



MARIE WILHOITE



MY BOOK HOUSE
FROM THE TOWER WINDOW

FROM THE TOWER WINDOW

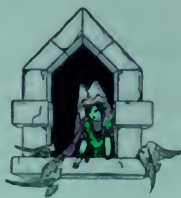
AND now within the old gray tower
We've climbed the winding stair,
And look out over all the earth
From topmost window there.

Far stretches all the world away,
And naught shuts out the sky,
And knights and maids and all of life
Go marching, marching by.



From
THE TOWER WINDOW
of
MY BOOKHOUSE

EDITED BY
Olive Beaupré Miller



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The BUGLE SONG *Alfred Tennyson*

The Splendour falls on Castle walls
And snowy Summits old in Story,
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild Cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.




M Y B O O K H O U S E

UNA AND THE RED CROSS KNIGHT

Retold from Book I of The Faerie Queene

Edmund Spenser

OW Glo-ri-an'a was that greatest, most glorious Queen of Faeryland and she did keep her feast for twelve days every year, during which time, as the manner then was, she might not refuse to any man or woman what boon soever he desired of her. On a certain year it happened in the beginning of the feast that there presented himself before the throne of Gloriana a tall, clownish young man, who, falling before the Queen, made request that he might have the achievement of any adventure which during that feast should happen. That being granted, he rested him on the floor, unfit through his rusticity for a better place.

Soon after, entered a fair lady in mourning weeds, riding on a white ass, with a dwarf behind her leading a warlike steed and bearing the arms and spear of a knight. The Lady, falling before the Queen of Faeries, complained that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queen, had been by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brazen castle, who thence suffered them not to issue; and therefore besought the Faery Queen to assign her some one of her knights to take on him the deliverance of these twain. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure; whereat the Queen much wondering, and the Lady much gainsaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him that unless that armor which she brought would serve him, he could not succeed in that enterprise; for that armor was of such a sort as would fit him only who had great courage and faith, great uprightness and truth; which armor being forthwith put upon the youth with due furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in all that company and was well liked of the Lady.

And eftsoons, taking on him knighthood, and mounting on

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that strange courser, he went forth with her on that adventure. Right faithful and true he proved, and on his breast and shield he wore a blood-red cross in dear remembrance of his dying Lord and to make known to all the world that he would give battle only in the cause of righteousness and truth.

Beside the Red Cross Knight, upon her snow white ass, Una, the lovely Lady, rode, her face well veiled from sight beneath her wimple, and over all her garments she wore a long black robe, as one who inwardly did mourn for thinking ever on that ancient King and Queen, her father and mother, shut up in prison by so foul a beast. After her, on a line, she led a snow-white lamb. As pure and innocent as that same lamb the Lady Una was and all her heart was full of virtue, loyalty and truth. Far away behind the Lady and the Knight the dwarf did lag, bearing fair Una's bag of needments at his back.

As they passed thus along the road the sky was sudden overcast and down upon the path there poured a hideous storm of rain. Enforced to seek some covert, they espied a grove not far away,

*Whose lofty trees, yclad with summer's pride,
Did spread so broad that heaven's light did hide,
Not pierceable with power of any star.
And all within were paths and alleys wide,
With footing worn, and leading inward far;
Fair harbor that them seems, so in they entered are.*

Safe enshrouded from the tempest beneath those sheltering boughs they journeyed forward, led on with pleasures, and joying to hear the sweet harmony of birds that sang within that wood as though no tempest raged without. Thus with delight they beguiled the way until the storm was overblown, when they weened to return out of that wood, and once more take the highway they late had quitted. But now when they looked about to find that path down which they had so carelessly strayed, lo! it was nowhere to be seen. So far within the wood they had pursued their way that they knew not how they might come out.

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To and fro they wandered, but so many paths there were, so many turnings, that they were ever in doubt which one to take and found their wits grown quite confused. They only wandered round and round and deeper in. At last, resolved to fare straight forward along a certain road until at least it brought them somewhere, they chose the one that seemed beaten most bare by travellers' feet, and journeyed on.

But, though they knew it not, alas! this was the Wandering Wood, wherein many a traveller had lost himself and never found a way out more. For in a hollow cave amid the dimmest density of those dark trees, there lurked a monster vile, who was the sovereign of that whole domain and hated God and man. By wicked spells of that same evil creature, all who entered in that wood were made to take the false for true, the true for false, and so to wander in a circle hopelessly. Ever her joy was to bewilder men, mislead them into sore mistakes and errors grievous to be borne.

At length the Knight, with Una and the dwarf, came sudden on that hideous, darksome cave, which Una had no sooner seen, than she, whose clear vision ever grasped the truth, knew this for the Wandering Wood and that cave for the fearsome dwelling place of that foul breeder of bewilderment. Then, all too late, she would fain have had her Knight draw back and not rush forth to call the monster from its lair; and eke the dwarf, thrilled on a sudden with the weird unspoken horror of the place, quoth shrilly, "Fly! fly! This is no place for living men!"

But the youthful Knight, full of fire and hardihood, could not be stayed for aught. Dismounting from his horse, he hurried to the darksome entrance of that cave and looked within. His glistening armor made a little glooming light, by which he saw the ugly monster plain, half like a serpent, loathsome, filthy, foul. And as she lay upon the dirty ground, her huge tail overspreading all the den and pointed with a deadly sting, a thousand young ones all about her lay, of sundry shapes, each more

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ill-favored than the rest. No sooner did the light flash on them from the Knight's bright suit of mail than they in terror crept into their mother's mouth and sudden all were gone. Then that old serpent, hurling her hideous tail about, rushed forth out of her den afraid. There seeing one all armed in mail, she sought to turn back again, for creature, as she was, of foul deceits, deluding all, she ever hated light and lurked in darkness where none might see her plain. But when the valiant Knight perceived what she would do, he leapt fierce as a lion on his foe. With his stout blade he boldly stayed her from returning to the dark, forced her to face him squarely and do battle in the light. Lifting his powerful arm, he struck a stroke that glanced her head and spent its stunning weight upon her shoulder. Much daunted by the blow, she gathered herself around, reared fiercely up and leapt upon his shield, winding her tail all suddenly about his body round and round, till hand and foot she had him so embound he could not move a muscle, even as when, once yielded to her deceits, she wraps a man in endless train of errors and mistakes and holds him altogether in power of her delusions.

The Lady Una, seeing her Knight in so sore strait, cried out:

*"Now, now, Sir Knight, show what ye be,
Add faith unto your force and be not faint;
Strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee!"*

In answer to her bidding, the Knight knit all his force together,

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got one hand free and seized the monster's throat with grip so strong that soon she was constrained to loose her wicked bands. Therewith she spewed out of her filthy mouth a flood of poison, horrible and black, filled full of frogs and toads and serpents small, her loathly offspring, foul and blind and black as ink. These, swarming all about, climbed up the good Knight's legs and sore encumbered him, but had no power to do him harm. Thus, ill-bestead, he suddenly resolved to win, and struck at the serpent with such force as one would never dream was possible to man, so that he clove her hateful head from off her body. A stream of coal black blood gushed forth, whereon the serpent's scattered brood, finding no more their wonted refuge in her mouth, plunged in that coal black stream and perished all. Thus the good Knight's evil foes did slay themselves.

His lady, seeing from afar all that was come to pass, rode up in haste to greet the victor with rejoicings of his victory. Then he mounted once again upon his steed, and with his lady and the dwarf, chose that path leading from the hateful place which was beaten most plain. Nor would he again let aught tempt him to turn aside into a byway. That one path he followed steadfastly until it brought him well without the Wandering Wood.

Now as they three journeyed forward once more in search of adventure, it chanced at length that they came upon an aged man in long black robes, with bare feet and a beard all hoary gray. Sober he seemed, and simple, wise and good, and ever as he walked he bent his eyes full humbly on the ground, and seemed to pray. The Red Cross Knight saluted him and asked him if he knew of any strange exploit that needed to be done. The old man answered that he knew little of such matters, so far did he live in his quiet cell away from all worldly cares and strife. Yet had he heard of a strange wild man that wasted all the countryside and never had been mastered and he could lead the Knight to him if sobeit he desired. Then did Una in her

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simple wisdom show her Knight 'twere wiser that he rest that night after his sore affray and seek new adventure with the morrow. The Hermit bade them pass the night with him and so in his company they rode on to his home.

*A little, lowly Hermitage it was,
Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people that did pass
In travel to and fro. A little wide
There was an holy Chapel edified,
Wherein the Hermit duly wont to say
His holy things each morn and eventide.
Thereby a crystal stream did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountain wellèd forth alway.*

In this simple, rustic retreat Una and the Knight found no great entertainment, but rest was their feast and the evening passed in fair discourse, for that old man had store of pleasing words as smooth as glass. But when the drooping night came creeping on them fast, and weariness weighed down their lids, the Hermit led his guests each unto his several lodging and bestowed them there to sleep. Then to his study and magic books he went and sudden threw aside the holy Hermit's guise. For this old man, enwrapped in false hypocrisy and well appearing words, was none other than Ar-chi-ma'go, a magician foul, enemy to Gloriana, Queen of Faeryland, and foe of all things good. He knew full well upon what worthy quest the Red Cross Knight was bound, and hating above all things else to see good accomplished in the world, was well resolved to bring that quest to naught by means of wicked spells and foul enchantments that he knew. So long as all true holiness within the heart of that good knight in closest union stood with that sage wisdom and straightforward truth that shone from Una, none could withstand these two. Together they were invincible; apart, each could but wander uselessly without the other, and so Archimago was resolved first in his wicked plan to separate the two.

From out his book he chose a few most horrible words, whereof

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he framed weird verses dread that spoke reproachful shame of highest God, the Lord of life and light. With these and other devilish spells, like terrible, he called out of the darkness legions of wicked sprites, the which like little flies fluttered about his head, waiting to do what service he should bid. Of these he chose the falsest two, those fittest for to forge true-seeming lies.

One he sent to Morpheus, god of sleep, to fetch an evil dream. The other with charms and hidden arts he made into a lady fair, most like to lovely Una. The first wicked sprite returned from the bowels of the earth where Morpheus dwelt and brought the evil dream. Coming where the Knight in slumber lay, he placed the dream upon his hardy head, and straightway the Knight did dream that Una, whom he loved and honored above all maids of earth and whose true love for him he trusted quite, was false to him, left to him the dangers of her quest, yet loved another in secret. Still was the Red Cross Knight too true and brave a man to let himself be troubled by a dream. Again and once again that troublous dream essayed to make him rise and leave the lovely maid. He held his ground and nought could make him disbelieve the pure and loyal faith of Una. When Archimago saw this labor all in vain, he took that same wicked sprite who brought the dream from Morpheus, and made him by his arts appear a knight. To him he brought the sprite whom he had cloaked with Una's form. Then with well feigned faithfulness, he ran and woke his guest and bade him rise and come to see his lady Una holding secret converse in the darkness with another knight. All in amaze the Red Cross Knight sprang up and, sword in hand, went with the aged man. When he beheld those sprites—one so like to Una—in close and hidden com-

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munion with a stranger knight, then indeed at last he held her truth for false and held the false for true. Within himself he struggled long until the evening star had spent its lamp in highest sky. Then, sore tormented, he donned his armor to ride away, and that long-faithful dwarf, hearing his tale, deemed also that his mistress must be false, and so these two fled from the Hermitage, and left fair Una deserted and alone.

Now when the rosy fingered morning rose from her saffron bed to spread her purple robe through dewy air, and the rising sun touched the high hills with light, then Una rose from the couch where she had slept and sought her Knight and dwarf. Alas! She found them gone, herself deserted quite, and knew no reason why she should thus have been left in such a woful case. Weeping full sore, she set forth from the Hermitage alone upon her snow-white ass and rode after the Red Cross Knight with all the speed that her slow beast could make. All was in vain. The Knight's light-footed steed, pricked by his master's wrath, had borne him so far away that following him was fruitless. Yet would faithful Una never rest. Every hill and dale, each wood and plain she searched, sore grieved that he whom she loved best had left her so ungently all alone.



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Meantime the Red Cross Knight pursued his way, flying before his thoughts and led astray by grief. And so it chanced he met at last a faithless Saracen, all armed, and bearing a great shield whereon in gayest letters was writ his name, *Sansfoy*. He was a man full large of limb and by his bearing it was easy to be seen he had no care for God or man. Beside him a fair companion rode, a goodly lady clad in scarlet cloth embroidered with gold and pearls. Upon her head she wore a splendid headdress and her palfrey was all decked with tinsel, while her bridle rang with little golden bells.

When this lady saw the Red Cross Knight advance, she bade her companion address him to the fray. Forward the faithless *Sansfoy* sprang. The other couched his spear and rode likewise forward. Soon they two met in furious shock; the horses staggered and gave back a pace. Then both knights seized their swords and fell upon each other furiously so that the flashing fire flew from their stricken shields as from an anvil beat with hammers.

“Curse on that cross,” quoth then the Saracen, “that keeps thee from all harm!” Therewith he smote a blow so fearful on his enemy’s crest that in the breast of that good Knight the natural courage awoke, and such a blow he struck upon the Saracen’s helmet in return, it cut clean through the steel and clove his head.

The lady, seeing her champion fall dead like the old ruins of a broken tower, fled from the place in fright, but the good Red Cross Knight rode after her, bidding the dwarf to come behind and bear the Saracen’s shield as sign of victory. When the lady saw the victor-knight close on her heels, she turned and cried as though in great humility, “Mercy! Have mercy, Sir!” The humbleness of one clad in such rich garments did much enmove the stout heroic heart of that good Red Cross Knight. He gently bade the dame put fear away and tell him who she was, and who he was that had been her champion. Melting in tears the wretched woman

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told a tale all false, how that she was Fi-des'sa, the faithful maid, much wronged by fortune and fallen by force into the hands of the proud Sans-foy', one of three wicked brothers that were called Sans-foy', the faithless, Sans-loy' the lawless, and Sans-joy', the joyless. The Red Cross Knight, deceived by her beauty and her simple dainty ways, held all her words for true, and bade her rest assured and journey on with him protected by his care. Yet every word she spoke was false. Not Fidessa, the faithful maid, was she, but Du-es'sa, false, a vile enchantress, ever arrayed against all good. She had not been stolen by Sansfoy, for he, the faithless man, was chosen knight of her, the faithless dame. Yet now, that all too easily the Red Cross Knight had believed the evil spoken of his innocent Una and parted from her, fair falsehood stepped into true Una's place to work the Knight much woe.

They two journeyed on together until at last, wearied of the way, they came upon a spot

*Where grew two goodly trees, that fair did spread
Their arms abroad with gray moss overcast;
And their green leaves, trembling with every blast,
Made a calm shadow far in compass round.*

Yet, beautiful though the spot appeared, there lurked a something sinister in the air about, so that the fearful shepherds never sate beneath those boughs, but shunned the place and never there did sound their merry oaten pipes. The good Knight, howsoever, soon as he spied the trees, thought only of the cool shade they offered, for golden Phoebus had now mounted in the heavens so high that the beams hurled from the fiery wheels of his fair chariot were scorching hot, and the Knight's new dame might not abide them. They therefore alighted from their steeds and sate them down beneath the trees, and the Red Cross Knight, now altogether deceived by this false dame, thought her the fairest he had ever seen. To make a garland for her dainty head, he plucked a bough from one of those two trees, whereon there trickled from the wound small drops of blood, and from the tree a human voice



cried piteously, "O spare to tear my tender side! And fly, Sir Knight! Fly far from hence, lest that befall you here that here befell to me." The good Knight's hair stood up in horror on his head at hearing words like these from out a tree and he made loud demand to know who thus addressed him in so strange a way. Then, groaning deep, the voice cried out that he was once a man, Fradubio, now a tree, and she who was to blame for his sad fate was one Duessa, a false dame. It happened in his youthful days

he loved a fair and lovely maid, Fraelissa, yet fell in on his travels by chance with that Duessa, who by her wiles beguiled him so he grew confused and knew not which was fairer, she or his own maid. His own dear dame was fair as fair might be, yet ever false Duessa seemed as fair, till at the last, bewildered quite by her enchantments, he saw his true and faithful dame as foul and ugly and herself, Duessa, alone as fair. Then he in anger cast his true-love off and chose Duessa for his dame and she, Duessa, turned Fraelissa to a tree. With her, the witch, he journeyed on, beguiled by her appearance of fair innocence, until the year turned round to that one day when witches must appear in their true guise. Then did it chance Fradubio came all unexpectedly upon Duessa bathing in a stream and saw her for what she was, a filthy, foul, old hag, misshapen, monstrous and more hideous than man could have believed. Awakened thus to see the truth, he secretly resolved to free himself from her foul snares, but she, perceiving how his thought toward her had changed, through charms and magic

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changed him also to a tree to stand there by his true-love's side.

The Red Cross Knight was much enmored by this unhappy tale and with fresh clay he closed the wound that he had made, yet was he blind as ever to the truth that this dame, here with him, who called herself Fidessa, was none other but that same false witch. Well she pretended that fear and sorrow and pity at this tale had made her swoon, and so drew his attention to her need, that he could think of none but her. At length he brought her to herself again, set her upon her steed and they fared forth, forgetting Fradubio and his dame.

Long they two journeyed till at last they saw rising before them a splendid castle, toward which a smooth broad highway led, whereon great troops of people travelled thitherward, yet ever those returning from the place seemed only wretched beggars that sank beside the road and lay in misery beneath the hedges.



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*A stately palace built of squarèd brick,
Which cunningly was without mortar laid,
Whose walls were high but nothing strong or thick,
And golden foil all over them displayed,
That purest sky with brightness they dismayed.
High lifted up were many lofty towers
And goodly galleries far overlaid,
Full of fair windows and delightful bowers,
And on the top a dial told the timely hours.
It was a goodly heap for to behold,
And spoke the praises of the workman's wit;
But full great pity that so fair a mould
Did on so weak foundation ever sit;
For on a sandy hill, that still did flit
And fall away, it mounted was full high,
That every breath of heaven shakèd it.
And all the hinder parts, that few could spy,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.*

Thither Duessa bade her knight to bend his way. The gate stood open wide to all; they entered in and sought the hall where dwelt the proud, disdainful lady of the place. On every side were wondrous rich array and many people clad in splendor. High above all upon a cloth of state there rose a rich and shining throne, whereon in gorgeous royal robes that shone with gold and precious jewels, sat the fair maiden queen. So proud she was, she kept her eyes raised high as though disdaining to look so low as on the humble earth, and in her hand she held a mirror, wherein she often viewed her face, taking delight in naught so much as in gazing on her own self-loved semblance. Proud Lu-ci-fer'a men called this queen, and she had usurped her throne with tyranny and wrong, for she had no rightful kingdom at all. Nor did she rule her realm with laws, but by changing policies and evil advisements of six old wizards.

An usher, full of pompous vanities, led Duessa and the Knight before proud Lucifera's feet to do her reverence, but she looked down upon them haughtily as though loath to cast her eyes so low and greeted them disdainfully, scarce bidding them to rise, nor did she vouchsafe them any other favor as a worthy Princess

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would have done. The knight and ladies received Duessa and her champion well, for in that court Duessa was well known, yet the stout-hearted Red Cross Knight in spite of this display, thought all this glory empty and most vain and that great Princess too exceeding proud.

On a sudden the royal dame rose up from her throne and called for her coach. Then she sallied forth, her brightness all ablaze with glorious glitter, and climbed into her coach that was adorned with gold and hung with gayest garlands. But lo! what strange steeds bore that splendid chariot—six strange beasts on each of which rode one of those six evil counsellors that had governance of the realm. First rode a sluggish, lazy, idle wight in a black monk's robe, astride a slothful ass, and even as he led the way, his head was nodding and he drowsed in sleep,—an evil one to guide the van, who knew not whether he went right or wrong.

Beside this idle counsellor there rode a loathsome gluttonous fellow upon a filthy swine. His belly was swollen with fat, his eyes deep sunk in rolls of fat, but his neck was long like any crane's, that he might swallow up excessive food. In green vine leaves he was clad; he wore an ivy garland on his head and ever as he rode he ate and drank—not fit to be the counsellor of a queen, whose mind was drowned in meat and drink.

The third counsellor in a fair green gown, rode upon a bearded goat, and man and beast were both wall-eyed, a sign of raging jealousy. The fourth, thin, spare and clad in threadbare coat, a greedy miser was, who sate astride a camel loaded down with gold. Two iron coffers hung on either side, full of precious metal, and in his lap an heap of coins he counted over. Of his ill-gotten treasure he made a god and unto hell had sold himself for money, so that he knew not right from wrong. Through daily care to get and nightly fear to lose what he had got, he led a wretched life, nor had of his possessions any joy at all.

Next him the fifth counsellor found place, an envious man and

