin?  
The price of my loss he'd surely address.  
Come, I'll have satisfaction for your sin,  
And pay you out for it in weighty blows.  
Give it back! Or here's another for your nose!"

And with that, he struck the slave's face again,  
Yelling: "Thief, rogue, I'll punch you in the eye."  
While Gambone, in considerable pain,  
Hopped about, with many a groan and sigh.  
Teodoro jabbed and kicked him, sent a rain  
Of blows, descending on him from on high,  
To Gambone's woe, though this deception  
Was about to prove the man's salvation.

## BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 49-53: DORISTELLA'S TALE IS INTERRUPTED

For Usbego, seeing how the young man raged,  
Gave credence to the theft that he'd proclaimed,  
As you or I might have done, were it so staged,  
For he seemed a stranger, still, as yet, unnamed  
By any there; though he'd have been outraged

If he'd known that this youth (quite unashamed  
Of his deceit) had joyfully obtained  
That which he'd neglected, and disdained.

Without saying who he was, Usbego  
Sent Gambone home and, in private, there,  
Shook the villain, and demanded to know,  
All he'd done, and the truth of that affair.  
The slave, who great penitence did show,  
Improvised a tale, telling it with care,  
("A finger seemed an arm" in the telling)  
Such that he escaped, and saved me a beating.

Don't think that this close escape deterred me,  
Or prevented me from warming my cold bed.  
No, I tested my good fortune oft; you see,  
"Heaven helps those who help themselves", tis said.  
Yet though I managed all most cleverly,  
Fierce Jealousy still plagued my husband's head.  
While my disdain increased until some sign  
Of my deceptions he marked, and my design.

Desperate to keep me under lock and key,  
And quite consumed himself by grief and pain,  
He sought a place for us to dwell, secretly,  
No living soul could readily attain.  
At last, he found this realm, wrought magically,  
Though, indeed, at that time, I should explain,  
Neither giant nor serpent guarded the door;  
The enchantress set them there, to make war.'

There was more that the fair Doristella  
Would have said, for her tale was not complete,  
But a fresh sight stopped the storyteller  
In mid-flight, for a vile band they did meet.  
A gang of thieves, out of some dark cellar,  
Some mounted, some nursing weary feet,  
Approached them shouting: "Travellers, we espy!  
Halt there, good friends, unless you choose to die!"

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 54-55: BRANDIMARTE SLAYS THE ROBBER, BARBOTTA**

Brandimarte answered: 'Halt, where you are!  
Yet, if you're daring, and theft is your game,  
You'll need stronger armour than mine, by far!  
One still approached, Barbotta was his name,

Fierce, and cruel, adorned with many a scar,  
Though devoid of reasoning powers was that same.  
Crying aloud, he advanced, filled with pride:  
'God help you, for I'll not. I'll have your hide!'

Without stopping, he ran at Brandimarte,  
Who responded by charging at the thief;  
And, striking him with Tranchera, sharply,  
Cleft him, from his head to the chest beneath.  
On came his companions, flailing wildly  
With their weapons, all set to cause him grief,  
And, had his armour not been charmed, I say,  
Brandimarte might well have died that day.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXVI: 56-61: THEN CAPTURES ANOTHER, FUGIFORCA**

They charged at him en masse, that cursed crew;  
Some attacking from the front, some behind,  
Advancing, fleeing, piling on anew,  
Some aiming carefully, some striking blind.  
The largest and the tallest ne'er withdrew;  
He was Fugiforca, worst of mankind,  
Born to be hung; with an axe he fought,  
And showed such skill it seldom fell short.

Untouched himself, he circled round the knight,  
Landing a blow full often. He could run,  
Turn neatly, and fly through the air; despite  
His size and weight, swifter than anyone;  
Leap to Batoldo's rump, and there alight,  
Strike Brandimarte's helm, aiming to stun  
The warrior, then, e'er he could be fought,  
Sliding down, scampering off, as if in sport.

The knight saved his strength, chased him not,  
But sought a swift revenge amongst the rest,  
Cleaving them this way, or that, on the spot,  
Till all of that evil crowd he'd addressed.  
Yet rest assured, that rogue was not forgot,  
Who had deemed that a swift retreat was best,  
Hell-bent on escape, when he came unstuck,  
His sins overtaking him, and his ill-luck;

For, while running, as he leapt o'er a briar,  
A long branch snagged his feet, and he was caught,  
Like a crow trapped in a snare, its one desire

To flap its wings and depart, its flight cut short,  
 All entangled; or a sheep in the mire.  
 The savage thorns had snagged him, though he fought  
 To free himself, till fierce Brandimarte,  
 Who'd turned to pursue him, gripped him tightly.

The latter declined to use his weapon,  
 Deeming it cowardly: 'Hanging's for you,  
 My friend!' he cried, urging the fellow on,  
 'Tis all you deserve, and long overdue.  
 I'll bind you; then, in a while, we'll be gone  
 To the nearest keep, perchance a mile or two,  
 Where, swift justice being of the essence,  
 You'll honour the gallows with your presence.'

Fugiforca wept, then the thief replied:  
 'Tis yours to do whate'er you wish with me.  
 But I beg of you, whate'er you decide,  
 Don't take me to Liza! Oh, have mercy!  
 Now my canto is done, though I abide,  
 My lords, and all this noble company;  
 And, to resume, anon, my whole intent.  
 So, God keep you all happy and content.

BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: BRANDIMARTE'S MARRIAGE

ARGOMENTO

*Brandimarte è assalito. Doristella, Pongon giù l'armi. e Fiordiligi bella  
Con la compagna, e il ladro son prigionì, Del Re si scopre figlia. Christian buoni  
L'amata sua Teodor conosce, e quella, Fansi. In Africa giunge Brandimarte,  
Abbraccia. Indine fa che i suoi Baroni Chiamando a guerra ogni guerrier, e marte*



ALLEGORIE.

**FIORDILIGI**, e Doristella che furono conosciute dal Re loro padre, ne mostra la grã potèza d'Iddio, il quale ò tardi, ò per tēpo riconfola gli affliti, dādogli il modo cò ch' scacciata la loro maniconia viuino il restate della lor vita còrēti.  
**BRANDIMARTE** che capitato in Africa non si vuole appalesare per Christiano, c' insegna che secondo il tempo bisogna apprendere i partiti necessarij.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 1-2: BOIARDO'S WISH  
TO PLEASE**

A young singer named Arion who dwelt  
On the shores of the Sicilian Sea,  
Had a voice of such sweetness, fit to melt  
The listener's heart, that dolphins, and tunny,  
Came to listen, such rare pleasure they felt.  
His art was of admiration worthy,  
Yet, my own lyre, in truth, more grace affords,  
Since it lures you to lend an ear, my lords.

Such grace, I believe, is heaven-sent,  
And so, I set my mind and intellect,  
To singing, that you all may feel content  
With an art that e'er delights the elect.  
I hope to please, for such is my intent,  
(Though I'm sometimes led to doubt the effect,  
By your glances!) now I resume my tale,  
That many a day has sought to unveil.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 3-7: FUGIFORCA  
TELLS HIS STORY**

I paused, earlier, as Fugiforca,  
Who'd been arrested by Brandimarte,  
Hearing he was to die, in his terror,  
Fell at the latter's feet, crying loudly,  
Shedding many a tear, sighing ever,  
And begging the valiant knight for mercy,  
Praying he might not be dragged to Liza,  
Where the king would subject him to torture.

'If you take me to Liza, my brave lord,  
They'll torment me, and tis with good reason.  
Though I deserve it, pity yet afford  
For the very stones will show compassion!  
Not that I think my sins should be ignored,  
Nor that I should now attain my freedom,  
Since indeed, for those errors, I must pay;  
Yet let me die but the one death, I pray.

For, there, they'll seek to punish me with more  
Painful tortures than any man has known.  
My death won't content the king, I'm sure,  
Since I've caused a deal of harm to the throne.  
Yet, perchance, fate will lead me to that shore,

For as the proverb says, and oft is shown  
To be true, by bitter experience:  
"Past sins e'er provoke present penitence."

It so happened, on a day, near the shore,  
King Dolistone, and Perodia,  
His queen, as they had often done before,  
Were dining, not too far from the water.  
I joined the crowd, meaning to explore  
A purse or two, but seized their daughter,  
Whom I sold for two thousand in silver,  
To the Count of Castle Wild, its master.

None, not the king, would ever find her,  
For I'd borne her secretly to that place.  
In that noble household, I'd dwelt ever  
Since birth, and was thus a familiar face.  
After that, since none did e'er discover  
My crime, I've ever courted this disgrace,  
For I've stripped the very shirt from men's backs,  
Subjecting travellers to bold attacks.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 8-12: THEY REACH  
LIZA WHICH IS UNDER SIEGE**

Brandimarte, musing on all he'd said,  
Was content to hear his explanation,  
Yet he told the thief: 'Be it on your head.  
Tis a matter for the king's jurisdiction,  
And so not for me to judge in his stead;  
He shall punish you, and with good reason.'  
With that he bound him, all the tighter,  
To a steed, which was led by Doristella.

The thief spoke not a word; he went in fear  
Of Brandimarte. Thus, they came to Liza,  
Where, on the field before it, did appear  
A band of armed men. As they drew nearer,  
Doristella wept, and sighed: 'Alas, tis clear  
An evil plight has beset my father,  
For these forces lay siege to the city,  
And will show the likes of us scant pity!'

Meanwhile a band of men, and many a knight,  
Rode towards them suddenly, and cried:  
'You're our prisoners, now; at once, alight!'  
Brandimarte, in a mighty voice, replied:

'As fiercely as you speak, you'll need to fight;  
Many who sought to capture me have died!  
With that he drew Tranchera, his sharp blade,  
And a swift attack upon the man he made.

At a stroke, he nigh sliced him quite in two.  
That huge soldier bore a bill-hook, and wore  
Plate and mail, but the stroke was good and true;  
Tranchera sent him tumbling to the floor.  
None mightier e'er was dealt, in my view,  
For at that blow the victim was no more,  
He lost an arm, his body lacked a head,  
And the pieces flew to their gory bed.

He did the like to the rest of that band,  
And more (if Turpin is to be believed),  
Or at least to those there who sought to stand,  
Not run; happy the man who first conceived  
The idea of flight, and quit that command,  
The one in front, I mean; while none there grieved  
Another's loss but fled, at speed, randomly,  
Never ceasing until they reached the sea.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 13-15: THE LADIES  
AND THE THIEF ARE CAPTURED BY TEODORO'S  
MEN**

From the camp, a sudden noise rose, loudly;  
And, 'To arms!' 'To arms!' the soldiers cried.  
Then they attacked Brandimarte, fiercely,  
Swarming to the fray, from every side.  
The knight conducted himself most bravely,  
But found little joy, his labours denied,  
And despite his defence, saw Doristella  
Captured, and then, his own Fiordelisa.

And Fugiforca too, that vile robber,  
They led away, hands tied behind his back,  
While Brandimarte, valiant as ever,  
Though hope seemed lost, mounted an attack.  
He wrought such destruction, from his charger,  
That of blood and gore there was scarce a lack;  
While Batoldo could scarce a course maintain,  
For all the heaps of victims that he'd slain.

Yet he failed to rescue the maids that day;  
Both were lost to him, that valiant knight.  
Let us leave him and, brooking no delay,  
Follow those who had led them from the fight.  
They were brought to where Teodoro lay,  
Who clasped his Doristella with delight,  
And the maid embraced her lover too,  
Which is hardly a surprise to me or you.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 16-18: TEODORO AND  
DORISTELLA ARE REUNITED**

For each of them loved the other so,  
That none but the other filled their heart;  
And the world holds no greater cure for woe  
Than the meeting of lovers kept apart.  
Kisses they exchanged, as you might know,  
Hot with passion, and more vigour than art,  
While all those around them died of envy,  
Watching that scene, that knew their story.

Teodoro explained to Doristella  
Why he was besieging the city,  
And, thus, fighting Dolistone, her father.  
He said: 'In despair, I blamed him wholly  
Thinking him the reason why that other,  
That wretch, Usbego, held you, securely,  
Where none knew. God curse his treachery!  
There was not a sign of where you might be.'

The maid set Teodoro's mind at ease,  
And answered all his questions, as she told  
Him the tale, nor for an instant did cease,  
Ere the point where Brandimarte the Bold,  
Slew Usbego, in the court, which did please  
Teodoro greatly, then she thought to hold  
His two hands, and begged him to save the knight,  
Since attacked, and outnumbered in the fight.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 19-23: TEODORO  
SEEKS PEACE WITH DOLISTONE**

She prayed that he might act, there and then,  
And, prompted by his sense of chivalry,  
He chose a herald from amongst his men,  
And a trumpeter, and dispatched them quickly,  
To the place where fighting hotly against ten



Or more, they found the fierce Brandimarte,  
Hotter still, in that twas revenge he sought,  
Although, on hearing the call, he stopped short.

Once he'd greeted the herald, politely,  
He sought the royal tent (Teodoro  
Was now King of Armenia, you see;  
His father dying naturally, though)  
And, halfway there, coincidentally,  
Met the king who, with triumphant show,  
Rode between two of the fairest ever,  
Fiordelisa, and his Doristella.

Teodoro received him with honour,  
And told Brandimarte the whole story  
Of his love, all the tale of his ardour,  
From its true commencement to that very  
Moment; while sending an ambassador,  
To Perodia and Dolistone,  
Seeking peace with them, thus to make amends,  
And to wed Doristella, among friends.

All happened with such speed, as you know,  
And such confusion, that Fugiforca,  
Remained bound on a horse, and full of woe,  
As such criminals are dealt with ever.  
His hands were tied behind him; to and fro  
He was led, so all could view the robber.  
And Brandimarte now asked, politely,  
That he be confined, and guarded closely.

So, at Brandimarte's request, the king,  
Had that cruel villain placed in custody,  
His arms and legs chained to an iron ring,  
Since all loathed the man for his villainy.  
The ambassador welcome news did bring:  
He had been received by Dolistone,  
And Perodia, his queen, and they had heard  
The message he had brought, every word.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 24-27: FUGIFORCA IS QUESTIONED AS TO THE STOLEN CHILD**

Thus, he returned clasping an olive wreath,  
The sign of peace, as it was e'er of old,  
Saying all was well, much to the relief  
Of Doristella, whose joy it now foretold.

They entered Liza, all but the thief  
That unwilling was a sad sight to behold,  
Filled with delight. He rode, that Devil's tool,  
Amidst the baggage, and astride a mule.

Once in the city, he was scorned by all,  
Showered with foul abuse from every side,  
None has ever met with so swift a fall.  
'Allah defend me!' the sad villain cried.  
Brandimarte dragged him to the king's hall,  
And told of the crime. The monarch sighed,  
As he gazed at the man, with grief and anger,  
That had cruelly snatched away his daughter.

He'd known of the thief, by reputation  
Agile and astute, and pleased he'd been caught,  
Now threatened to put him to the question  
If he hid aught that he knew from the court.  
Fugiforca gave a full confession,  
Said he'd sold her but, beyond that, knew naught,  
For, having done so, from that far country  
He'd returned, and long had proved the journey.

He said: 'For a goodly price I sold her,  
To the Count of Castle Wild; and his land  
Is a thousand miles away, or further,  
Beyond fair Bukhara, and Samarkand.'  
Brandimarte asked the troubled father,  
Once the king's attention he could command,  
If there was any way to recognise her,  
This child; answer came from Perodia.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 28-30: WHO IS RECOGNISED IN FIORELISA**

For, on hearing Brandimarte's question,  
She interrupted, ere the king replied.  
'If she lives,' she said, with deep emotion,  
'She may be known,' and she, momentarily, sighed,  
'By a mulberry stain, that no lotion,  
Or aught else, could remove,' and here, she cried.  
'Carrying her, I craved such,' she confessed,  
'Thence, perchance, came that mark, beneath her breast.

When she was born, she possessed that dark stain,  
Naught affected it.' The queen fell silent.  
But Brandimarte took up the thing again,

(Fiordelisa had granted her consent  
To his speaking) and went on, to explain  
That the maid recalled her mother, which lent  
Credence to his view that Fiordelisa,  
Who'd likewise been stolen, was their daughter.

He asked the queen to confirm, privately,  
The stain was there, and of the very form  
She recalled, and this the queen did swiftly;  
And, thus, no more was needed to inform  
The royal pair of the claim's verity.  
This sweet revelation worked to transform  
Perodia's tears to joy; all did seem  
Like the mind's release from an evil dream.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 31-33: THE TWO PAIRS OF LOVERS MARRY**

Every eye was now filled with joyful tears,  
And all those present wept with tenderness,  
The mother and this daughter, lost for years,  
Embraced and kissed each other, to excess.  
The vile thief was pardoned, despite his fears,  
Reprieved, to mark their future happiness,  
And everywhere the bells rang out; the cries,  
Trumpet calls, and horn-blasts, rose to the skies.

The news was proclaimed through all the land,  
And throughout every neighbouring country;  
Soon marriage preparations were in hand,  
For Fiordelisa was wed to Brandimarte,  
While, at the altar, Doristella did stand  
Beside her Teodoro, there to marry,  
Ere they joined the triumphal parades.  
I doubt that they were virgin brides, those maids,

For few husbands can boast wives of that sort;  
One may sooner find a crow that's snow white.  
And those two maids (if you've remembered aught!)  
Knew how to mount a steed, and then alight,  
In the tourneys where love's battles are fought.  
Such was the custom, then considered right;  
Though not today, where every maid's intact;  
Who believes not, go seek, and prove the fact!

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 34-35: THE NEW BRIDES CONVERT ARMENIA TO CHRISTIANITY**

These two sisters, whose stories I have told,  
Were Christians, true Catholics indeed,  
The laws of Allah left such ladies cold,  
And both were hostile to the Muslim creed.  
They went to see their father, being bold,  
And wooed him, with soft words, till he agreed  
To turn to the 'one truth faith', for, by God's grace,  
The king could ne'er refuse a pretty face.

Their mother was as easily persuaded,  
And led to embrace their sacred belief.  
Then the court and city were converted  
To their religion with but little grief.  
Need I say more? The faith, once asserted,  
Was embraced by the people; to be brief,  
Everywhere, from the mountain to the sea,  
All Armenia did, to this new lore, agree.

### **BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 36-39: BRANDIMARTE AND FIORDELISA SAIL TO SEEK ORLANDO**

And need I tell of the festivities,  
Which waxed more joyful day by day?  
Here were jousts, and there were full-scale tourneys,  
With the song and dance of love e'er in play.  
Yet Brandimarte now sought to journey,  
To follow the Count, sadly loathe to stay,  
And, one morning, spoke to Dolistone,  
And, with him, agreed the matter swiftly.

He explained that he'd well-nigh decided,  
To follow the path of Count Orlando.  
The monarch replied: 'If you'd be guided  
By my good counsel, you'd not leave us so,  
Yet such a course should not be derided,  
And you have my consent, if you must go.  
I need not hear your reasons; as you wish,  
Sail, or remain, I yield to you in this.'

The king provided our knight with stores,  
And provisions, to fill a splendid galley,  
A royal vessel fit for foreign shores,  
With gold about its stern, adorned richly.

And, with wealth enough to support his cause,  
Fiordelisa and Brandimarte  
Boarded; to her child the queen sent many  
A pearl, fine emerald, and rare ruby;

Amongst those stores was a pavilion,  
The finest tent e'er wrought in Syria.  
An easterly blew; the captain, content  
With the weather, warned them that to linger  
Could cause them harm given their intent.  
They bid Dolistone, and her mother,  
And the rest, a fond farewell and, with ease,  
Passed Rhodes, then Crete, sailing with the breeze.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 40-45: CAUGHT IN A  
STORM, THEY LAND NEAR BIZERTE**

Yet such sea-journeys, much like human life,  
Are subject to vast uncertainty;  
Hope in worldly things often ends in strife,  
And many a fair breeze lasts but briefly.  
Now a gale arose, the wind cut like a knife;  
For those who sought to make for Sicily  
From Crete, 'twas an ill northerly that blew;  
The air darkened, the waters churned anew.

Said the captain: 'Heaven works against me,  
If I err not, and all things run counter;  
For I thought to skim before the easterly,  
Yet now the wind's in the northern quarter.  
We'll not last long amidst so fierce a sea;  
We'll turn to leeward; seek calmer water.  
Gainst this gale, no vessel can advance;  
Nor have we hope now of attaining France.

For then, if I've read the chart correctly,  
Africa will lie on our starboard side,  
To which the ship may make directly;  
"You win if you lose not," is e'er my guide.  
Perchance the tempest will ease, shortly,  
And this endless northerly, thus, subside.  
Pray for a warm southerly breeze once more  
To carry us to fair Sardinia's shore.'

But rather the northerly gained in strength,  
Dashing the captain's hopes that such might be,  
While the waves grew higher, till, at length,

All, fearing death, sent up plea on plea,  
To God above, who answers not a tenth  
Of our endless prayers for aid, nor did He  
Lend an ear to their cries that they would drown,  
But merely turned the waters upside-down.

Tempestuous rain and hail filled the air,  
Till it seemed the sky had turned to water.  
The waves broke o'er the deck everywhere,  
Wrecking all not battened under cover.  
The storm's vast strength was far beyond compare,  
The furious gale seemed fierce as ever,  
And the wind, as I say, blew ceaselessly,  
Till they drew near the coast of Barbary.

They made land near Bizerte, in that bay,  
Wherein which Carthage, that mighty city,  
Once stood; as great as Rome was, in her day,  
And well-nigh her match in power and beauty.  
Yet, there, but scattered, broken ruins lay,  
A witness to her lost supremacy.  
Fortune had, thus, laid low her lofty pride,  
And few now knew the name, or how she died.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 46-50: AND TRAVEL  
TO THAT CITY OVERLAND**

Brandimarte, I say, reached that harbour,  
Driven southwards by Fortune, and the gale.  
Yet, by decree, any Christian traveller  
Who appeared, was to be slain, without fail;  
For a prophecy claimed that Africa  
Sooner or later, would weaken and fail,  
And fall to a prince, out of Italy,  
That would set ablaze all that fine country.

Brandimarte knew of this prophecy,  
And had no wish for his true name to be known,  
Fearful for his wife, and their company,  
Rather than anxious for himself alone.  
He gave his servants their orders, swiftly,  
Then left for shore, where in a civil tone  
He explained to the governor, briefly,  
That he was the son of Monodante,

And that he came from the Distant Isle,  
To visit the court of Agramante,  
Whose fame had reached him, o'er many a mile;  
Desirous of vaunting his chivalry,  
For, among them, his own worth he would trial.  
Thus, he sought one who might lead him, safely,  
To Bizerte, where such might be displayed;  
Indeed, would be most grateful for his aid.

The governor, of his great courtesy,  
Said he would willingly escort the pair,  
And Fiordelisa then joined them swiftly,  
With many another, to journey there.  
They took the Bizerte' road, cheerfully,  
And, early one morning, the sight did share  
Of a grove on one side of fine and tall  
Palm-trees, on the other the city wall.

Our knight gifted silver to his escort,  
And then his men made camp among the trees,  
Where the ground was verdant, and the grove caught  
The passage of a balmy onshore breeze,  
That refreshed the countryside, as it sought  
To flow inland, and gave them rest and ease.  
Beneath the palms, his pavilion was raised.  
A thing of beauty, twas by all folk praised.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 51-52:  
BRANDIMARTE'S PAVILION AND ITS  
PROPHETIC TAPESTRIES**

For twas a work so splendid and ornate  
That it outdid all such that e'er were seen.  
A Sybil of Cumae, at some early date,  
Had wrought it, and with her own hand I ween,  
By the Bay of Naples; her skill was great,  
And, richly embroidered, it oft had been  
Gifted twixt kings of many a foreign land,  
Till Dolistone its fate did command.

I know, my lords, that you are well aware,  
That each Sybil possessed prophetic skill.  
And she who designed it that power did share,  
And adorned it with deeds and tales, at will.  
Past, present, and future were pictured there,  
Every corner of its cloth they did fill,  
Twelve named Alfonso thereon displayed.  
More splendid than the last, was each portrayed.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 53-55: ALFONSO V  
OF ARAGON (1396-1458)**

Nine of these twelve, envious Nature  
Would bear at Europe's western edge, in Spain;  
So splendid their fire and light however,  
That the Orient their bright rays would gain.  
Some would seek justice, wisdom honour,  
Lead in peace, or war, the right maintain;  
The tenth of these great men would, tenfold,  
In himself, their host of virtues, enfold;

A triumphant, yet peaceable, soldier,  
Generous and pious, just and benign,  
And worthy of all that God and Nature  
Would grant him, virtues human and divine.  
Before him all the realms of Africa,  
Would bow the knee, and, of his own design,  
He would win a large slice of Italy,  
Uniting Naples and fair Sicily.

Like Hercules, who was conquered by love,  
And lost his heart to a Lydian maid,  
His love for Italy as great would prove,  
Causing that for his Spanish realm to fade.  
Our people his great valour would approve,  
And every virtue, midst us, thus displayed,  
That would win acclaim for our fair land,  
Would derive from him, scattered from his hand.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 56-57: ALFONSO II  
OF NAPLES (1448-1495)**

The young Alfonso, the eleventh of these,  
Shown there with wings, like to a Victory,  
Looked as if Nature, seeking for her glories  
A fair home, had chosen this, most gladly.  
Wishing to tell, amidst her many stories,  
The tale of his deeds, in their entirety,  
It seemed the Sibyl had, with art, unfurled  
Bold scenes from every corner of the world.

Embroidered there were deeds of love and war,  
Of arms and wisdom; here, fair Italy  
He'd defend from the Turks, by valour more  
Than by mere strength; twas all shown fully.  
And there, a string of battle-scenes it bore,

Showing all the fight at Poggibonsi  
(Monte Imperiale), the fortress won,  
The fairest keep in all the world undone.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 58-59: ALFONSO OF ARAGON, DUKE OF BISCEGLIE (1481-1500)**

The twelfth Alfonso was portrayed nearby,  
A little child, dressed as the young Apollo,  
A Phoebus in triumph, rays of gold on high  
Crowning his forehead, winged, and with his bow.  
So handsome, glowing there, beneath the sky,  
Shining so brightly in his outward show,  
That all who viewed him could not but approve  
And cry, as one: 'Here stands the God of Love!'

Before him Fortune knelt, and full of joy  
She seemed, her aspect one of happiness,  
As if saying: 'O sweet son, blessed boy,  
Here you may see the virtues and success  
Of your great ancestors, their deeds enjoy.  
Show but their courage, their farsightedness,  
Their courtesy, the wisdom of those same,  
And you may share their glory, and their fame.'

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVII: 60-62: BRANDIMARTE RIDES TO THE CITY WALL**

Many another feature of that pavilion  
Met the eye, inside and out, rich and rare;  
For bright gems, and woven gold, gleamed thereon,  
Such that it lit the palm-grove everywhere.  
While within sapphires, emeralds, crystal shone,  
From ornate vessels, all displayed with care,  
Enough to buy a kingdom in that age,  
Far more than I can picture on my page.

For, truthfully, I lack the power to tell  
Of all the noble work that tent contained.  
Yet, fair sculpted nymphs met the eye as well,  
Works that such glorious beauty attained,  
All deserved praise on which the awed gaze fell.  
And there too the Sybil's hand had ordained  
Portraits of knights, lifelike in every way,  
Though to what end created, none could say.

Once the tent had been raised, Brandimarte,  
Swiftly left the scene, mounted on Batoldo,  
And made his way, alone, to fair Bizerte,  
Armed to encounter either friend or foe.  
Once there, he sounded his war-horn bravely.  
You will hear the tale, in the next canto,  
Of what happened at the joust that befell;  
Till then, God and the Virgin keep you well.

BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: THE HUNT AT BIZERTE

ARGOMENTO.

*Mentre giostrano insieme il Re Agramante Lascian la giostra, e con Ruggiero inante  
E Brandimarte il prode cavaliero. Si fanno, e veggon che su quel sentiero,  
Fugge la gente vil co'l cor tremante, Vi son molti Leon. Vassi cacciando  
Che dar bere a caualli hauean pensiero, Agramante il passaggio v'è ordinando.*



ALLEGORIE.

**BRADAMANTE** che nella caccia si diede a conoscere ad Agramante, & a gli altri per huomo ualoroso, mostra quanto tosto si conoscono gli huomini valorosi da gli ignoranti.  
**AGRAMANTE** che ripreso dal tamburino si misse per passare in Francia, ne insegna che alle uolte piu si de temere le riprensioni d'huomini vili, che quelle d'uguali, e potenti.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 1-3: BRANDIMARTE  
ISSUES HIS CHALLENGE**

My lords and ladies, God give you good day,  
And maintain you in joy and happiness!  
As I promised I've returned, without delay,  
To speak of Bizerte. With the boldness  
That was ever Brandimarte's to display,  
He blew his war-horn (loudly, I confess)  
And challenged Agramante: 'Sovereign lord,  
To my clear call, your due respect afford.

If the tales of your vast prowess are true,  
(For your endless fame resounds everywhere),  
Which make a second Hector out of you,  
Naming you the crown of valour, and heir  
To men's praise and love, that may never view  
Your face (in that company I did share,  
Who, although ne'er encountering you before,  
Have found myself but loving you the more),

Then, O valorous and most famous knight,  
Grant my chivalrous challenge an answer,  
That speaks the nature of your court outright,  
Which is of every martial sport the flower.  
Upon that slope, that lies within my sight,  
I would joust with your nobles at this hour,  
And yet I may be much deceived, and they  
Have scant desire for a bold affray!

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 4-7: WHICH KING  
AGRAMANTE ACCEPTS**

Now, King Agramante was then dancing,  
Amongst fair ladies, on a balcony,  
(In view of the pavilion) that stood facing  
The entrance to the harbour and the sea.  
On hearing the mighty war-horn blowing  
That challenge, he left the dance, promptly,  
And, leaning on Ruggiero's shoulder,  
Was the calm and curious beholder

Of a knight below, in the open field.  
Agramante listened, studiously,  
And, with joy and pleasure unconcealed,  
Said: 'I think he speaks most courteously,  
Filling me with longing for lance and shield,

That I might be the first to show clearly  
The extent of this knight's strength and valour.  
Come, bring me my arms and my charger!'

Now some declared this plan was evil,  
And a murmur rose among the nobles there,  
Deeming it wrong for so great a mortal  
To fight with an unknown, however fair.  
But the king was a man loved a battle,  
Who did as he wished; and, without a care,  
He ignored all that the courtiers said,  
Armed himself and clapped his helm on his head.

His surcoat was quartered, azure and gold,  
As was his great charger's fine carapace.  
His crest was still that distaff, proud and bold.  
With his sword at his side, he took his place,  
Upon the field, with Ruggiero, to uphold  
His honour. After pausing for a space,  
Courtesies exchanged with Brandimarte,  
Each turned and gazed at the other party.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 8-14: BRANDIMARTE  
JOUSTS WITH THE KING**

Then they rode, lances lowered, to the fight,  
Two lords skilled in jousting, who spurred  
Their steeds on, to meet head-to-head. Each knight  
Bore a lance so mighty that each incurred  
A solid blow, and splintered his spear outright.  
They met with such force, that it transferred  
To their coursers whose haunches touched the ground,  
Though instantly their feet again they found.

Stunned for but a moment, the horses fled,  
And galloped, in their frenzy, a good mile,  
And even faster would that pair have sped,  
Were it not that they were reined in with style;  
Though blood ran from each warrior's head,  
Or rather mouth, nose, and ears, for a while,  
So furious and fierce that first encounter.  
Yet each returned, ready for another.

Both combatants now sought revenge, I say,  
And spurred their good steeds on, to the attack,  
Charging wildly, as a seasoned fighter may  
When his mount knows the horsemen on its back.

Neither sought his opponent's shield that day,  
The bright helm it was they sought to crack,  
Yet the weighty lances those warriors bore  
Snapped on impact, as their spears had before,

While the splinters flew high and, in their hand,  
But a stump remained, less than three palms long.  
Thus, neither's blow achieving what was planned,  
To claim advantage there had proved but wrong;  
While, again, both dripped blood upon the sand,  
Though fortunately both were brave and strong.  
Their bold chargers, with loosened reins, meanwhile,  
Flew off, once more, and ran a solid mile.

The king called for lances: that fine pair  
That the Temple of Ammon once possessed,  
The ancient god. One, Hercules did dare  
To wield, Antaeus the other spear did test,  
So, writers claimed; each a mighty affair.  
Nature (their proven weight the texts attest)  
Has diminished men through the centuries.  
Two now would fail to raise those same, with ease.

Such mighty strength had those knights of old,  
Two, these days, would fail to achieve a deed  
One wrought alone, though when those authors told  
Their tales, and set them down, who knows, indeed,  
How true they were! The knights did now behold,  
That brace of lances and, all there agreed,  
None knew which of that pair was the stronger,  
Alike in size, weight, and manufacture.

Brandimarte had first choice of the two,  
Honoured, in that way, by Agramante,  
While the audience could not wait to view  
The contest, to see who fought more fiercely.  
But, as the combatants mounted anew,  
From the river-bank a cry arose, loudly.  
Men sped towards them, calling out for aid,  
Fleeing the scene, distressed and much afraid.

## BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 15-18: THE JOUST IS INTERRUPTED

So, the monarch abandoned his great lance,  
And, armed as he was, went to seek the cause.  
While Brandimarte likewise made advance,

To aid him, since the joust was now on pause.  
A host of men streamed past them, but, by chance,  
Agramante caught one from out the scores  
That sped by, riding bareback on his horse,  
But thwarted now, a moment, in his course.

'Where go you, you knave?' cried Agramante,  
'Why do you flee?' and the man gave answer:  
'We took our horses, all were hot and thirsty,  
To drink, and cool themselves, by the river,  
There, a pride of lions charged us, fiercely.  
Forced, thus, to abandon one another,  
All looked to themselves, and sought to flee;  
You, sire, should take flight along with me,

For there are thirty in that pride, at least,  
And they came at us so swiftly, for their part,  
That though I chanced to see the leading beast  
Leave the trees, I scarce managed to depart  
In time; as for the rest, perchance they feast,  
Those creatures, on my friends; with a head start,  
I turned not back to see what was their fate.  
Take my counsel, sire, ere it proves too late!

The monarch smiled then, at Brandimarte,  
And declared: 'Though tis annoying, I know,  
To lose the pleasure of our joust, yet we  
May enjoy a lively hunt, even so.'  
Brandimarte replied, with courtesy,  
Being prudent: 'They'll make a worthy foe.  
I am your command, in joust or chase,  
Or aught else that you may wish for, your Grace.'

## BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 19-21: THE HUNTERS ASSEMBLE FOR THE CHASE

The monarch now sent word to Bizerte,  
Summoning up his huntsmen, and the pack,  
Swift greyhounds, trained to obey their master,  
Brave bloodhounds, mastiffs fierce in the attack,  
And lesser breeds, accustomed to danger.  
Not waiting, as the messenger turned back  
Towards the walls, he, with Brandimarte,  
And Ruggiero rode on, full swiftly.



When the king's command was received at court,  
The dancing stopped; the knights donned their armour.  
The huntsmen mustered nets, spears, pikes; in short,  
All that was needed to arm the hunter,  
For a chase like this is more than simply sport.  
Twas no mere land of hares and goats either;  
Those hills the leopard and the lion maintain,  
There, herds of elephant roam o'er the plain.

Many a lady mounted her courser,  
Bow in hand, and dressed in her finery.  
Many a man sought to ride beside her,  
Happy to offer her his company.  
The noble lords and knights began to gather,  
And blowing their hunting horns, full loudly,  
Set forth; it seemed the heavens were falling  
So loud the shouting, barking, and neighing.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 22-25: THE THREE  
WARRIORS ARE ATTACKED BY LIONS**

Young Ruggiero followed Agramante,  
With Brandimarte riding at their side.  
They spurred their coursers on, furiously,  
To reach the victims by the riverside.  
Skill and strength they needed, and bravery,  
For the lions attacked men, far and wide;  
Some were pinned, yet alive and seeking aid,  
Some, dying, looked heavenwards and prayed.

The three warriors, pitying their plight,  
Seeking to help them, in their hour of need.  
Drew their gleaming swords, and prepared to fight,  
Not wishing to ride in vain, or concede  
The task as hopeless. One lion turned outright  
From the river, where it had slain a steed,  
Roared loudly, and shook its mane, at the foe,  
Then quit its prey, and charged Ruggiero.

The knight waited, then dealt a backhand blow  
At the creature, slicing it from ear to ear.  
Meanwhile a second, lurking below,  
Sprang at Agramante, and then leapt clear;  
Fiercer than the first aggressor though  
It had clawed at the monarch nigh his ear,  
Raking the helm, then the shield, of the king;  
Which grave danger to the monarch did bring.

The creature might have knocked him from his steed,  
Had not brave Ruggiero seen his plight.  
He sliced at its flank, a courageous deed;  
Twas far shorter in the shank from the fight.  
Brandimarte fought a third, of that breed,  
While needing to exert all his great might,  
And had almost slain the beast, when the sounds  
Reached them of the hunters' horns and hounds.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 26-30: A MASS  
HUNT BEGINS, DRIVING FORTH A GIRAFFE**

I lack skill to describe all this in verse,  
The strident calls and cries, the seething throng.  
The lions shook their manes; to many a curse  
They quit their prey and, well-nigh thirty strong,  
Slunk to the trees, reluctant to disperse,  
Growling in anger; then, prodded along  
By pikes and spears, or firmly held at bay,  
Each turned at last, and slowly moved away.

So great a crowd followed on their trail,  
The hunters' shouts and cries shook hills and plain.  
A host of darts were loosed, to scant avail,  
For most were poorly aimed, and fired in vain.  
One lion then another sought the vale  
Beyond the trees, where the monarch, again,  
Had deployed bold hunters, till closely fenced  
The beasts were confined. Then the hunt commenced.

The glades were now surrounded entirely,  
Such that scarce a rodent could win free.  
Then many a knight, joined by his lady,  
With much pomp, a glorious sight to see,  
Were posted, on the plain, by Agramante.  
To leave one's place showed scant chivalry.  
Fierce mastiffs, and swift greyhounds, waited, paired;  
Not a word was said, not a horn now blared.

Nets were set in place, ere the drive began,  
That would resist the force of tooth or claw;  
And now the eager bloodhounds swiftly ran  
Through the glades urging creatures on before.  
The branches crashed; far taller than a man,  
A giraffe emerged, which Turpin, to be sure,  
Claims was thirty feet tall, from head to toe,  
Though few who've seen such creatures, think twas so.

Out came that monstrous beast, in front so tall,  
Yet so low in the haunches there, behind,  
Travelling at such speed, that it trampled all  
The trees and underbrush, and, running blind,  
Was then attacked by the knights, at the call  
Of their monarch; the ladies too I find,  
Joined in the chase, until the creature fell,  
And was slain, by hosts of spears, in a dell.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 31-37: RUGGIERO  
KILLS AN ELEPHANT**

Lions and leopards emerged on the plain,  
And cheetahs too, I know not how many.  
A few the hunters' nets served to restrain,  
While others passed by in some quantity,  
But all of these big cats were swiftly slain.  
Though the ladies had a fright; for suddenly,  
An elephant charged out, which Turpin says  
Was twenty feet high; tis not so nowadays!

Yet if here he erred, well, I understand,  
And pardon his sad mistake, as one should,  
For he repeats what he heard second-hand.  
The huge beast, on emerging from the wood,  
Tossed a knight in the air, who then did land,  
After soaring thirty feet high, in the mud,  
His every bone broken, and quickly died,  
While the others veered swiftly to the side!

The creature, its bulk immeasurably vast,  
Lumbered off; none could halt it in its stride,  
The huntsmen having parted where it passed.  
Though struck by many missiles, its thick hide  
Protected it from harm, from first to last,  
For the skin was tough and hard on the outside,  
So strong that it resisted every blow,  
Like a suit of armour, worn gainst the foe.

Yet the beast had not yet met Tranchera,  
Or felt the weight of Ruggiero's arm.  
He had slipped from the saddle of his charger  
For the horse had reared, on taking alarm  
At the size, and fierce mood, of this creature,  
Whose ears were huge, whose trunk could crush and  
harm,  
And whose tusks, which were long and sharp indeed,  
Were quite enough to frighten any steed.

When the elephant noticed Ruggiero,  
Who was chasing it on foot o'er the plain,  
It turned, raised its trunk, and charged the foe.  
(Many a man that proboscis had slain)  
Then, at the youth, the creature aimed a blow,  
Though its fearsome attack proved all in vain  
For Ruggiero leapt aside, and swung his blade,  
Low and wide, which the beast failed to evade.

Turpin says each leg when measured around,  
Was large as a man's body at the waist,  
Though I know not if his statement is sound,  
Never having such a measurement traced;  
But this I can say, the creature hit the ground,  
After the single sword-stroke, that it faced,  
Succeeded, as the valiant knight had planned,  
In severing all four legs; nor could it stand.

Once the beast had fallen, the knights drew near,  
And then ran in, to stab it here and there,  
Since, by then, there was little left to fear,  
And the king then concluded the affair.  
Agramante blew his horn, loud and clear,  
And the hunt was over; while, everywhere,  
The shadows lengthened, for the day was done,  
Soon twilight would replace the setting sun.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 38-42: THE HUNT  
CONCLUDES**

The knights and huntsmen gathered to the king,  
And many displayed a blood-stained spear,  
As proof of their valour in the hunting,  
And that they'd not been overcome by fear.  
The carcasses of the creatures, though being  
Too large to be retrieved, it would appear,  
Were, by the cunning use of human strength,  
Carried before them to the town, at length.

A number of the many hounds that sped  
Towards the quarry were harmed in the chase,  
Clawed by a lion, or wounded instead  
By leopard or cheetah, in haunch or face.  
But now the hunt was over, as I said,  
And twas evening, and at a pleasant pace,  
The knights, rejoicing, rode, as they desired,  
Next their lady, by pride or love now fired.

For some vaunted their wondrous hunting skill,  
 Seeking to prove their sovereign worth, while some  
 Pled their cause, as, forever, lovers will,  
 Whispering, covertly, of delights to come.  
 Their conversation served six miles to fill  
 Ere they attained Bizerte, where the hum  
 Of the crowd, and the beacons' flares amazed,  
 Bright torches lit the streets, and the heavens blazed.

They entered in, with great magnificence,  
 Almost in the guise of a procession,  
 While from their balconies, their joy immense,  
 Ladies and maids savoured the occasion.  
 Once at the castle, to the king's presence  
 Sped Brandimarte, and sought permission  
 To return to his own lodging and, though  
 The king would have him stay, he watched him go.

Nonetheless, the monarch asked his nephew  
 And five others to escort the valiant knight;  
 And sent on a feast (with dishes strange and new,  
 Rare delicacies) ere the fall of night;  
 And clothes for the morrow, in gold and blue,  
 Quartered like his own, and gleaming bright  
 With pearls and gems, unadorned otherwise;  
 And fair robes for the ladies there, likewise.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 43-48: THE JESTER'S  
 ADMONITION**

The monarch held a splendid feast, next day,  
 As was the custom, and Fiordelisa  
 Joined Brandimarte, midst the fine array,  
 Both invited at the monarch's pleasure.  
 The king and Ruggiero made display  
 Of robes of a like blue and gold colour,  
 While all three, and they alone, midst the rest,  
 Sported a quartered gold and azure crest.

Now, as they were dancing, a jester flew  
 From the balcony, where musicians played,  
 Quitting his tambour, leaping wildly, through  
 The air, and a stumbling landing made,  
 Tripping over all, his headgear askew,  
 As if he were mad, or drunk on parade,  
 And then wove his way, all indiscreet,  
 To the king's platform, and the royal seat.

The king, expecting to be entertained,  
 Welcomed the jester with a smiling face,  
 But the latter, his audience once obtained,  
 Clapped his hands, and feigned to weep for a space:  
 'Allah be cursed, and Fortune, that ordained  
 This man be made our master, of their grace!  
 They care not whom we must endure as lord;  
 Nay, to us the worst of creatures they afford!

For this man, who rules o'er North Africa,  
 Who commands a third of all the region,  
 So immense an army here does gather,  
 That it terrifies both Earth and Heaven.  
 Yet behold him here, amidst the odour  
 Of musk and attar, seated by some maiden,  
 Not caring for the fierce hardships of war,  
 Though he boasts of his conquests to be sure.

No man should leave a great campaign to chance;  
 Begin it, and pursue it, as it may suit;  
 Nor furnish it with gold, with sword and lance,  
 But ere a cutting's planted, count the fruit.  
 For Allah may well prompt the King of France  
 His own invasion plan to execute,  
 And then you may learn if wars are best fought  
 In foreign lands, or at your own fair court.'

The jester spoke, but then was swiftly seized,  
 By the guardsmen who stood about the king,  
 That, deeming he was mad or drunk, were pleased  
 To free him, without a vicious beating.  
 But Agramante's conscience scarce was eased;  
 He was lost in melancholy musing.  
 He shook his head sadly, cast down his eyes,  
 Then left the feasting, prompting much surmise.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXVIII: 49-55: AGRAMANTE  
 EMBARKS ON THE INVASION**

The strange business much perturbed the court,  
 For the limbs feel it, when the head is sore.  
 The royal hall emptied, as the guests sought  
 Their own lodgings; while none danced as before.  
 The king wished to be alone, and said naught,  
 Having, silently, locked his chamber door.  
 He weighed the admonition he'd received;  
 His self-contempt scarcely to be believed.

But when the dawn broke, King Agramante,  
 Summoned to him his councillors of state,  
 And told them he'd resolved to move, swiftly,  
 To completion what he'd commenced of late.  
 Then he decreed who would govern, while he  
 Was campaigning, and buffeted by fate.  
 Bugia's aged king, wise Branzardo,  
 Would rule Bizerte, while he fought the foe.

To him he said: 'Attend to justice here,  
 Beware of the lawyer and the notary,  
 And the justices too, for, far and near,  
 Our people mistrust the judiciary.  
 Those are oft preferred who poor folk fear,  
 And the lawyers are the worst; hark to me;  
 They ever twist the law to win a fight;  
 Beware of them all, and uphold the right.

Folvo of Fez will guard our lands afar,  
 The desert towns, the oases, and more,  
 While King Bucifaro of Alcazar,  
 Will traverse the coasts, and defend the shore.  
 If the Christians should seek our realm to mar,  
 He and his troops will bring upon them war;  
 Likewise, if the Arab realms should attack,  
 His men will be the ones to drive them back.'

Then he announced the fate of brave Dudon,  
 (On whom the monarch turned his regal eye)  
 Ruled he should be confined while he was gone,  
 Could not be freed, nor play the Christian spy,  
 Yet should be treated like a lord, and none  
 Deprive him of aught but freedom, thereby.  
 And, lastly, he ordered Bucifaro,  
 And Folvo, to obey wise Branzardo.

Then, to give witness to the latter's power,  
 He had Branzardo's status proclaimed,  
 And handed him his sceptre that same hour,  
 His golden sceptre, and his generals named.  
 Then he gathered in his troops, the very flower  
 Of Africa, the unknown and the famed.  
 Who could describe that tumult, and the roar,  
 That shook the earth, and beat at Heaven's floor?

Hearing the trumpets sound the embarkation,  
 The mighty host now pressed towards the shore.  
 Clambering aboard, men of many a nation,  
 Waited on the breeze; some were pleased, but more,  
 Were fearful of their fate. My vocation  
 Is here to delight those (their word is law)  
 Who would hear all the tale; my next canto,  
 Will sing of deeds as great, and greater show.



BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: AGRAMANTE IN SPAIN AND FRANCE

ARGOMENTO.

*Del Re Agramante la superba armata, che fa la gente afflitta, e malmenata  
L'Autor descrive nel presente Canto, Di Spagnuoli, e Francesi, si dan vanto,  
Che ne i liti di Spagna al fin smontata, Molti fassi la zuffa su'l camino,  
Giunge oue s'ode il gran rumor, e'l piato Combatte con Rinaldo il buon Sobrino.*



A L L E G O R I E.

- P**ER Agramante, che fa sì grande armata contra di Carlo, ci dinota che spesso volte l'huomo grande, e potente non si contentando dello stato nel qual si ritrova, molte fiate per farsi maggiore, diuien minore.
- L**A battaglia di Rinaldo, e Sebrino significa che l'huomo ualoroso non dee sgomentarsi d'alcuna impresa, benché sia pericolosa.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 1-3: THE VAST SIZE OF AGRAMANTE'S HOST**

Of the greatest, and most stupendous, war,  
That has e'er been told, in prose or rhyme,  
I now shall tell; it shakes me to the core,  
Ere I've begun. Not at this present time,  
Not in days past, has king or emperor,  
Amassed as great a force, or as sublime,  
To equal that which I'll describe to you;  
Agramante's host we shall now review.

Not when barbarous Hannibal first crossed  
The Ebro, Spain and Africa behind,  
And then with fire and acid, midst the frost,  
A path, o'er the snowy Alps, cleft and mined;  
Not when great Xerxes, careless of the cost,  
At that pass where the Spartans were confined,  
Brought Ethiopians and Scythians to bear;  
Did it match what was seen in this affair;

Where Agramante judged its size by sight  
Alone, so vast was his disordered host.  
For the shadows of his sails stole the light,  
And obscured the trembling waves, almost,  
While the mighty vessels were packed so tight,  
That scarce a vessel clear water could boast.  
When the wind rose astern, to the drums beat,  
The monarch's admiral led forth the fleet.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 4-20: THE ROLL-CALL OF NAVAL COMMANDERS**

He was bold Argosto of Marmonda,  
And flew his royal ensign, a Siren  
On a field of pure green; o'er the water  
King Gualciotto sailed beside him; chosen  
Warriors filled his ship, and his banner  
Was a black field that bore white doves; and then  
Came Mirabaldo whose flag did unfold  
To reveal a black ram with horns of gold,

A golden-horned ram on a field of white.  
Not far from them sailed King Sobrino;  
A flame on a black field proclaimed the knight,  
The emblem of that wise king of Garbo.  
Half a mile behind, but easily in sight,

Next in line came King Bambirago,  
Of Arzila, and his banner revealed,  
A dragon vert upon a crimson field.

Brunello, King of Tingitana,  
Had, but lately, wrought his banner anew,  
To seem far finer than any other.  
He had planned it himself, as many do  
In our own age, vanity their prompter,  
Believing that their House will, to the view,  
Appear nobler, worthier, midst the rest,  
With both lions and lilies as their crest!

And so, Brunello, but a recent king  
As you know, displayed, on a field of red,  
A goose (*'oca'*), wings and tail covering  
A golden egg, regarding which he said,  
Jokingly: 'My emblem's an ancient thing.  
Here's the proof: for in the Gospels I've read,  
John the Evangelist proclaims it so,  
'*Oca (Hoc!) erat in principio.*'

After him came Getulia's Grifaldo,  
His bold emblem, a dishevelled maiden;  
All his vessels that same banner did show;  
She was grasping, by the ears, a dragon,  
Though his own device was not ordered so;  
Its field was black, with a white bar thereon.  
Near him, was Garamanta's young king,  
Martasino his name, his vessel flying

The emblem, on a vermilion field  
Of a gryphon's bold head, and neck, and claw.  
A mile behind, Dorilone was revealed,  
Ceuta's king, and his mighty banner bore  
A lily, white on blue, as on his shield.  
Now, Sorridano departed the shore,  
A white lion, on a field vert, he showed,  
The Hesperides his distant abode.

Then Constantina's King Pinadoro's  
Two-headed yellow eagle did unfold  
On a crimson field; then came Alzirdo's  
Pure vermilion rose, on a field of gold,  
His fair emblem; and then Puliano's  
Banner, next in line; he was the bold  
Monarch who held power in Nasamona,  
His arms an azure field, a crown in silver.

Nor was Arigalte absent from sight,  
Nor his men, their heads with lice replete;  
That King of Amonia's banner was white,  
A blank square. Manilardo joined the fleet,  
A gold claw, on a field of blood, that knight  
Showed on his flag, a lion's claw complete;  
And, behind him, sailed King Prusione,  
Seeking now to gain upon him swiftly.

King Manilardo ruled Norizia,  
Alvarrachie honoured Prusione.  
Tell me: which of those two was the bolder?  
Neither, I'd say, had the supremacy.  
The King of the Canary Isles, slower  
O'er the water than that pair, clearly,  
Came next (so Bishop Turpin claims, I mean),  
His arms a black crow on a field of green.

His name was Bardarico, and his land  
Lay in the west; next old Balifronte  
Led, from Dudrinasso, who had command  
Of Libicana; he ploughed on swiftly.  
The ancient monarch's vessels were all manned  
By men of Mulga, a fountain had he  
On an azure field as emblem; the other,  
A naked boy filled his scarlet banner.

King Dardinello then, both young and bold,  
Joined his ships with theirs; the ensign he bore  
Was quartered scarlet and white, for of old  
Those arms Almonte, his dear father, wore,  
The very same that the Count's shield did hold,  
The like exactly, neither less nor more;  
For one of them twould prove a costly thing.  
That bold young monarch was Zumara's king.

Nearby, sailed Cosca's lord, Cardorano;  
A dragon with a human head his sign,  
On a field vert, followed by Tardoco  
King of Djerba, who sailed the next in line,  
And then Oran's monarch, Marbalusto.  
King Tardoco's shield carried a malign  
Serpent, its head concealed behind its tail,  
That, deaf to every spell, none might prevail.

King Marbalusto's showed a noble queen,  
With a fair garland encircling her head.  
Farurante of Maurina next was seen  
His shield vert, with a single stripe of red.  
Alzirdo then came swift upon the scene,  
An acorn on his banner there outspread,  
Gold on blue; Tanfrone hove in sight,  
His emblem a lion's head, the field white,

Of Almasilla he was king. From court,  
Came the elected council all complete.  
Mordante's emblem their ships did sport,  
King of Tolometta, he led their fleet;  
Its vessels bore his emblem from the port,  
Two red moons on a field 'or'; six feet  
And more in height that king, a fierce foe,  
The bastard son of Carogiero.

Next followed the bold men of Tripoli,  
And no vessels on that sea were as fair,  
Or as fine, they lacked naught equally,  
For Ruggiero led them, his arms, there,  
The white eagle on azure, borne proudly  
By his ancestors; he that pride did share.  
While, next, beneath Agramante's banner  
Came Bizerte's fleet, following after.

Nearby, the fleet from Tunis left the port,  
Commanded by old King Daniforte,  
He, the High Steward to the royal court,  
Wise and experienced; a crimson lily  
On a field vert, his arms, to France he brought,  
Seeking to die, or deal death, equally.  
Next came, from Bernica and from Rassa,  
One fleet chasing the sterns of another.

Barigano was both fleets' commander,  
(He had raised Agramante from a child)  
A white mastiff, displayed on his banner,  
On a red field, the martial eye beguiled.  
And last came Fizzano's mighty ruler,  
Malabuferso, not quite reconciled  
To his place at the rear; upon his shield,  
And flag, a leopard on an azure field.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 21-23: AGRAMANTE'S  
ARMY REACHES MONTALBANO**

In the order that I've described to you  
That mighty armada sailed forth to Spain,  
Led by Agramante, presenting a view  
The likes of which none here may see again.  
Twas as if Hell's gate had opened, anew,  
And the martial host its depths did contain  
Had poured forth, to wage war on Paradise,  
Of many a hue, bearing every device.

That mighty host, that fierce and darksome foe,  
Could only have been matched, Turpin claims,  
If the dead, and the demons down below,  
Had quit their sepulchres, and their flames,  
And filled those vessels, riding with the flow.  
Marshalled by that band of famous names,  
A hundred thousand strong, they made harbour,  
From fair Malaga to Tarragona.

Neath Tortosa, the Ebro meets the sea;  
And twas there, his armies, with sword and lance,  
Gathered to the flag of Agramante.  
Without resting, they began a swift advance,  
From the Pyrenees viewed all Gascony,  
And then descended, joyously, to France,  
In marching order, took the road below,  
And so crossed the plain to Montalbano.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 24-29: WHERE THE  
VARIOUS DUELS ARE STILL BEING FOUGHT**

Below that famous castle, on the plain,  
The fierce battle yet raged, of which I've told,  
Between the mighty kings of France and Spain,  
A mortal contest twixt the brave and bold;  
For they, their courts, and their armies were fain  
To make war upon each other as, of old,  
Their ancestors had and, upon that field,  
Nigh a foot deep, their noble blood congealed.

Rinaldo and Ferrau duelled together;  
Which man might prove the fiercer none did know,  
While Grandonio, savage as ever,  
Fought gainst the Marquis Oliviero;  
Not one was in need of aid, however.

Charlemagne battled with Marsilio,  
While Serpentino and the valiant Dane  
Hammered at each other, o'er that plain.

Twixt Rodomonte and Bradamante  
The duel yielded much the finest sight.  
As for Orlando, struck ferociously,  
You'll recall, I think, his perilous plight;  
Stunned by that blow, dealt thunderously  
By the African, who'd toppled the knight.  
Of the history of that, I'll say no more,  
For, indeed, tis a tale I've told before.

Twas Bradamante who now fought the king,  
And their duel had continued such a space  
That the Count had arrived to join the ring,  
Desiring to wreak revenge, and save face.  
His anger and his shame he sought to bring  
To the encounter, grieved at the disgrace,  
For the pagan had mazed him with that blow;  
But he'd deal him like for like, even so.

Nonetheless, Orlando now felt it wrong,  
To make a third, in the duel being fought,  
So, he stood and watched, while hoping, ere long,  
To engage the Saracen; and, thus, he thought  
To sheathe Durindana. They duelled among  
The flowers of a field, a pleasant court,  
Far from the other knights, so there was none  
To trouble them ere the contest was done.

For three hours or more, the warrior-maid  
Had defied the pagan king, most bravely,  
When the Count raised his eyes, and duly paid  
Attention to the slopes above; there, swiftly  
Descending, came a host, their flags displayed,  
In such numbers, war-horns sounding loudly,  
That it seemed, as he viewed the endless tide,  
The Heavens shook, and all the Earth beside.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 30-35: ORLANDO  
CONQUERS KING PINADORO**

Orlando cried: 'O Lord of Eternity,  
Whence comes this ill wind that now doth blow?  
Yet however great that mighty host may be  
It shall not serve to save Marsilio.



From Hell itself they come, it seems to me,  
Yet they'll find a better welcome below,  
For ill they'll receive, if Durindana  
Slices flesh and bone as well as ever.'

Uttering this, with much pride and disdain,  
He urged his steed towards the mountainside.  
He saw a lance stuck upright in the plain,  
And leant down to take it, as he did ride;  
I mean a Christian lance, not one from Spain,  
And since it was abandoned, once he'd spied  
The brave weapon, he plucked it from the field,  
Found it entire, and chose that spear to wield.

He galloped with it seated next his thigh,  
On Briagador who flew much like a bird.  
Meanwhile, Agramante, mounted nearby,  
Watched the duelling below, without a word.  
Twas the kind of sight that much pleased his eye.  
He called King Pinadoro, and conferred  
With that knight; Constantia's ruler he;  
Then ordered him to find whom these might be.

He commanded that king to go alone,  
And ride fearlessly amidst those few,  
Where the greatest ferocity was shown,  
And the battle bloodiest, and bring him two  
Or three of those knights, their names unknown,  
Though five or six, would be best, in his view,  
And alive, so that he might discover  
The details of the contest, and its nature.

Pinadoro rode swiftly down the hill,  
And, as fast again, o'er the level ground,  
Nor rested from spurring his steed, until  
A knight (twas Count Orlando) he had found.  
He shouted a challenge, advancing still,  
As if he'd come to joust, to the air around,  
And then charged on to the encounter,  
To be met by a fierce blow from the other.

To be clear, there was no one else about,  
At that moment, though the conflict was near,  
And the Count replied with a mighty shout,  
Then rode at Pinadoro, without fear  
Of the man, and without a qualm, or doubt.  
Both shields rang, as the Saracen flew clear,  
For his lance had been splintered to the hilt,  
While he left his seat cleanly, swiftly spilt.

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 36-39: AND LEARNS FROM HIM OF THE INVASION**

Orlando constrained the fallen king;  
He, who offered no defence nor sought  
To escape, acquiesced in everything,  
Knowing he was well and truly caught.  
From him Orlando learned much regarding  
Agramante's invasion, and his court;  
How o'er the sea he'd made his advance  
To conquer both Charlemagne and France.

At this news, the Count felt great delight,  
And lifted his joyous face to the sky,  
Murmuring: 'You send aid in grievous plight,  
And help where there is need, O Lord on high!  
For, if I err not, that treacherous knight  
Rinaldo, much discomforted hereby,  
And King Charlemagne too, and all the rest,  
Will seek my aid, that ever prove the best;

By many a valiant deed, therefore,  
I'll win the lady I love so deeply;  
Then, let the whole world, waging war,  
Come fully armed, seeking to destroy me;  
I shall, should such occur, but gain the more,  
Dismaying all those that would annoy me.'  
This speech to himself the Count muttered;  
Pinadoro heard naught that he uttered.

Then Orlando turned to the knight, saying:  
'Go swiftly, and seek out Agramante,  
Since he has sent you here to learn a thing,  
You may give your report, and truthfully.  
Say that you found Marsilio waging  
War on Charlemagne, as in a tourney,  
And if a kingly valour fills his heart,  
Let him join the fight, and reveal his art.'

## **BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 40-45: SOBRINO TAUNTS HIS COMRADES TO FIGHT**

Pinadoro thanked him courteously,  
As any polished nobleman would do,  
Then wheeled about and sought Agramante  
And having found him told all that was new,  
Saying: 'Sire, I went where you despatched me;

My report will assuredly prove true;  
Marsilio, and bold King Charlemagne,  
Are now battling each other on the plain.

I know not what you think of the fact,  
But my firm counsel is: seek not that field!  
For I met a brave knight, and was attacked;  
To his wondrous skill, I was forced to yield.  
Splendid the martial joust he did enact;  
Quartered red and white, the arms on his shield,  
And if he but shows what the rest can do,  
Then our campaign is lost, I swear to you.'

Sobrino, who was present, merely smiled,  
And said: 'Those are the arms of Orlando.  
He'll lower the pride of those who've reviled  
The Christian ranks; for that lord I know,  
And have done, since the Count was but a child.  
May Allah bring him fear, and lay him low,  
For in trials, with sword and lance, I attest,  
He ranks amongst the fiercest, and the best.

Now you shall see if I but spoke in vain,  
In Bizerte, where you made mock of me,  
When I described the power of Charlemagne,  
And praised his knights, though perchance too loudly.  
Come Alzirdo, Puliano, maintain  
Our honour; Martasino speaks bravely;  
For Rodomonte whose fire was so extreme,  
Must be dead, or captive, now, it would seem.

Urge on the other youths, who also claim  
To be so bold and fearless, who delight  
In jousting at tourneys, seek lasting fame,  
And bear their lances like a proper knight.  
And if any think I call upon those same  
Because I fear to go down there, and fight,  
I'll be riding with them, and stake my soul  
None will be ahead when I reach the goal.'

Martasino, hearing this, shook with anger,  
And said proudly: 'Well, I shall go and see  
If this Orlando is possessed of great valour,  
Or a creature of flesh and bone, like me.  
Sobrino will, no doubt, out of honour,  
Ne'er attack one he's known since infancy.  
Let those who wish descend now to the plain,  
Let those that court dishonour here remain.'

## BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 46-50: MARTASINO LEADS AN ATTACK

Thus, spoke brave and daring Martasino,  
And none in this world e'er showed greater pride.  
He was a weighty man, small in height though,  
Dextrous yet ponderous, bold and wild-eyed,  
Aquiline his nose, all his face aglow,  
Haughty and reckless, both those traits allied.  
He tossed his head, cried out and, shouting still,  
Flourished his lance, and galloped down the hill.

Marbalusto followed; Farurante,  
Alzirdo, Mirabaldo at his side,  
Bambirago, and Grifaldo, quickly  
Pursuing, but Sobrino swift did ride;  
Not a trace of hesitation showed he,  
All fear of Count Orlando he denied.  
And with such speed and ardour he did go  
He passed them all, even Martasino.

Agramante recalled his knights in vain;  
That bold company but rode the faster.  
Like unleashed hounds they coursed o'er the plain,  
Though, ere they struck, it seemed forever.  
Gazing on, the king now ceased to maintain  
His stance, and all the court followed after.  
No semblance of order could he decree,  
But urged them on, riding furiously.

Yet more wildly and fiercely than the rest  
The monarch rode, passing Sisifalto,  
Who was spurring his mount on with the best,  
Beside Atlante and Ruggiero.  
The cries rose high, the very skies, oppressed,  
Shook with the sound, as did the earth below,  
Echoing the riders, and the chargers,  
The horses' hoofbeats, their yelling masters.

To the trumpet, the war-horn, and the drum,  
All Agramante's host sped on apace,  
Few of the soldiers armed with swords, though some  
Bore a heavy club, or an iron mace.  
To the high heavens rose the constant thrum  
Of pounding feet, as they filled that space  
Of open ground, far and wide, spears in hand,  
Striving to catch, not pass, that eager band.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 51-57: CHARLEMAGNE  
BREAKS OFF THE DUEL, AND SUMMONS  
RINALDO**

Marsilio by now was faring ill,  
A monarch doomed to die, it would seem,  
For he clung to his mount by force of will,  
Swaying from side to side, as if in dream.  
Charlemagne was belabouring him still;  
With two-handed strokes, his skill supreme,  
He wrought such damage at every breath  
That Marsilio was on the brink of death.

Yet, raising his eyes, the Christian saw  
King Agramante coursing o'er the field,  
Neath a host of standards, emblems of war,  
Leading a band of knights with lance and shield.  
Seeing that company speed on before  
A greater force, its passage now revealed,  
Pipin's son crossed himself, astounded,  
Shocked, by the alarms and cries that sounded.

He quit Marsilio and, at a thought,  
Rode to rally and to aid his army.  
Rinaldo was nearby; for he yet fought  
With Ferrau, who was suffering badly,  
Such that the knight had lost his sword, yet sought  
To defend his honour still, manfully,  
With huge swings of his cudgel, yet, I fear,  
Found that death seemed ever hovering near.

Rinaldo might have slain him, then and there,  
As I say, since he had the upper hand,  
For the cudgel wrought little, in that affair,  
While Fusberta, many a stroke did land  
That pierced chain mail; ill then Ferrau did fare.  
But then Rinaldo heard his king's command,  
For Charlemagne had cried his name aloud,  
And the knight heard his voice above the crowd.

'My son, the king called out: 'my dear son,  
On this day, we must needs be gallant men.  
If we seek not deliverance, as one,  
What awaits is but lasting shame, and then  
Twould prove the blackest of nights, darker none,  
Whence the bright sun might never rise again,

If Montalbano, and all Gascony,  
Were doomed to die with Christianity!'

At this cry from the emperor, Rinaldo  
Turned from smiting Ferrau, though the fight  
Was still continuing and his brave foe,  
While beset, still fought on with all his might.  
Yet whatever enchantment helped him so,  
And protected him from death, the bold knight  
Had never been more bruised in all his life,  
Though many a time found midst war and strife.

He was so weakened from his hard labour,  
He longed for the duel to reach an end,  
So dented and shattered was his armour,  
He wished for rest, the damage to amend.  
Rinaldo left him reeling, his honour  
Yet intact, and turned to aid and defend  
Charlemagne, his monarch, who boldly  
Faced, now, the advancing Agramante.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 58-61: THE EMPEROR  
SENDS HIM TO FIGHT SOBRINO**

When Rinaldo reached him, Charlemagne  
Gave him the first squadron to command  
That he'd gathered, and decreed: 'O'er the plain,  
To that cliff-slope ride where on every hand  
The enemy descend, for your task is plain.  
Head for that narrow cleft, you understand,  
And against that bold king mount an attack,  
Whose emblem is a flame on a field of black.

Tis clear Agramante has crossed the sea,  
For the banner is that of King Sobrino,  
That warrior I know and his bravery,  
A valiant Saracen, a worthy foe.  
Away, my son, win me a victory!  
Spurring Baiardo, off sped Rinaldo,  
While the monarch gave the second squadron  
To a pair of dukes, from Arles and Bayonne.

They were of the House of Mongrana,  
Sigieri, and his kinsman Uberto.  
King Otho and his men led another,  
The third squadron to ride against the foe.  
Then the fourth was granted as its leader,

The brave King of Frisa, Daniberto,  
While Manibruno of Ireland laid claim  
To the fifth force assigned by Charlemagne.

The sixth the King of Scotland led, as he,  
Charlemagne, urged the seventh o'er the field.  
And now the shouts and war-cries rose, loudly,  
As Montalbano's knight, with lance and shield,  
Spurred Baiardo o'er the ground, full swiftly;  
Ill fared the man who gainst him spear would wield!  
Some men he unhorsed, some he left half-dead,  
Some skewered like a frog, as on he sped.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXIX: 62-65: SOBRINO  
DUELS WITH RINALDO**

His lance broke, and so he drew Fusberta,  
Clearing a path, and striking far and wide.  
'Who slays so many, in his mad fervour?'  
Thought Sobrino, as he viewed that fierce ride,  
'A barred shield with a lion? Its bearer,  
I know not. Through all that countryside  
Of France, where I have been, I never saw  
This warrior, nor viewed such arms before.

Yet surely that knight must be Rinaldo,  
Whose fame, it seems, is bruited everywhere.  
Perchance now I'll discover if tis so,  
If his heart is such, that lions he may bear.'  
He spurred on his war-horse gainst the foe,  
That monarch who'd boasted he would dare  
To be the first to battle; split was his lance,  
With sword alone he now thought to advance.

Rinaldo viewed Sobrino, and admired  
Both his bold appearance and his armour.  
He thought to himself: 'One is oft inspired  
By a fine beginning, that's built on later.  
So, I'll not let you win the start desired;  
He who's first to reap, oft proves the gainer!'  
With that he swung his sword at Sobrino,  
That struck the gleaming helmet of his foe.

The casque was so finely wrought, in its fall  
The sharp blade cleft it not, despite the blow.  
The effect of the stroke appeared but small,  
Raising scarce a murmur from Sobrino.  
Now, the limit I've reached, as I recall,  
That I set myself for this whole canto;  
And perchance a little rest would delight,  
Ere you hear the remainder of the fight.

BOOK II: CANTO XXX: THE BATTLE AT MONTALBANO

ARGOMENTO.

*Gran strage fan gli eserciti affrontati  
Il Spagnuolo, il Francese, e l'Africano,  
Molti rimangon di vita priuati,  
De' morti s'empie d'ogni intorno il piano,*

*Mena Rinaldo colpi ismisurati,  
Si che ogniun quanto può gli stà lontano,  
Che troppo ben da ogniuno è conosciuto,  
Troua il buon Conte Orlando Ferraguto.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**P**ER gli eserciti affrontati insieme, ci dinota che i gran Principi cercano in ogni uia, e modo di aggrandire lo stato, non hauendo riguardo a far morire le genti per farsi grandi.

**P**ER Rinaldo, che fa gran proue della sua persona, ci mostra che l'huomo ualoroso non dee sparagnar mai la vita in impresa alcuna, benchè pericolosa, in fauor del suo Signore.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 1-7: RINALDO,  
DUELLING, FINDS HIS SQUADRON UNDER  
ATTACK**

You, lords and ladies, that now lend an ear  
To such illustrious deeds as gained a name  
For many a brave and daring cavalier,  
In times past and present, and brought them fame,  
This day, I shall recount, and you shall hear,  
The tale of the battle in which those same  
Faced the fiercest fight, you may suppose,  
That ever was spoken of, in verse or prose.

If you've listened closely, you'll remember  
Where, and between whom, the war was fought,  
And how Rinaldo chose to deliver,  
A blow that King Sobrino's helmet caught.  
But that old warrior, tough as ever,  
Cared not a whit for it, but swiftly sought  
To return the gift to Montalbano's lord,  
With a two-handed stroke of his sharp sword.

Prince Rinaldo replied at once, and so  
The pair commenced duelling, until  
The Christian ranks met those of the foe,  
These on the plain, those higher on the hill;  
And, though lesser in number blow for blow,  
The Christians fought with a greater will.  
Vast was the roar, as voices cried aloud,  
And drums, and horns, urged on the martial crowd.

Banners and lances flew at one another,  
As those armies crashed headlong on the field,  
Where the foremost, as they met together,  
Felt the fierce onslaught most, on helm and shield;  
Where the Christian faced his pagan brother,  
And neither party was inclined to yield.  
Some drove their spears through plate and iron mail,  
Some fell with their steeds, in that bloody vale.

They fought on, Sobrino and Rinaldo,  
Although the Saracen king fared the worst,  
Until, as I've explained, Martasino,  
Joined the fight, and many a blow rehearsed.  
Then Farurante and Bambirago,  
Added their weight and prowess to the first;  
While to their succour came Marbalusto,  
And the bold Alzirdo, and Grifaldo,

Argosto of Marmonda, Puliano,  
Tardoco, Mirabaldo, Barolango,  
And Arugalte, and Gualciotto  
Who much evil would do, Cardorano,  
And that treacherous knight Dudrinasso.  
Fifteen is their number, even so,  
I promise you not five that join the fight,  
Will crawl into their bed again this night.

Not if Fusberta and Durindana  
Have their say; not unless I would maintain,  
They are carried there, though tis likelier  
They'll be cut to little pieces on the plain.  
Let us watch those bold kings of Africa,  
And the rest, who would slay and not be slain,  
Join the battle; midst the cries, they enter in,  
While Heaven and Earth tremble at the din.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 8-10: THE SARACENS  
MAKE INROADS**

The first rank, that led by Prince Rinaldo,  
(Seventy-thousand Gascons was the count)  
Were overwhelmed, in a trice, by the foe,  
As knights and soldiers fell in vast amount.  
The Africans came on, an endless flow,  
Like drops of water spraying from a fount,  
Or brown ants swarming o'er an old oak tree,  
Flies in hot weather, mackerel in the sea.

Every pagan king fought like a dragon,  
Cutting and thrusting hard, amidst our men,  
Though Martasino proved their champion,  
Emptying saddles, with the strength of ten.  
Marbalusto, Bambirago upon  
His heels, followed the mighty Saracen,  
Through the field, and those knights were merciless,  
As their blades did our fearful ranks oppress.

Great was the lamentation, loud the cries,  
Of the wounded and the dying on that field.  
The swarm of Saracens increased in size,  
While behind, on the hill, more were revealed.  
Farurante's strokes redoubled, likewise  
Grifaldo's, Alzirdo's (men forced to yield),  
Argosto's Dudrinasso's, Tardoco's,  
Bardarico's, and King Puliano's.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 11-15: RINALDO SLAYS  
MIRABALDO AND ARGOSTO**

Rinaldo fought on against Sobrino  
(The king had the worst of the encounter),  
But seeing his troops running from the foe,  
A sorry sight that filled him with anger,  
Grinding his teeth with fury, and with woe,  
He then quit the fight he'd started earlier.  
Stay, my lords, attend to me, for, I vow,  
That the game will begin in earnest, now.

Gnashing his teeth, then, Prince Rinaldo went,  
Carving himself a path on every side,  
To where the fight burned with fiercest intent,  
Commending himself to God, in his ride.  
Spurring Baiardo, the foe's ranks he rent,  
And came to Mirabaldo, who swiftly died,  
For Rinaldo sliced the man with a blow,  
Severing, at the waist, his royal foe.

Argosto of Marmonda was watching  
That fight, and his face turned cold as ice,  
Amazed at that great warrior slicing  
A man like a hair; he shuddered twice.  
Rinaldo, swung again, limbs sent flying  
Through the air, crests and pennants, in a trice,  
Surcoats, and chunks of steel, made to rise,  
Soaring upwards, like falcons, to the skies.

Heads, sliced from their bodies, lay all around,  
Severed legs and arms littered o'er the field.  
The routed pagans relinquished their ground,  
And fled, abandoning both sword and shield;  
Breathing hard, mouths open wide, yet no sound  
Emerging, as their terror they revealed.  
Mincing food for hounds, that blade fell again;  
Ill fared the soldier choosing to remain!

Argosto proved such, and so Rinaldo  
Cleft him from his head down to his waist,  
Not three inches of flesh held him below,  
While his fickle troops departed in haste.  
Those sad wretches tossed away spear and bow,  
Shield and cudgel, that bitter bile did taste,  
And sped in confusion, o'er the plain,  
Pursued by the prince's cries of disdain.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 16-20: HE IS ATTACKED  
BY MARTASINO AND OTHERS, AND SLAYS  
BARDARICO**

Martasino was engaged elsewhere;  
He bore a gryphon's head as his bold crest,  
Set on a splendid helm, a brave affair,  
That protected him, proof gainst every test.  
He now left his place, his sword in the air,  
For he saw Argosto's troops now hard-pressed  
And slain, out of hand, in the ruin wrought  
By that lord of Montalbano, as he fought.

He charged, from the left, against Rinaldo,  
And dealt him a backhand blow to the head,  
With such force he stunned his Christian foe,  
And the prince almost toppled, stunned, half-dead.  
Martasino was joined by Tardoco,  
And Bardarico too who swiftly sped  
To the fight, ahead of Marbalusto,  
Large and weighty; each struck at Rinaldo.

Outnumbered, he yet fended off each blow.  
They fell like bitter hail on his brow;  
For those four kings swung hard at their foe,  
At random, as mere chance did so allow.  
Rinaldo swung in rage at Bardarico;  
Fusberta struck the helm, and made him bow,  
Split the casque, then the visor, then the shield,  
Sliced his chest, and laid him dead on the field.

But his own helm was struck by Marbalusto,  
Whose great club now descended, swung with might,  
A cudgel, its shaft bound with iron though,  
That landed true, on the helmet of our knight,  
And, with such force, it nigh downed Rinaldo.  
He, for an instant, lost hearing and sight,  
And bent forwards, set to drop to the ground,  
But Tardoco's next fierce stroke brought him round;

Tardoco, King of Djerba, with that swing  
Of his blade, kept the prince in his saddle,  
As Martasino now made his helmet ring,  
Tearing the crest away from the metal.  
While Rinaldo was thus hammered in the ring,  
The pagans proved themselves men of mettle:  
Led by Dudrinasso, and Grifaldo,  
They once more routed the Christian foe.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 21-23: CHARLEMAGNE SENDS IN SIGIERI AND UBERTO**

The Saracens had broken our first line,  
Such that, though no soldier hid from the fight,  
They made scant defence; and so, at a sign,  
Our second brave squadron, in all their might,  
Charged in, eager for the fray, their design  
To turn the tide, aid our beleaguered knight,  
And rout the foe in turn; their leaders' heart  
And strength, amidst the French set them apart.

I speak of the Duke of Arles, Sigieri,  
And the bold Duke of Bayonne, Uberto,  
Both exemplars of power and bravery,  
And both experienced against the foe.  
Those valiant knights came on swiftly,  
And the sky echoed to the clash below,  
While the earth beneath their steeds seemed to heave,  
As the battle a fresh pattern now did weave.

Uberto sought to tackle Grifaldo,  
While Dudrinasso fought Sigieri.  
Both Saracens were quickly brought low,  
Feet to the heavens, both falling loudly.  
Rinaldo dealt fierce blows, nearby, although  
As I've said, he was outnumbered greatly,  
For Bardarico he'd slain and won free,  
But twas now one warrior against three.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 24-27: SIGIERI KILLS TARDOCO, BUT IS SLAIN BY MARTASINO**

For Oran's mighty king, Marbalusto,  
Constantly attacked our valiant knight,  
Along with Martasino and Tardoco;  
One with his club, two with swords did fight.  
Sigieri now sped to aid Rinaldo,  
Spurring his steed, anxious at the sight  
Of their conflict, riding with loosened rein,  
As he rode to his defence o'er the plain.

He dealt his fierce first stroke at Tardoco,  
And then those two began a mortal dance,  
Each man seeking to deal a winning blow,  
Though the prize went to the warrior of France.  
For as Bishop Turpin tells us (true, or no)

Sigieri conquered with a swift advance,  
His sword passing through the pagan's gut,  
His back, and the saddle, at least a foot.

Sigieri was now without his blade,  
Stuck fast in the leather. Martasino  
Turned the former's way, as he was bringing aid,  
Or such he'd intended, to Tardoco.  
When he saw Sigieri, thus delayed  
In re-arming and a weapon-less foe,  
Martasino struck hard at the warrior,  
Cracking his helm, shattering his visor.

That mighty blow had landed with such force,  
That it opened up Sigieri's face,  
Sliding down his neck, in its evil course,  
And piercing his chest, at lightning pace;  
Naught could keep Sigieri on his horse.  
Rinaldo, in his anger, now gave chase  
To Martasino, seeking to overwhelm  
That king, and dealt a fierce blow to his helm.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 28-31: RINALDO WOUNDS MARTASINO AND MARBALUSTO**

The casque was good and strong, as you have heard,  
And the blow did little damage within,  
Though Martasino could not speak a word,  
Being stunned when the visor struck his chin.  
Twas a quarter of an hour, lest I've erred,  
Ere he knew which world it was he was in.  
Rinaldo meanwhile had scarce dealt his blow  
Ere he was struck by King Marbalusto.

With both hands he'd raised his huge cudgel,  
And had dealt Rinaldo a stroke indeed,  
Which failed to harm him, in no way mortal,  
While he replied, with a blow dealt at speed.  
It shaved off half the beard, that sharp metal,  
And then wounded the jaw, so fate decreed,  
Neither helm nor beard deflecting the blade,  
That shaved the king's whiskers, and thus repaid

His majesty for the previous blow.  
Shocked by the pain, the Saracen retired,  
And upon the plain met with Sobrino.  
He saw the king's suffering, and enquired



As to the whereabouts of Martasino.  
 ‘And where’s Bardarico, so oft inspired  
 To bold deeds, and that firebrand Tardoco?’  
 He cried, ‘Have they fallen to Rinaldo?’

At Bizerte, none of you believed me,  
 Nor defended me gainst Rodomonte,  
 When I told you of the power, you would see  
 Charlemagne wielding, in his own country.  
 Yet I was right, as you know now, for we  
 Are face to face with cruel reality.  
 You may retreat, for I see you suffer,  
 But I choose death rather than dishonour.’

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 32-34: SOBRINO  
 ADMONISHES MARTASINO**

With that speech, the forthright old warrior,  
 Parted from Marbalusto, at full speed,  
 Swinging his blade, urging on his charger,  
 Striking our men as chance or fate decreed.  
 That brave pagan put us to the slaughter,  
 Downing many a knight, many a steed,  
 And as he rode, he came upon Rinaldo  
 Facing an attack from Martasino,

Who had recovered consciousness, at last,  
 And was battling Rinaldo, once again,  
 Wanting aid, for the latter’s strength surpassed  
 His own, his fierce blows seeming dealt in vain.  
 When Sobrino, drawing nigh, saw what passed,  
 He shouted, from a distance, o’er the plain:  
 ‘Where now the bravado and arrogance,  
 You’ve shown in Africa, yet not in France?’

Where the proud looks, and the bravery  
 You seemed to own, as you boldly applied  
 The spur, descending in such a hurry,  
 Scorning Orlando, from the mountainside?  
 Tis not even the Count you fight! T’was he,  
 That, in your dreams, fell before you and died,  
 Was it not? That blade’s not Durindana,  
 And yet a slave’s thrashed thus by his master.’

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 35-39: RINALDO IS  
 BELEAGUERED BUT FIGHTS ON**

Martasino heard not a word he said,  
 For he was being harried by Rinaldo,  
 And had much to do to attend, instead,  
 To his defences, turned at every blow.  
 So Sobrino, his sword above his head,  
 Pausing no further, struck at Rinaldo,  
 And thereby sliced away his lion crest;  
 T’was his emblem, a lion’s head and chest.

That stroke of Sobrino’s cut it cleanly,  
 Which pleased Amone’s proud son not at all,  
 For he felt the blade whistle by him closely,  
 And then saw the severed crest’s sudden fall.  
 He turned towards the pagan king fiercely,  
 Angered by his effrontery and gall,  
 But as he twisted round, Martasino  
 Struck that helm once owned by King Mambrino.

As a bear, when the hunters form a ring,  
 In the Alps, midst a scattering of trees,  
 Closing in on the creature, then, to fling  
 Their spears and stones, charges all it sees,  
 Strikes one then another, a beaten thing,  
 Seeking revenge, wheeling in its unease,  
 And yet the more it turns about, the more  
 The weary beast fails to even the score,

Just so Rinaldo seemed in that affray,  
 Belaboured by many a Saracen,  
 Struck by harsh blows, that he sought to repay,  
 While they worked their evil as and when.  
 Bishop Turpin, in his text, chose to say  
 That they seemed like fierce desert hawks, those men,  
 And, I could not, in verse, had I the will,  
 Convey their speed as they swooped to the kill.

They struck at the prince, from front and back,  
 Yet, riding Baiardo, our valiant knight  
 Defended himself from their attack  
 And wrought many a fine deed in that fight.  
 But twas as those kings held him on the rack,  
 That Agramante on the plain did alight,  
 And filled that space with so mighty a host,  
 When they roared, the earth split apart almost.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 40-42: AGRAMANTE'S  
HOST FILLS THE PLAIN**

There, in the vanguard rode Ruggiero,  
Not far in advance of Daniforte;  
Then Barigano, with Mulabuferso  
King of Fizano, and wise Atlante;  
Next the treacherous dwarf King Brunello,  
Dardinello, Sorridano, Mordante;  
Then Manilardo, and Prusione,  
And that faithless old man, Balifronte.

King Tanfirone of Almasilla,  
He was there. Who can call them all to mind?  
Forget not Dorilone of Ceuta;  
He, with Pinadoro, trailed far behind.  
The first had fought the Count, the other  
Possessed a deal of treasure you will find,  
And such folk always tarry in a fight,  
Sending on some bolder, and braver knight.

Dorilone, then, lingered at the back,  
Not seeking to revisit that affair;  
With Constantina's lord, who had the knack  
Of inspiring more valiant men to share  
The dangers of some perilous attack.  
Come, fair Nymph of Parnassus, let us share  
The burden, speak the verse; your aid I need  
To tell this tale, replete with many a deed.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 43-49: THE ARMIES  
CLASH, ATTACKING AND RETREATING IN TURN**

King Charlemagne now recognised their plight,  
And the emperor, again, addressed his force,  
Saying: 'My sons, the day has come, the fight  
Through which we'll win renown in due course.  
We must trust in God's aid, and every knight,  
Must stake his life upon God's love, the source  
Of our help; whate'er fate we must abide,  
We'll not lose, I say, with God on our side.

The host darkening the field, fear not that same.  
Howe'er great it seems; though it fills the plain,  
Much straw is burnt away by one small flame,  
And a light wind oft brings a flood of rain.  
If we fight hard, and take to them the game,

They'll not stifle our assault; theirs the pain.  
Charge, with loose reins! On, attack the foe!  
I see them routed! Now, go prove it so!

With that, he lowered his lance, that noble knight,  
And galloped forth. Show me the base traitor  
That would see his sovereign ride to the fight  
Gainst some fierce foe, and not follow after?  
There rose a mighty roar that reached the height  
Of Heaven, as he rode forth on his charger.  
The trumpets blared; the war-horns, and the cries,  
Shook the earth beneath, and rose to the skies;

While, on the other side, the pagan foe  
Shouted as one, and the ground shook again,  
The wide space between them soon to narrow,  
As the hostile forces charged o'er the plain,  
For no river or stream discharged its flow  
Between those ardent spirits, once in train.  
They spurred o'er the field so fast indeed  
No armies e'er engaged at greater speed.

Up to the heavens, the lance splinters flew,  
Sounding like hail as they met the ground.  
Shield met shield, sword met sword anew,  
As armour clashed with armour, all around.  
I consign the chaos that did ensue,  
To God alone, kings, knights, and steeds all bound  
In one great mass, so gripped by war's dark spell;  
Nor know which were of heaven, which of hell.

Think not that those who fell escaped their fate,  
For the armies passed o'er them in the fight,  
And they were thus destroyed, or soon or late,  
Be they a common soldier, or great knight.  
The Saracens did now the field vacate,  
Their pagan army surely put to flight,  
Their ranks in ruin, scattering o'er the ground.  
The Christians new strength and courage found.

Yet scarce two arrow-flights away they'd sped,  
Ere Agramante stopped them in their flight,  
And then our ranks, in turn, took fright and fled,  
Deserting the field, before such pagan might,  
Running from those they'd chased, now filled with  
dread,  
As the waters, midst a storm, confounded quite

Thrust, by a north-easterly, from the shore,  
Are thrust back, by a southerly, once more.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 50-55: THE BATTLE  
SWAYS TO AND FRO**

Thus, the Christians and Saracens swayed  
Back and forth, as they fought, o'er the field.  
Now they fled, now a swift pursuit they made,  
Changing places, as they thought to charge or yield.  
And, though the sovereign lords and knights displayed  
Their reluctance to move, with sword and shield,  
The common soldiers were blown to and fro  
Leaves in the wind, urged on by friend or foe.

Three times, indeed, each army failed to hold  
The ground it won, retreating o'er the plain.  
When a fourth time they met, they sought to hold  
Every inch of that field they could gain.  
Standing firm, chest to chest, their efforts told,  
Fierce blows, and cruel wounds, each did sustain.  
Naked swords flailing, savage was that fight,  
While, amidst the chaos, knight felled bold knight.

Here, sharp sword in hand, King Puliano  
Charged an English warrior, Ottone;  
Count Gano's cousin met Ruggiero,  
And was unseated; I mean the brave Grifone.  
While a Christian, the knight Ricardo,  
Fought for a while gainst King Agramante,  
Until the latter brought the former low,  
Then charged Monleone's Gualtiero.

The Duke of Bayonne, Barigano,  
With William the Scot, faced Daniforte;  
While Charlemagne dealt a mortal blow  
To that mighty warrior Balifronte.  
Elsewhere the Saracen king Moridano  
Fought Sinibaldo, and no less fiercely;  
Sinibaldo, Count of Holland, could hold  
His own against that giant, big and bold.

Nearby, Daniberto the Frisian  
Fought Noritia's king, Manilardo,  
While Brunello, the little African,  
Stood to one side, watching every blow;  
While King Tanfirone fought, for a span,

With Picardy's Sansone, midst the foe,  
As a host of others, beyond number,  
Battled, everywhere, gainst one another.

The battle lines were much confused, I say,  
In that fierce fight, and firm news only came  
To Oliviero, after much delay,  
Of the latest situation; that same  
Had been fighting Grandonio all day,  
The proud Saracen, whom he knew by name.  
Each had inflicted damage on the other,  
While gaining scant advantage, however.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 56-59: THE KNIGHTS  
GATHER TO THE AID OF THEIR MONARCHS**

As soon as Oliviero had learned  
Of Charlemagne's labours in the field,  
The noble marquis, now greatly concerned,  
Quit Grandonio and with sword and shield  
Sped to his aid. News reached the Dane who'd earned  
Much honour, for he fought, and ne'er would yield,  
Gainst Serpentino, champion on his side.  
Which was the finer knight, who could decide?

But Uggiero, on hearing Charlemagne  
Was encountering many a reckless foe,  
Swiftly broke off his duel on the plain,  
I mean that gainst the fierce Serpentino,  
And galloping, the further slopes to gain,  
Crossed wooded hills and vales, hastening so,  
Until he reached the place where his king  
Fought Balifronte, seeking help to bring.

In like manner, Christians in the field,  
Now learned about this other bitter fight,  
Where Agramante all his skill revealed  
Gainst Charlemagne, with many another knight.  
And swiftly, their concern now unconcealed,  
With loose reins, spurring with all their might,  
They rode, as one, to reach the upper plain,  
To fight nowhere but with King Charlemagne.

And when Balugante, and Marsilio,  
And Grandonio, King of Volterna,  
And that brave Saracen, Serpentino,  
Likewise saw the dust-cloud whirling ever,

From the slope where their monarch fought the foe,  
They sought to bring aid to Agramante,  
Recognising his host had reached the field,  
Though Ferrau to that impulse failed to yield,

**BOOK II: CANTO XXX: 60-63: FERRAU  
RETIRES TO THE WOODS, WHERE ORLANDO IS  
ALSO RESTING**

He had been hammered in such a manner  
By Prince Rinaldo, that he chose to retire,  
And amidst the woods seek the cool water  
Of a fount, far from the heat of the fire.  
He found a fair glade, its trees in flower,  
Filled with little birds, whose notes rose higher,  
In their joy; and yet that solitary place  
Was that in which Orlando hid his face.

The Count, when he had left Pinadoro  
(I know not if you now recall the scene)  
Dismounted in those same woods, also,  
Loosing Brigliador and, midst the green,  
Praying that the sacred ensigns on show  
And France's fleurs-de-lys might yet be seen  
To fail, and he might prove their saviour there.  
Ferrau was to find him thus in prayer.

Neither knight as yet suspected aught,  
That they, I mean, were nigh to each other,  
But what passed between them, and if they fought,  
That I shall narrate a little later.  
Meanwhile the battlefield, I may report,  
Which brought so many warriors together,  
Was the site of such fierce conflict once more,  
I fear my voice must fail, that sings but war.

So, I will rest awhile, ere I return,  
To continue the fight of which I speak,  
Where of Ruggiero's deeds you may learn,  
And marks of his high valour you may seek.  
Grant me, then, an ear, that I might earn  
Your good favour (or face your fierce critique!)  
My fair lady, and my courteous knight,  
Whom, from the first, I've but sought to delight.



BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: THE PHANTOM ARMY

A R G O M E N T O.

*Ferraù loda il buon figliuol d'Amone,  
Onde Orlando pien d'ira al campo riede,  
Facendo crudel stragge. Se gli oppone  
Ruggiero. Atlante come questo vede,  
Mostra ad Orlando con falsa visione,  
Che Carlo è preso, e dimanda mercede,  
Segue Orlando l'ingāno, arriva a un Fōte.  
Pien di Donzelle in quel si lascia il Cōte.*



A L L E G O R I E.

Orlando che sentendo lodar Rinaldo da Ferraù, pien d'ira torna al campo; mostrando il suo furor tra nemici, ne mostra quanto può in noi lo sentire a lo dare vno, delquale noi non si teniamo da meno.  
Atiāte, che preuedēdo la morte di Ruggiero di breue douer'essere in Francia, e veggēdolo cōbatter col Cōte, credēdo esser giūta l'hora, il cōduce cō sue arti in altra parte, ne mostra quādo un teme vna cosa, mai stā cō l'animo riposato.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 1-4: ORLANDO AND FERRU ENCOUNTER EACH OTHER BY THE STREAM**

The sun that lights the sky with many a ray,  
Leaves our brief life behind it in its flight;  
A life that barely seems to last a day,  
To one who spends it lost to true delight.  
So, to all you who gather here, I say,  
Lock up your cares and woes that pleasure blight,  
All those pensive thoughts that spell misery;  
Lock them within, and throw away the key.

And I, in singing here for you, as well,  
Will forget all ill thoughts, in my desire,  
This tale of wars and loves, long past, to tell.  
My aim? That you might learn the facts entire.  
I spoke of how brave Ferrau, for a spell,  
Much like the Count, had chosen to retire  
Within the wood and, when he reached the stream,  
Orlando knew him instantly, twould seem.

A spring arose midst the trees, and twas there  
That the Count had dismounted, by the shore;  
Clad in full armour still, hid from the glare  
Of the sun, Durindana he yet bore.  
Ferrau came, exhausted, from that affair,  
His duel with Rinaldo, the heat of war.  
And, burning with thirst, longing now to drink,  
Reined in his weary steed beside the brink.

No other aim had he but to dismount.  
He then removed his helm, yet, as he sought  
To drink full deeply of the gleaming fount,  
Either from haste, or stooping without thought  
To the water, and failing to account  
For the steepness of the bank as he ought,  
He dropped the steely casque into the flow,  
Which soon buried it neath the silt below.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 5-6: ORLANDO ADDRESSES HIM**

Distressed, he watched the helm sink out of sight,  
And to such a depth he knew not what to do,  
Except to call on Allah in his plight,  
Cry out in vain, and then lament anew.

Meanwhile Orlando recognised the knight,  
By the arms on his shield, his armour too,  
And so, he approached along the shore,  
Saluted him, and said, once he was sure:

‘He who brings aid to mortals, aids you now,  
For He shows towards you such great pity  
You’ll not end midst the lost souls, I avow,  
Since He knows you are a knight full worthy.  
With eternal salvation He’ll endow  
Those who acknowledge Him, in verity;  
Honour on earth, joy in heaven above,  
For the flower of chivalry, He’ll approve.’

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 7-12: FERRAU TAUNTS THE COUNT FOR HIS ABSENCE FROM THE FIELD**

Brave Ferrau, on raising his eyes to see  
Who spoke, with such courtesy, recognised  
The quartered arms, and thought himself to be  
The son of Fortune to have thus surprised  
The greatest knight of all, and thought that he  
Possessed the power, or so he now surmised,  
To treat the Count, before him, as his foe,  
Or demonstrate his courtesy, also.

Happy now, where he had grieved before  
(For the helmet he had lost to the flow),  
He said aloud: ‘I will complain no more,  
About my fortune in this world below.  
My good luck was gone, of that I felt sure,  
And yet I am more contented, you should know,  
Than ever wealth could make me, for I see  
Before me the true flower of chivalry.

Yet tell me, if it is my right to hear:  
Why are you not contending in the field;  
Displaying your knightly skill, where I fear,  
Rinaldo alone his prowess has revealed?  
He has beaten me soundly, twould appear,  
Though but for a single spot, e’er concealed,  
I am charmed; an enchantment, it would seem,  
That served ill, for the bruising is extreme.

I deem it that on earth there’s not a one  
That owns a valour greater than that knight,  
Though they claim, everywhere neath the sun,

That you are far more valiant in a fight.  
If I were to war with you, as I have done  
With Rinaldo, and test the claim outright,  
To see who is more agile, brave, and strong,  
Though I die, I'd die content to be wrong.

I would challenge, and defy you, indeed,  
Now I have you here before my eyes;  
Though now I've fought Rinaldo, take heed,  
I deem those tales of you a pack of lies.'  
In the Count's mind, his words did anger breed,  
And his heart within burned with rage, likewise.  
He cried aloud: 'Your praise of him is right,  
For, in truth, he is a most valiant knight,

Yet such a speech, that lauds beyond belief  
One man, vilely offends another's name.  
If you had but your helm, that source of grief,  
I'd be content to see you test that claim,  
And thus prove, for the contest will be brief,  
The truth or the falsehood of that same.  
If Rinaldo's valour's so in evidence,  
Try mine; perchance, at your own expense.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 13-14: ORLANDO  
JOINS THE BATTLE, FERRAU REMAINS IN THE  
WOOD**

Yet I'll not quarrel with you, here and now,  
Since you are wearied from your labour.  
I'll seek the foe, while time doth allow,  
And grant them an exercise of valour.  
Ill luck for those that meet me, for I vow  
To show my blade's as sharp as another!  
With that, in haste, and filled with anger,  
The Count leapt aboard his valiant charger.

Ferrau remained there, silent, midst the trees,  
Exhausted from the duel, as I've said,  
But recovering his strength, by degrees,  
And, regretting the bareness of his head,  
Striving to find his helm; while, without cease,  
Orlando spurred his steed, and onward sped,  
Until he arrived where much as before  
The armies were engaged in bitter war.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 15-19: THE COUNT  
SWEEPS ALL BEFORE HIM**

All that long day, as I've described to you,  
Charlemagne and Agramante in turn  
Drove their forces that battle to pursue,  
And no conflict with fiercer flame did burn.  
All seemed prepared to die, the cowards few;  
Shame, and their monarch's scorn, none wished to earn,  
But rather they would set their spirits free,  
Than yield an inch to their fierce enemy.

Many a shattered lance, and broken shield,  
Many a dusty standard and banner,  
Many a body, prone upon the field,  
Of man or steed, decked that scene of horror.  
The warriors fought on, disdained to yield,  
Their broken ranks in ruin and disorder,  
The noise of battle, the cries, so profound,  
It seemed the earth would open at the sound.

Charlemagne sought to govern, everywhere  
Fighting with intelligence and ardour,  
Yet his fierce commands faded in the air,  
While all ignored the last shouted order,  
And though he feared naught, in despair  
He was thinking to retreat, in swift manner,  
Leaving Agramante's host the blood-wet field,  
When he caught sight of the quartered shield

That signified the Count, who forged ahead,  
With his proud and threatening attitude.  
And where Anglante's lord to battle sped,  
There rose a fearsome cry, as others viewed  
His advent; fearful hearts his presence fed  
With new courage, who now his steed pursued,  
While Charlemagne fresh hope it did afford;  
He lifted up his hands, and praised the Lord.

What pen could describe that fiery attack;  
The sword-blows that descended from on high?  
I would need God's aid, for the skill I lack  
To tell of it; no lightning from the sky,  
No tempest o'er the sea, no thunder-crack,  
No wave that o'er the cliffs in spray doth fly,  
No pounding of the gale, no angry fire  
Compared with the Count; his fury higher.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 20-25: HE DOWNS  
GRANDONIO, SLAYS CARDORANO,  
DUDRINASSO AND TANFIRONE**

That giant from Volterna, Grandonio,  
Had fought fiercely till now in the war,  
Wielding his great cudgel gainst the foe,  
Covering the field with bodies; before,  
Orlando he now came, to his great woe,  
And found but scant success there, to be sure,  
For upon encountering Orlando's lance,  
He tumbled from his horse, by that advance

Rendered half-dead; thus stunned, the warrior fell,  
While Orlando passed on by, with drawn sword,  
Dealing such strokes as if the bounds of Hell  
Had oped, and the world a glimpse did afford  
Of all therein; he lopped arms and heads as well,  
None could hide; Durindana roamed abroad,  
And shield and plate and mail were all in vain  
As that blade brought rack and ruin to the plain.

Horse and riders tumbled to the ground,  
As Orlando, in frenzy, cleft the foe.  
There amidst the violent melee he found,  
Cosca's bearded lord, King Cardorano.  
With a two-handed stroke, at a bound,  
He split the man to the saddle below,  
And relieved his charger of him, stone-dead.  
Then he chased Gualciotto in his stead.

Gualciotto of Bellamarina  
Fled before him (at faster than a trot!)  
For Orlando had resolved to further  
His defeat, though other proved his lot.  
He hunted him midst the host; however  
Dudrinasso blocked him, whether or not  
By design or blind chance, I cannot say,  
Nonetheless, the latter stood in his way.

Dudrinasso ruled in Libicana.  
His cruel mouth was wider than a span,  
And no face on earth was ever fiercer;  
The muscles fairly rippled on that man.  
Orlando struck him with Durindana,  
And severed his head, such was his plan,  
The helm, and all within it, soaring high,  
Though Orlando was scarce detained thereby.

For he had espied King Tanfirono,  
The fearsome ruler of Almasilla,  
Five feet high above the saddle, surely,  
With a beard to the waist; a born killer.  
Yet Orlando now assailed him fiercely,  
Not merely to scare the fellow either,  
For he struck his face between the eyes,  
And so cleft his head in two, lengthwise.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 26-32: AND THEN  
ENCOUNTERS RUGGIERO**

Not e'en so great a stroke as landed there,  
Caused the Count's valiant attack to slow.  
No king, no knight could be found anywhere,  
That sought to meet him, and feel such a blow.  
When young Ruggiero that deed did dare,  
He saw his soldiers scattered to the ground,  
Or heaped high, in some gory blood-wet mound.  
A very mountain, all stained crimson red,  
By the streams pouring from the piles of dead.

He knew the emblem that Orlando wore,  
Though now it could barely be discerned,  
For, the white quarters of the shield he bore  
Had been reddened, by the gore through which he'd  
    churned.,  
Ruggiero came on, his movements sure,  
And, I can tell you, every skill he'd learned,  
All his fierce courage, and strength, and valour,  
Was expended there, and all his vigour.

As they met, no tempest was e'er so wild,  
Not even when opposing gale meets gale,  
Tramontana and Libeccio; no mild  
Encounter was that, each keen to prevail.  
Their blades were sharp; Balisardo beguiled  
The watchful eye, its edge could never fail,  
Nor proof against it was mail or armour;  
While you know the strength of Durindana.

That blade, Balisardo, was forged to slay  
The Count; in Orgagna, in that garden,  
Twas made. Brunello gained it on a day,  
And to Ruggiero gave that weapon,  
The where and when of it, I need to say.  
To return to the duel, those two laid on;



A fight so cruel it was, so fierce and raw,  
Naught like it had the world e'er seen before.

Their steel plates and iron mail were torn  
Like fragile spider-silk, and fell away,  
Strewing the plain, as on a summer morn,  
Till both were stripped of armour; held at bay  
Neither knight won advantage, both were shorn,  
They traded cruel blows in that affray,  
And each was in such haste to land a blow  
They swung at will, not waiting for the foe.

Thus a stroke, two-handed, caught Orlando,  
And cut his helmet open, rim to chin;  
No enchantment was on it, even so  
He received no wound, the blade slid within;  
Between his hood and jaw, its steel did go,  
Flaying his whiskers, but not his bare skin,  
And, as God wished, the Count was unharmed,  
Despite the fact his helmet was un-charmed.

Orlando replied with a blow so great  
That it tore Ruggiero's shield apart,  
Slicing the thongs, and shattering the plate,  
Falling to his saddle where like a dart  
Its sharp point slid along his thigh; the weight  
Of the blade scored his armour, for its part,  
Cut the harness, but failed to sink deeper;  
Heaven aids the bold, the Lord their keeper.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 33-36: ATLANTE  
CONJURES A PHANTOM ARMY, AND SAVES  
RUGGIERO**

The hosts on either side ceased warring,  
To watch the progress of that bitter fight.  
Meanwhile, wise old Atlante came seeking  
His beloved Ruggiero; once in sight  
Of the duel, where the risk of dying  
Was immense, so fierce the blows from each knight,  
Instantly dismayed, the mage clasped his head,  
And well-nigh fell from his charger, half-dead.

Yet, in a moment, that false enchanter,  
Creating a deception, through his art,  
Conjured up a phantom army, larger  
Than the Saracen forces at the start,

That seemed to be routing our emperor,  
Who cried for: 'Aid!' while, some distance apart,  
A giant had captured Oliviero,  
Dragged away, it seemed, in chains, midst the foe.

Rinaldo appeared wounded mortally,  
Pierced by a spear, and he seemed to cry:  
'My dear cousin, how can you bear to see  
Me treated with such contumely; I die!'  
Orlando was overwhelmed, utterly,  
By the outrageous sights that met his eye,  
And his face turned a sudden fiery red,  
As tempestuous anger filled his head.

In a moment he'd turned Brigliador,  
Quitting his duel with Ruggiero,  
And spurred on the steed; a moment more  
And he was fast upon the seeming foe,  
Fleeing, driving their captives on before  
Their phantom forms, herding the prisoners so.  
Borne on the wind, it seemed their army sped,  
So strong the enchantment the mage had bred.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 37-42: WHO THEN  
WREAKS HAVOC ON THE REAL CHRISTIAN  
ARMY**

Ruggiero, abandoned by Orlando,  
Confused in mind, now seized a gleaming lance,  
Then wheeled about, upon bold Frontino,  
And swept away our ranks in his advance.  
He found our Bishop Turpin, midst the foe,  
Whose prayers, in this dire circumstance,  
Vespers, masses, paternosters, helped not;  
A swift descent, feet in air, was his sad lot.

Ruggiero passed by like a torrent  
Raging down a mountainside, and surged on;  
And now the armoured breast he pierced and rent,  
Of bold Uberto, the Duke of Bayonne.  
Salamone his crowned head did present  
As a target; in a moment he was gone.  
Ottone, and his brothers, Avino,  
Avorio, and Belengiero,

All four together, tumbled to the ground,  
Heels kicking the air, as Ruggiero  
Swept onwards; new purpose and strength he'd found,  
And fresh courage, as he conquered the foe.  
Gualtiero of Monleone, downed  
By his stout lance, writhed in pain there below.  
Such speed as he revealed was rarely seen.  
The field littered with foes where he had been.

Meanwhile the other Saracens, who'd fled  
Before frenzied Orlando, turned once more,  
Showing their valour, as they drove ahead  
With greater force and spirit than before.  
Ruggiero's blows, to arm, and chest, and head,  
Were so mighty, they shook men to the core.  
None could resist his power and, at his back,  
The pagan force now pressed home its attack.

King Agramante, with Martasino,  
Sobrino, Barigano, Mordante,  
That bold Saracen Malabuferso,  
Dardinello, and wise old Atlante,  
Now supported young Ruggiero,  
King Brunello cheering them on, loudly;  
Though he indeed encountered some delay  
Pursuing ever chance that fell his way!

Ruggiero wrought such harm, in his advance,  
Those following had little left to do,  
Yet still intact was his sovereign lance,  
His sword still sheathed, onwards the young knight flew.  
Defeat looms now for the brave court of France,  
Charlemagne well-nigh overcome; tis true!  
Yet that's a weight, as yet, I cannot bear;  
Tis my third book must tell of that affair.

**BOOK II: CANTO XXXI: 43-50: MEANWHILE,  
ORLANDO REACHES AN ENCHANTED FOUNT**

First, I'll say what happened to Orlando,  
Who'd swiftly pursued the ghostly army,  
That had seemingly conquered, as you know,  
Routing Charlemagne's forces utterly.  
Now the phantom host fled before their foe,  
Appearing to lack courage, suddenly,  
Until they reached a slope not far away  
From the Forest of Ardennes; there, I say,

They entered a fine grove of green laurel,  
Midst which pooled the water from a spring,  
And there that evil host, scarcely mortal,  
Vanished, in smoke, like some empty thing.  
The count was astounded by that marvel,  
As he saw the crowd of phantoms take wing.  
Then, parched from the heat, he made his way  
Amongst the trees; ill was his luck that day!

He quit Brigliador beside the stream,  
And prepared to drink the pond's clear water,  
Tying his mount to a laurel, I deem,  
And then kneeling where the bank was lower.  
But then, beneath the little pool's bright gleam,  
He saw a sight that filled him with wonder:  
In a glassy hall, as he viewed, entranced,  
Fair ladies played on instruments, and danced.

Lovely the maidens seemed, all dancing there,  
Singing songs of love, harmoniously,  
In that palace of crystal, set with rare  
Gems and gold; twas a scene of great beauty.  
The sun was setting, shadows filled the air,  
As the Count decided twas his duty  
To know more of this wonder, and he sought  
So, to do; thus, without another thought,

He leapt into the lake, still in his armour,  
And plunged to the enchanted depths below,  
Where he found himself in a lovely arbour,  
A fair field, where many a flower did grow.  
He sped towards the palace, in his ardour,  
Joy in his heart, so great, you should know,  
That his every sad care away did fly,  
And he knew not how he'd come there, nor why.

Before the Count, there stood an open door,  
All of gold set with sapphires it was wrought,  
Through which he went, smiling to be sure.  
The maids danced in a ring midst that court,  
Then all about him. I can sing no more,  
For I've approached the end, not giving thought  
To the length of this book; the tale I'll rhyme  
In my third, for you, at another time.

Then with choice words I'll seek, and finer verse,  
To tell of darksome war, and ardent love.  
Though our own times their evil now rehearse,  
Our troubles, from my song, shall not remove  
My mind; though we sink from bad to worse,  
And to clear my ill thoughts a task doth prove.  
In my head, Italy's sad cries now ring,  
And I but seek to sigh, my lords, not sing.

For you, sweet maids and lovers, everywhere,  
Of noble and amorous hearts possessed  
Was created all this history, so fair,  
Of courtesy, and valour, and the rest.  
Those who war, in rage and spite, I declare  
Harken not to such things as I've expressed.  
Farewell, lovers and maidens, e'er my friends;  
In your honour begun, this book now ends.



BOOK III: CANTO I: MANDRICARDO'S DEEDS



ARGUMENTO.

Lasciai il suo Regno Mandricardo altiero,  
E uà senz' arme a piè da pallegrino,  
(che vendicar suo padre hà nel pensiero,  
Sopra di Orlando franco Paladino,  
Trova arme, e mentre a l'usato sentiero  
Suo vuol tornar, con quelle arde il meschino,  
Si lancia entro vna fonte. Il Re Gradasso.  
Vince e vn Gigante fa da vita ca'sso.



A' LLEGORIE.

QVANTO spesso gli huomini estimino se stessi tali, che con-  
dur debbino a fine quello, che molti insieme l'hanno quasi per  
impossibile, ce lo manifesta Mandricardo, che solo, e di arma-  
to li parte per vendicarsi col Conte Orlando, il qual gli hauea  
ammazzato suo padre Agricane.

IL suo ritrouar le armi, ne dimostra che gli audaci sono dalla for-  
tuna fauoriti.

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 1-4: BOIARDO  
RECOMMENCES HIS TALE**

Just as the mariner finds it sweeter  
When his vessel's survived the roaring gale,  
To view calm seas, midst tranquil weather,  
And the star-studded skies above his sail;  
Just as the pilgrim, journeying ever,  
Sees, o'er the plain, the bright dawn-light prevail,  
As he descends to safety from the hill,  
Where shadows clothe the rugged mountain still,

So now, when all the hellish storm of war,  
Has passed beyond us, and joy and delight  
Fill the court that now flowers, as before;  
When day returns after the dark of night;  
I can, with greater pleasure, tell once more  
The tale I've long pursued, embrace the light.  
Come listen, lords and ladies, all the throng;  
Of your courtesy, come listen to my song.

For I'll tell of fierce battles, honours won  
By Charlemagne, that noble king of France,  
And the deeds performed by Milone's son,  
Count Orlando, his skill with sword and lance,  
Deeds performed for love; and what was done  
And how, in treacherous circumstance,  
Such that chivalry's flower, Ruggiero,  
Was slain by that Maganzese, Gano.

I'll pursue as ever, strange adventure,  
And duels fought by lovers long ago,  
When virtue flowered, and in bold manner  
Knights and ladies proved that it was so,  
Midst the woodland, or beside the river,  
As Bishop Turpin ever seeks to show,  
In his text, which I follow, and but pray  
That his story may still delight today,

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 5-10: OF MANDRICARDO,  
EMPEROR OF TARTARY**

In those days when Pipin's son, Charlemagne  
Maintained his high and happy state in France,  
There came a pagan from the northern plain,  
That almost ruined all, with sword and lance.  
No more daring knight, in pride and disdain,

Battled here, none more valiant, perchance,  
None fiercer, or more skilled, in all the world,  
That, o'er our lands, his banner now unfurled.

That pagan lord's name was Mandricardo,  
The mighty ruler of wide Tartary,  
Possessed of such courage gainst the foe,  
And such strength, none was mightier than he.  
Such pride, so little mercy, he did show,  
That any man that showed less bravery,  
Or was less skilled in war, than he desired,  
He rejected, and slew, as was required.

And so, his realm was deserted and bare,  
For his people abandoned house and home.  
Now, one day, an old man was captured there,  
And then bound with chains, as he sought to roam,  
And not knowing what to do, in that affair,  
Fell flat before the emperor (says my tome)  
Loud were his cries, and lamentation,  
Which drew all to hear his fierce oration.

'Let me but speak!' the old man begged his lord,  
'Then you may do with me whate'er you will.  
Your father's soul cannot pass the ford,  
To join the souls condemned to Hell, for still  
He remains unavenged; and, rest assured,  
Through your neglect, he feels the bitter chill;  
Head bowed he groans and weeps there, endlessly,  
Though other shades beyond the dark shore flee.

Your father Agricane, as you know,  
(Yet deign not to acknowledge, out of fear)  
Was killed by a certain Count Orlando.  
That you must now avenge the dead, tis clear.  
Many a man you've slain that proved no foe,  
Because your own proud rank you hold too dear;  
Yet none win praise who only cause offence  
To poor folk who lack the means for defence.

Go find a man that has the power to fight!  
Go and reveal your fury to Orlando!  
Such things can ne'er be hidden from the light;  
For all that a lord does the world will know.  
Base coward, are you not troubled outright,  
By shame and dishonour, to linger so?  
Are you so inured to baseness and disgrace;  
You care not where you dare to show your face?'

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 11-14: WHO SETS OUT TO  
WREAK VENGEANCE ON ORLANDO**

The old man screamed those scornful words aloud,  
And might have continued, so tis said,  
Had Mandricardo, ferocious and proud,  
Been prepared to listen further, instead,  
His bitter heart now aflame, his head bowed,  
To his chamber, the emperor swiftly fled,  
And there, alone, possessed by self-disdain,  
Full of anger, he sought to drown the pain.

After a deal of thought, his decision  
Was to quit the realm, so that no man there  
Could point their finger at him, with reason.  
He swore to avoid the court, and would fare  
Like any exile, banished from the nation,  
Till he'd avenged his father; twas his care  
Not to hide that same bold plan in his breast,  
But effect it; he so informed the rest.

Appointing the best of men to govern  
In his absence; then sought the sacred shrine,  
Wishing to consult the will of Heaven;  
Next, to the fire, his crown he did consign.  
He left at night, foregoing any weapon,  
In pilgrim dress, and on foot, by design,  
And with but the little he now possessed,  
Took to the road that led towards the west.

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 15-19: MANDRICARDO  
REACHES AN ENCHANTED POOL**

He'd denied himself armour or a steed,  
Lest some subject in his empire might claim  
That their aid and assistance he would need,  
To perform his plan, and erase his shame.  
He thought he could acquire them both; indeed,  
A good horse, and a saddle to fit that same,  
And armour, might be swiftly won, he thought,  
By strength alone, his former power unsought.

He went alone, and slowly journeyed on  
Through Armenia, and other countries,  
And viewed, from a hill, a pavilion,  
One day, beside a stream, midst the trees,  
Which flowed into a pool; he mused upon

The sight, while descending, at his ease,  
And vowed he'd not leave the place until  
Force had satisfied his needs, or goodwill.

Having reached the plain, he entered the tent,  
Quite unafraid, with none to tell him nay,  
Near or far, nor to thwart his first intent,  
(None guarded it, it seems, by night or day)  
But a voice there, within the waters pent,  
Issued gurgling forth, where the waves did play,  
Saying: 'Knight, too great a boldness you show;  
You are a prisoner now, and may not go.'

He heard not, or he failed to understand,  
And so, he gave the matter little thought,  
But rifled through the tent as he had planned,  
To see if he could gain the arms he sought.  
There, on a rich carpet, he found, to hand,  
All a knight might need, for war or court,  
And, beyond the pavilion, saw a fine  
Steed, equipped for war, tied to a pine.

So, without a qualm, he donned the armour,  
But, on freeing the rope, about to mount,  
He saw bright flames coursing near the charger.  
From the pine-tree, tongues of fire beyond count  
Had run to the ground, and spread to cover  
All that was present, but the tent and fount.  
Now, the trees, the grass, the stones ignited,  
Till the beauty of the glade was blighted.

All was glare, and heat, and confusion,  
While the conflagration grew, till the fire  
Enclosed Mandricardo, no illusion,  
For its flames scorched the knight, and waxed higher,  
As the flickering tongues rose in profusion,  
And covered armour, shield, and helm, entire,  
Till the breastplate and iron mail he wore  
Burned against his body, like dry straw.

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 20-21: HE ESCAPES A  
FIERY DEATH BY PLUNGING INTO THE WATER**

That wondrous happening had scant effect  
On the proud monarch; boldly as ever,  
That fierce spirit, swift escape his object,  
Ran through the flames to attain the water,

Then plunged in the pool, where he sank, unchecked,  
Through the cool depths; deeper, ever deeper.  
He'd have surely burned to death, I surmise,  
His clothes alight, had he done otherwise.

His shield, his plate and mail, as I have said,  
Burned like dry straw, and fell from his body.  
His tunic, and his other garb, he shed,  
And naked as a new-born babe, gladly,  
Cooled himself, as to the depths he sped.  
As with delight he sank there, finally  
Free, it appeared, from further dire alarms,  
He found himself clasped in a woman's arms.

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 22-32: A MAIDEN TELLS HIM OF HECTOR'S ARMOUR**

The fount, and its surrounds, were of marble,  
Tinged green and crimson, azure and yellow.  
The cool depths shone, translucent as crystal;  
And all was clear, bright, and tranquil below.  
The liquid clothed the maid (scarcely mortal)  
Yet her breasts, nipples, every hair, did show,  
As if she were wrapped in a subtle veil,  
Half-hid, yet half-seen, midst the waters pale.

Embracing him, she kissed the warrior  
Several times on the mouth, then she said:  
'You are the Fountain Faery's prisoner,  
Though if you're not yet overcome with dread,  
And prove a champion, many another  
Shall be freed, knights and ladies, nobly bred,  
Such that your fame will rise above the stars,  
Soaring high o'er this little world of ours.

Step by step, let me explain the matter.  
By magic, the Faery made this fountain,  
And, in its depths, holds many a warrior,  
Far more than can be counted, I'd maintain.  
Gradasso, the lord of Sericana,  
Is one, whose vast tracts of hill and plain,  
Beyond India, comprise that country;  
Yet, despite that, here he's at her mercy.

With him is the noble Aquilante,  
And Grifone, his valiant brother,  
And many a fine knight and fair lady,

(Too many to name) beneath the water.  
Beyond the cliff there, seen most clearly,  
There is a castle and, within, the armour  
Hector wore, the Faery keeps on display,  
All except that warrior's sword, I say.

For brave Hector of Troy earned fame indeed.  
Proving himself an excellent knight.  
None could equal him in word or deed,  
The flower of courtesy, fair to the sight.  
He was besieged for ten years, tis agreed,  
By seventy kings, and warriors of might,  
And throughout that war, so long and intense,  
His prowess was the city's sole defence.

While the armies raged all about the wall,  
He claimed an act unique midst fighting men,  
Defeating thirty kings who there did fall,  
Whom the knight had challenged; and then again,  
He was gifted with virtues, beloved of all,  
And in war he possessed the strength of ten.  
None was nobler, or gained more victories,  
Till he was slain by mighty Achilles.

When Hector died, Troy met destruction too,  
For all that city was destroyed by fire.  
And how the armour came here, I'll review,  
That armour to which champions aspire.  
Penthesilea, whom Achilles slew,  
The Amazon queen, did the sword acquire,  
Ere she died; long the list of its dead foes.  
Brave Almonte's once, tis now Orlando's.

That mighty sword is called Durindana  
(I know not if you've ever heard the name)  
And perchance far more than any other  
That weapon has earned its claim to fame.  
The queen was killed, Troy ruined thereafter,  
The Trojan fugitives to Europe came,  
Led by Prince Aeneas, who here conveyed  
Hector's arms and armour (all but the blade),

Left to that noble knight, Hector's brother.  
Now, by a strange chance, the Fountain Fay  
From grave misfortune rescued the latter,  
When within a dark sepulchre he lay,  
Where the prince had been kept a prisoner

By one who held him there many a day,  
A time that seemed long beyond measure,  
Seeking to extort from him his treasure.

The Fay, by means of magic, set him free,  
Her secret arts drew him forth from the tomb,  
And, on doing so, she sought, as her fee,  
The armour he had saved from Troy's past doom.  
Later she came here, to the place you see,  
And wrought a palace with many a room,  
To which I shall lead you, when you please,  
And test your valour there, and expertise.

But if it pleases you not so to do;  
If I find you consumed by cowardice,  
Then, counter to my wish, I say to you,  
There can be, truly, but one end to this.  
You will die here, in the deep, as no few  
Have done before, fated thus to perish,  
Of whom memory no trace shall keep,  
Their souls in Hell, their bodies in the deep.'

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 33-37: SHE MAKES LOVE  
TO, THEN ARMS, THE KNIGHT**

This adventure seemed to Mandricardo,  
As in a dream, both real and unreal,  
Yet he answered: 'Where you wish, I will go;  
And where I must, it seems, yet I appeal  
To Modesty herself; I would not show  
Myself all naked, but would now conceal  
What should be hidden; what then can I do?'  
'Fear not,' she replied, 'for I'll clothe you too.'

And then she let her tresses flow freely,  
Of which the happy maid a wealth possessed,  
And covered him with her hair, completely,  
As she eagerly clasped him to her breast.  
Hidden by that veil, they issued swiftly  
From out the depths and to her tent progressed,  
Nor spent further time in conversation,  
But, arm in arm, entered that pavilion.

The flames had left it untouched, as I've said,  
And twas filled with flowers, the damask rose  
Amongst others sweet and rare; to her bed,  
All adorned, where a Faery might repose,

To sport with him a while, the maiden led  
The monarch; what they did, there, Heaven knows!  
But Bishop Turpin, who's an honest soul,  
Says the silk collapsed all about the pole.

Now, after they'd frolicked, in this manner,  
Among the flowers, the roses, April bore,  
A tunic, dyed with many a colour,  
And a snow-white shirt, such as fine knights wore,  
She found; then dressed him; and strong armour  
She sought, and adorned the knight the more,  
Adding golden spurs, and crimson hose,  
To complement what plate and mail she chose.

A strong burnished breastplate o'er his harness  
She now laid, and strapped his sword to his side,  
And he donned a helm, set with gems no less.  
A surcoat, and a white shield, she supplied;  
Then the steed (he'd fled the fire, I confess)  
She led forward, that the monarch might ride;  
And Mandricardo, not tired, or weighed down  
By his armour, mounted, with ne'er a frown.

**BOOK III: CANTO I: 38-42: SHE TASKS HIM  
WITH DEFEATING KING GRADASSO**

She untied her palfrey from a juniper,  
And rode beside him for a mile or so,  
Passing by a hill, a little further,  
Until they came, at last, to a meadow.  
There the maid said: 'List to me, warrior,  
While I tell you of all that you must know.  
With Gradasso you must joust, tis your task.  
I trust you'll understand all that I ask.

He's the palace champion, that high king,  
And he defends himself with all his might.  
Grifone held that post, before conceding  
It, some little while ago, in fair fight.  
If he defeats you, you'll be mouldering  
In prison till there comes a better knight,  
To aid you; yet, down him from his horse,  
And a last adventure's yours, in due course.

For glory, there, you must attempt to gain,  
By winning the armour that Hector bore.  
Bound by no stronger spell, I maintain,



Was any known of, in this world, before.  
Till now, those brave knights seeking to attain  
That prize met their defeat, and, to be sure,  
Unattainable it seems, yet you must try:  
Fortune will aid you, or your skill, say I.'

Speaking so, they reached the faery's hall.  
A richer work of art was never seen.  
Of alabaster was each gleaming wall,  
Of gold the capitals. A field, pure green,  
And fenced with laurel, lay before it all,  
Laurel twined with myrtle; such the scene.  
And, within that list, stood an armoured knight,  
Equipped to face all-comers, day or night.

'Behind the barrier stands King Gradasso,'  
The maiden said, 'with whom you must contend.  
For no more shall you seek to joust with me,  
That, to the depths beneath, must e'er descend.'  
Mandricardo, at her words, full swiftly  
Closed his visor, and forth his steed did send.  
Full tilt against the king he made advance,  
And, when halfway towards him, couched his lance.

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 43-47: BOTH KNIGHTS FALL, BUT GRADASSO IS FORCED TO YIELD**

From the other side rode King Gradasso,  
Galloping to the encounter, at speed,  
If the emperor's mount flew like an arrow,  
Like a lightning bolt sped the other's steed.  
They crashed together, twas a mighty blow,  
Greater than Mars himself e'er decreed,  
So loud it seemed the very Heavens fell,  
And land and sea sank suddenly to Hell.

Neither man was unhorsed in that advance,  
Though a shower of splinters rose on high;  
Each had shattered the other warrior's lance,  
Which, in broken fragments, soared to the sky.  
Now came the final test, of skill not chance,  
Between two paragons, prepared to die,  
Who swiftly clashed together, blade on blade;  
In chivalric manner, their powers displayed.

Then commenced a dark and dreadful fight,  
No jest indeed was that most brutal game.  
Merely watching, the maiden did affright,  
For sparks flew at each stroke, as on they came.  
Their armour cracked; whole pieces torn outright  
From plate and mail, the field beneath did claim.  
Though neither gave their armature a thought,  
As, with great hammer-blows, they wheeled, and fought.

Two well-born warriors were they, as was seen  
In their aspect, and their martial attitude.  
Five hours or more they occupied the scene,  
But list now to the outcome that ensued.  
Mandricardo grasped Gradasso, I ween  
To drag him from his steed as, with rude  
Force, the king clasped the emperor in turn  
And both fell to the ground, the mud to churn.

By chance or fate, I know not which, the pair  
Landed with King Gradasso on the floor,  
Mandricardo on top, with breath to spare,  
So, the former yielded; he could fight no more.  
The sun towards the west did now repair,  
And looked to sink beneath the ocean floor,  
As they agreed to cease; the maiden mild,  
Pleased it seemed, approached the knights, and smiled.

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 48-52: THE MAIDEN TELLS MANDRICARDO OF THE GIANT MALAPRESA**

To Gradasso, she said: 'O cavalier,  
What Fortune wishes, no man can deny.  
You must cease, and quit the battle here,  
For night is falling, darkened is the sky.  
Yet to him that has won, new cares appear,  
For ne'er beneath the rising moon, say I,  
Have land or sea beheld so strange as foe  
As that which awaits you, Mandricardo.

When the new morn is here, you shall see  
Famed Hector's armour, and its guardian.  
But now, in the west, the sun sets redly,  
And tis too late to enter thereupon;  
So, seize the moment, and rest your body,  
Come now, and lay yourself down upon  
The sweet turf here, and, gently, take your ease,  
Till the sun lifts, once more, above the trees.

You cannot enter that fine palace now.  
 (For at night no man may open the door)  
 Yet I'll watch over you, if you'll allow,  
 As you sleep amidst the roses once more.  
 Or, if you prefer, I can show you how  
 To find a shrewd and gracious lady, who's sure  
 To honour those who enter her domain,  
 Though danger you may face, and shame, and pain;

For a thief, on whom God has laid a curse,  
 A giant of a man, named Malapresa,  
 Harms, and outrages, and offends, and worse,  
 The maid, and proves her enemy ever.  
 Therefore, twould be foolish to rehearse  
 Such a visit, as you must fight that other;  
 Nor should you look to battle here anew,  
 When, on the morrow, there is much to do.'

'By my faith,' said Mandricardo, swiftly,  
 'The time is lost that serves not to advance  
 Affairs of love, or deeds of chivalry,  
 As revealed by the use of sword and lance.  
 I ask you therefore, of your courtesy,  
 To lead me to the place; there, perchance  
 For good or ill, despite the fall of night,  
 This Malapresa will show his face, and fight.'

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 53-58: HE ENTERS A CASTLE AND ENCOUNTERS THE GIANT**

The maid, to please her brave warrior,  
 Set out, that moment, for the place she'd said;  
 She on her palfrey, he on his charger,  
 Till they saw a brightly-lit keep ahead.  
 As, through the parkland, they rode on further,  
 Upon which the glow from the castle shed  
 Clear light for there so many torches flared,  
 They could see, as if the daylight they shared.

A dwarf stood, as guardian, day and night  
 On a wondrously ornate balcony,  
 That was set above the gate, and had sight  
 Of all who might come there, to seek entry.  
 If he sounded his great horn, all took fright,  
 And ran within, and then if they could see  
 It was Malapresa they'd mount on high,  
 And rain stones upon him, from the sky.

But if twas a knight-errant or a lord,  
 Full ten gracious maidens, full of honour,  
 Would open wide the doors, and so afford  
 Him passage, their faces showing pleasure,  
 And embrace him, en masse, in sweet accord,  
 Day and night, and serve him, in full measure  
 With such kind looks, such obvious delight,  
 None would e'er wish to leave so fair a sight.

Amidst those maidens, Mandricardo  
 Was welcomed so, his face was all serene.  
 The mistress of the castle walked below,  
 In the garden with the knight, a faery queen.  
 And they strolled in the loggia, to and fro,  
 Until a meal was set amidst the scene,  
 And there they sat and dined; every course  
 Revealed things rich and fine, from some rare source.

A maiden, from a lyre, sweet harmonies  
 Drew gently forth, that their ears did approve,  
 Singing of famous deeds, the centuries  
 Had seen, and many a sweet tale of love.  
 But just as they were seeking, now at ease,  
 Another melody, her skill to prove,  
 Sounds, from the court beyond, to them were borne,  
 And a cry: 'Why does the dwarf sound his horn?'

All the ladies, in fear, took up that cry  
 (They looked half-dead, so pale was every face)  
 But Mandricardo never blinked an eye,  
 Since, to defend them, he'd entered that place.  
 The giant had shattered the doors, and thereby  
 Gained passage to the hall, and came apace,  
 And he was the source of more violent cries,  
 Though the knight experienced scant surprise.

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 59-62: WHOM HE QUICKLY DEFEATS**

The giant was shouting as he entered in;  
 Loudly enough to shake the walls indeed.  
 He was protected by a serpent's skin  
 Invulnerable to every hostile deed,  
 While the wretch any challenge thought to win  
 With an iron mace, to be used at need.  
 An iron helm upon his head was pressed;  
 A long black beard hung to the villain's chest.

He reached the loggia. Mandricardo,  
Without a thought to the cost, drew his blade,  
And attacked, the moment he saw the foe.  
A blow upon that iron mace he laid,  
And cut away the ball and chain below.  
Then, swung again instantly, and flayed  
The giant's wooden shield, which he cracked and tore,  
Sending the fragments to the solid floor.

Now the giant, Malapresa, in anger,  
Swung his weapon with both hands, but his foe  
Leapt aside, avoiding every danger,  
And, unharmed, replied with a fiercer blow  
That landed exactly where the emperor,  
Had intended, such that Mandricardo  
Struck below the serpent skin; with that slice,  
He severed both the giant's legs, in a trice.

Malapresa fell. The monster was dead.  
Conceive the ladies' relief and delight!  
The servants cut away the giant's head,  
Once they were sure twas the end of the fight,  
Then dragged the corpse, despite lingering dread,  
To the forest, where they hid it out of sight,  
In a deep pit, far beyond the palace gate.  
Thereafter, none there named him, or his fate.

### **BOOK III: CANTO I: 63-66: MANDRICARDO SPENDS THE NIGHT IN THE CASTLE**

Not a word was spoken of that giant again,  
As if there'd ne'er been a Malapresa.  
The maidens danced in a ring, to a strain  
Sounded by shrill pipes and lutes, together,  
Raising their voices in a sweet refrain,  
So brightly, with so happy a measure,  
That any that heard, and feasted their eyes,  
Would have sworn there within lay paradise.

Thus, they prolonged their glad revelry  
Till a good part of the night had gone by,  
When maidens entered, ceremoniously,  
Bearing sweetmeats, fruit, golden cups, held high,  
And, before Mandricardo, bent the knee.  
Then he and the castle's mistress, eye to eye,  
Refreshed themselves, and a draught did share,  
Joying with that company, free from care.

By the light of torches, borne in splendour,  
They went off to their beds, the keep secure.  
With snow-white sheets, and silken cover,  
Mandricardo's was made, sweet and pure;  
And orange branches perfumed the chamber,  
While, from midst the leaves, little birds did soar,  
When the emperor to his room was shown  
And the torches flared. He was not alone,

For a maiden stayed to serve him as required,  
Though he'd had quite enough to do and say,  
Her tasks no more nor less than he desired;  
He'd have much more to do at dawn of day.  
If you, by curiosity inspired,  
Care to return, you'll hear of an affray,  
Deeds, strange and terrible, arousing fear.  
Adieu, my lords; for this canto ends here.

BOOK III: CANTO II: HECTOR'S ARMOUR

A R G O M E N T O.

*Tocco lo scudo, Mandricardo taglia,  
La biada, quel creò molti animali  
Che dopò aspra feroce, e gran battaglia  
Tra lor mostraro ch'erano mortali,*

*Suelse ei la pianta, e cò sua possa, e vaglia  
Uccise il Serpe. Ha l'armi d'Hettor tali,  
Vuol sopra Durindana bauer impero,  
Combatte Orillo, e i figli d'Oliuiero.*



A L L E G O R I E.

**I**l grano che si cangiaua in animali, & andando contra Mandricardo alla fine esso gettatoli nel mezo vna pietra, si dissiporno da se stessi, sono le varie sorte di opinioni che mediante l'appetito nascono nella mente de gl'huomini le quali alla fine hauendo, nel mezo la ragione vna si scopre contraia all'altra per modo che in breue vengono a nulla.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 1-3: MANDRICARDO IS  
GUIDED TO THE PALACE**

The sun, crowned with many a golden ray,  
Now raised its lovely face above the sea,  
And soon the rosy sky announced the day  
Hiding the morning star, quite suddenly.  
Within the garden many a bird did play,  
The swallows warbling, as, melodiously,  
A wave of birdsong ushered in the dawn,  
The heavens glowing o'er the dew-wet lawn.

Mandricardo left, at once, for the field;  
Quit his chamber; free from sleep, wet his face  
At a fount nearby; grasped his sword and shield;  
Donned his armour, adventure to embrace,  
As a farewell to the maidens, he did yield;  
By the door he'd entered, went from the place;  
And was led by the maiden his fair guide,  
To the palace, she trotting at his side.

She conversed with him, as they took their way,  
Of love and the joust, all that brought delight,  
Leading him to the meadow, bright and gay,  
Where the palace stood, lovely to the sight.  
Before them blazed that edifice, I say,  
For its walls of stone shone, a gleaming white,  
With tall crenellated towers, like a keep,  
None fairer in the world, except in sleep.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 4-8: HECTOR'S SHIELD  
AND COAT OF ARMS**

The palace was in the form of a square,  
Its walls a quarter of a mile on each side.  
Its drawbridge and portal, strong and fair  
Faced the east, and to all were open wide;  
But lords and knights that entered had to swear,  
And to promise, on their faith, so none lied,  
That ere they left the courtyard of that place,  
They'd touch the shield, that hung before their face.

In the midst of that vast courtyard it was set,  
Though I'll not delay us by explaining how.  
There loggias at the four corners met,  
Painted with subtle labour, to allow  
Description of a chase, where a young cadet

Of a great House, whom Nature did endow  
With rare beauty, paraded midst the rest;  
And 'Ganymede' was writ above his crest.

All the passage of his life was there portrayed,  
In all its detail, with nothing hid from view.  
It showed how, hunting in a woodland glade,  
An eagle snatched him up, of snow-white hue.  
That eagle was the emblem e'er displayed  
By his kin, and by their descendants too,  
Till Hector met Achilles, and was slain;  
Then Priam changed the emblem, Hector's bane.

The eagle's feathers had, till then, been white,  
For white was the bird that from Heaven came,  
But on that accursed day when Troy's true light,  
Brave Hector, died, that emblem of his fame  
Was altered to appear as dark as night,  
To evoke the tragic fate of that same.  
That none the memory of his death might lack,  
The eagle's snowy hue was changed to black.

Twas Hector's shield that hung there, in the court,  
Unaltered from when Hector died in war,  
At Troy, where the Greeks and Trojans fought,  
The one that hero had borne long before.  
Upon a pillar, which of gold was wrought,  
It hung, and these few words, above, it bore:  
'If you're no Hector reborn, touch me not!  
My lord's equal this world has ne'er begot.'

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 9-16: MANDRICARDO  
STRIKES THE SHIELD, AND FIERCE BEASTS  
APPEAR**

The shield was of the sky's serene colour.  
The maiden dismounted from her palfrey,  
And knelt in reverence, the emperor,  
Behaving no less reverentially.  
And then, since none, it seemed, wished to hinder  
His doing so, he drew his sword, swiftly,  
And tapped the shield hung amidst the court.  
Then he waited, to see what task it brought.

As soon as he had done so, all the ground  
Groaned and shook as if the sky had fallen,  
And then, as the earth trembled all around,

A portal in the courtyard sprang open,  
Revealing a vast field whose crop was crowned  
With ears of solid gold, large and swollen,  
And golden were the glistening stalks below;  
A shining sea, o'er which the breeze did blow.

Yet, the eastern door behind them closing,  
The entry path was shut against the knight.  
The maiden said: 'None may boast of leaving  
This place, until they've harvested, outright,  
The crop, that you see before you gleaming  
On all sides, and remove the tree, sir knight,  
That you behold in the midst of the field,  
By tearing at its roots, until they yield.'

Without further thought, Mandricardo,  
Entered the treasure-field, sword in hand,  
And scything at the crop, with every blow  
Revealed the spell placed upon the land;  
For every seed of grain became his foe.  
Into some creature each did then expand.  
A lion, a panther, or a unicorn,  
From the strangest of harvests, there was born.

Those seeds fell to earth and were transformed  
To beasts, that encircled Mandricardo,  
About the valiant warrior they swarmed,  
Rendering his prowess vain, they battled so.  
The emperor's defences, thus, they stormed,  
Their numbers increasing gainst their foe,  
Wolves and lions, fearsome bears and wild-boars,  
Engaged him, with tusks, teeth, and razor claws.

That most cruel and bitter battle raged on,  
In which bold Mandricardo nearly fell,  
Much the loser gainst that vicious squadron,  
That fierce harvest of beasts wrought by the spell.  
He found himself defenceless, whereupon  
He grasped a stone, their bold attack to quell,  
Twas a stone of power, wrought by magic art,  
Though naught was known of the fact, on his part.

This stone, I speak of, was marked with colours  
Of green and azure, gold, and red, and white,  
And when he hurled it amidst those creatures  
It sowed confusion; they commenced a fight  
Among themselves; wrath in all their features,

Bears, lions, boars, with many a lunge and bite,  
Savage bulls, and all those others, head-to-head,  
Raging madly, till all the host were dead.

In no time at all they had slain each other;  
Naught was left for Mandricardo to do,  
Who took scarcely a moment to linger,  
For the next adventure occupied his view.  
I mean that tall, impressive tree, bearer  
Of a thousand flowering branches, that grew  
Amidst the field, to which, he understood,  
He should make his way, as fast as he could.

### **BOOK III: CANTO II: 17-19: HAVING SLAIN THE BEASTS, HE UPROOTS THE TREE**

He seized the trunk, exerting all his force,  
Then he sought to uproot it from the ground,  
But as he shook the huge tree, to divorce  
It from the earth, blossom fell all around,  
Downwards the flowers flew, and, in their course,  
As they cascaded o'er his head, he found  
(Where have you heard a tale that equals mine?)  
Them changed to birds, crows, falcons, all malign,

Eagles, and owls, with other birds of prey,  
All, seemingly, determined to assail  
Mandricardo. Although, they found no way  
O'er his steel-plate, and his mail, to prevail,  
Their numbers were so great, as to dismay  
The warrior, striking at him like hail,  
And distracting him from the task in hand,  
To tear those golden roots from out the land.

But, being a man of vigorous cast,  
Fearing naught, with redoubled ardour  
He strained away, and dragged it free, at last,  
With a tearing noise, like peals of thunder.  
A mighty wind arose, and its fierce blast,  
Blew all that vicious host of birds asunder.  
That gale issued (in Turpin's text, I find)  
From the crater that the roots left behind.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 20-24: FROM THE  
CRATER A SERPENT EMERGES, WHICH IS SLAIN**

Out of that pit the roaring tempest came,  
Catapulting great stones, through the air;  
And as the knight gazed down into that same,  
He perceived a mighty serpent lurking there,  
That now crawled above, the light to claim;  
And the creature, as it emerged, laid bare  
Not merely a single tail, or even two,  
But a mound of lengths and coils, of livid hue.

Let me be clear, that out of that dark cave  
Came a creature with but a single head  
While a single body slid from that enclave,  
Though ten long tails behind its haunches spread.  
Mandricardo slowing not, an end did crave  
To such assaults, so, with raised sword, he sped  
Towards the loathsome snake, and struck his foe  
Upon the neck, with his first mighty blow.

It fell upon the nape, as intended,  
Yet a charmed hide that fell serpent possessed;  
Against the knight, its length it extended,  
And like a ship that some rock doth arrest,  
Struck him a resounding blow, that ended  
With two of its coiled tails tightly pressed  
About his legs, and others round his chest,  
And arms, by which he found himself oppressed.

Bound by brute force, he was dragged to the floor.  
The serpent's jaws were long, its eyes aflame  
Its sharp white teeth it fastened, their grip sure,  
In his flank, and chewed his armour; its game  
The warrior perceived; wearily he bore  
Its weight, and as he struggled with that same,  
Turning and twisting, into the hole he fell,  
From which the snake had crawled; yet all was well,

For by good fortune, plunging through the air,  
(Twould have surely meant his death, otherwise)  
Landing heavily, in that brief affair,  
He crushed the serpent's head, in no small wise,  
And drove its eyeballs, with their fiery glare,  
From out the sockets. Robbed of its eyes,  
Its skull shattered, its tails twitched, and then  
The creature died, never to rise again.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 25-29: HECTOR'S  
ARMOUR**

With the serpent done for, Mandricardo  
Searched around the deep cavern, high and low.  
(A ruby blazed like a torch, as he did so,  
That shed light, as the sun does with its glow)  
The cave was solid stone, above and below  
Carved from the rock, but adorned also  
With amber, coral, and burnished silver,  
That all the surface of the place did cover.

A platform rose at the cave's centre,  
Wrought of perfect, snow-white ivory,  
On which an outspread cloth of bright azure,  
Starred with gold, lay, much like a canopy.  
And thereon, it seemed, a knight in armour  
Lay, indifferent to all, sleeping soundly.  
Seemed, I repeat; for the thing was not so,  
The plate and mail but empty, you should know.

These were the arms of that knight of renown,  
That on Earth gained honour, and endless fame.  
Brave Hector, I mean, who was once the crown  
Of those virtues to which Man may lay claim.  
The suit of Hector's armour, there laid down,  
Lacked a shield and sword; that very same  
Shield we have observed, the sword, however,  
Was now Count Orlando's Durindana.

The steel-plate and mail were luminous and bright,  
And all adorned with precious gems and gold,  
Such that the eye could scarcely bear the sight,  
Rubies, and emeralds, and pearls untold,  
And a longing, thus, arose within the knight,  
To clad himself in that gear, wrought of old.  
He gazed at the breastplate, and all thereon,  
But more so at the helm, that gleamed and shone.

At its summit was a gold lion crest,  
With a silver banner gripped in one paw,  
And the rim at its base was gold, impressed  
With six and twenty matching clasps, no more.  
In front was that ruby, with brightness blessed,  
That glowed, like a fiery torch borne before,  
And with so fierce a power shed its light  
Each corner of the cave was clear and bright.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 30-34: A BEVY OF MAIDENS WELCOME HIM TO THE PALACE**

While the knight stood admiring the armour,  
And, indeed, it was beautifully wrought,  
Behind his back he heard a sudden clamour,  
For a steel door opened, and, as he sought  
The cause, maidens, one after another,  
In strange frills and ruffles, entered the court,  
In a line, while joyfully advancing,  
Playing fifes and castanets, and dancing.

Stepping here and there, in carefree manner,  
Springing aloft, and landing gracefully,  
They commenced singing sweetly together,  
In clear and varied tones, harmoniously.  
Their voices o'er the instruments ever  
Rose in consonance to fill the lonely  
Cavern, till at last they ceased their singing,  
And ended in silence, humbly kneeling.

Then one of the beauteous maids arose,  
And lauded the valiant Mandricardo.  
To the stars, she praised him, heaven knows,  
For the wonders he'd performed here below.  
And when she fell silent, two others chose  
To remove his armour, willing or no,  
Then escorted him, unarmed, from the cave,  
Through that door reserved for the bold and brave.

And they pinned a fine cloak to his shoulder,  
The silk embroidered with many a sign,  
And perfumed the happy knight all over,  
With sweet scents, and odours most divine.  
While festive songs were sung in his honour,  
Horns, tambourine and flutes, in a line,  
Bore him up the marble staircase that led,  
To the palace, whose courtyard, as I've said,

Displayed famed Hector's shield; there cavaliers,  
And damsels, sang, and danced, and laughed, and  
played.  
Ne'er was a nobler court known, it appears,  
For as soon as the knight his entrance made,  
They ran to honour him, ladies and peers,  
And reverential obeisance displayed;  
To the knight all courtesy did afford,  
Welcoming him as their sovereign lord.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 35-37: THE FAY CHARGES HIM WITH GAINING DURINDANA**

Seated upon a rich throne, was the Fay,  
And she beckoned forth Mandricardo,  
And proclaimed: 'Cavalier, upon this day,  
You have won a prize finer than aught below.  
Yet you yourself must add the sword, I say,  
For you must pledge to win from Orlando  
That enchanted blade, fierce Durindana.  
Upon your faith swear it, and your honour,

And until the thing is done, the task complete,  
You must ne'er allow yourself to seek rest;  
Nor with another sword in hand compete;  
Nor wear the crown at any man's behest;  
Nor let the snow-white eagle meet defeat,  
That stands upon this shield to guide your quest.  
For these fair arms, and this insignia,  
Deserve to triumph o'er every other.'

Mandricardo, with reverence, obeyed  
The Faery's firm command, and so he swore,  
And then the maidens the armour displayed,  
And clad him in that breastplate, wrought of yore.  
And when he was in all those arms arrayed,  
He bid farewell, now bent for foreign shore,  
Having achieved that most fine adventure,  
And viewed the release of every prisoner.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 38-39: THE CAPTIVES ARE RELEASED AND THE COMPANY HEADS FOR FRANCE**

All the captives were freed; there were many  
Imprisoned knights; for, King Gradasso,  
And Grifone and bold Aquilante,  
And Spain's Isolier, our mighty foe,  
And folk of great worth, he saw in plenty,  
Released from that enchanted place also;  
Full many a name of equal glory  
To those I've mentioned in my story.

King Gradasso rode with Mandricardo,  
And kept him company, day by day,  
Nor will it be too long ere I must show  
What those bold knights encountered on the way.



No more valiant pair did Pagandom know,  
No greater warriors in fierce affray.  
Great and wondrous deeds, without sword or lance,  
They performed before they entered France.

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 40-44: AQUILANTE AND GRIFONE MEET TWO LADIES, ONE DRESSED IN BLACK, ONE IN WHITE**

But bold Aquilante, and Grifone,  
Rode together, and went another way.  
Many languages they spoke fluently,  
And, through Pagandom, could in safety stray.  
One morning they encountered, suddenly,  
Two ladies, with two dwarves in their pay,  
One lady dressed in garments black as night,  
The other wearing pure and gleaming white.

The dwarves, dark-skinned and pale respectively,  
Black as coal, white as snow, and each fine steed  
Matched their female garb, while each lady  
Showed a welcoming manner (one glance indeed  
Could steal the heart away) and spoke sweetly  
With warm and kindly gestures; they agreed  
In their looks so well, and seemed so lovely,  
Each was the other's equal in beauty.

The courteous knights bowed their heads in greeting,  
At which the two ladies exchanged a glance,  
And she who was dressed in black, speaking  
To her companion, said, ere she did advance:  
'Not a thing can we do, there's no hiding  
From the vicissitudes of circumstance,  
From what Heaven and Earth prophesy,  
Spinning endlessly, our fates wrought on high.

And yet we can prolong life, you'll admit,  
And, perchance, change our fortune, if we're wise,  
While the world's Creator can alter it,  
And exchange the sun and moon in the sky.'  
'So, regarding these knights, we should commit,  
To thwarting their journey, or we should try,'  
Said the other, 'you'll agree, since, by and by,  
Fate would lead them to France, where they would die.'

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 45-48: WHO SET THEM THE TASK OF SLAYING THEIR PERSECUTOR, ORRILLO**

Now, the ladies' whispered conversation  
Went unheard by the knights, till she in white  
Turned and beckoned, as an indication  
That she wished to address them, if she might:  
'I would ask,' she said, 'if tis your vocation,  
To enhance your fame, and defend the right,  
If honour you both love, and chivalry,  
To defend my companion here, and me.'

The knights spoke, well-nigh in unison,  
And offered their assistance, in a trice.  
She in black said: 'Since you speak as one,  
And show willing, we need not ask you twice  
To pursue a task, and swear twill be done,  
Upon your faith, and no matter the price;  
For we'd have you slay a most treacherous  
Villain, who oppresses and torments us.

The name of this traitor, whom we revile,  
Is Orrilo, and no man is worse, I say.  
In a tower, the imp dwells, beside the Nile;  
A dragon-like beast guards it, night and day.  
That creature is called the Crocodile,  
It feeds on human flesh and blood away.  
Twas a strange spell made the imp; he was born  
Of a goblin, and a fay, that ill spawn.

Born of an enchantment, as I've said,  
The villain is so devoid of mercy  
He has wrecked this whole realm, and evil bred.  
Every knight and maiden that would journey  
Through the land is imprisoned, and then fed  
To his creature to eat. So, endlessly,  
We have sought for any that might help us,  
And free us from a plight so perilous.

But we have long lacked any remedy  
Or repair for the ruin he has wrought,  
Through magic, he has immortality;  
Though slain he renews; death to him is naught.  
Yet you are champions, men of chivalry,  
Capable of mighty deeds in short,  
Which you'll prove, if your hearts give not the lie  
To your looks (or so we hope) by and by.'

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 49-56: THE KNIGHTS  
ATTACK ORRILLO, WHO PERPETUALLY RENEWS  
HIMSELF**

A great longing possessed the martial pair,  
To attempt that most wondrous enterprise.  
The ladies led them to the tower; once there,  
They could hear Orrilo, with dreadful cries  
Of rage and fury, sending through the air  
His great roar, like the north wind as it flies.  
For a sound the imp made, grinding his teeth,  
Like driven waves that churn the shore beneath.

A horned owl was the villain's helmet crest,  
With its feathers, and its eyes, all ablaze,  
And a noisome breath issued from its chest  
Though our two knights it scarcely did amaze,  
For they'd faced wolves, and assailed the best  
Of knights in other lands, in other days,  
And held the danger to themselves at naught,  
So, swiftly gave their challenge ere they fought.

Orrilo scorned to offer a reply,  
But merely gripped his cudgel and attacked,  
While Aquilante at the man did fly,  
Dropping the lance his opponent lacked,  
And swinging his great sword; and by and by  
The duel developed, each advanced and backed,  
Giving and receiving many a blow;  
The blade and cudgel, dancing to and fro.

Grifone gave no heed to those that landed  
On his brother's enchanted plate and mail,  
As Aquilante sword dealt two-handed  
Blows against the other, much like a flail,  
Till the blade, that his strong arm commanded,  
Sliced his foe at the waist; like a piece of sail,  
He severed him, like taut canvas; at last,  
His top part fell, the rest to his mount stuck fast.

The half with a head twitched upon the sand,  
Meanwhile the steed kicked and leapt around,  
And arched its back, freed from all command,  
Till the other half was thrown to the ground.  
Yet once fallen to earth, you understand,  
The first piece joined it, and, made whole and sound,  
Jumped to the saddle rendered good as new,  
As intact as it had been; one piece, not two.

Need I say how wondrous the matter seemed  
To our warriors, how strange and curious?  
Though Bishop Turpin, that most esteemed  
Of authors, is my source, the marvellous  
Aftermath of the blow (as if twere dreamed)  
Embarrasses in the telling. The furious  
Aquilante cried: 'Is this mere phantasy?'  
And struck once more at his base enemy.

Orrilo replied, and they laboured on,  
Though the pagan had the worst of the fight,  
For Aquilante would see the fellow gone,  
And Orrilo's plate and mail soon took flight.  
Determined the imp should die, thereupon,  
A fierce two-handed swing dealt the knight,  
O'er the shoulder of his foe, to see him dead;  
And, from the villain's neck, sliced his head.

Now hearken to a wonder, for that devil,  
Enchanted, yet accursed (I mean the part  
That still remained seated in the saddle)  
Gripped his club in one hand, lest it depart,  
And then seized his head as it came level  
With his other hand, and, by some strange art,  
Re-joined it to his neck, then raised his weapon,  
And resumed the fight, the nett damage: none!

**BOOK III: CANTO II: 57-60: ORRILLO SETS  
LOOSE THE CROCODILE**

The maid dressed in white smiled, sadly, and said:  
'Friend, leave alone that which will not yield;  
You'll not conquer him. Though he were dead,  
Strewn in a thousand pieces o'er the field,  
Milled finer than the grain is for your bread,  
You'll not see him perish; the wretch, instead,  
Though divided, will be renewed again,  
And, despite your slaying him, life retain.'

Aquilante cried: 'Such disgrace, such shame,  
Has ne'er been suffered in this world before.  
Though I be attacked by fire and flame  
I'll not cease from battling with this boor.  
And though I see no end to it, this same  
Base villain I'll fight, though my death be sure.  
God may do as he pleases with my life;  
To neither truce nor peace shall yield this strife!'

And with that, he turned, to renew the fight,  
 But Orrilo sped from the battle-ground,  
 And headed for his tower where still in sight  
 He freed the Crocodile, which, once unbound,  
 Crawled, from the door, towards our valiant knight,  
 While Orrilo rode behind his wondrous 'hound'.  
 Aquilante meanwhile prepared for war,  
 And raised his yet gleaming blade as before.

When Grifone saw the creature advance,  
 And that villain riding close upon its tail,  
 He set forth and, lowering his bright lance,  
 As if equipped with wings, onwards did sail  
 To aid Aquilante, for ne'er, perchance,  
 In this world did a battle e'er entail  
 Such effort, and against so strange a foe;  
 I'll give you the tale, in my next canto.

BOOK III: CANTO III: PRINCESS LUCINA

ARGOMENTO.

*Con Aquilante il suo fratel Grifone  
Occidono vn feroce Cocodrillo,  
Indi seguendo l'vsata questione,  
Combatton col maluagio,e forte Orillo*

*Riman de l'Orco Gradasso prigione  
Ma con Lucina dal viso tranquillo,  
Sciolto è da Mandricardo, uia fuggendo  
Van da le mani del fier Orco orrendo .*



A L L E G O R I E.

**I L** Cavalier che interruppe la battaglia che faceua Orillo co'fratelli, è il Fatto, il qual vuole ad ogni modo che le cose, che hanno da essere auenghino, ne che si possino con arti ouuiare.

**L V C I N A** legata che all' hora che credeua esser vecisa, e sciolta, & saluata da Mandricardo, e Gradasso, ne insegna che Iddio aiuta i miseri affliti, a punto quando meno le sperano .

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 1-4: THE FIGHT AGAINST ORRILLO RESUMES**

There, amidst the roses, crimson and white,  
Midst fields bright with many a fair flower,  
Midst fresh herbs, and those sweet scents that delight,  
That issue forth from many a leafy bower,  
I sang the deeds of more than one brave knight,  
Renowned of old, to fill the present hour;  
Cavaliers so bold and fierce they overcame  
Every vile thing on Earth, and slew those same.

Then it entered my mind that such treasure  
Enjoyed alone is ever incomplete.  
So, my lords and ladies, at your leisure,  
I bring you fresh delight, in measures sweet,  
For I believe it may give you pleasure  
To hear of the monstrous creature's defeat,  
I mean that which was fighting Aquilante,  
And Grifone, when I paused my story.

I told you how the Crocodile crawled out  
Of Orrilo's tower, a beast most wondrous.  
Long-lived it was, and huge, from tail to snout,  
Growing, while alive, till it was monstrous.  
It swam in the Nile, and also crawled about  
On land, seeking prey (twas adventurous).  
Some kind of giant lizard, it did seem;  
Of a size unequalled even in dream.

Its length was a good thirty feet or more,  
Its back was spotted, a mottled yellow.  
It could open full wide its upper jaw,  
A move that few other beasts could follow.  
While its stomach, a vast larder, could store  
A cow or two, whatever it could swallow;  
And then its teeth were a foot long, I'm sure,  
On Earth there was no stranger carnivore.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 5-10: GRIFONE ATTACKS THE CROCODILE**

Grifone who watched its thunderous advance,  
Slow but sure, as I've sought to indicate,  
Attacked it boldly now, with lowered lance,  
As it neared his brother, ere twas too late.  
No finer thrust was made and, not by chance

On the brow, twixt the eyes, fell its full weight.  
The spear was large, sharp its tip of iron,  
But naught that availed; the heavy weapon

Bent like a slender reed, as home it struck,  
And did scant damage to the vicious beast,  
Whose hide was impenetrable; it took  
The blow, its thick and calloused skin uncreased.  
Once again, bold Grifone, tried his luck,  
As the violence of their battle increased.  
The creatured oped its jaws, in fierce anger,  
And might have swallowed knight and charger,

Had not Aquilante reached the scene,  
(Having sliced the vile Orrilo in two)  
And found his brother, in grave peril I ween,  
Nigh on his way to vanishing from view.  
With all his strength he swung his strong and keen  
Blade of steel (an enchanted blade, tis true)  
And hit the beast on its uplifted snout,  
Though twas impervious, inside and out.

The Crocodile turned on Aquilante,  
Arousing such terror in his charger,  
The latter veered aside, bolting swiftly,  
Not waiting for the oncoming creature,  
Which would scarce have eaten them slowly,  
But swallowed them whole, such was its nature,  
Caparison and armour, horse and knight,  
Not touched by its vile teeth, but gulped outright.

As I said, his valiant steed, much dismayed  
Leapt aside, and fled, like a speeding dart,  
While that horrendous monster quickly made  
A move to catch it, snapping, for its part,  
At the horse's rump, which it almost flayed,  
Within an inch of Aquilante, whose heart  
Gave a tremor, for Orrilo, whole and sound,  
Now advanced, cudgel raised, o'er the ground.

Meanwhile, dismounting, bold Grifone  
Leapt upon the Crocodile, from behind,  
And ran up its tail and spine full swiftly,  
To the back of its head, while it was blind  
To his intent; it reared, but, gripping tightly,  
The knight levered up its snout, ere it dined,  
And with both hands rode the monster so;  
No stranger a sight did the world e'er show.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 11-14: AQUILANTE AGAIN  
ATTACKS ORRILLO**

For their part, Aquilante and Orrilo  
Were now engaged in cruel battle once more,  
As fierce a duel as ever, blow for blow.  
Orrilo's mail and armour struck the floor  
In a shower of fragments, and then his foe  
Hit him on the shoulder, the stroke was sure,  
For Aquilante, seeking to do harm,  
Sliced away that whole shoulder and the arm.

It fell, with the weighty club, to the ground;  
But Aquilante, now wise to the game,  
Paused not, having previously found  
The binding spell must soon restore that same.  
Even though he saw him die, safe and sound  
He'd return, no doubt; so, as on he came,  
He severed his shield-arm at the shoulder,  
And, dismounting, threw both limbs in the water.

Half a mile he hurled them (wide as a sea  
The Nile extends at that place) then he cried:  
'Advance, I'm not stopping you, feel free  
To do your worst, and a little more beside.  
Why, you couldn't swat a fly, it seems to me,  
Or crack and eat a lobster, if you tried.  
You wretched deceiver; you, and your spell,  
Have wasted my precious time all too well.'

But Orrilo sped away like an arrow,  
And, in a trice, had reached the flowing Nile,  
Where the rogue leapt from the bank, plunged below,  
And failed to reappear for quite some while.  
Aquilante, deprived thus of his foe,  
Since his brother still gripped the Crocodile  
By the nose, paused not a moment, but rode  
To Grifone, whose weariness now showed.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 15-16: AND THEN SLAYS  
THE CROCODILE**

As I told you earlier, the brave Grifone  
Had gripped that vile monster by the nose,  
Bending its jaws back firmly, while, boldly,  
Pressing hard on its head with heels and toes.  
And so, he still remained, as Aquilante

Dismounted (full swiftly you may suppose)  
And seized his lance, that lay upon the ground,  
For which but scant employment had been found.

Then he leapt forward, with that spear in hand,  
And drove it full length between those jaws,  
With whatever strength he could yet command.  
The lance journeyed on, without a pause,  
Thus, avoiding the ribs, you understand,  
Emerging through the gut, despite the roars  
Of the beast (for the weak spot in its hide  
Lay beneath the legs, on the underside).

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 17-22: ORRILLO EMERGES  
INTACT FROM THE NILE**

That thrust, I would say, pleased Grifone  
More than any had in his life before,  
For his waning strength was ebbing quickly.  
Lo, Orrilo, re-emerged, close to shore,  
Swimming with both arms, seeming wholly  
Restored, as towards the bank he bore,  
While Aquilante wondered how on earth,  
He'd found his limbs, and achieved re-birth!

Orrilo used both his arms together,  
And cleft the flood in most vigorous style,  
Swimming like a frog through the water,  
Till he reached the sloping bank of the Nile.  
Grifone said, turning to his brother:  
'All we've left to show, for our long trial,  
Is one dead monster, which was hard to kill;  
If it's truly dead, not just lying still!'

Said Aquilante: 'I can't say I'm sure  
That such an adventure leads to honour.  
Nor know I how we could have laboured more  
In seeking to slay that other creature;  
He's as whole and enchanted as before.  
Barely an hour of daylight, moreover,  
Remains. And when tis night, what shall we do?  
He'll drag to Hell the likes of me and you.'

Grifone answered: 'Ere the light has gone,  
Before the sun sinks down behind the hill,  
We've yet time for sword-play.' Whereupon,  
He turned about, and laid on with a will,

For, as he wheeled, Orrilo, rushing on,  
Met him with his cudgel, warring still.  
Then with deeds, not mere threats, face to face,  
That pair fought; the blade pitted against the mace.

With plenty of work to do on each side.  
One struck the other, then their roles reversed.  
Grifone, well-armoured, thus replied  
To the cudgel, which he scorned, and rehearsed  
Many a mighty blow; twas then they spied  
A knight in armour, one who seemed well-versed  
In such ventures, for a giant on a chain  
He dragged behind him. Later, I'll explain

That whole matter, as I e'er seek to do,  
For I'll tell you all about that enterprise,  
But when a tale has veiled all else from view  
It should give way. I have, before my eyes,  
Mandricardo and Gradasso; those two  
Are on their way to France, and time flies;  
While, before they attain that fair country,  
Of toil, on land and sea, they'll have plenty.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 23-26: MANDRICARDO  
AND GRADASSO SEE A MAIDEN CHAINED TO A  
ROCK**

Those warriors had parted from the Fay,  
In whose palace Hector's arms had been kept,  
And through Syria the pair had made their way,  
To attain fair Damascus, where they slept;  
Then had journeyed on, to reach, on a day,  
A lodging-place, to which they slowly crept  
Near the shore, there to rest; the hour was late.  
It seemed empty, with none to guard the gate.

Gradasso, looking down upon the shore,  
Towards a rugged cliff of broken stone,  
Above the shallows, where the waves did roar,  
Saw a naked maiden chained there, alone,  
Her hair dishevelled; and, weeping full sore,  
O'ercome by deep despair, and making moan,  
'Come Death, O Death, and aid me now,' she cried,  
'For every other hope in me has died.'

The cavaliers instantly descended  
And galloped to the cliff, o'er the strand,  
To learn who or what had thus offended  
The maid, and if the cause was yet to hand.  
She wept, as if her grief could ne'er be ended,  
Enough to wring tears from that stony land,  
And then cried to the knights: 'Oh, show pity!  
Draw your swords, and slay me, of your mercy.'

If God, or Ill-Fortune, would have me die,  
Then by human hands let the deed be done,  
Rather than that vile creature, by and by;  
'Tis worse than death to fall to such a one.'  
The knights would know her tale, though her reply  
Was nigh stifled in her throat, and yet she won  
Sufficient breath, despite her tears, to relay  
The substance of the thing; this she did say:

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 27-36: LUCINA TELLS  
THEM OF THE OGRE**

'If I'm sadder, and grieve more than I can show,  
I've good reason. If there's time, I'll explain.  
What woman in the world felt greater woe?  
An Ogre dwells beneath that cliff; my bane.  
Whether of such vile creatures you know,  
I know not; yet if, my lords, you were fain  
To view his face, tis so dreadful, in a trice,  
The blood within your veins would turn to ice.

I can scarcely bear to speak of the creature,  
The heart in my poor breast trembles so.  
He's short, fat as six, with hair all over,  
And a curly beard o'er his chest doth flow.  
Two dull bony spheres, not eyes, moreover,  
Occupy the sockets where eyes should go.  
There Nature did well, for if he could see  
He'd already have ruined all this country.

He can't be overcome, although he's blind,  
For that vile monster lacks eyes, as I've said.  
I've seen him (oh, you'll think I've lost my mind!)  
Tear up oaks like fennel shoots; then he fed  
Upon the flesh of three giants, not his kind,  
Whom he squashed like frogs, till the giants bled.  
He tore away here a thigh, there a chest,  
Boiled some pieces, and then roasted the rest.

Human flesh is all he chooses to eat,  
And then, he drinks from a bowl of fresh blood.  
’Twere best if you both admitted defeat,  
Ere he finds that you’re in his neighbourhood.  
At the moment he’s sleeping there, replete,  
Deep in his den but, be it understood,  
If he wakes, he’ll smell you, instantly,  
Sensitive to the scent of man, you see.

He can scent your trail, like a well-trained hound,  
While all defence is in vain, as is flight.  
A hundred miles he’ll run, chase you to ground,  
And end your life before the fall of night.  
Depart therefore, I pray, lest you be found  
Aiding me. Go! Leave me here in my sad plight.  
But there’s a favour I ask: if, on your quest,  
(I beg you, my lords, grant this last request!)

You happen to meet King Norandino,  
Lord of Damascus (you may know his name)  
Tell him of my death, and of my woe,  
And say (he’s bound to weep at that same,  
For he and I do love each other so,  
And then my hand in marriage he would claim):  
“Your lady, while she lived, loved you dearly.  
She loves you yet, and shall, most sincerely.”

But take care not to err in what you say.  
Tell him not that I live, nor of my pain;  
For he loves me and would brook no delay  
In seeking my rescue; the strongest chain  
Would fail to hold him back, and yet I pray  
He does not so, for then I would sustain  
Far greater harm, know deeper misery  
Than death itself, were he to die with me.

So, tell him you buried me on the shore.  
He will ask in what land lies his Lucina.  
Say that you know its name not, ne’er before  
Visited the place, were here no longer  
Than a single day, and could return no more,  
Driven here by chance, stormbound, in error.  
Then grant him solace, so his tears abate,  
And he may prove accepting of my fate.’

Thus, she spoke, the maid, in her wretchedness,  
As she wept and the tears ran down her face.  
Gradasso well-nigh wept himself, no less  
Moved than she, and drew his sword apace,  
To cut the chain, and free her from distress,  
But the maiden cried: ‘Do not, of your grace!  
For if you seek to free me you will fail;  
You yourself will die; twill prove of no avail!

The chain (alas and woe!) runs through the stone,  
And leads, from where I am, to his foul lair,  
And if twere severed then that act alone  
Would rouse the Ogre, for a bell sounds there;  
And once awake, and once my flight was known,  
He would seek and pursue us everywhere;  
He would sniff out our trail o’er shore and strand,  
Hill and dale, and then slay us where we stand.’

### **BOOK III: CANTO III: 37-41: GRADASSO FIGHTS THE OGRE AND IS CAPTURED**

Mandricardo desired to break the chain,  
And hear the bell sound, for the knight feared naught,  
And when the maiden fell silent again  
He cut it with his blade, without a thought.  
The bell clanged in the Ogre’s dark domain,  
Like a peal of thunder; the maiden, fraught,  
Nigh to fainting, her face pale with dread,  
Cried: ‘Alas! My life is done; we are dead;

Soon you’ll behold that evil creature.  
Oh, my whole body is by fear oppressed!’  
And behold, that thing of evil nature  
His goitre hanging down o’er his chest,  
His boar-like tusks a hideous feature,  
Now appeared, his vile jaws, like all the rest  
Of his ugly face, foul with blood and gore.  
His eyebrows were six inches long or more;

The thickness of a leg was each finger,  
And the villain’s long nails were black with dirt.  
The bold Gradasso feared him not, however,  
And against him all his strength did exert,  
Swinging his sharp blade, with wondrous power;  
And yet the monstrous thing seemed unhurt.  
For the Ogre grasped his shield, in a trice,  
Tore it from him, and shattered it like ice.



Had the Ogre gripped Gradasso's head,  
He'd have cracked and crushed his helmet outright,  
The monarch's life would have hung by a thread.  
As tender little nuts are shelled, the knight  
Would have ended, by ill-fortune misled,  
His neck snapped like a lily stalk, as might  
Be done by some storm, his head plucked, entire,  
Like a mushroom, and then ground in the mire.

The blind Ogre, lacking the means to see  
What his hand had seized upon by chance,  
Gave the shield a tug, and so strong was he  
That Gradasso fell. In his eyeless advance,  
The Ogre stumbled o'er him, then, swiftly,  
Picked him up (the result of circumstance)  
And bore him to his cave. Struggling in vain,  
Gradasso was then bound with iron chain.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 42-49: THE OGRE FALLS  
INTO A CHASM WHILE CHASING  
MANDRICARDO**

As soon as the Ogre had chained the king,  
He emerged from his noisome den once more,  
To where brave Mandricardo was grieving,  
Having lost his companion. The knight bore  
No sword, for so he had vowed, on leaving  
His realm, and twas a sacred oath he swore,  
Not to wield a sword unless twere that blade  
Orlando wore; such was the pledge he'd made.

But he bent down, and grasped a heavy stone,  
With both hands, full thirty pounds in weight,  
And with all the skill and strength he did own,  
Hurled it at the Ogre's chest; its force was great,  
But the beast seemed not made of flesh and bone,  
Nor did his monstrous rage and scorn abate.  
He merely rubbed the place, angered sore,  
While he frothed at the mouth, like a wild boar.

He set himself to hunting Mandricardo,  
Tracking the knight by his scent, like a hound.  
But the other lingered not for his foe,  
And, being quick and agile, with a bound,  
He swiftly scaled the cliff, then gazed below,  
And, tearing a large boulder from the ground,  
Took as fair an aim as time would allow,  
Hurled it, and hit the Ogre on the brow.

Into a thousand splinters the rock flew,  
Yet it scarcely hurt the Ogre at all,  
And, indeed, not a drop of blood it drew,  
Not for an instant did the monster fall,  
But sought Mandricardo's scent to pursue,  
Who climbed, with all his might, the rocky wall,  
Traversing, and ascending, till he came  
To the top, though the Ogre did the same,

And almost reached it first. The warrior  
Knew not how to save himself; at his back,  
Came the beast, up every slope, and o'er  
Every broken pathway, or rugged track.  
He could think of naught, as onwards he tore,  
That could serve for defence; as to attack,  
He ripped up stones, and many a gnarled tree,  
But the thing rushed on, precipitately.

Running back towards the lower valley,  
While looking about him, all the while;  
Behold, the mount was cleft, vertically,  
From top to bottom; twas a deep defile,  
And the knight, now convinced he would surely  
Be slain, leapt out across the gap, in style,  
And, despite his full armour's heavy weight,  
Flew wildly through the air, tempting fate.

The leap was full forty feet or more,  
Or so it seems he guessed the leap to be,  
Thereafter; the Ogre, blind as before,  
Now tumbled o'er the edge and, falling free,  
Like a lump of lead, to the distant floor,  
Struck the rocky ground below, presently,  
With a crash, as if the sky had fallen in,  
His arrival made such a thunderous din.

Indeed, twas no feather bed he landed on,  
For the gorge was high, and its depths stony,  
While three ribs in his chest broke thereon,  
And his landing left the rocks all gory,  
Mandricardo, in his joy, cried: 'Be gone!  
With one's nose to the trail, one leaps badly.  
You may hunt there, for ever and a day!  
Said Mandricardo, and chose not to stay.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 50-54: KING TIBIANO'S  
SHIP APPEARS**

He descended, hoping the beast was dead,  
Soon regained the shore and, seeking the cave,  
Came upon an arm, and a severed head,  
And a hand gnawed away; one look he gave  
At the rocks where sad mangled forms still bled,  
Legs, and shoulders of folk too late to save,  
And odd chunks of flesh, variously hued,  
Like those that wolves, or savage dogs, have chewed.

He hurried to the entrance in the rock.  
The cavern, deep within, was vast and high,  
And filled with much treasure, as if to mock  
Those human fragments left beneath the sky.  
Gradasso, he unchained from a stony block,  
And they freed the naked maid, by and by;  
While all the three were soon clad in fine gear,  
Bejewelled, that lay scattered, far and near.

They all mounted, and sped along the sand,  
The two brave knights, and the lovely lady,  
And, as they galloped o'er that empty strand,  
They saw a ship, far off, upon the sea.  
When the vessel drew closer to the land,  
King Tibiano's flag, the maid could see;  
He was the father of this precious maid,  
Whom cruel Fortune had so sadly misled.

Tibiano was king of that sweet isle  
Of Cyprus, and he ruled in Rhodes also,  
And he had journeyed many a sea-mile  
Seeking his fair daughter, filled full of woe,  
And anxious, and desperate, all the while,  
Weeping at her loss, nigh a mortal blow.  
The lady smiled his ensign to behold,  
And then she wept many a tear untold.

They soon could see the vessel clearly,  
And all the folk aboard her; so, the maid  
Waved a kerchief as a signal, and, shortly,  
Not to prolong the tale, the company made  
A fair sight, smiling and weeping freely,  
O'er the deck, all their happiness displayed;  
For, e'er, tears of joy must appertain,  
Where a child that was lost is found again.

**BOOK III: CANTO III: 55-60: THE OGRE  
REAPPEARS, AND THEY ARE CAUGHT IN A GALE**

As the vessel now prepared to come about,  
While the yards were being hoisted on high,  
The Ogre appeared, with a mighty shout,  
Upon the cliff, and outlined against the sky.  
The sailors moved swiftly, without a doubt!  
For they knew not what the creature might try,  
And a host of them ran to the rudder  
And strove hard as the ship gave a shudder.

The Ogre soon descended to the shore,  
They could see all his blood-soaked beard, and chest,  
And a vast piece of cliff the monster bore,  
For thorn trees, broken stumps, roots, and the rest  
It yet held. A dozen oxen or more  
Could not have lifted the weight it possessed.  
Into the waves the blind creature paced,  
Till the water was as high as his waist.

Then he swam like some great toad, with his snout  
Above the flood, while his feet trod the sand,  
At the sound of oars, turned his head about  
And hurled the missile, far from the land.  
It missed the ship, but they all gave a shout,  
For it threw up water, quite close to hand,  
And had his arm been a little stronger  
The ship would have sailed the sea no longer.

I need not tell of the fear felt by all.  
Indeed, the very bravest of the crew  
Were much afraid. Just then, a sudden squall  
Arose, and dense cloud covered o'er the blue.  
Waves drove from the east, the wind did maul  
The vessel, and the waters changed their hue.  
The breakers crashed, the sky and sea did roar,  
As it drove them from the Ogre, and the shore.

They no longer feared the monster, their dread  
Was lest they were wrecked, ere they could flee.  
The heavens turned the colour of the dead,  
And the wind's force increased, endlessly.  
Sharp hail and rain lanced down, from overhead,  
The lightning flashed, it thundered ceaselessly,  
And with scarcely a space between each crash,  
As the waves mounted, and the wind did lash.

A host of dolphins leapt from out the sea,  
Ever Ill-Fortune's sign of woe to come.  
The waves rebelled, seeking to run free,  
And filled the vessel, work for all, in sum,  
As they bailed, with the shore upon their lee.  
But I fear, my lords lest you're overcome,  
So, here, I shall end the present canto,  
For tis good to pause midst a tale of woe.

BOOK III: CANTO IV: RETREAT TO PARIS

ARGOMENTO.

Il Re Tartaro insieme, e il Sericano,      Getta Ruggier, col sir di Mont' Albano,  
Dopo molta fortuna in Francia han porto      Si affrōta. Ogni Frācese è al fuggir scorto  
Giungono oue Agramante e Carlo Mano,      Per Bradamante l'ardito Ruggiero,  
Fà guerra. Or q̃sto, or quello a terra morto      Battaglia fa col Re di Sarza altiero.



A L L E G O R I E.

Lo Esercito Christiano che ha il peggio, ne mostra che Iddio per i nostri peccati fa spesso potente un suo nimico, e per suo mezo ne castiga de' nostri errori. Rodomonte che non vuol concedere a Bradamante tregua, onde Ruggiero ne prende la sua difesa, ne insegna quanto un superbo sia hauuto in odio, che anco spesso i suoi proprij se li mostrano nemici.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 1-7: TIBIANO'S SHIP  
MAKES SHORE**

My lords, if twas in your power to find  
A man that never knew the taste of fear,  
And perchance you had the thought, in your mind,  
Of frightening one, who doubtless would appear  
Wholly secure, then have the man consigned  
To a ship, in a storm, when winter's here.  
If he's not scared, or troubled, then, I say  
He's mad, not bold; with death an inch away.

An angry sea is a quite dreadful thing,  
And much better spoken of, than seen;  
Nor need you sail, to prove all that I sing,  
Merely heed the word of a man who's been  
In distress on the waves; the tale I bring  
To your ears, simply hark to that, I mean.  
Tibiano's ship, pounded stern to prow,  
Took in water, and shed caulk anyhow.

Lucina and her father, Tibiano,  
Clung on, as the waves roared in the deep,  
Likewise, Gradasso and Mandricardo.  
The breakers looked much like a flock of sheep,  
A snow-white flock, grazing there, although  
They kept sighing, and collapsing in a heap.  
The rigging sang, the vessel groaned away  
Far within, as if from pain and dismay.

Now the wind blew this way, now another,  
The sailors scarcely knowing what to do.  
The ship scraped the sea-bed neath the water;  
And then on high, to touch the clouds, it flew.  
It seemed to have passed through every danger,  
Till a huge wave struck the mainmast, anew,  
And almost tipped the vessel on its side,  
While to God, for His aid, the travellers cried.

For two miles or more the ship was driven,  
Heeled over on its side, nigh upside down,  
Now in some trough, now scraping heaven.  
All aboard thought themselves about to drown,  
When, suddenly, the aid they sought was given,  
A crosswind nearly turned the ship around,  
But tipped the vessel back the other way,  
As, unheard midst the roar, they sought to pray.

The wind swung about constantly,  
Striking now the gunwales, now the bow,  
Till a vicious gust, confounding the sea,  
One blowing from the east, I'd avow,  
Struck the stern, and a good two or three  
Rods, neath the towering waves, drove the prow,  
Deeper than the diving birds ever go,  
As far, it felt, as the dart from a bow;

Then the prow rose again, quite as fast  
As an arrow from a cross-bow will fly,  
And from that hour, until the night was past,  
And from next morn, while the long day went by,  
The vessel fled onwards, before the blast,  
Until she came to land, as eve was nigh,  
Beyond Aigues-Mortes; there, from the level plain,  
Rose the Pyrenees, where fair France meets Spain.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 8-10: THE COMPANY  
JOURNEY TO MONTALBANO**

They willingly disembarked on the strand,  
Near a cape that is named La Oruna,  
Though they scarcely believed they'd reached dry land,  
Fortune had treated them with such anger.  
The darkness and the storm-wind, hand in hand,  
Departed, and the dawn brought fair weather,  
And with the clear light of a bright new day,  
They determined to proceed on their way.

Having ascertained where upon that coast  
They'd landed, they unloaded the cargo.  
The company many a fine steed did boast,  
And they armed, and set out for Montalbano,  
And twas not many days, five at the most,  
Before they heard many a trumpet blow,  
The sounds of many a war-horn, and drum,  
And battle-cries that made the heavens hum.

Bold Gradasso and Mandricardo  
Delayed not, but rode on, with a will,  
Leaving Lucina with Tibiano,  
And so reached the tall summit of a hill,  
Where they could overlook the plain below,  
And saw two armies that the field did fill,  
Who faced each other, in their battle lines,  
Beneath their pennants, standards, and ensigns.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 11-13: WHERE THE  
BATTLE BETWEEN CHARLEMAGNE AND  
AGRAMANTE CONTINUES**

You'll recall that there, on the level plain,  
Fierce war was being made, by Agramante,  
Upon the forces of King Charlemagne,  
And no battle was so cruel. Balugante  
And the bold King Marsilio of Spain,  
Had led many a knight, troops a-plenty,  
To support the African, on that stage  
Where the greatest fight of all men did wage.

Orlando was not present on that day,  
Nor was bold Ferrau who, as I've stated,  
Sought for his helmet that had gone astray,  
Fallen to the flood's depths, as was fated.  
The Count's situation, I may say,  
Was stranger than any I've related,  
For he who'd conquered every other foe  
Was enthralled, by fair maidens, neath the flow.

I'll tell you more, later, of Orlando,  
For he as yet was absent from the plain.  
Yet Rinaldo was there, as was Guido,  
Ricardo, Oliviero, and the Dane,  
When, as I've stated, from Ruggiero  
Such a violent attack we did sustain,  
Like a tempest, driving on o'er the field,  
That our men could do naught but die or yield.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 14-19: RUGGIERO  
SWEEPS ALL BEFORE HIM**

As when one breaks a poppy-head apart,  
Or a lupin-pod, in a summer garden,  
So, Ruggiero, with the warrior's art,  
Had crushed our troops where'er he'd ridden.  
He'd inverted Turpin forced to depart  
His mount, and Uberto, of a sudden,  
Avino, Belengiero, Ottone,  
Avorio, and King Salamone.

Gualtieri felt a blow to the head,  
And blood spurted forth, from his mouth and nose,  
He choked, and plunged to the ground, like lead.  
Ruggiero one or another chose,

And left his beaten victims stunned or dead.  
None could describe the power of his blows.  
He charged that great noble, Duke Ricardo,  
And sent him, wounded, to the earth below;

For he shattered Ricardo's solid shield,  
Lance and pennant emerging at his back,  
Though the shaft, as he thrust, was forced to yield,  
And split along its length in that attack.  
He left Ricardo helpless on the field,  
Then drew his sword, turning in his track;  
That weapon was forged by Falerina,  
Than all other blades, finer and keener.

A fierce and bloody battle then ensued,  
That made all seem but a game until then,  
Where Ruggiero like lightning pursued  
One group, and another, of fleeing men,  
In fiery guise, then, e'er the fight renewed,  
Appearing everywhere, wheeling again  
And again, speeding, as if winged, to strike  
Our troops, downing horse and foot alike.

Our men retreated, scattered far and wide.  
Ask me not if they were filled with dread!  
Ruggiero swung his blade and soldiers died;  
His violent rage but greater violence bred.  
Holland's Sinibaldo, pierced in the side,  
Slashed from chest to waist, he left for dead,  
And then Daniberto, the Frisian king,  
Cleft, to the saddle, with a mighty swing.

And Duke Aigualdo, so great in stature,  
Begot of Irish giants, like to his kind,  
Was pounced upon, in no short measure,  
And then cut about, before and behind.  
The Marquis of Vienne, brave by nature,  
Yet remained, as others ran like a hind;  
Alone that great lord, Oliviero,  
Turned to face the rampant Ruggiero.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 20-25: HE WOUNDS  
OLIVIERO, AND IS ATTACKED BY GRIFONE**

A most furious duel now began,  
Though this bout of theirs differed from the rest,  
For each left a mark on the other man

Their two blades being of the very best.  
Next Uggiero fought the youth for a span,  
And then brave Rinaldo upon him pressed,  
Their fight raising so much dust, in the air,  
That its clouds filled the field everywhere.

Ruggiero, whose men had fled the foe,  
Fell again like an arrow from the sky,  
As he once more faced Oliviero,  
Swinging that mighty blade of his, on high,  
But, as God pleased, ere he landed the blow,  
The weapon turned in his two hands, whereby  
The flat struck the helm, which cracked like glass.  
Oliviero, in a pretty pass,

Half-dead, fell from his steed, to the ground,  
His face flushed, helmet gone, and in distress.  
Ruggiero, when he saw the stroke had found  
Some weak point, and that blood, to excess,  
Flowed forth from that sorry wound, with a bound  
Leapt to the field, moved by pity no less,  
And took the Marquis in his arms, to bear  
Him to a surgeon, who could grant him care.

While he was on this errand of mercy,  
And, therefore, occupied in seeking aid,  
His youthful face bathed in tears of pity,  
As towards his own ranks his way he made,  
Grifone attacked him, treacherously,  
From behind, where cowards wield their blade.  
And as, with his burden, he made advance,  
The Maganzese struck him with his lance.

Between his shoulder-blades, the spear struck,  
And flung Ruggiero high in the air,  
But the knight, with the greatest of good luck,  
Fell on his feet (a somersault, past compare!)  
Then spun and found Grifone, dealt a look  
Of anger towards him, a wrathful glare,  
And since his lance had split, drew his blade,  
In a trice, and then faced him, unafraid.

'Death to you, foul traitor!' the young knight cried,  
Though the villainous Grifone waited not,  
A coward, who, seeing himself denied  
An easy victory, all thought of such forgot,  
Spurred his charger on, to reach his own side,

Where he now sought to vanish on the spot,  
Plunging among them, too afraid to face  
Ruggiero who, on foot, had given chase.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 26-29: WHOM HE  
PURSUES, ON FOOT, TILL THEY REACH  
RINALDO**

Ruggiero, at his horse's heels, pursued,  
Crying that he'd gut him like a villain.  
Grifone, lest that very thing ensued,  
Fled, till he reached Rinaldo's position,  
Who'd used his blade with such attitude,  
And with such skilful art and precision,  
That blood had drenched all the ground below.  
No man e'er fought so well against the foe.

'For God's sake, aid me!' Grifone cried,  
'Aid me, by God, for I can do no more.  
That Saracen, possessed of evil pride,  
Comes behind, and seeks to slay me, for sure!'  
At his words, Rinaldo, mounted astride  
The brave Baiardo, wet with blood and gore,  
Charged, at the gallop, towards the knight,  
But finding the youth on foot, stopped outright.

You should know, the knight had left his steed  
Where he'd dismounted, and near the place  
Where Bishop Turpin fought, then much in need  
Of a mount, with the foe before his face.  
He, when he saw the horse, ran, at full speed,  
(Though, at no greater than a bishop's pace!)  
Towards the creature, and seized the bridle,  
And, in an instant, was in the saddle.

He then returned to the fight, that bold priest!  
Grifone, meanwhile, swiftly disappeared,  
While Ruggiero, not dismayed in the least,  
Faced Montalbano's lord, who now neared,  
Though he swiftly reined in his valiant beast,  
Since it was less than chivalrous, he feared,  
To attack a knight on foot; to the field,  
He leapt, gripping Fusberta, and his shield.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 30-35: HE DUELS WITH RINALDO, AS CHARLEMAGNE DESPAIRS OF THE BATTLE**

So fierce was the battle they now began,  
All there marvelled, watching on in silence.  
Rinaldo showed no fatigue, though the man  
Had warred all day, ere they started to fence.  
Both swung wildly, with no sign of a plan,  
Scarce seeking to maintain a good defence.  
'Twas a wonder neither fell, for their blows  
Might have razed a mountain peak, by the close.

As their cruel and bitter duel progressed,  
Lo! King Agramante, with sword and shield,  
The mob of fleeing Christians addressed,  
That ran as fast as fire o'er a stubble field.  
Charlemagne, confounded midst the rest,  
Could see naught but to retreat or yield,  
Before that host, whose dust darkened the sun,  
Arming ten men, or more, where he armed one.

At the head of their ranks rode Martasino,  
The merciless king of Garamante,  
He cried aloud, as he charged gainst the foe,  
That he'd capture Charlemagne full swiftly.  
The noise was such, the earth shook below,  
With the passage of their numbers. Briskly,  
Flights of arrows flew, to cover their attack,  
Rising high, and turning the heavens black.

Our folk took to their heels on every side,  
And any that stumbled died where they fell.  
On came Sobrino, old, yet fit to ride,  
Sporting a crest of flame, and fighting well;  
Balifronte, on his camel, rode the tide,  
Swinging his scimitar, amidst the swell,  
As Christians fled before Alzirdo,  
Fierce Barigano, and Dardinello.

Oh! Any that had seen King Charlemagne  
Gazing, mutely, at the over-arching sky,  
Would, like the very stones, have felt his pain,  
And been moved to tears, in pity, thereby.  
'Save yourself!' to Amone, and, again,  
'Save yourselves!' to Namus, Gano, his cry  
Arose. 'Save yourselves! Abandon me!  
I would purge myself, and of sin be free.

If God, our Lord above, would see me die,  
Then His will be done, for I am ready.  
My only grief is that men baptised, hereby  
Must perish at the hands of Allah's army.  
O my Sovereign Lord,' he said with a sigh,  
'King of Heaven, if tis vengeance, truly,  
That you seek for our sins, let me atone,  
And bear the pain, and perish: I, alone!'

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 36-40: THE CHRISTIANS ARE ROUTED; RINALDO PURSUES HIS STEED BAIARDO**

Those lords and knights that heard King Charlemagne  
Cry out thus, wept, and were rendered silent.  
The sovereign's ranks scattered o'er the plain,  
The wounded and the sound, their sole intent  
A swift escape, nor order did maintain,  
Pressing upon the place, as on they went,  
Where Ruggiero and Rinaldo fought,  
That saw them not, but only honour sought.

So great was the mighty rout, so confused  
The mass of those fleeing, those chased behind,  
Stumbling, falling, with fear and dread infused,  
Driving forward, driven back, their actions blind,  
That those two knights stood awhile bemused,  
Ceasing their strokes, their action now confined,  
Till driven, midst that press, from each other,  
The pair could contest their ground no longer.

Forced apart, full weary, caught midst the rout,  
Both were left ill-content, robbed of the prize,  
Having landed blows, turn and turn, about,  
The final outcome they could but surmise.  
Rinaldo, angered, gave a mighty shout:  
'O Lord, above, what sight now meets my eyes?  
Deserting the field, they flee, on every side;  
How then shall a man, on foot, stem the tide?'

And with this, he began to gaze around,  
And, not too far away, saw Baiardo.  
But whene'er he'd covered sufficient ground,  
The horse would wheel, and away twould go.  
Rinaldo, as the steed now made a bound,  
And ran ahead of the knight, cried: 'No, no,  
'Tis no time for games; stay, stay there, I say!  
But the creature, once more, was on its way.



Rinaldo was obliged to chase the steed  
Through a dark wood; and there, amidst the trees,  
We must leave him awhile, though there, indeed,  
He will find high adventure, little ease.  
I must turn to Ruggiero, in great need  
Of his mount, Frontino. Here, if you please,  
Came Bishop Turpin, on that very horse,  
And chanced to pass Ruggiero in his course.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 41-45: RUGGIERO  
RECOVERS HIS MOUNT, FRONTINO, FROM  
BISHOP TURPIN**

You'll recall Turpin had lost his charger,  
And while on foot, surrounded by the foe,  
Had mounted Frontino in a lather,  
When Grifone unhorsed Ruggiero.  
The priest was heading for a vale below  
When the youth saw him pass, in full flow,  
Before his eyes. Imagine his delight,  
As the warrior viewed that welcome sight!

Though on foot he set himself to follow,  
And called aloud: 'Stop, stop, the horse is mine!'  
The good bishop, seeing all flee the foe,  
Was not inclined to halt, and gave no sign  
Of having heard, though much delayed also  
By the Saracens advancing, line on line,  
On the Christians, who so blocked the way  
He was forced to avoid the fierce affray.

Bishop Turpin fled, pursued by the knight,  
Till they reached the depths of a narrow pass  
Between two hills, where Turpin in his flight  
Tumbling down from the charger, rolled, alas,  
Towards a foul, marshy place, in full sight  
Of Ruggiero, who viewed the hapless mass  
Speeding towards the swamp's stagnant water,  
Which soon held him fast, and sucked him under.

Ruggiero, laughing, hastened down the hill,  
To aid the drowning priest, and drag him free.  
He pulled him forth, straining, with a will,  
Caught Frontino, and of his courtesy,  
As the bishop recovered from his spill,  
Offered him to the latter, cheerfully.  
'God help me!' Turpin cried, 'Why, tis clear,  
That I am met with no Saracen here;

For I scarce believe a Saracen by nature  
Owns to such courtesy as you, my friend.  
Nay, take the steed; though tis a fine creature,  
Base would I prove should I seek to defend  
My riding him, or accept your offer.'  
With that the priest, not wishing to offend,  
Sped off, on foot, and once upon the plain,  
Slew a pagan, and, thus, a mount did gain.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 46-49: WHO JOINS THE  
CHRISTIANS' RETREAT TO PARIS**

He rode so swiftly that he reached, again,  
The host of Christians in swift retreat;  
For all that could not flee were quickly slain,  
The field forsaken, and the rout complete.  
Sixteen days they marched, o'er hill and plain,  
Driven back on Paris, chased, in their defeat,  
Through her very gates, deserting the dead.  
Of greater loss has no man heard or read.

Only the valiant Dane, Uggiero,  
Midst those Christians, upheld his honour.  
The royal banner he kept from the foe,  
While doing deeds worthy of his valour.  
Captured were Marquis Oliviero,  
England's Otho, and many another,  
Duke Ricardo, and King Salamone,  
And Desiderio of Lombardy;

While so many were taken then or slain,  
I cannot name, or e'en recall them all.  
Countless valiant knights had toiled in vain,  
And then been captured, or been seen to fall.  
Who can describe the sorrow and the pain?  
The grief that darkened Paris like a pall?  
For all believed then, in their woe and dread,  
That both Rinaldo and the Count were dead.

The aged men, the women, children too,  
Stood guard upon the city wall that night.  
But Paris I must quit, to speak anew  
Of Ruggiero, that brave young knight,  
For, from the slopes above, he had view  
Of a furious duel, a sovereign sight,  
There, below, he could see Bradamante  
That had fought that day gainst Rodomonte.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 50-54: RUGGIERO VIEWS  
THE DUEL BETWEEN BRADAMANTE AND  
RODOMONTE**

In that book of mine, which I completed  
Many days ago, I told of their struggle,  
And how the Count, seemingly defeated  
By Rodomonte, near left the saddle;  
Yet the warrior-maid ne'er retreated,  
Engaging Algiers' fierce king in battle.  
Her, I sang, the flower of Chiaramonte,  
That fought alone; fairest Bradamante.

I've told how Count Orlando left the scene,  
And later met with strange adventure,  
While the maid, tis Bradamante I mean,  
Remained to face mortal harm and danger.  
None had approached, and sought to intervene,  
Ere the youth had arrived on his charger;  
And so, in bitter conflict, they'd fought on.  
Twas they that Ruggiero gazed upon.

As he crested the hill, the valiant knight  
Could see the duel, yet in play, below,  
And paused there, to look on with delight,  
At this Christian, who faced a mighty foe.  
For, there ne'er was seen a more splendid fight;  
And, if about the world you chose to go,  
You'd find few to equal Bradamante,  
Or Ulieno's son, fierce Rodomonte.

They showed as great a skill, as now they fought,  
As they had done till then, and e'er would do.  
It seemed they'd but begun, for still they sought  
To conquer, and both seemed as good as new.  
If either struck, the other made retort,  
Without a pause, and swiftly followed through.  
With their blows, they raised bright sparks of fire,  
That seemed to reach the skies above, or higher.

Now, Ruggiero knew not either's name,  
For he'd not met with either one before;  
Knew not their arms, but now gazed on those same,  
For the pair seemed experienced in war,  
Well-matched indeed; for, here was no mere game,  
Their strength and skills comparable, he saw.  
Christian and Saracen, it was plain,  
With valour, sought their honour to maintain.

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 55-57: HE TELLS THE  
CHRISTIAN OF CHARLEMAGNE'S RETREAT**

Descending, he drew near, and then did say:  
'If one of you two worships Christ, as lord,  
Then cease your fight, and hark to what I say,  
For grievous news, to you, I here afford.  
Charlemagne is routed, in fierce affray,  
And if you would follow him, be assured  
You must brook no delay, but go quickly.  
He retreats now, by way of Gascony.'

At his words, Bradamante's face grew pale,  
And, in anguish, the reins fell from her hand,  
She turned to Rodomonte, saying: 'Fail  
Not, my brother, this plea to understand:  
Let me of your courtesy make avail;  
Permit me with my king to flee, or stand,  
Let me be near him at this time, say I;  
Beside him I would be, and there would die!'

But Rodomonte answered, with a sneer,  
'Here's my reply. I was joined, in fair fight,  
With the Count, ere you chose to interfere;  
And Orlando had the worst of it, fair knight!  
No, no, you shall remain and perish here,  
Unless you can defeat me, such is right.  
Would you go, ere I've fallen to the field?  
Come, try me, yet, and see if I will yield!'

**BOOK III: CANTO IV: 58-60: RUGGIERO TAKES  
ON THE DUEL WITH RODOMONTE**

When Ruggiero heard this fierce reply,  
He had a great desire to fight the man,  
And answered Rodomonte, with a sigh:  
'How can I not sorrow,' the youth began,  
'To hear a knight, so fair a plea, deny?  
A tree that bears no leaves is better than  
Nobility without true courtesy;  
A House without issue, or the cruel seal'

Then, turning to Bradamante: 'Fair knight,  
He cried, 'Grasp the reins, journey where you please!  
If this gentleman would prolong the fight,  
Let him battle with me, nor need he cease.'  
The warrior-maid, silently, took flight,

While Rodomonte cried: 'Be at your ease;  
It seems you're a physician by nature,  
And so must seek out hurt and pain, ever.

Why die for another? You should be chained  
Like a madman. Defend yourself, I say!  
Ruggiero answered not, his look restrained,  
But raised his blade and swung, without delay;  
The pagan too. Scant advantage was gained,  
For each was fierce and strong; either way  
Their duel might have gone; what did ensue,  
God willing, I will shortly sing for you.



# BOOK III: CANTO V: RUGGIERO AND BRADAMANTE



## ARGOMENTO.

*Bradamante, e Ruggier fanno battaglia  
Contra quei che la Dama hanno assaltata  
Oue mostra ciascun quanto ch'ei vaglia,  
Sin che via con inganno è lei menata  
Troua Ruggiero coperti di maglia,  
Gradasso, e il Re di Tartari. Spirtata  
Guerra con Mandricardo fa in disparte  
Per l'insegna. Gli acqueta Brandimarte.*



## ALLEGORIE.

**RUGGIERO**, e **Bradamante** che cercandosi l'un l'altro non si seppero trouare, sono de gli effetti de gli innamorati, che spesso la **Fortuna** fa, che se ben sono di vn uolere, pure non ponno hauere il cor contento.

**Brandimarte**, che acqueta **Gradasso**, e **Mandricardo** dalla contesa che haueano insieme, è figurato per l'huomo prudente, il quale vedendo controuerfia tra alcuni, cerca rappacificarli insieme.

**BOOK III: CANTO V: 1-5: THE DUEL WITH  
RODOMONTE CONTINUES**

I've culled many a flower in the meadow,  
Bright crimson and yellow, white and blue,  
And made a fine bouquet, a pretty show,  
Of violets, roses, pinks, and lilies too.  
If you like sweet perfume, come where they blow,  
And choose those you prefer, of any hue.  
Some like the rose best, and some the lily,  
Some like this kind, and some its contrary.

Many and varied is my fair garden,  
For I've planted it all with love and war.  
Fiercer souls seek the battle's guerdon,  
Sweet and gentle hearts serve the god Amor.  
Let me raise, once more, my brave weapon  
(Tis but a pen!) and visit, as before,  
Ruggiero who'd tackled Rodomonte.  
None on earth ever fought so fiercely.

Blade against blade they whirled about,  
Those two brave warriors, prepared to die.  
The first to receive a mighty clout  
Was Ruggiero, on his shield; it did rely  
On three layers of iron, made more stout  
By four of bone, yet still apart did fly,  
For Rodomonte, stupendously strong,  
Sliced away at the target, and its thong.

From top to bottom he marred that shield,  
And knocked quite a third of it to the ground.  
Sour plums for bitter the youth did yield,  
And a weakness in the king's armour found.  
He sliced his targe in two, his arm revealed,  
Tore plate and mail, and all the links unbound,  
As one tears a spider's web, neither's armour  
Proved impervious to the other's valour.

And death would have been the destiny,  
Of both the warriors in that fierce fight;  
But the hour had not yet arrived, clearly,  
That would signal the end of that fair knight,  
(Ruggiero, I mean). Bradamante  
Intervened, that maid so fair to the sight,  
(Though, as yet, she'd not made her status plain!)  
Who'd gone, they thought, to join King Charlemagne.

**BOOK III: CANTO V: 6-9: BRADAMANTE  
RETURNS, TO APOLOGISE TO RUGGIERO**

Yet after she'd travelled a mile or two  
Without reaching the Christian army,  
Who had already retreated from view,  
She'd cried: 'O ungrateful Bradamante!  
Chastising herself, 'that fair knight, whom you  
Know not, you've used most villainously.  
He might well deem you discourteous,  
While he himself shows more than courageous.

He takes on the duel, to uphold your cause,  
And defends your leaving, with his honour.  
Though you find our host in the enemy's jaws,  
Captured or dead, the king a prisoner,  
Yet you must first obey chivalry's laws,  
And return to that vale to find him, ever.  
Though duty binds you to the emperor,  
You are bound to yourself and honour more.'

With this, she wheeled about and returned,  
And, in as brief a while, reached the hill,  
And came where that pair of warriors churned  
The ground, battling furiously still.  
She arrived just as Ruggiero had earned  
The victory, by an exercise of skill,  
Striking at the head of Rodomonte,  
So fiercely, he left him stunned utterly.

The king slumped, unconscious, in the saddle,  
And dropped his sword to the mud below,  
While Ruggiero, ending thus the battle,  
Withdrew, for he now faced an unarmed foe.  
Bradamante, ashamed not a little,  
Thought: 'I was right to praise the warrior so,  
For his courtesy, and I am much to blame.  
I must know his country, his rank, and name.'

**BOOK III: CANTO V: 10-14: RODOMONTE  
CONCEDES, AND LEAVES FOR THE SARACEN  
CAMP**

As soon as she'd descended to the plain,  
She raised the visor of her helm, and rode  
To Ruggiero, then hastened to explain:  
'Accept my apology, having showed

But little courtesy, I return again;  
Our errors bring us blame, and so tis owed;  
For an error I made, and am to blame,  
In seeking to pursue King Charlemagne.

I was not so eager to perform that same,  
When the distress I felt had abated  
Somewhat, and now I beg I might reclaim  
My part in the duel.' As she related  
Her actions, fierce Rodomonte came  
To his senses once more, pride deflated,  
For he saw he was defeated, and found  
His hand empty, his sword there, on the ground.

Ashamed, he cursed Heaven and his fate,  
For allowing him to be conquered so.  
And then, reflecting on his present state,  
Addressed the victorious Ruggiero,  
For, with lowered eyes, he sought to placate  
That warrior: 'We have fought, and I now know  
In this world there's no finer cavalier,  
Nor will I enhance my fame fighting here.

Even were I with good fortune blessed,  
And were to overcome you in the field,  
That fact would prove but little, I suggest,  
For, to your courtesy, I still must yield.  
Stay therefore, and I will join the rest.  
Yet if my services, with sword and shield,  
You should at any time choose to demand,  
The greater shall the lesser then command.'

Rodomonte, not seeking a reply,  
Departed, in a moment, once he'd laid  
Hands again on his sword, as he passed by,  
(For twas his great-grandfather's treasured blade)  
And reached the Saracen camp, by and by,  
While Ruggiero with Bradamante stayed.  
Sarza's monarch, shamed by the whole affair,  
There retired, to brood, consumed by despair.

### **BOOK III: CANTO V: 15-17: BRADAMANTE AND RUGGIERO DEPART TOGETHER**

As I said, Ruggiero yet remained  
With Bradamante, for the king had gone.  
The maiden a deep interest maintained

In learning his name; she mused thereon,  
And yet found no way, readily explained,  
Of obtaining that same; scheme had she none.  
Afraid that it might cause him displeasure,  
She now sought to leave the knight at leisure.

But Ruggiero, exclaimed, courteously:  
'I'll not permit you to take the road, alone.  
The barbarous creatures of this country  
Attack all travellers, known or unknown.  
As you ride, I shall keep you company,  
For no affront to you could I condone.  
When they see that we are two, they'll think twice,  
If not, we'll overcome them, in a trice.'

Bradamante was pleased by his offer,  
And so, the pair departed, together,  
And she began searching for an answer  
As to who he might be; this he did proffer,  
After she'd commenced by raising another,  
More distant, query, leading him, thereafter,  
From the mountain to the plain, so to speak,  
Until she'd obtained what she did seek.

### **BOOK III: CANTO V: 18-22: RUGGIERO CLAIMS TO BE OF TROJAN ANCESTRY**

His tale was long; he started from the theft  
That first caused the Greeks to take offence  
When Menelaus, of Helen bereft,  
Stirred war against Troy, in recompense;  
And how treacherous Sinon, through a deft  
And cunning plan, compromised Troy's defence,  
The Greeks concealed within the Wooden Horse;  
And how the city was burnt, in due course.

He told her how, in their cruel arrogance,  
The Greeks devised a ghastly spectacle,  
Desiring that not a single instance  
Of Priam's House survive the debacle:  
'The pitiless victors left naught to chance,  
Slaughtering them all, as with the sickle  
Men cut wheat. The lovely Polyxena,  
They slew before her anguished mother.

But when for Astyanax they sought,  
(Hector and Andromache's little boy)  
His mother of a desperate plan bethought  
Herself, and executed that same ploy,  
She seized another's child, ere she was caught,  
Though the Greeks every means did thus employ  
To annihilate their House; in slaying her,  
And the child she held, they could but err.

For her true son, Astyanax, lay hid  
In a rock tomb, a deep and ancient cave,  
Midst a dark grove, silent, as he was bid;  
And thus, by a ruse, she the lad did save.  
With him she left a knight, who'd ever bid  
To be brave Hector's friend; to him she gave  
Instructions; thus, escaping from the pyre  
Of burning Troy, they reached the Isle of Fire.

They had travelled o'er the sea to that place,  
Though wandering here and there; twas Sicily,  
Where Mount Aetna's flames above it trace  
Their passage in the sky. A prodigy  
The young lad was to prove, of strength and grace.  
He was handsome, and in many a country  
Did great deeds; Corinth, and Argos too,  
Fell to him, whom the false Aegisthus slew.

### **BOOK III: CANTO V: 23-27: ASTYANAX RULED IN MESSINA, AND HIS SON WAS POLIDORO**

Now, before his death, he ruled Messina,  
And loved, and wed, a royal lady,  
Whom in love's warfare he did conquer,  
Queen of Syracuse, and all the country  
Thereabout. A giant named Agranor, he  
Being King of Agrigento, had sorely  
Oppressed this queen, till Hector's brave son  
In battle saw that monstrous Greek undone.

He married the lady, and then waged war  
In Greece till he was cunningly deceived  
By vile Aegisthus, on that foreign shore,  
That a vile scheme to slay him had conceived.  
The news of his defeat and death men bore  
To Messina, yet there twas not received,  
Ere the Greeks, with a vast and mighty fleet,  
Laid siege to the place; the surprise complete.

Now the lady was with child, six months gone,  
When fair Messina was thus blockaded.  
The Messenians, under siege, thereupon,  
Made terms with those who had invaded,  
To spare the city suffering; whereupon,  
The Greeks slew them all, once persuaded  
The Messenians could not fulfil their oath  
To deliver them the woman. She was loath

To remain, if the city was surrendered,  
And, fleeing that very night, all alone,  
Crossed the straits in a boat, undefended,  
Amidst the waves, that chilled her to the bone,  
And, beating on the shore, near upended  
The little vessel, while the wind made moan,  
She unheard by those ashore; however  
She yet reached Reggio, and safe harbour.

The Greeks had given chase but in vain,  
For in seeking the path of least danger,  
They were caught by the gale, to their pain,  
Shattered by the waves, and torn asunder,  
Retribution for the knight they had slain.  
When the lady became a fond mother,  
She gave her son the name Polidoro,  
Being golden, and a gift to her also.

### **BOOK III: CANTO V: 28-34: RUGGIERO LISTS POLIDORO'S DESCENDANTS, DOWN TO HIS OWN BIRTH**

Polidante was the heir to Polidoro,  
And Floviano was his offspring's name  
Who in Rome made his dwelling, you should know,  
And two fine sons were granted to that same,  
They were Constante and Clodovaco;  
Two lines, known separately to fame,  
Stemmed from them. From Constante, Constanto,  
And then, from that latter, came Fiovo,

Then Fiorello that great champion,  
Fioravante from him, and of that strain,  
Many a lord, down to Pipin, whose son  
Of France's royal stem, is Charlemagne.  
The other line was a still finer one,  
For Clodovaco did his House maintain,  
Gianbarone his issue, Ruggiero  
His son in turn, ancestor of Buovo.

From Buovo, two trees took root, once more,  
 And flourished in separate places also:  
 One Southampton, on England's pleasant shore,  
 One in Calabria, fair Reggio.  
 The latter place obeyed the rule of law,  
 Well ruled and governed, the histories show,  
 Till his rebel son slew Duke Rampaldo,  
 And his own brothers; tis a tale of woe.

This Beltramo rose against his father.  
 The treachery began through his ill love  
 For Galaciella, my dear mother.  
 This was when Agolante did remove  
 From Africa, with many another,  
 Crossing to fair Italy which did prove  
 A vast success, peopling Apulia:  
 His daughter was Galaciella.'

So, Ruggiero informed Bradamante,  
 Telling the tale of his ancestral line,  
 And he continued in that vein, humbly:  
 'Tis not from any vanity of mine,  
 That I say no other House has, truly,  
 Wrought as many deeds, as valiant and fine,  
 As has ours, though I confess I make one  
 Of that family; I am Ruggiero's son;

Ruggiero, whose father was Rampaldo,  
 And the second of us to be so named.  
 Virtue's light, midst his brothers, you should know;  
 For his prowess and for every grace, so famed.  
 His betrayal, and murder, by Beltramo,  
 Were the most unnatural that e'er shamed  
 Those Italian shores, for that vile brother,  
 Betrayed both his brothers and his father!

And he brought disaster on Reggio,  
 The city burnt, and its people slain,  
 While Galaciella fled from the foe,  
 Ruggiero's wife, mourning, and in pain,  
 And gave herself to the ebb and flow  
 Of the tide, reaching the far shore in vain;  
 In vain, that is, to save her own life so.  
 She died bearing me, in grief and woe.

### BOOK III: CANTO V: 35-37: HE TELLS HER OF HIS BEING RAISED BY ATLANTE THE WIZARD

I was raised by an old necromancer,  
 Who fed me lion's sinew and marrow,  
 Naught else, in truth; my nourishment ever.  
 Casting spells, all about the mage would go  
 In that hostile land, cruel and bitter,  
 And caught snakes, as they slithered to and fro,  
 And dragons, and would shut them in a pen,  
 And set me there, to fight them in their den,

Though tis true the wizard would quench their flames,  
 And pluck the poisonous fangs from their jaws.  
 Such was my sport, such were my pleasant games,  
 At that tender age, such my curious wars.  
 When I was older, seeking other aims,  
 Not wishing me forever trapped indoors,  
 He led me through the forest, where I sought  
 Many a savage beast in Nature's court.

He'd have me track many a wild creature;  
 Many a strange thing I hunted midst the trees.  
 Fierce gryphons, and winged steeds, I remember  
 Chasing after. Yet such things must displease.  
 I fear I but ramble on forever,  
 And am bound to set you now at your ease.  
 To answer what you asked,' he gave a sigh,  
 'Ruggiero, of Trojan blood, am I.'

### BOOK III: CANTO V: 38-43: BRADAMANTE, IN TURN, REVEALS HER LINEAGE

While he spoke the maid scarcely breathed at all,  
 As he uttered his long and curious tale,  
 Though, upon his form, many a glance did fall,  
 For that she scanned, in every last detail;  
 And his features did so her mind enthrall  
 She could scarcely attend; her holy grail  
 Was his face, the which she would rather view  
 Than Paradise, amidst the happy few.

Bradamante uttered not a word, tis true,  
 Till Ruggiero said: 'Come now, brave knight,  
 I would gladly hear, if it pleases you  
 To tell me, of your name and your birthright.'  
 Then the maid, on fire with love, spoke anew,



Answering his request (her eyes shone bright):  
 ‘Thus, may you see the heart, you do not see,  
 In my revealing what you ask of me.

I descend from Chiaramonte, and Mongrana;  
 Of their deeds, I know not if you’ve heard aught;  
 Though the fame of Rinaldo, my brother,  
 Would have reached your country, I’d have thought.  
 Both born of the same father and mother,  
 And alike in looks, divided in naught,  
 Are he and I; that you may know his face,  
 Come, but look upon my own, for a space.’

With that she doffed her helm; her hair blew free,  
 That had the brightness, and the hue, of gold.  
 While her looks owned to rare delicacy;  
 Both ardour and vigour that face did hold.  
 The bold hand of Love had painted surely  
 The eyebrows and the lips he did behold;  
 And her gaze was livelier and sweeter  
 Than any could portray; nor dare I offer.

When her angelic features were revealed,  
 Ruggiero was amazed and overcome.  
 The beating heart, within his breast concealed,  
 Trembled, as if scorched by fire; struck dumb,  
 He knew not what to say, to love did yield,  
 Tongue cleaving to his mouth, his body numb.  
 He had not feared her with her helm in place,  
 But felt dismay now he could view her face.

Bradamante continued: ‘Ah, my lord!  
 I beg that you grant me one sole request.  
 If grace, to a lady, you did e’er afford,  
 Come reveal all your face, at my behest.’  
 But as she spoke, and he her gaze explored,  
 A sudden thrum the air around possessed.  
 ‘What, in God’s name, is this?’ Ruggiero cried,  
 Seeing armed men forth from the forest ride.

**BOOK III: CANTO V: 44-48: THEY ARE  
 ASSAILED BY A GROUP OF SARACEN KINGS**

On came Mordante and Pinadoro,  
 With Martasino, and Daniforte,  
 Beside Bernica’s king, Barigano,  
 Seeking stragglers from the rout. Full boldly,

Ruggiero raised his hand and cried: ‘Ho!  
 Halt where you are, and hearken unto me.  
 Tis Ruggiero; advance not, I say,  
 Rest there, for we intend to pass this way.’

In truth, most of the knights had failed to hear,  
 For they were shouting as they left the trees,  
 While Martasino wild as ever did appear,  
 And like the tempest hearkened to no pleas.  
 He charged at Bradamante; drawing near,  
 He struck her on the head, and sought to seize  
 The bridle (she’d doffed her helm you’ll recall)  
 While she prayed for aid, and sought not to fall.

That fair warrior, disdaining to flee,  
 Raised her shield as a means of defence,  
 But Martasino striking at it fiercely,  
 Sliced it open, and repeated the offence,  
 Wounding her head, again. Bradamante  
 Swooned not, for her anger was intense.  
 With all her might she struck Martasino,  
 As, to her aid, now hastened Ruggiero.

Daniforte called to him: ‘Engage him not!  
 Tis Martasino; aid not the Christian!  
 But Barigano said naught, who’d not forgot  
 That Ruggiero had slain his cousin,  
 Bardulasto, that traitor, on the spot,  
 Who had employed the point of his weapon,  
 In contravention of the rules agreed.  
 Barigano sought revenge for the deed.

If you recall, it was during the tourney  
 That Agramante held at Mount Carena,  
 (Though, no doubt, you do so but slightly,  
 For I, that told of it, scarce remember!)  
 Barigano gripped his sword two-handedly  
 And struck at Ruggiero’s head, however,  
 Though he thought to unseat him from his steed,  
 The young knight remained unmoved by the deed.

**BOOK III: CANTO V: 49-53: RUGGIERO SEEKS  
 TO DEFEND THE WOUNDED BRADAMANTE**

He grasped his saddle-bow, and sat tight,  
 Using all the strength that he possessed.  
 Offended rather, by that blow, the knight

Waxed fiercer, like a lion when hard pressed.  
 Bradamante, meanwhile, slipped from the fight,  
 And, with a pennant from a lance, she dressed  
 Her wound (that spear and ensign she had found,  
 Where it had lain, abandoned, on the ground).

Her helmet once donned, her visor lowered,  
 Sword in hand, she now returned to the fray,  
 And the valiant maid, now much recovered,  
 Set out to make vile Barigano pay  
 For the blow to Ruggiero; he shuddered,  
 Her foe, as she sliced his armour away,  
 Steel-plate, and mail beneath it, all in vain;  
 Severed, at the waist, he fell to the plain.

Ruggiero who himself had turned his head,  
 All set to repay the blow he'd received,  
 Witnessing that mighty stroke, paused instead;  
 One beyond a woman's power he'd believed.  
 Barigano had assailed her, and was dead;  
 All the rest that same idea had conceived,  
 But too late. They spurred their steeds at the foe,  
 Too tardily to aid Barigano.

Seeking revenge, and mightily enraged,  
 They attacked the warrior-maid as one.  
 Ruggiero, at once, their swords engaged,  
 Seeking to stop the fight, ere twas begun.  
 He tried to intervene, dismayed, outraged,  
 As Pinadoro, piqued by what was done,  
 And Martasino cried: 'Ruggiero,  
 You dishonour King Agramante so!'

On hearing those words of insult, the knight,  
 Grew wrathful, all his face was now afire,  
 His eyes flamed, his very core alight,  
 As he cried out, nigh consumed by his ire:  
 'You are the traitors, here, before my sight;  
 To no form of courtesy do you aspire.  
 As I will prove, if you approach too close,  
 Although you outnumber us, Heaven knows!'

### **BOOK III: CANTO V: 54-57: TOGETHER, BRADAMANTE AND RUGGIERO WAGE WAR**

With that the knight charged at Pinadoro.  
 Now blood will drench the field, as you will see,  
 For Bradamante, and brave Ruggiero,  
 Those ardent hearts, will labour mightily,  
 Before their faces, at their sides, the foe.  
 For those five villains had brought an army;  
 Those five kings I mean, who, you will find,  
 Led a troop of men, that came on behind.

In total, there were fifty squires or more,  
 Gathered together, in their company,  
 And others followed, soldiers from the corps.  
 Yet even had they not ridden slowly,  
 The lady, from the love that she now bore  
 Ruggiero, would have shown no fear, truly,  
 But rather would have striven, so that same  
 Would find her skill e'en greater than her fame.

And the knight felt no lesser a desire,  
 To show the warrior-maiden that he  
 Was powerful and valiant; full of fire,  
 His heart burned like a star, radiantly;  
 His soul and spirit love possessed entire,  
 Beat within, and urged him on fiercely.  
 That the lady was wounded, and still bled,  
 Would have stirred him to anger were he dead.

In such wrath, as I've described clearly,  
 The warrior sought out Pinadoro,  
 While no less valiantly Bradamante,  
 Singled out the vicious Martasino.  
 Yet, too short a space remains to me  
 To describe their actions in this canto.  
 I'll reserve the rest for another day,  
 If God will aid me, as He does alway.

BOOK III: CANTO VI: SEEKING DURINDANA



ARGOMENTO.

Torna la bella Bradamante ardita,  
Che seguir uol la pugna col Pagano,  
Ma si chiama egli uinto, indi partita.  
Fa che seguir intende il Re Africano  
Narra Ruggier a la dama gradita,  
Et essa a lui suo ceppo almo, e soprano  
Riman ella senza elmo a la foresta,  
Ferita a tradimento nella testa.



ALLEGORIE.

I Pagani che a tradimento ferirno Bradamante, ma essa aiutata da Ruggiero mostrò tra loro il suo ardire, ne mostra che'l Diauolo spesso volte tira l'huomo, benchè prudente con qualche modo a se, ma poi non lo può in tutto superare, perchè egli accorto di ciò è risvegliato da' vitij, mediante la virtù si salua, e quello riman schernito.

Olan. Innam. KK

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 1-6: RUGGIERO AND BRADAMANTE FIGHT THE SARACEN KINGS**

My lords, if you have ever loved, conceive  
Of the deeds that in battle they will do,  
That pair, each heart destined to receive  
The other, and create one heart not two.  
Heaven's angry lightning you may believe  
Could not part them for long; bound anew,  
Merciless Fortune, even Death, Man's lot,  
Could not destroy such love, untie the knot.

Noble Ruggiero had, as I have said,  
Cracked Pinadoro's helm, and plucked his crest,  
By hammering on that king's royal head,  
The blow nigh unsaddling him, I attest.  
Elsewhere Martasino, rousing dread,  
Was matched in fiery battle by the best,  
For the lady cried: 'Hearken well to me,  
There's a helm upon my head now, you see!'

And, with that, she dealt a two-handed blow,  
A tremendous, and fear-inducing thing,  
That knocked him backwards, her ill-meaning foe;  
And to the ground he'd have dropped, that king,  
Had not Mordante now chosen to show  
His recklessness, by entering the ring,  
Charging from the side, his backhand stroke  
Designed to fell her; the force of it no joke.

To her aid, at speed, rode Ruggiero,  
For he had kept an eye on Bradamante,  
And, although engaged with Pinadoro,  
Quit that duel to support her, swiftly.  
Like a tempest, at sea, he struck the foe,  
Splitting the shield grasped tight by Mordante,  
Slicing his steel breastplate through and through,  
Piercing his chain mail, and the bare flesh too.

Pinadoro had pursued Ruggiero,  
And, on his neck, he struck the valiant knight,  
Piercing the collar, a full inch below,  
Though his iron mail blocked the sword outright.  
Ruggiero wheeled his steed, Frontino,  
And, bounding forward, recommenced their fight,  
Striking at Pinadoro's head, I say,  
As Martasino, charging, sped his way.

While the battle was raging thus, to and fro,  
Came Daniforte, his troop thirty strong,  
Armed with shield and lances, in full flow,  
And dressed as are the Moors, if I'm not wrong,  
For Bradamante raised her brows at the show,  
Wondering at the neatness of that throng,  
For those were woven cloths, and silks, they wore,  
That, severed, through the air like sails do soar.

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 7-14: BRADAMANTE AIDS RUGGIERO AND SLAYS MARTASINO**

The maid spurred her steed, and struck a Moor  
That rode a jennet; his mount white in hue,  
Its mane and tail dyed with henna; once more  
She sliced him on the back and flank, then flew,  
Ere he had fallen to the earth, to score  
A like hit gainst an Arab; her attack  
Piercing again the left side, and the back.

That pair of victims nigh died together,  
One fell here, one slumped, there, to the ground,  
For, as the one reached Hell's gate, the other  
Arrived, and at the former's side was found.  
Daniforte charged the maiden-warrior,  
Then wheeled away, like lightning, at a bound,  
Neither encouraged, nor inclined to stay,  
Whenever Bradamante turned his way.

Bold Daniforte rode a Moorish mare,  
Its coat grey like a rat, its head dark black,  
So swift it never landed, I would swear,  
On all four feet; so quick in the attack.  
The king but little armour chose to wear,  
Neither steel-plate nor mail, to front or back,  
But bore a scimitar slung o'er his chest,  
A lance, a shield; his silk turban his crest.

Armed as I've described, the Saracen  
Was ever seeking to provoke the maid,  
Drawing near to her and, now and again,  
Jabbing hard, at her face, with his lance-blade.  
Lo! She caught sight of Martasino then;  
A blow gainst Ruggiero he'd essayed,  
By striking him on the back, from behind;  
To unseat him from his mount, twas designed.

But Bradamante arrived as the knight,  
Ruggiero, I mean, was dealt the blow.  
To his brave charger's neck, he now held tight;  
Barely conscious he seemed, nigh-on brought low.  
Swift aid, in time, she brought him, in that fight,  
For he might well have died, and gone below,  
Had she not pounced, like a goshawk, there,  
That pounces on a partridge from the air.

Martasino attacked her; Mordante,  
And bold Pinadoro, charged to the fight.  
Many more came to aid Daniforte,  
To fore and rear of our valiant knight.  
She, disdainful the rest, a treasury  
Of subtle martial skills, fixed her sight  
Above all, on the dread Martasino,  
Scorning all the others amongst the foe.

She was possessed by such deep anger  
That she almost slew the Saracen king,  
Whose strength helped but little in the matter,  
His chest pierced, his helm split; his ring  
Of companions were of scant use either.  
She had set her heart on ending the thing,  
And, no matter what, sending him below,  
As she circled, seeking the mortal blow.

At last, in vexation, she dropped her shield,  
Exposing her side and, two-handedly,  
Dealt a fierce stroke that his bare head revealed,  
While her weapon, still descending swiftly,  
Sank to his waist; the monarch's fate was sealed,  
By a well-sharpened sword, wielded bravely.  
Ere the king was struck, Ruggiero came to,  
All that wondrous deed within his view.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VI: 15-20: SHE PURSUES DANIFORTE WHO FEIGNS FLIGHT**

Young Ruggiero now returned to the fray,  
His face crimson, such that it shone like flame.  
Pagans, beware; Death haunts your steps this day!  
The die is cast, and mortal is the game!  
Daniforte, saw no course but delay,  
For Martasino, a monarch known to fame,  
And Barigano, were dead; while on the plain  
Lay forty or more, dying there, or slain.

He, and Mordante, and Pinadoro,  
And some eight or so other knights remained.  
The maiden was beheading her next foe,  
Swift victory o'er the rest having gained.  
Consulting together, whether bold or no  
Twas Daniforte that they then ordained  
To attack the maid, then feign a retreat,  
While the rest sought Ruggiero's defeat.

When that young warrior renewed the dance,  
His first partner was on horseback; indeed,  
Strange was the ball, for in his swift advance,  
He sliced him to the saddle on his steed.  
No armour had the man, by circumstance:  
Though Genoese, he dressed as was agreed  
Among the Moorish ranks; thus, his weapon  
And gear he'd changed with his religion.

Ruggiero slew him, and a knight nearby.  
Brave Bradamante, too, pursued the war;  
While Daniforte hung back, cautiously,  
And now and then attacked her, as before.  
At last, he struck at her hauberk, fiercely,  
Though it did little damage, to be sure,  
For the hesitant ne'er strike hard enough.  
Bradamante turned, his assault to rebuff.

Disinclined to stay, the rogue took to flight.  
She spurred hard at her charger, and pursued,  
Wishing to slay the irritant outright,  
Though twas a curious thing now ensued,  
For he, who should have sped out of sight,  
Lingered, and feigned injury, to delude  
The warrior-maid. That piece of carrion,  
Moaning aloud, deceitfully, cantered on.

Pinadoro, Mordante, and the rest,  
(The half dozen that remained of the pack)  
Ruggiero's stout defence now addressed,  
With blows to the warrior's front and back,  
And, using all their skills, upon him pressed.  
But I must leave them, and hasten to track  
Fair Bradamante, who had chosen to ride  
After Daniforte, and chase him, though she died.

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 21-28: BRADAMANTE  
SLAYS HIM, AND THEN WANDERS ALONE**

The villain often stopped to await her,  
Let her approach him, and then spurred away,  
Gallop, for a while, on his courser,  
Then cantering, until she'd made headway.  
He drew her steadily, farther and farther,  
From the battleground, where they'd fought that day,  
Which was ringed by mountains on every side;  
Crossing the plain, which was long and wide.

Then he climbed the mountain slopes ahead,  
And descended to a more distant plain,  
While Bradamante pursued him, as I've said,  
Determined that the wretch be caught and slain.  
Her steed was weary now, yet onwards sped,  
Despite the labours it had long maintained,  
But, when commanded to leap o'er a ditch,  
Fell short, and thus, into the fosse did pitch.

When Daniforte realised her mischance,  
He turned, seemingly free of injury,  
And called out: 'That fall should slow your advance,  
My Christian friend; stay now, and wait for me!  
But she, untroubled by the circumstance,  
Pushing the steed aside, rising swiftly,  
Replied: 'False Saracen, no friend am I;  
Naught holds me here; haste to me, and die!'

Daniforte now circled her, and sought  
To strike by stealth, oft feigning an attack  
Then retreating, as if it were some sport  
Or other, wounding her on breast and back.  
Blood now stained her amour, and she thought  
She might breathe the last breath of all: 'Alack!  
She cried, 'I'm losing strength, and will be slain,  
If I use not his trick, and weakness feign.'

This she murmured, then employed his deceit,  
And feigned that she was falling to the ground,  
Although scarcely requiring that conceit,  
For she scattered drops of blood all around,  
Slowly turning the earth crimson at her feet.  
At the last, she seemed to fall, her steps unsound;  
Done so convincingly, it must be said,  
Looking on, one would have sworn she was dead.

The villain came to see if that were so,  
Not daring to dismount, but with his spear  
Prodding her here and there, high and low,  
To see if signs of life might yet appear.  
This she suffered, silently, till her foe  
Dismounted, tethered his steed, and drew near.  
For as soon as she heard him tread nearby,  
She leapt up, and with her weapon let fly.

Now the pagan, on foot, could scarcely flee,  
Nor retreat in the way he'd done before,  
For the maid beheaded him, instantly,  
And left his spirit to wander Hades' shore.  
By now twas evening there, for suddenly  
The sky grew dark. Many a wound she bore,  
And yet was uncertain which way to ride,  
For strange to her was all that countryside.

Amidst the stones and thorns, by wood and dale,  
The maid had followed that false Saracen;  
Not e'en a hut adorning hill or vale.  
She mounted his steed, and rode on again,  
Leaving the meadow, as the light did fail,  
The reins slack; and, far from the haunts of men,  
Yielding to Fortune, wandered ways unknown,  
Neath the rising moon, wounded, and alone.

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 29-32: RUGGIERO SLAYS  
MORDANTE AND PINADORO**

We must leave Bradamante, to follow  
(I'll speak more of her adventures later!)  
The efforts of the brave Ruggiero,  
Battling hard gainst many a warrior.  
Monodante, and Pinadoro,  
Disregarding the path of honour,  
Circled about him, to bring him low,  
Dealing the youth many a savage blow.

Oh, but to have seen that ardent knight,  
Dividing his efforts between the two!  
Yielding not an inch in that fierce fight,  
Striking here, then there, facing anew  
One then the other, striking with such might  
And so swiftly, he was akin, in my view,  
To the lightning bolt, with thunder overhead,  
That finds the ground, ere a word can be said.

I'll not draw out the thread of my matter  
Rather to tie a knot here's my intent.  
Mordante who'd attacked the warrior  
Now fell victim to the strangest event,  
His face being sliced across, the upper  
Part of his head flew where his helmet went,  
Soaring with that fragment through the air,  
While his neck the lower half yet did share.

The blow was hardly dealt, ere Ruggiero  
Turned to seek Pinadoro, still close by,  
And, in turning, landed a further blow,  
But Pinadoro, unwounded thereby,  
Fled like a greyhound, that, in full flow,  
Free of the leash, the hare doth now espy.  
Amidst the craggy hills and dales he sped,  
Till Ruggiero robbed him of his head.

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 33-38: IN SEARCH OF  
BRADAMANTE, HE ENCOUNTERS TWO KNIGHTS**

The sun was descending in the west,  
When that swift and savage duel ended.  
Twas then, the loving youth, his mind oppressed,  
To the maiden's whereabouts, attended.  
Though night was falling, searching without rest,  
He yet failed to find she who'd defended  
Him bravely against the foe; no trace at all  
Was visible, while, loudly, he did call.

He passed o'er the slopes, down every vale,  
And came, by a cliff, upon two cavaliers.  
Hope rose in his heart, his face grew pale,  
As the sound of horses' hooves met his ears,  
But when those two knights the youth did hail,  
Addressing him with courtesy, his fears  
Were such that, despite their pleasant greeting,  
He scarce could speak a word, on first meeting.

'A robber, this man here must be,' they cried,  
'Who's clad it seems in a dead man's armour,  
And like the corpse says naught!' The knight replied,  
'You are right in that, upon my honour.  
Amor grips my heart's reins, and here doth ride,  
And has so stolen my wits, moreover,  
That I am scarce the man I used to be.  
I pray you, for that fault, yet pardon me.'

'You need offer us no excuse, sir knight,'  
Said the one, 'if Love has you in his thrall,  
Since it proves your nobility, outright;  
Love visits not the base, as I recall;  
And if of our courtesy you'd have sight,  
Why, whate'er you may need, upon us call.'  
He replied: 'I languish thus, to my cost,  
For a dear companion of mine I've lost.

If you're aware a knight has passed you by,  
Then point out to me his path, if you will.  
I'd search the world, for I would rather die  
Than lose him, and live on without him still.'  
So, he spoke, but revealed no more, thereby,  
For jealousy his loving heart did fill.  
Suspicion, ever, in a noble breast,  
Embitters sweet love, though ne'er expressed.

The two knights declared they had not seen,  
Or heard of, any that had passed that way,  
But both declared themselves more than keen  
To aid him in his search that very day.  
This he, alone amidst the savage scene,  
Accepted willingly, and the like did say;  
Adding that the land seemed wild and empty,  
And he was but a stranger to that country.

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 39-42: MANDRICARDO  
CHALLENGES RUGGIERO'S RIGHT TO BEAR HIS  
INSIGNIA**

And so, the three knights rode on together,  
Often pausing to call out 'Bradamante!'  
Searching all that night (fine was the weather),  
Yet finding naught; the land indeed was empty.  
Dawn was visible, the east the colour  
Of the burgeoning rose, when suddenly,  
The one stared hard at Ruggiero's shield,  
His surprise and amazement unconcealed.

'Why, who granted you, sir knight, the licence,  
To bear that insignia on your shield?  
It signifies such worth and excellence  
That, before it, lesser emblems must yield.  
I'll only allow you to bear it hence,  
If you've sufficient prowess in the field  
To gain the honours in a duel with me.  
For I have earned, and own, it totally.'

Ruggiero answered: 'I was not aware  
That this was your insignia; indeed,  
You are wrong to bear it, unless we share  
One ancestry, and are of that same seed.  
I beg you, if tis so, come, we'll compare  
Our Houses, and their root, if tis agreed.  
Where did you earn that emblem, and how?  
Of your name, your family, tell me now.'

The warrior answered, 'My House is one  
That can but be far distant from your own.  
I am the Tartar Agricane's son,  
Although, as yet, my name is little known.  
Upon strange adventure, by force I won  
This shield, in Asia; it is mine alone.  
Why offer incense to the dead? I say:  
Let he who's strongest bear the shield away!'

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 43-47: GRADASSO  
CHALLENGES MANDRICARDO OVER HIS QUEST  
FOR DURINDANA**

The youth accepted, and circled, warily,  
About his bold opponent, and then stared,  
For the man lacked weapons, his hands empty,  
And so replied to him: 'You shall be spared!  
Lacking both lance and sword, how may we  
Contest the thing? With fists, our faces bared?  
What kind of joust, sir knight, do you propose?  
Not simply one of words, I would suppose.

The warrior replied: 'Why, never yet  
Has Fortune failed a man of true valour,  
If I tire not, that shield you may forget,  
Since I'll win it with a cudgel; and no other  
Weapon will I bear, till I gain, and whet  
Orlando's blade (Milone's his father).  
That brave sword he holds; tis mine rather;  
And the name of that blade is Durindana.'

The knight who spoke was Mandricardo,  
But his companion intervened, swiftly.  
'You are sadly deceived', said Gradasso,  
'You'll not gain that blade so readily,  
Not one that is held by brave Orlando.  
You come late to the adventure, believe me,  
And your cause is but dishonest at best;  
I come before you, in claiming the quest!

A hundred and fifty thousand fine men,  
I brought to France from distant Sericana.  
And much trouble and pain I've seen, again,  
In searching for that blade, Durindana.  
It seems that to all the market's open,  
If you have plans to trade there, my brother.  
Yet long ere you fulfil your brave intent  
I'll give your helm, and your head, a dent.

Don't think you'll win the blade without a fight,  
By words alone; you first must meet with me!  
Mandricardo, full of wrath, cried outright:  
'Defend yourself, uphold true chivalry,  
For I well know, mere talk makes not the knight'  
Then, he broke a branch from a tall elm tree,  
That grew there in the field, stripped it bare,  
And with that weapon commenced the affair.

King Gradasso in turn set down his sword,  
And broke a like branch from a lofty pine.  
With these, stupendous blows each did afford  
His foe; dust to the air they did consign,  
From their armour and cudgels, as they scored  
Their brave hits. Ruggiero thought it fine,  
And smiled: 'Tis a game, this, for the miller  
And his mule; strange grain they grind together!'

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 48-53: BRANDIMARTE  
AND FIORELISA APPEAR**

He sought several times to part the pair,  
But they hammered away all the harder.  
Behold, a cavalier the road did share  
With his lady, riding slowly beside her.  
Ruggiero saw them, advancing there,  
And, thus, a pleasant greeting did offer,  
Smilingly, telling them the reason why  
The knights were so engaged; and, with a sigh,

Said: 'I've tried, yet find myself powerless  
To separate those two; they wage their fight  
Over Orlando's sword, and thus address  
The question as to who has greater right  
To the weapon, though neither, I confess,  
Owns the sword, nor is likely to, sir knight.  
Both seem masters of the wooden blade, though;  
I can scarcely bear to watch so fierce a show.



But tell me whence you come; if I err not,  
I seem to know you from some other place;  
Agramante's court, I think, the very spot  
Where we met.' 'Yes, indeed, I know your face,'  
Said the knight, 'nor is your name soon forgot.  
I was there, in Bizerte, for a space,  
Once I had left the East; twas even so;  
Brandimarte am I; you, Ruggiero.'

The warriors embraced, courteously,  
And then, debating the matter, agreed,  
That they should put an end, chivalrously,  
To that fierce clash of cudgels, and with speed.  
It took them quite a while, so violently  
Did that quarrelsome pair battle, indeed,  
The two would hear neither reason nor plea,  
But merely hammered away, ceaselessly.

Yet Brandimarte, forcefully, insisted  
That his words be listened to, calling out:  
'If you do seek the sword, here contested,  
I can lead you to the Count; there, no doubt,  
You can resolve the thing, and be tested  
Against the man!' (He stopped them with that shout),  
'Filled with anger, you merely drop the rein,  
And fight for naught, here; all your blows in vain!

**BOOK III: CANTO VI: 54-57: BRANDIMARTE  
SEEKS HELP IN FREEING ORLANDO**

Could you but save that mighty champion  
From a certain grievous enchantment,  
He'd not refuse to duel for the weapon,  
And should either win, you'd gain your intent.  
The world is full of wonders, and yet none  
More wondrous has been seen, rest content,  
Than this same place to which I go, to see  
If I can set the Count Orlando free.'

This, Mandricardo and Gradasso heard.  
They willingly left off their savage fight,  
And, taking Brandimarte at his word,  
Begged that he would conduct them to that knight.  
He answered: 'Now I'll tell you, what's occurred:  
There is a river that flows, tis clear and bright,  
Less than two leagues from here, you should know,  
Called the River of Laughter, though of woe,

And there the Count is held, by enchantment.  
In Africa, one skilled in wizardry,  
Told me the tale, and, here, tis my intent,  
Being desperate, to set the warrior free.  
I'll not do so alone; if you'd consent  
To grant your aid (tis heaven-sent to me,  
I believe) I know the sea you would brave  
To find the Count and the sword you crave.'

Now, the warriors who'd fought together  
Had a great desire to hasten to that place,  
But the youth said: 'As regards this matter,  
Nor Count nor Durindana, I'd embrace!  
I'll speak no more of that strange adventure,  
The enchantment, or Orlando, for a space,  
Nor whether his release their quest affords.  
I commend myself to you, my dear lords.



BOOK III: CANTO VII: THE RIVER OF LAUGHTER

ARGOMENTO.

Brandimarte Ruggier, e'l Re Gradasso,      Cadon gli ultimi, e van del fiume al basso, :  
 (Che la sorte fe il Tartaro restare)      Ma con Orlando qual gli fa tornare  
 Messo han per liberare Orlando il passo,      Combatte il Conte, e'l Serican Ruggiero,  
 Dal fiore incanto oue ei si stà a danzare,      Gli acqueta, Vario prendono il sentiero.



A L L E G O R I E.

LA Sorte che fe rimaner Mandricardo, e il buon destino, che per ouiar la conte  
 fa che poteua nascer con Orlando per Durindaua, e di nouo con Ruggiero  
 per l'Aquila. fa che esso se ne rimanga adietro.  
 Brandimarte, che libera gli altri compagni da l'incanto, ne mostra che molte  
 cose si fanno con astutia, che altramente non si potrebbe fare.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 1-2: BOIARDO, ON TRUE FRIENDSHIP**

Of far more worth than power or treasure,  
Or honour, or aught else that may delight,  
Are true friends and companions, ever.  
For to those whose mutual love burns bright,  
The ill seems less, the good seems greater,  
Since two such can reveal their hearts outright,  
And every sudden, or familiar, care,  
As with oneself, with the other, one can share.

What use are pearls or gold, in the end,  
Noble station, or vast authority,  
If they must be enjoyed without a friend?  
Who loves not, nor is loved, sad is he,  
Or she; scant happiness it doth portend.  
I say this, with regard to Brandimarte,  
One so firm, in his love for Count Orlando,  
That he sailed the sea, to aid him in his woe.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 3-6: MANDRICARDO IS OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW, AND HEADS FOR PARIS**

That cavalier had journeyed from Bizerte  
To free Orlando from the magic river.  
Mandricardo and Gradasso, lately,  
Had both expressed their desire, moreover,  
To share his quest. Ruggiero had simply  
Declared: 'In regard to this same matter,  
I seek not the Count nor Durindana;  
I yet would share in the quest, however.'

'According to what I heard, the number  
Of my friends, needs be odd, it would seem.'  
The knight replied, 'We'd all ride together,  
But tis not within the enchantment's scheme.  
As to who should do so, there's no better  
Way of choosing than drawing lots, I deem.  
In this bag I'll place one black stone, two white;  
Choose black, another quest claims you outright.'

With all three in the bag, each dipped his hand,  
And so found whether he would go or no,  
With Brandimarte, to the river, as he planned.  
The second to try was Mandricardo,

And he lost the draw, you understand.  
He drew black and went away, full of woe,  
And rode like the devil, more than angry,  
To Paris, now besieged by Agramante.

There the warrior was welcomed, with honour,  
By the Saracens King Agramante led.  
I'll not follow the events there, however,  
At this time, but speak of the Count instead,  
Who had found himself beneath the river,  
Wandering, midst the Naiads, o'er its bed;  
Deep, I say, in the River of Laughter.  
Now listen to what occurred thereafter.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 7-13: THE RIVER OF LAUGHTER, AND THE WALLED GROVE**

The Naiads haunt, like fish, the depths below,  
And there those fair maidens take their pleasure.  
Weaving subtle enchantments, midst the flow,  
To achieve their wishes in full measure.  
Since many a maid, that lacks a man, feels woe,  
They're oft in love with some knight or other;  
Full plenty in this world feel such an ache,  
Though not all are at the bottom of a lake!

Neath that stream, called the River of Laughter,  
They wrought a palace, of crystal and gold,  
That was far fairer than any other,  
And there they danced in that watery hold.  
I told you how, dismounting from his charger,  
Orlando sought the waves, clear and cold,  
To quench his thirst, by that pleasant shore.  
It's how my last book ended; now hear more.

You'll recall the maids welcomed him with joy,  
To their wondrous mansion, there below,  
Where their enchantments they did employ;  
And enamoured, enthralled, amidst the flow,  
Held by a love whose sweetness ne'er did cloy,  
He wandered, beyond himself and all woe.  
The Naiads, delighted beyond measure,  
Cared but to gaze on their new-found treasure.

Above, beside the river, spread a wood,  
Created by their magic, that contained  
Every species of tree, in flower and bud.

Oak, beech, and ash were there, whose branches  
strained  
Towards the sky, while, in their neighbourhood,  
A pleasant shade and coolness they maintained,  
For they grew, densely layered, broad and tall;  
And, all about this garden, stood a wall.

That fence was wrought of marble, entirely,  
Of white and yellow hues, red and azure,  
And was surmounted by a gallery,  
With columns formed of crystal and amber.  
Let us return to those approaching, swiftly,  
The soundless dance, unconscious however  
Of the Naiads' magic arts; Ruggiero,  
I mean, Brandimarte and Gradasso,

And Fiordelisa, who of their enterprise,  
Spoke further, and comforted them greatly.  
At last, the high wall rose before their eyes,  
Before whose metal gate stood a lady,  
And she (twas a matter of much surmise)  
Appeared to be placed there as a sentry.  
And in her hands the maiden held a sign,  
Which, writ in large letters, read, line by line:

'Desire for true renown, love, and disdain  
All find this path lies open to their will.'  
Such the text, on their side, written plain.  
But the reverse a second text did fill:  
'Love, and disdain, and the desire to gain  
Honour, when they control the mind, instil  
The urge to drive onward with such force  
The mind can ne'er retrace its former course.'

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 14-16: FIORELISA  
ENCOURAGES THE KNIGHTS TO ENTER THE  
WOOD**

The knights arriving there, as I have said,  
The maiden at the gate held up her sign,  
So that it might be clearly seen and read;  
The reverse side yet concealed, by design.  
Therefore, the cavaliers rode straight ahead,  
With confidence, as all there seemed benign,  
And, with Fiordelisa, be it understood,  
Entered, but failed to penetrate the wood.

It was a veritable maze, the trees too dense,  
And broad and tall, and the gate closed behind,  
Rendering the gloom, there, the more intense.  
But Fiordelisa, versed in every kind  
Of magic (and possessed of common sense)  
Called out. 'Drive every fear from your mind!  
Whate'er the danger, where'er we may stray,  
True virtue, and the sword, will find a way.

Dismount from your steed, and use the blade,  
To demolish these trees, and clear a trail.  
And, if aught strange arises in the glade,  
Be not troubled, and let brave thoughts prevail.  
Courage will conquer all; be not afraid.  
Though sound wisdom must guide it, or we fail.'  
So spoke the maid and, being of like mind,  
They dismounted, and left their steeds behind.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 17-23: RUGGIERO FELS  
A LAUREL, WHICH TRANSFORMS TO A MAIDEN**

The three knights descended, as she'd asked,  
And Ruggiero was the first to enter in.  
A laurel blocked his path, thus he was tasked  
With felling it ere he could pass within.  
Its limbs were thick, its solid spread was vast;  
But, sword in hand and eager to begin,  
He attacked the laurel, the which is seen,  
Through heat or cold, to flourish, ever green.

That lovely tree once severed, and brought low,  
(The laurel, whence comes the triumphal wreath),  
A female form from out the trunk did flow,  
A maid with golden tresses and, beneath  
Her long hair, a pair of bright eyes did glow,  
Though she wept, now free of her leafy sheath,  
And spoke sadly, and yet in so sweet a voice  
That twould have made the harshest soul rejoice.

'Sir knight, could you be so cruel,' cried the maid,  
As to delight in my mischance, and sad fate?  
My legs from tangled roots must be remade,  
If you should leave me in my present state,  
My breast as a trunk of wood be displayed,  
My arms long branches, as they were of late,  
My face but bark, my tresses turned once more  
To the twigs and leaves, that they were before.

So, the enchantment works; against our will,  
Each fair maid is transformed into a tree,  
And, there within, enclosed and bound, until  
Some virtuous knight comes to set her free.  
Yet I'll remain possessed of freedom still,  
If, of pity, you will but accompany me  
To the stream and my liberty, thus, earn;  
Else, to my former shape, I must return.'

Young Ruggiero, courteous as ever,  
Swore he would not abandon one so fair,  
Until he'd escorted her to the river,  
So sweetly did the maid beguile him there.  
She led him to the River of Laughter,  
And you should wonder not if, in that affair,  
The man was thus deceived; tis no surprise.  
Such maids enthrall the foolish and the wise.

Once the pair had reached the nearby river,  
The lovely maiden took him by the hand,  
And deprived him of his reason; thereafter,  
A fierce urge gripped his heart, you understand,  
To leap into the clear, sparkling water,  
Nor did she his strong desire countermand,  
But linked her arm in his, and swiftly leapt  
Into the current, as onward it swept.

In the palace of crystal, neath the flow,  
The pair of them were joyfully received.  
Sacripante was there, with Orlando  
And many a knight, equally deceived,  
Now dancing with the Naiads, down below.  
Tambourines and flutes sounded, where none grieved,  
For those folk spent the whole of every day,  
In singing, and in dancing, and in play.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 24-29: GRADASSO,  
LIKEWISE, ENDS UP IN THE RIVER**

Now, Gradasso had entered the dark glade,  
Where he likewise had failed to find a trail,  
And scant progress that valiant knight had made.  
Gainst an ash tree he now pushed, to no avail,  
So, he felled it with the edge of his blade.  
Forth from the trunk, a valiant steed did sail,  
Its coat was dappled grey, ne'er had Nature  
Created so miraculous a creature.

The bridle and the bit were of pure gold,  
And it was richly furnished and adorned  
With pearls and jewels wondrous to behold.  
Gradasso who had scarcely been forewarned  
Unconscious of the dangers it might hold,  
Seized the reins, for all cowardice he scorned.  
Since not a soul was there to tell him, nay,  
He mounted, ere the precious steed could stray.

The charger made a sudden leap, and flew,  
And never touched the solid ground again.  
They soared through the air, then soared anew,  
As high as in dream some folk maintain  
They fly. No joust or battle, in his view,  
Had ever frightened him, but it seems plain  
He was terrified, all that realm in sight,  
To find himself at such a fearsome height.

A hundred feet it bore him, in the air,  
Or higher still; the river showed below,  
As it descended, by that skyey stair,  
For it travelled in an arc, to reach the flow;  
And the steed plunged to the surface there,  
(The speed of its fall was strangely slow)  
Where that enchanted mount, as if in dream,  
Sank, without a ripple, neath the stream.

Down to the very depths sank Gradasso,  
Up to the surface sped the steed, once more,  
Then through the woods at once did swiftly go,  
As if its hooves were winged, to be sure.  
The king, beneath the water, naught did know,  
Of what had occurred the moment before;  
He forgot everything he'd done and seen,  
And danced there with the Naiads, all serene.

To the sound of trumpets, they dallied there,  
In a festive dance, one not known to us,  
For each would kiss the other, of a pair,  
And parted were their lips; twas curious;  
They e'en forgot themselves in that affair,  
And the excuse I would make, is that, thus,  
Planting a kiss on open lips, when meet,  
Every spirit is transformed, tis so sweet.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 30-34: BRANDIMARTE  
IS INSTRUCTED BY FIORDELISA**

In such festivities the knights immersed,  
Midst, music, song, and dance, they interwove,  
While Brandimarte struggled yet, and cursed,  
As he laboured to penetrate the grove.  
Many a stroke of his sword he rehearsed,  
Felling the mighty trees, gainst which he strove,  
Threatened by many an enchantment; though,  
Fiordelisa on him counsel did bestow.

He chopped down a good twenty trees and more,  
And from each one there issued something new;  
Here, some large, brightly-feathered bird would soar,  
There, shone palaces; mounds of treasure too.  
But in vain those enchantments forth did pour,  
For Brandimarte quitting them, ploughed on through  
The grove of trees, seeking the flowing river,  
And ceased not, till he approached the water.

When that valiant warrior reached the shore,  
His face became quite crimson in colour.  
Forgetting his intent, for, once he saw  
Love's fair stream, he hastened to the water,  
Ready to leap (its spell pierced to the core)  
All thought of Orlando gone forever,  
And would have leapt, had not Fiordelisa  
Been there to restrain him, who, earlier,

Had woven four fine garlands, skilfully,  
Each shaped to form a verdant coronet,  
From flowers and herbs of many a country,  
To defeat the spell; on his brow she set  
One of those flowery crowns, most gently,  
And explained carefully, lest he forget,  
The action that he needed to employ,  
That Orlando might true liberty enjoy.

At once that most valiant knight effected  
All that his fair lady had commanded.  
Into the depths he leapt, as directed,  
And sang, and danced, and played, when he landed.  
Yet he kept his wits about him, as expected,  
Unlike the rest; for those crowns she'd handed  
To the knight, and that she'd set upon his brow,  
Enchanted roses with power did endow.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 35-36: HE FREES  
ORLANDO AND THE OTHERS FROM THE SPELL**

Then, amidst the festivities below,  
In that palace wrought of crystal and gold,  
He set one garland upon Orlando,  
One on each of the others, and, behold,  
Their beguilement they now perceived, with woe;  
The foolish scene before them left them cold.  
They abandoned those nymphs, and false delight,  
And issued forth, from the depths, to the light.

Like gourds, first their helmets topped the wave,  
Gleaming wet (each showed a bedraggled crest)  
Then their shoulders, as if from out the grave,  
And then their chest, and waist, and all the rest,  
And soon were o'er the bank the stream did lave,  
Lifted on high, like moths that, in strange quest,  
Are attracted to the flame; blown by the breeze,  
In an instant, they'd crossed the surrounding trees.

**BOOK III: CANTO VII: 37-43: A DWARF  
APPEARS WHO SEEKS AID FROM THE FOUR  
KNIGHTS**

If they'd been asked to say what had occurred  
The three who'd been beguiled could not have said,  
Like those who've dreamed, who not a single word  
Can repeat of the speech that filled their head.  
But now, behold! A dwarf, that onward spurred,  
Appeared, nearby; and he towards them sped,  
Crying: 'My lords, if you love chivalry,  
Then draw nearer, and hearken unto me!

If you'd defend all that is just and right,  
Come, avenge the strangest act of villainy  
That e'er there was, that e'er the earth did blight!  
Gradasso, cried: 'By my faith, assuredly,  
If I were not concerned enchantment might  
Be concealed here, or some such trickery,  
Why, I would be the first to lend my aid,  
For of naught that is real am I afraid!'

The dwarf swore that such was not the case,  
That the adventure involved no deceit.  
Said the Count: 'Who'll assure me that I'll face  
An honest task, and not with magic meet?

I've been beguiled; the bird will not retrace  
Its flight to the snare, its escape complete,  
And fears every branch stirring in the breeze.  
My own self-mistrust causes me unease.'

Ruggiero replied: 'Opinions vary;  
And every man it seems commends his own.  
Some say one should fear the realm of faery,  
And magic arts, and leave such things alone,  
But if an honest knight upholds his duty,  
He cannot but accept the task he's shown,  
And face every strange adventure here,  
Prove himself gainst all foes, and never fear.

So, lead me, O dwarf, through water, flame,  
Or through the air, if you would have me fly.  
I'll accept any task that you might name;  
Naught on earth do I dread, nor in the sky.'  
Orlando and Gradasso blushed with shame,  
Somewhat, and looked each other in the eye,  
While Brandimarte told the dwarf: 'Lead on;  
We will follow.' The dwarf left, whereupon,

As they watched him depart on his palfrey,  
And then amble across the open plain,  
Gradasso turned to the Count and, boldly,  
Declared: 'Since this strange quest we entertain,  
And tis my lot to follow Brandimarte,  
Then your sword Durindana I now deign  
To ask of you, although in truth tis mine;  
Such was captive Charlemagne's design.'

'He promised it to you?' cried Orlando,  
Roused to anger, 'Then ask him for that same!  
I'll say it more than clearly, so you know,  
There's not a cavalier, that dares to claim  
My good sword, that I treat not as a foe.  
If you would gain it, and be known to fame,  
By force, then here it is, and you may try,  
But I'd watch your skin. Come now, don't be shy!

### **BOOK III: CANTO VII: 44-52: GRADASSO AND ORLANDO QUARREL OVER DURINDANA**

While speaking thus, Orlando drew his blade,  
Which neither plate nor mail could e'er withstand.  
Gradasso fumed, and many a feint essayed

With the scimitar he grasped in his hand.  
They lacked a herald, and a king, arrayed  
In royal robes, to issue his command,  
And bar the lists; so, unceremoniously,  
They fought, without trumpets or pageantry.

They began their contest in furious haste,  
Both displaying much contempt and anger,  
And struck together as their foe they faced,  
Blows ringing on their helms; every other  
Mighty stroke the air with sparks of fire graced,  
As if drawn from an anvil, neath the hammer.  
As a tempest sways the trees to and fro,  
So those warriors swayed at every blow.

The Count despatched a mighty stroke indeed,  
Such that it seemed earth trembled at the sight.  
Seeing it descend, with his shield, Gradasso  
Tried to thwart it, while exerting all his might.  
He failed; the targe fell to the ground below,  
Shattered like his hauberk; bare flesh the knight  
Revealed; his gorget and collar did yield,  
Struck with such force they fell upon the field.

Gradasso ground his teeth, and swung once more,  
Two-handedly, and cut away steel armour  
Down to the Count's bare flesh; he gave a roar,  
As that clash of metal raised a clamour.  
Then he laughed aloud, and cried: 'To be sure,  
I've shaved your neatly, upon my honour.  
I'll take no more, my friend, from your chin,  
Since little, there, remains except the skin!'

The Count replied: 'What, you malcontent,  
What's that you say? Know, ere I let you go,  
I'll beat and bruise you to my heart's content,  
You'll learn to laugh the other side of woe!  
'By my faith, that may be your fond intent,  
And if any could so do,' cried Gradasso,  
'Twould be you, but, in truth, none I fear;  
None indeed that I see duelling here.

And even if you seized me by the belt,  
I'd still go where I pleased. Try your skill!  
Come, prove your worth, for scarce a blow I've felt,  
Come, do your worst, and lay on with a will!  
Orlando's face was hot enough to melt;

He cried: 'Words are not deeds! The air they fill,  
Your threats, yet are but worthless in the end,  
As you'll find, by experience, my friend.'

And with that, he swung fierce Durindana  
With both hands, and dealt a mighty blow,  
Knocking the helmet crest from the other,  
Sending the fragments to the ground below,  
And, so denting the steel casque in his anger  
It echoed like a bell. King Gradasso,  
Bent low towards the floor, bright blood did drain  
From out his nose and mouth; he dropped the rein.

And yet that proud knight, more fiercely yet  
Contested the battle, his face aflame,  
And with insolent power, drenched in sweat,  
Struck Orlando's crest, and despatched that same,  
With the cap and mount on which it was set,  
Along the ground, like a ball in some game.  
Bishop Turpin says the echoes, as before,  
Of that helm, travelled for a mile or more.

Orlando nearly fell from his saddle,  
From the force and direction of that blow;  
Like a dying man, his teeth did rattle,  
His stirrups loosened, the reins hung below,  
While his steed departed from the battle,  
And ran about the flatlands, to and fro.  
On his Arabian, chasing after,  
Came Gradasso, seeking Durindana.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VII: 53-54: BRANDIMARTE INTERVENES**

If truth be told, Gradasso might have won,  
But Brandimarte could not bear to see  
Orlando in danger, for there was none  
Loved him so, and, thus, furiously,  
He followed, where'er their chargers did run.  
Gradasso looked back, and cried, archly,  
'Are you seeking trouble too? Come this way,  
There's plenty of space for three to play!'

But, as he was speaking, the Count awoke,  
And sword in hand charged at Gradasso.  
At that (ere either man could land a stroke)  
With soft and civil speech came Ruggiero,

And the dwarf, whom they'd neared, also spoke,  
In like manner, and prayed them now to go  
On the quest he'd named, and cease their rivalry  
For pity's sake, and of true chivalry.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VII: 55-56: THE COMPANY DIVIDES IN TWO**

And so persuasive were they, those two,  
They calmed the pair, ending the duel so;  
Then the knights agreed to divide anew,  
And pursue separate paths. Ruggiero  
And Gradasso, to a tower, in full view,  
Rode with the dwarf, yet warily did go;  
While Brandimarte, and the Count, that day,  
Along the road to Paris, made their way.

Of Ruggiero's and Gradasso's quest  
I'll say no more, but speak of it elsewhere.  
To follow Brandimarte, I think best,  
And Orlando, for that most valiant pair,  
Journeyed through France, scarce halting to rest,  
With Fiordelisa (wise beyond compare  
Regarding enchantments) till, one morn,  
They found Paris, ringed by foes in the dawn.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VII: 57-60: BRANDIMARTE, ORLANDO, AND FIORELISA REACH PARIS**

Agramante, as I've described before,  
Had routed Charlemagne in the field.  
And slain, or captured, score upon score.  
Now, having chased a foe that failed to yield,  
He was besieging Paris, as they saw.  
Such a host, its vast numbers there revealed,  
Was rarely seen; for quite seven leagues it spread,  
O'er hill, vale, and plain, viewed now with dread.

Those within, in defence of the city  
Manned the walls, and stood guard, both night and day,  
Commanded by the Dane, his chivalry  
Renowned, who sought to strengthen them alway.  
When Orlando gathered the enormity  
Of the defeat they'd suffered, his dismay  
Was such that his heart ached; filled with woe  
He lamented the transience mortals know.



'He that places his trust in this life, so frail,'  
 He cried, 'and in this world, of little worth,  
 Should fold his wings, noble thoughts curtail,  
 And muse on Charlemagne, a king on Earth,  
 Who in battle was e'er seen to prevail,  
 Such that he made men tremble, of high birth  
 Or low, near or far, and yet, in a trice,  
 All is wasted, where Fortune rolls the dice;

And perchance he is slain.' Yet, as Orlando,  
 Uttered these sad words, a most mighty roar  
 Rose from the pagan camp, and its echo  
 Seemed to fall from the sun, then rise the more.  
 And now, my dear friends, I'm troubled so,  
 I can speak no further, pained to the core;  
 And, hence, you must await my next canto,  
 To hear of the battle that must follow.

BOOK III: CANTO VIII: PARIS BESIEGED



ARGOMENTO.

*Mentre Parigi assaltano i Pagani;  
Giungono al campo Brandimarte, e il Conte  
Che pria slegati i prigion de' Christiani  
Verso nemici mostrando la fronte,  
Sino a la notte menano le mani  
Bradamante guarisce. Ad una fonte  
Si addormenta. Creduta maschio allhora  
Vien Fiordispina, e di lei s'innamora.*



ALLEGORIE.

ORLANDO, E Brandimarte che liberati i prigion danno aiu-  
to a Parigi, allhora che a pena si potea piu tenere, ne ammae-  
stra che Iddio, se ben ne fa del male, col mezo d'huomini catti-  
ui, pure non vuole la nostra total rouina, & destruttione.  
Fiordispina, che ha Bradamante per Caualliero, ne mostra quan-  
to sia fallace il uolere a prima vista conoscere alcuno.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 1-2: BOIARDO'S  
ADDRESS TO HIS AUDIENCE**

May God grant joy to every sweet lover,  
And to every bold knight true victory,  
To great princes and lords, land and honour,  
And to those in love with virtue, glory.  
May peace and plenty surround us ever,  
And to you, who listen to my story,  
May Heaven's King deliver to you, there,  
Whatever you may ask of Him in prayer.

May He see you grasp Fortune by the bridle,  
And may He drive all mischance far away,  
And grant every wish you have (in total),  
For beauty, wisdom, power, or fine display,  
Whate'er you may desire, your glass brimful,  
Since every one of you grants to me, this day,  
Your courtesy, and seems ever-willing  
To hearken to the tale now forthcoming.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 3-10: THE SCENE IN  
AND AROUND BESIEGED PARIS**

I paused my story, when, if you recall,  
A mighty roar rose from the pagan side.  
Tabors, timpani sounded, loud the call  
Of the bronze horns, and others far and wide.  
As, from the hill-slopes above them all,  
Brandimarte and Orlando now applied  
Their eyes to the plain below, it seemed  
A vast forest of flags and lances gleamed.

So, you may understand the dispositions,  
And the order of the enemy that day,  
Paris was assailed from all directions,  
Assaults begun, and squadrons put in play.  
The Africans, men of those many nations,  
Swore their strength and prowess to display;  
Some made vows to Allah, some would reap  
Fame, and vault the wall with a single leap.

Many a wooden tower and scaling ladder  
Was wheeled into place; many a new sight  
They viewed, windlasses with ropes of leather,  
'Cats' of wood, their vine-thongs woven tight,  
And mangonels loaded with much labour,

Which, when released, launched, in sudden flight,  
Flaming missiles and boulders at the wall,  
Destroying all beneath them in their fall.

Within the city, Uggiero the Dane,  
Appointed as Charlemagne's commander,  
Prepared his defences, which, in the main,  
Were crossbows, catapults, slings, as ever,  
Which missiles, on the enemy, could rain.  
He sought not to rely on any other,  
But himself arranged huge beams, blocks of lead,  
Stones, and sulphur, on the turrets overhead.

He ordered and positioned, everywhere,  
Armed men on foot, and squads of cavalry;  
He was present on the walls, nor did spare  
Time for rest, but laboured on endlessly.  
The sounds of horns and drums now filled the air,  
Trumpets, castanets, a cacophony  
Of shrill pipes, and tambourines; everything,  
That made the ears throb, and the heavens ring.

O High King of Heaven! O Mary mild!  
How wretched the poor city seemed that day!  
I doubt the Devil himself could have smiled  
Viewing the dread and misery on display.  
Cries and screams rose from mother and child,  
The old, the ill, the helpless; some did pray  
To die that very moment, beat their brows,  
Voiced pleas, and offered up their heartfelt vows.

People gathered at random, flushed or pale,  
Timid or bold, or ran in disarray;  
Sad women urged their husbands to prevail  
Clasping their children tightly; some, I say,  
Shed their fear though, and refusing to quail,  
Helped the men; bore pails of water by relay,  
Or carried rocks and boulders to the wall,  
Quite determined that Paris should not fall.

The sound of bells signalled the call to arms;  
The war-horns and the cries raised such uproar  
No words could describe those wild alarms.  
Across the city rode their emperor,  
His knights behind; and every man-at-arms,  
Vowed to die, that others might rest secure.  
He sent men here and there, and disposed  
His forces against the armies they opposed.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 11-15: THE SARACEN ASSAULT BEGINS**

Paris gazed down on the advancing foe,  
Rank on rank, the glittering lines spreading far.  
Gainst Porte Saint-Marcel rode King Sobrino,  
With Bucifaro, King of Alcazar;  
While that false Saracen Baliverzo,  
Where access to the Seine men tried to bar,  
Breached the city walls, with his evil horde,  
Joined by Fez's king, and Arzila's lord.

At Saint-Denis, the King of Nasamona,  
With Zumara's bold monarch, tempted fate;  
While the lords of Tremizon, and Ceuta,  
Fought furiously near the Market Gate.  
The air and earth shook, the noise grew louder,  
As battle was joined, nor would soon abate,  
While stones and fiery darts flew to and fro,  
As each side struggled to outdo the foe.

Christians and Saracens had seldom fought  
With such fury against one another;  
Striving to show their worth, twas death they sought,  
As lime, and sulphur, and lengths of timber  
Cascaded down, fierce missiles of every sort;  
While ladders, and armour, broke asunder,  
As dense smoke, and clouds of dust, cast a veil  
O'er the sky, till the sun could scarce prevail.

It seemed no defence could prove sufficient  
Against such an onslaught, for as the bees  
And wasps, and flies seldom seem deficient  
In returning to haunt one, without cease,  
So that ruthless foe, fierce and proficient,  
Came again, though repelled, yet not with ease,  
For bodies fell from battlement and tower,  
And filled the city's moats within an hour.

A path of blood floated on the water,  
Dreadful to look upon. Mandricardo  
And Rodomonte, aiding each other,  
Struggling to scale the heights, proved not slow.  
Nor was Agramante deterred moreover,  
Nor Ferrau, vying to attack the foe,  
Seeking to be the first to mount the wall;  
In their pride, careless of what might befall.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 16-18: ORLANDO AND BRANDIMARTE DESCEND TO THE FRAY**

Orlando, gazing down on the affray,  
Was well-nigh daunted by that fierce assault,  
And then, groaning aloud, began to pray,  
Scarce knowing whether to descend or halt.  
'O Brandimarte, what to seek this day?  
If Charlemagne is dead, our troops at fault,  
What may a man do? For, below, I see  
Naught but our ruin, flames, and misery!

All aid, I now believe, must come too late,  
For the Saracen foe are mounting the wall.'  
'Why, if I see clearly, I would deem our fate  
Undecided; on ourselves men yet may call.'  
Cried Brandimarte, 'Let me add my weight  
To our defence, for I would slay them all,  
All those hounds; and though Paris may expect  
Scant help from us, vengeance she'll not reject!'

To that, Orlando answered not a word,  
But closed his visor, and followed after,  
For Brandimarte, having thus conferred,  
Sped down the slope on his valiant charger.  
Fiordelisa present risk now inferred,  
And hid in a grove, to avoid the danger,  
As those two cavaliers, nigh wreathed in flame,  
Crossed the river, and to the battle came.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 19-24: THEY FREE MARSILIO'S PRISONERS**

Both were soon known; their brave pennants unfurled.  
'To arms!' the Saracens cried, as they appeared.  
Despite the spears and darts that oft were hurled,  
Marsilio's tent those brave knights had neared,  
Which that king, the lord of his hostile world,  
Now defended, though scarcely had he feared  
An assault; by him stood Falsirone,  
And the men set to guard the enemy,

Those they held captive; Oliviero  
Was one, and the brave Desiderio,  
And the lord of Poitiers, Count Gano,  
A host of Germans, and bold Ricardo,  
And Brittany's King Salamone, also.

There the two brave knights slew the foe;  
Some of whom now stood firm, while others fled;  
While a sudden charge laid full many dead.

Battle raged round the king's pavilion,  
Nor could Marsilio secure the place.  
Many of his royal guard were dead or gone;  
Then, he himself fled the field, in disgrace.  
Orlando tore down the tent, and rode on,  
And, when the prisoners beheld his face,  
They marvelled, and crossed themselves to a man,  
While Brandimarte cut their bonds; all began

To arm, with the weapons that lay to hand,  
Then they mounted as swiftly they could,  
Eager to join Orlando, with lance and brand.  
He sped towards the city, seeking blood.  
Close behind, to Paris rode that band,  
Hoping to nip the foe's assault in the bud.  
In the lead rode Marquess Oliviero,  
With the lord of Poitiers, Count Gano.

Then Desiderio, Salamone,  
And Ricardo, and Belengiero,  
And then the valiant Brandimarte  
Who had freed them, with Avorio,  
And Avino, beside the bold Ottone,  
Dukes Namus and Amone; gainst the foe  
Rode that band of noblemen, while, in sum,  
A hundred chargers made the ground to thrum.

'Twas not long ere they reached the city wall,  
Where the battle raged ever more fiercely.  
And all was dark, still obscured by the pall  
Of smoke and dust, I described, while shrilly  
Rose the trumpet's blare, and the dying call  
Of many a victim, seeking mercy.  
The battlements shook, and naught around  
But fire, blood, death, filled all that ground.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 25-31: RODOMONTE INVADES THE CITY**

Mandricardo had seized a bridge, destroyed  
The barriers, and then brought down the gate.  
His soldiers were now eagerly employed,  
Jostling each other, lest they proved too late

In showing their valour. Rodomonte toyed  
With victims on the walls, hurled to their fate,  
A goodly many, sending them to float  
Midst streams of blood; crimson was the moat.

He viewed the lofty towers above with scorn,  
Foaming like a boar, and gnashed his teeth,  
So fierce a Saracen had ne'er been born.  
His shield at his back, he bowed beneath  
Spikes and hooks, coils of rope, a ladder borne  
Upon his shoulder, a blade in its sheath,  
An oak-tree trunk, fire within; he blasphemed,  
Leant his ladder against the stone, and seemed,

As he climbed, like one who strolled along  
A street; just so the cunning pagan scaled  
The turret; here was ruin, there a throng  
Fought, or cried for aid, or were impaled.  
If Lucifer had issued, fierce and strong,  
From the depths (and, once above, was hailed  
By his faithful) to raze Paris, from on high,  
No greater could have been the dread, thereby

Aroused in his foes. In desperation,  
Our men fought for themselves, about to die,  
Careless of life and limb, and for their nation,  
Brought to that sorry state; without a sigh,  
Each sought to hold, and defend, his station,  
Sensing their fate; striking, if he came nigh,  
That warrior with spears, and darts, and stones,  
And massive beams; fear in their very bones.

Still, he climbed on, to the highest tower,  
His foes like straws or feathers in the breeze,  
Unstoppable by any mortal power,  
It seemed, reaching the summit-wall with ease.  
Panic swept the city at that dark hour,  
And, midst the other pains and miseries,  
Rose a piercing wail of lamentation,  
That soared above the earthly creation.

Now the proud warrior clawed at the stone,  
Loosening great blocks from their mortar,  
And hurled them down, to mar flesh and bone,  
Downing houses and spires; great the slaughter.  
To the Count, fighting elsewhere, naught was known  
Of the vast destruction in that quarter,

But the uproar that arose, the loud commotion,  
Alerted him; he set his steed in motion,

And rode, at speed, towards the bitter fray.  
Never had he been so filled with anger;  
Grasping his sword, he climbed, and cut away  
The lower part of Rodomonte's ladder,  
Sending that warrior to the moat, that lay  
Far below, though the turret followed after  
And mighty stones struck Orlando's head,  
Felling that warrior to the ground, half-dead.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 32-36: THE SARACENS GATHER TO HIM**

Rodomonte freed himself, quite promptly.  
So strong and fierce was the Saracen king,  
To him twas an irritation, merely,  
An annoying, inconsequential thing.  
The Count though had been rendered wholly  
Stunned and mazed (death passed him by on the wing),  
And lay still, as the other left the moat  
Ready to seize the city by the throat.

Our troops surrounded the pagan warrior.  
Gano of Poitiers stood on the shore,  
Who though false and evil-minded ever,  
Fought well when he so wished, brave to the core.  
Rodomonte showed his strength however,  
And Count Gano in vain his weapons bore,  
For Rodomonte felled him with a blow,  
Then charged on, further ruin to bestow.

Quitting his victim, he met Rodolfone,  
A kinsman of Duke Namus, in the field.  
He cleft him to his saddle, ruinously,  
Then forced King Desiderio to yield,  
Aiming a blow at his head, which merely  
Grazed his helmet, then struck upon his shield,  
Thank God! But still the King of Lombardy  
Knocked from his steed fell, most awkwardly.

Those Saracens that had fled Orlando,  
Now regrouped, seeming bolder than before,  
And aided Rodomonte against the foe  
Most willingly, now he'd regained the shore,  
And charged, thrusting fiercely, to and fro,

As upon the ranks of Christians he bore.  
Balifronte of Mulga, and Grifaldo,  
Were there, and that villain Baliverzo,

Besides Farurante of Marina,  
Tremizon's valiant King Alzirdo,  
Gualciotto of Bellamarina,  
And full many another of our foe.  
Yet none of them will appear hereafter,  
Not one of them will fight on the morrow.  
Oliviero some of them will fell;  
Brandimarte will send the rest to Hell.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 37-41: BRANDIMARTE DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF**

Stay, and hear the facts stated clearly,  
For twas now the dance truly began.  
Salamone advanced on Rodomonte,  
Who was taller than every other man,  
And struck the king where he aimed, full fiercely,  
In the centre of his chest; such his plan,  
But his lance broke, the pagan was unmoved,  
And his return-blow much the fiercer proved.

For his sword split apart the Christian's shield,  
Slicing through the steel as if twere paper,  
Shattering his armour, his chest revealed,  
And descending to his saddle, thereafter.  
Last he hacked his horse's head to the field.  
Brandimarte viewed that swift disaster,  
And, seeking vengeance, he lowered his lance,  
Spurred his steed, savagely, and seized the chance

To strike Rodomonte's ribs, with huge force.  
Though the latter's serpent-hide saved the man,  
He was driven back, sharply, in his course.  
Staggering o'er the ground, the African  
Fell with a crash; thus, the wind will divorce  
Some oak from the soil, of many a span,  
That, split in two, uprooted by the blow,  
Crushes lesser trees, as it sinks below.

Brandimarte now met Gualciotto,  
Having watched that bold King of Sarza fall,  
And with both hands he landed a stout blow,  
That split his shield and then shattered all

The hauberk, and the stomach-plate below.  
His stroke, indeed, the victim's did forestall,  
And Gualciotto, his body cut in two,  
Dropped to the field, sliced through and through.

Then Oliviero showed his mettle  
And gave evidence of his noble birth,  
His House not discredited in battle,  
As his sword measured King Grifaldo's girth.  
The Count, reviving, mounted the saddle,  
Having found himself stretched upon the earth,  
For wise Brigliador, valiant in his pride,  
Never strayed far from Count Orlando's side.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 42-46: CHARLEMAGNE  
UNSEATS AGRAMANTE**

Orlando, his wits quite sound, left the moat,  
And, when his quartered shield he displayed,  
A cry rose from every Christian throat,  
As their brave champion flourished his blade;  
While King Charlemagne, instantly, made note  
Of his presence, amidst the troops arrayed,  
As the news came of their deliverance,  
Through combat, from the Saracen advance.

Ask me not of the emperor's delight,  
As he learnt that their lines were now secure,  
While courage filled the heart of every knight,  
As they sallied forth again to the war.  
The city gate was opened to the light,  
And Guy of Burgundy rode out before  
The Dane, and Duodo of Antona,  
With Huon of Bordeaux pounding after.

Charlemagne led the charge; the emperor  
Would not be left behind in the city,  
Where his deputy, Bishop Turpin, saw  
To the defence of Paris, now his duty.  
Mandricardo who, as I've said before,  
Fought at the bridge, beside Agramante,  
Now encountered the Dane, Uggiero,  
As he, with lowered lance, rode at the foe.

Since Mandricardo was on foot, he thought  
To drop him in the ditch, but greatly erred.  
The Saracen stood firm; fiercely he fought,

And nothing of the kind, in truth, occurred.  
He failed to fall to the lance, and swiftly caught  
The Dane's charger, Rondello, as he spurred  
Past his face at the gallop, by the rein,  
And then hard upon the bridle did strain.

King Agramante was fighting at his side,  
And together they unseated Uggiero,  
Bur Charlemagne, in his headlong ride,  
Thrust with his lance, straight at his royal foe.  
He knocked the latter to the ground, upside  
Down, trampling him with many a hoof-blow.  
Then the battle re-commenced, man to man,  
As knights duelled, each with victory his plan.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 47-50: RODOMONTE  
AND ORLANDO CONTEND**

The word spread that Agramante was floored,  
And his friends vied to gather to his aid.  
Here was Grandonio, Volterra's lord,  
There Ferrau; a third, Balugante made.  
But Mandricardo did most help afford,  
And defended the monarch with his blade.  
He rescued Agramante from all danger,  
While bristling like a dog in a manger.

Alone he fought, at first, and full many  
Were hurled from that bridge into the moat.  
The water beneath his feet ran bloody,  
Like the stream that flows from a wounded throat,  
Bright crimson, while the depths shone like ruby,  
And gore the bank's mud and stone did coat.  
Charlemagne, Uggiero, and the rest,  
In their fury, upon the pagans pressed.

From the bridge they drove the Saracen horde,  
And confined the foe twixt the ramparts, there,  
Till at the pagans' rear, Anglante's lord  
And the bold Brandimarte, that brave pair,  
With their troop, fresh assistance did afford.  
The fury now increased, cries filled the air,  
Till never was there such a battle seen;  
None so vicious and merciless, I mean.

For proud Rodomonte chased the Count,  
Without cease along the paths thereabout,

Orlando, not minded to dismount,  
Striking at the throng, with many a shout,  
Scarce needing to aim, so small an amount  
Of space lay twixt his foes; yet twas no rout.  
Rodomonte and the Count thrust, and bored,  
A path, a mere sword's-length deep and broad.

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 51-58: BRADAMANTE  
AND THE HERMIT**

Perchance it was because the people prayed  
Behind the walls of Paris, or twas fate;  
But a tempest its darkening clouds displayed,  
And an earthquake shook all beyond the gate,  
While, within the city, the buildings swayed.  
Thunder rumbled, the rain fell, in full spate,  
Turning the ground to mud, and flooding all,  
Till their sodden state could not but appal.

And that the sun was sinking, towards eve,  
Made the scene appear all the more dismal.  
The fighting ceased, as you may well believe;  
Men retreated, for the rain ne'er ceased to fall.  
Now, the history that Turpin did conceive,  
Which I, in verse, from out his prose recall,  
Turns to speak of the fair Bradamante,  
Whom I quit, she having slain Daniforte.

That false pagan she had killed in the field.  
He had tricked, and wounded, her badly,  
And, after that, the maid had strayed, concealed  
By the night, and lost her way completely.  
She wandered, morn and eve, the blood congealed  
O'er her wound, through an unpeopled country,  
Until she came upon a hermitage,  
Of which there were full many in that age.

She was, in truth, in urgent need of rest,  
Having lost a deal of blood ere that morn,  
On her long and weary way and, a guest  
In need of aid, she arrived thus, all forlorn.  
She dismounted, and the door firmly pressed,  
Then knocked until the hermit, in the dawn,  
Showed his face, crossed himself, and loudly cried:  
'Hail Mary, who unto my cell doth ride?

What chance brings you to my dwelling-place?'  
The warrior-maid replied: 'I am a knight,  
And have lost my way, wandering for a space,  
In a dark wood, o'er the wilds, day and night,  
I am wounded, and need rest, of your grace.'  
The hermit cried: 'You prove a welcome sight!  
For sixty years have I dwelt here, alone,  
And ne'er a human face have I been shown.

Yet the Devil doth oft to me appear,  
In more shapes and forms than I can tell,  
Thus, I doubted who it was, drawing near,  
And so hid within the depths of my cell.  
I see visions, and in the dawn-light clear,  
I saw a vessel sailing; I saw it well,  
A little barque full of souls, on it sped,  
Its oars moving, as if o'er some watery bed.

The helmsman, standing at the stern, he cried:  
'Idle brother, the valiant Ruggiero  
Is leaving France. Upon the Christian side  
He might have fought, loyally, gainst the foe!  
We turned him from Mahomet; he denied  
Allah's power, almost; or I deemed twas so,  
Yet now I think he'll not escape that creed.  
I tell you, that you might pay better heed!'

The ship passed onwards, as that evil sprite  
Ceased speaking, and I saw it not again,  
Yet was dismayed at what he'd said in spite,  
Believing the man's soul lost, for tis plain  
To me, that if God fails to aid the knight,  
And chooses not, of His mercy, to ordain  
The warrior's baptism, damned he will be,  
When he dies; excluded from the mystery.'

**BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 59-63: HE CUTS HER  
HAIR AND TREATS HER WOUND**

On hearing this, the maiden blushed, on fire,  
Her face aflame, thinking of Ruggiero,  
Whom she loved deeply, filled with the desire  
To see him once more, and distracted so,  
That her thoughts to the heavens did aspire,  
And she hardly cared to rest, here below,  
Although the hermit, viewing her wounded head,  
Offered her treatment, and an easeful bed.



He was so adept at calming her mind,  
That, at last, she accepted his kind aid,  
But he was somewhat amazed then, to find  
The coils of hair that her helm displayed.  
He was troubled by her tresses, resigned  
To this being the Devil, thus arrayed  
In female form, and knew not what to do.  
'Ah, he tempts me! he cried, 'All here's untrue!'

But he learned, by further touching her head,  
That she was but flesh, and no empty shade,  
And he treated her with herbs, where she bled,  
And brought her to health; the wound did fade.  
Yet, to clean and close it so, he'd been led  
To shear those tresses from the lovely maid;  
He'd trimmed them all, till she looked like a boy.  
He bade her farewell, a blessing did employ,

And told her: 'You must leave this place, my dear,  
For an honest man can scarcely let you stay.'  
At length she reached a river, bright and clear,  
That traversed the woodland, along her way.  
The sun had reached its zenith, twould appear,  
And the maid was keen her thirst to allay,  
So Bradamante dismounted on the shore,  
And drank, and then lay down to rest once more.

Ere she did so, her helmet she unlaced,  
Setting down her stout shield, for none was nigh;  
Then her cropped head upon her arms she placed.  
Now, as she slept, a hunt came riding by,  
And a lady, midst the other huntsmen, chased  
Their prey, with hawks and deerhounds, and full high  
Was her rank; Fiordispina was her name,  
The fair daughter of Marsilio of Spain.

### **BOOK III: CANTO VIII: 64-66: FIORDISPINA FALLS IN LOVE WITH BRADAMANTE**

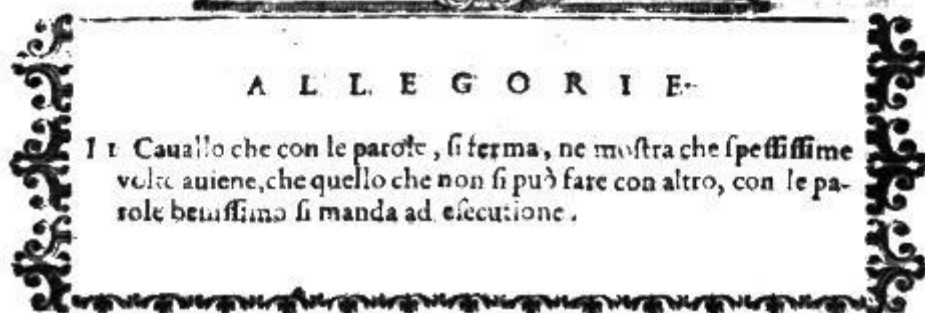
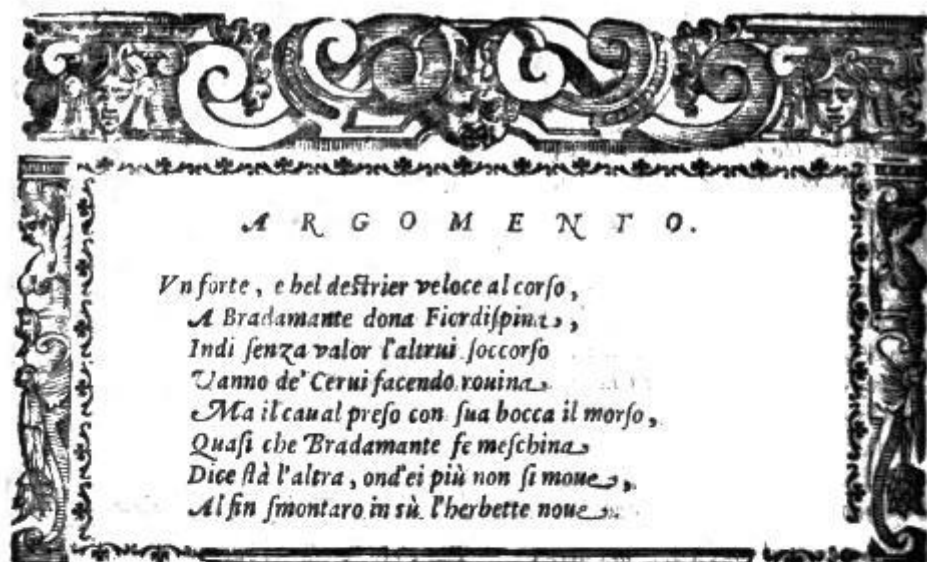
Out hunting, she drew near, as I said,  
That river, and thus saw Bradamante,  
Whom she took for a valiant youth instead  
Of a warrior-maid; the face was lovely,  
And the form, and many a thought filled her head  
Of an amorous kind, while, inwardly,  
She cried: 'By Allah, the powers of Nature  
Ne'er achieved so beautiful a creature!

How I wish I were here alone; that I  
Had left the rest in the woods, far away,  
Or dead, for all I care!' She gave a sigh,  
'And might kiss this fair youth, while he doth stray  
Through Sleep's far realm and, sweetly, here doth lie.  
Patience, I need, and so must here display.  
One shameful act, wrought in fatal measure,  
May cause the loss of our greatest treasure.'

So Fiordispina dwelt on that fair sight,  
Though merely gazing failed to satisfy.  
She thought he slept so sweetly, that fair knight,  
That she sought not to wake him with a sigh.  
But we have filled the normal measure quite  
Appointed for our cantos; by and by,  
We must rest; next time I'll tell their story.  
God keep us, in pleasure, and in glory.



BOOK III: CANTO IX: FIORDISPINA AND BRADAMANTE



**BOOK III: CANTO IX: 1-3: BOIARDO'S  
INVOCATION OF LOVE**

Since my cantos ever bring you delight,  
For I see the signs revealed in every face,  
I shall bring my choicest dulcimer to light,  
And strike the finest chords, with skill and grace.  
Come, Love, descend, and by my side alight,  
And if my worth's too slight for such a place,  
Since my head still lacks a wreath of myrtle,  
These that listen are most worthy people.

As, ere the sunrise and the dawning glow,  
The stars in splendour in the sky do shine,  
So, this court gleams with honour, here below  
That of knights and fair ladies, rare and fine.  
So tis meet you descend, O Love, and go  
Amidst these folk, angelic and divine;  
And, once you are among us, I declare,  
You'll stay, and ne'er will leave a place so fair.

For here you'll find another paradise.  
Come therefore and inspire me, of your grace;  
Bring me your sweet delight, and smiling eyes,  
That I may satisfy all who embrace  
The tale of Fiordispina, and her sighs,  
As she watches Bradamante's sleeping face,  
And thinks to die, consumed by her desire,  
Like dew in the sunlight, wax in the fire.

**BOOK III: CANTO IX: 4-7: BRADAMANTE  
WAKES**

Quite unable to turn her eyes away,  
The more she gazed, the more she longed to gaze,  
Like a moth drawn to the flame, once in its sway  
Unable to tear itself from the blaze;  
The huntsmen were not far, the hounds at bay,  
Midst cries and horn-calls; her mind a maze.  
Some creature had but now gone to ground,  
When Bradamante awoke at the sound.

As she opened her bright eyes, instantly,  
A light issued forth from them, a splendour,  
That blinded Fiordispina, momentarily,  
Then travelled to her heart, while her colour  
Changed to that of the rose, and silently,

Gave witness, through her face, to her ardour,  
A rose that opens in the morning light,  
At the rising of the sun from darkest night.

Bradamante saw, from her dress and manner  
That the other was a lady of the court,  
And greeted her, courteously as ever.  
Then she gazed all around her, and sought  
Her mare that she'd taken care to tether  
By the stream, on dismounting; she thought  
To see her by the water, but could not,  
For she'd slipped her bridle, and the spot

Was empty, now the steed had gone astray,  
Wandering it seemed somewhere midst the trees.  
This so troubled her that tears began to play  
In her eyes, tears that spoke of her unease.  
Now, Love, that wakes the intellect they say,  
Revealed to Fiordispina, by degrees,  
That she might have the very means in sight  
To ensure she was alone with the knight.

**BOOK III: CANTO IX: 8-13: FIORDISPINA  
CONTRIVES A RUSE**

For she possessed an Andalusian steed,  
Swift and strong, though temperamental ever.  
She'd ne'er seen the creature's equal for speed,  
Yet he'd ever run away with his rider,  
Once he'd the bit between his teeth, indeed  
His fury was unrestrained; however,  
A single word would calm him, as she knew,  
The knowledge, though, confined to but a few.

Thinking she'd thereby found a way to gain  
Bradamante's heart, deeming the maid a youth,  
She said: Sir knight, you are sad, I maintain;  
Perchance your mount is lost; though, in sooth,  
I know you not, nor e'er saw you, tis plain,  
(Since your features declare the living truth,  
That you are not treacherous by nature,  
Goodness dwells, oft, in the fairest creature)

That I could not find a better person  
On whom to bestow a dear possession.  
I offer you this steed; tis a rare one,  
For there's none swifter midst any nation.

What's worthless you may have of anyone,  
 What's precious not so easily is won;  
 My heart indeed I'd give (of noble birth  
 Is mine) did I not think it of small worth.'

With that she descended to the ground,  
 And, holding the bridle, with much grace,  
 Gave her mount to Bradamante, who found  
 That Love's colours were painted in her face,  
 While her gaze was tremulous and the sound  
 Of her speech, and she thought: 'Sad is our case;  
 She's deceived; one of us must come to grief;  
 Small joy if stone grinds stone, tis my belief.'

And, thinking so, she spoke to the lady:  
 'So fair a gift is far beyond my worth.  
 If I gave all, I still would prove unworthy,  
 Yet only merchants price all things on earth;  
 While you, who have a noble spirit, truly,  
 And, in that, reveal your breeding and birth,  
 May accept me as I am, nonetheless;  
 For body and soul are yours, I confess.'

'And I refuse them not!' cried Fiordispina,  
 'Nor delight more in aught that I possess.  
 No queen e'er granted a gift that's nobler,  
 Or that it's recipient so did bless.'  
 Bradamante answered not, however,  
 Bowed to her, and then the steed did address;  
 She could have vaulted a giraffe, her feet  
 Ne'er touched the stirrups e'er she gained her seat.

### **BOOK III: CANTO IX: 14-16: HER HUNSMEN DRIVE OUT THE PREY**

The Saracen princess watched her mount;  
 Her eyes, fixed on her, ne'er tired of gazing,  
 Then told her huntsmen: 'Give a good account  
 Of yourselves; this hunt is of my raising,  
 And I command here, so let none discount  
 My orders, or, to those hell-fires blazing  
 Down below, he'd be better to have gone.  
 I would have each man keep his place, anon,

And lack a tongue, or he'll meet with disgrace.  
 Be silent, and then drive the creatures out.  
 By myself, I would follow in the chase.  
 All but you, sir knight, remain hereabout,  
 For you will stay with me, since tis my place  
 To honour the stranger, nor would I flout  
 That rule, indeed, for I like nothing more,  
 And would do all your pleasure to ensure.'

They quietly obeyed, some leashed the hounds,  
 Some slackened bows, then the forest rang  
 To horns and tumult, and the violent sounds  
 Of branches breaking; from the treeline sprang  
 A great stag whose antlers, grown beyond bounds,  
 Shadowed his back; many a tine and tang  
 They showed; a stag possessed of many years,  
 None larger, driven now before the spears.

### **BOOK III: CANTO IX: 17-21: FIORDISPINA AND BRADAMANTE CHASE A STAG**

Out from the woods it leapt, at such a speed  
 Nor thorn nor briar could slow the creature.  
 With the hounds at its tail, it passed indeed  
 No more than a yard from Fiordispina.  
 'I fear lest this knight chooses not to heed  
 My call to follow,' she thought, 'the warrior,  
 May scent deceit, and thus turn from the chase.'  
 And so, she flicked her whip, and set the pace,

Crying to the knight, to take up the lead;  
 To him alone, for the rest stayed behind,  
 Leaving them to hunt the prey, as agreed.  
 Fiordispina rode a saddle-horse, assigned  
 To the chase, which was of an Irish breed,  
 Fast as a greyhound, to the layman's mind,  
 Like the best mounts of that land, though its speed  
 Matched not her gift's, fair Bradamante's, steed.

For the Andalusian, oft, in the chase,  
 Ran faster than its rider might desire.  
 A bow-shot length already was the space  
 Twixt the maidens, so great that courser's fire.  
 Bradamante showed regret upon her face,  
 That to such a pace it sought to aspire,  
 And she tugged on the reins, and then she hauled,  
 Though it slowed not, however loud she called.

A hill-slope rose in front; twas covered o'er,  
With unfamiliar undergrowth and trees,  
But nothing slowed the beast, that yet tore  
Upwards, as if on level ground, with ease.  
Despite the stag's head-start, six hounds or more  
Had neared the creature, running without cease,  
While behind them Fiordispina gazed ahead  
And, as fast as she was able, onward sped.

Just as it started to descend the hill,  
The stag was seized and bitten by a hound;  
And, once the first had caught it, with a will,  
The others dragged the creature to the ground.  
Fiordispina now ensured the loved one still  
Would attend her there, for her voice she found,  
An called to the Andalusian steed,  
Which slowed, at her command, and gave heed.

**BOOK III: CANTO IX: 22-26: THE MAIDENS  
DISMOUNT FROM THEIR STEEDS**

Ask me not if Bradamante was relieved  
As her mount drew to a halt beneath her.  
She leapt from the saddle, somewhat grieved,  
So winded she felt she'd ne'er recover,  
For that she might die she'd, in truth, believed,  
While her heart leapt yet; up came the other,  
Crying: 'Sir knight, I hope that you'll accept  
My excuse, twas a moment of neglect,

(Yet omission is no sin, some do say)  
In which I failed to tell you that your steed  
That almost caused your death this very day,  
Won't move an inch, he loses all his speed,  
If you should utter but the one word: "Stay!"  
Somehow the thing slipped my mind, indeed,  
And, as I said, much to my deep regret,  
I forgot the fact; and am suffering yet.'

Bradamante was content, and breathed anew,  
And then began the maid's command to prove.  
She rode, with loosened reins, a yard or two;  
On hearing: 'Stay!', not an inch would he move.  
Another trial she made, then no small few,  
Till the steed's obedience she could approve,  
Then descended to the grass, where a glade,  
By a bridge o'er a river, cast its shade.

There they left their steeds, Brandimarte  
Was still clad, I should say, in her armour,  
Fiordispina wore a dress of azure, lightly  
Starred with gold (the bow, that hung about her,  
And her arrows, and hunting-horn, rightly,  
Shone likewise). Each was fair as the other,  
Adorning the Earth with grace and beauty,  
Though she burned with longing, the one lady...

Yet while I sing, O my Redeemer,  
I see all Italy ablaze with fire,  
For the French, as valiant as ever,  
To lay waste, who knows what domains, aspire.  
Thus, I must leave that ill-fated lover,  
Fair Fiordispina, ardent with desire.  
Yet, if further breath You will allow me,  
I'll gather up the threads of my story.



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE



t this point Boiardo ceased work on the text (Charles VIII of France invaded Italy in the September of 1494, and Boiardo died in mid-December). The threads were indeed gathered up, not by himself but by Ariosto, who developed and completed the tale as a tribute to the House of Este. The innovative historical setting with its prophecies of the future; the main characters and their attributes; and the whole style and manner of the poem, Ariosto adopted in his, better known, 'Orlando Furioso', though the credit for the whole wonderful, imaginative story should, in truth, be equally shared.



## ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR



S. Kline is the author and/or translator of the majority of works hosted by Poetry in Translation. He was born in 1947 and lives in England. He graduated in Mathematics from the University of Manchester, and was Chief Information Officer (Systems Director) of a large UK Company, before dedicating himself to his literary work and interests. His work consists of translations of poetry; critical works, biographical history with poetry as a central theme; and his own original poetry. He has translated into English from Latin, Ancient Greek, Classical Chinese and the European languages. He also maintains a deep interest in developments in Mathematics and the Sciences.

He continues to write predominantly for the Internet, making all works available as open access, with an added focus on the rapidly developing area of electronic books. His most extensive works are complete translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, both published electronically, with a comprehensive in-depth index fully hyper-linked to the text. Many of his works have also been published in printed book and audio formats.

