

Describe symbolism and allusion in the poem “The Faerie Queene” Book I.

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In Spenser’s *“The Faerie Queene, Book I”* (1590), symbolism and allusion play a big role. The characters, places, and events all have deeper meanings. They teach lessons about faith, truth, good, and evil.

Red Cross Knight: The Red Cross Knight is not just a character. He is both a symbol and an allusion. He is the symbol of holiness. The red cross on his chest is a reminder of his dear lord, Jesus Christ.

“On his brest a bloudie Crosse he bore”

So, the knight represents a true Christian hero. He is on a mission to defeat a dragon and save Lady Una’s parents. The dragon symbolizes sin and evil. So, the knight’s mission shows us a good Christian’s journey to be holy. Moreover, the Red Cross Knight is an allusion to St. George of the 3rd Century. St. George is England’s patron saint, who once fought a dragon. This allusion ties the Red Cross Knight to England’s pride and Christian heroism.

Lady Una: Lady Una is the knight’s companion in this journey. She is beautiful, pure, and innocent. Spenser describes her as,

“So pure an innocent, as that same lambe.”

Here, Lady Una is the symbol of truth and goodness. She stands for true religion. The journey of the lady and the knight symbolizes that a good person must be guided by truth or true religion.

Monster Error: The knight fights against a vile monster named Error. Monster Error is the symbol of falsehood. It stands for the lies of false religion. The knight defeats the monster in a

fierce battle. This fight is a symbolic struggle against the dangers of false religion and sin.

Archimago: Another important symbol is Archimago. He is a powerful sorcerer. He pretends to be a pious man, but he tricks the knight into leaving Lady Una. So, Archimago is the symbol of hypocrisy and lies. He stands for the Roman Catholic priests, according to Spenser's view.

In short, the poem is full of symbolism and allusions. Every character, monster, and event has a deep meaning. It shows the struggle between truth and falsehood, virtue and sin, and religion and irreligion. These elements make the poem not just a work of imagination but also educational, meaningful, and entertaining.

LxNotes