

# [Array and establishment of parallel characters.](https://assignbuster.com/array-and-establishment-of-parallel-characters/)

Edmund Spenser’sThe FaerieQueenefeatures an array of characters that appear briefly, usually toinfluenceRedcrosse in a critical moment along his journey. Fradubio is one such character, given sixteen stanzas in a poemof over 600 stanzas. The importance of Fradubio’scharacterbecomes more puzzling consideringhisstanzas could be removed from Cantos II without discontinuity in the plot line. Why is this talking tree important, both for the literal storyline andtheallegorical subplot? Fradubio functions as a parallel character to Redcrosse and contrasts between them pose questions of how graceisloss andobtained. Fradubio’s tale is a succinct preview of the plot come, allowing readers to considerHoliness, Doubt, grace, and other themesbefore they are fully addressed in later cantos.

Fradubio is easily establish as a parallel character to Redcrosse, through comparison with cantos II and thepoemas a whole. In the beginning of his tale, Fradubio is“ In prime ofyouthlyyeares, whencoragehot/Thefire of love and joy ofchevalree” (1. 2. 35. 1-2) similar to the naive Redcrosse, “ his hart didearne/ To prove his puissance inbattellbrave” (1. 1. 3. 6-7). Both men were accompanied by a fair lady: Fraelissa or Una. They meet Duessa through a victorious battle against her former companion. After some form of magic trickery, each man trades the companionship of the fair lady for Duessa. Eventually, her two-faced nature is revealed. After experiencing great hardship, the men hope to acquire the grace of God. The ambiguous inclusive pronoun Fradubio uses includes Redcrossewhen he states,“’Wemay notchange,’quothhe, ‘ this evil plight,/Till we bebath? din a living well’” (1. 2. 43. 3-4). Fradubio has no way of knowing that Redcrosse will be saved by“ The Well of Life” in the last cantos(1. 11. 29). At the time Redcrosse meets Fradubio in Cantos II, Redcrosseonly at the start of this shared story arc. An attentive reader may gain foresight into Redcrosse’s fate and already begin thinking about how faith is lost and recovered.

Nonetheless, Redcrosse fails to see this warning against Duessa or the foreshadowing of his own future in Fradubio’s tale. Redcrosse, identified in Professor Drew Daniel’s lecture as representingHoliness, is repeatedly deceived by ill-willed magic and trickery. Examples includeArchimago’sillusions of a fake Una, Duessa’s beauty, the House of Pride, and almost giving in to the arguments of Despair. The space around Fradubio and Fraelissa is so cursed that evenshepherds“ shundth’unluckyground,” but Redcrosse cannot sense thisanimosity(1. 2. 28. 8). When Redcrosse thrusts Fradubio’s bleeding bough into the ground, “ That from thebloudhe might be innocent”, he seems to be actively denying insight which Fradubio may grant (1. 2. 44. 6). Holiness embodies aninnocence that borders on ignorance, which leads to the first fundamental difference betweentheoverly trustworthyRedcrosse asHolinessand Fradubio asBrother Doubt.

Fradubio is identified in the footnotes of the Norton Critical Edition ofThe FaerieQueeneas meaning “ Brother Doubt” (Maclean and Prescott, 28).“ Brother” denotes Fradubio’s connection with Redcrosse as well as the universal nature of Fradubio’s plight. “ Doubt” denotes Fradubio’s allegorical role as someone religiously conflicted, seesawing between truth and deceit, faith and false faith, Protestantism and Catholicism. The first instance of doubt Fradubio has is between the beauty of Fraelissa and Duessa. He makes the mistake of only comparingoutward beauty, a category in which Duessa “ clad inscarlotred,/Purfledwith gold andperleofrich assay” has appeal (1. 2. 13. 3-4). In theNorton Critical Edition footnote of this passage, Duessa is linked with the “ pomp and hypocrisy of Rome [and Catholicism of Rome]” (23). Fradubio praises Fraelissa as “ mydearelove” (1. 2. 31. 6), “ this gentle Lady” (1. 2. 35. 4) along with her beauty, while Duessa is only acknowledged for her outward traits. It may be concluded that seed of doubt and false faithis based in superficial appearances. Also, note that Fradubio and Redcrosse cannot reject true faith without active intervention by Duessa orArchimago. Good men may be susceptible to doubt, but it takes manipulationon the part of false faith to turn the men away from achieving grace.

The next instance of doubt in Fradubio’s storyis discovering Duessa’s deception, which may be likened to acknowledging the evils of the Catholic Church. There is an oddcontradictionto the scene in which Duessa’s true form in revealed: as Professor Daniel pointed out, Fradubio claims to see “ neatherpartesmisshapen, monstruous/Werehiddin water, that I could not see” (1. 2. 41. 1-2). This contradiction is necessary to maintain Fradubio’s role as Brother Doubt. If Fradubio were to incidentally stumble upon Duessa’s true form, there would be no internal development allowing him to see through her deception. Doubt is notreserved for regressions in faith; it allows one to doubt their past misconceptions. Some instance or internal change must have caused Fradubio to question Duessa, such as the “ feignedpaine” of losing Fraelissa oran instinct that Fraelissa was “ turndtotre? nmould” (1. 2. 39. 7-8). He was then able to “ see” Duessa’s true form without literally seeing it. Thus, turns towards true faith require inward growth, rather than fortunate instance of chance.

Returning to the comparison of Redcrosse and Fradubio, the formerprotagonist’s storyline is fully realized in a return to grace, while Fradubio’sfateis left in state of uncertainty. Fradubio’s tale is such an accurate forecast of Redcrosse’s journey, why not give Fradubio thesame end that Redcrosse achieves? With only sixteen stanzas in which to ascertain Fradubio’s character, it is difficult to concludeif Holiness is innately more deserving of grace that Brother Doubt. Fradubio recognizes his own shortcomings:“ wretched man…whose natureweake” (1. 2. 33. 4). However, Redcrosse displays the same susceptibility to outward beauty and tendencies towards prideful rage that Fradubio has. As previously discussed, Brother Doubt lacks the innate innocence of Holiness. There are nuances that possibly paint Fradubio’s character as less fit for grace. Fradubio needlessly starts a fight with Duessa’s companion in defense of Fraelissa, who is under no apparent threat. Earlier in cantos II, Redcrosse is attacked bySansfoyupon Duessa’s urging, and he is forced to defend himself. All in all, such minute differences hardly seem to merit granting grace to one character and not the other.

The main difference between Fradubio and Redcrosse, which might explain the disparity in the conclusions of theirplots is waiting versus action. When Fradubio realizes Duessa’s duplicity, he “ ganrefraine, inmindeto slip away, /Sooneas appeared safeopportunitie” (1. 2. 41. 6-7). Such half-hearting actionagainst a being he knows to be evilcausesthe state of inaction Fradubio is forced to adopt indefinitely, after Duessa turns him into a tree. Waiting is certainly a form of suffering, as even the cold and heat of the weather pains Fradubio (1. 2. 33. 6-8). In contrast, Redcrosse is told by Contemplation in the House of Holiness that he has a long time of battles and trials before peace (1. 10. 61). Even before that, Redcrosse faces constantchallenges, such as the Cave of Despair and House of Pride. Whilethe form of trialvaries, each man must fulfill his celestial duty:“’Time andsuffis? dfates to former kind/Shallus restore, noneelse from hence may usunbynd,’” (1. 2. 43. 7-8).

Granted that Fradubio appears for only a small portion ofThe FaerieQueene, his story functions as a surprisingly complex parallel to that of Redcrosse. Thechallenge with such a shortexcerpt is that it will not hold all of Spenser’s beliefs on holiness, doubt, and grace; these will be revealed in depth through the rest of the poem. From Fradubio’s story alone, areader in Spenser’s time who facesthesimilardoubts about which religion is true faith, Protestantism or Catholicism, can find comfort in the possibility of God’s grace. It will come with hardship in any number of forms, but one need not be Holiness incarnate or guided by idols such as Arthur to have hope of salvation.