



Jerusalem Delivered (Gerusalemme liberata)

Torquato Tasso

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First published in 1581, Torquato Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered (Gerusalemme liberata)" is a magical epic poem that tells the story of the First Crusade, led by Godfrey of Bouillon and other European noblemen and warriors. The story is full of supernatural characters and events. It develops during the bloody siege of Jerusalem, against the Moors and their famous leader, Soliman. The story in "Jerusalem Delivered" is violent and erotic, especially the torrid love affair between Tancred, the bravest of the Christians, and Clorinda, a fierce but beautiful warrioress. Written in the XVI century, "Jerusalem Delivered" book captures the spirit and ideology of the Middle Ages, specifically the XI century. Like in "Curial and Guelfa", Christian symbols mix with Greco-Roman ones, in a tale of war and sex. Tasso's images are powerful and the poetry of "Jerusalem Delivered" is anything but childish or naive. As I said, it is violent and full of action. It contains no boring digressions or reflections, but pure action. Today, "Jerusalem Delivered" is considered to be a one the masterpieces of Italian literature. This Spenserian translation by Edward Fairfax, rendered in 1600, is the only significant translation that has endured the test of time.



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