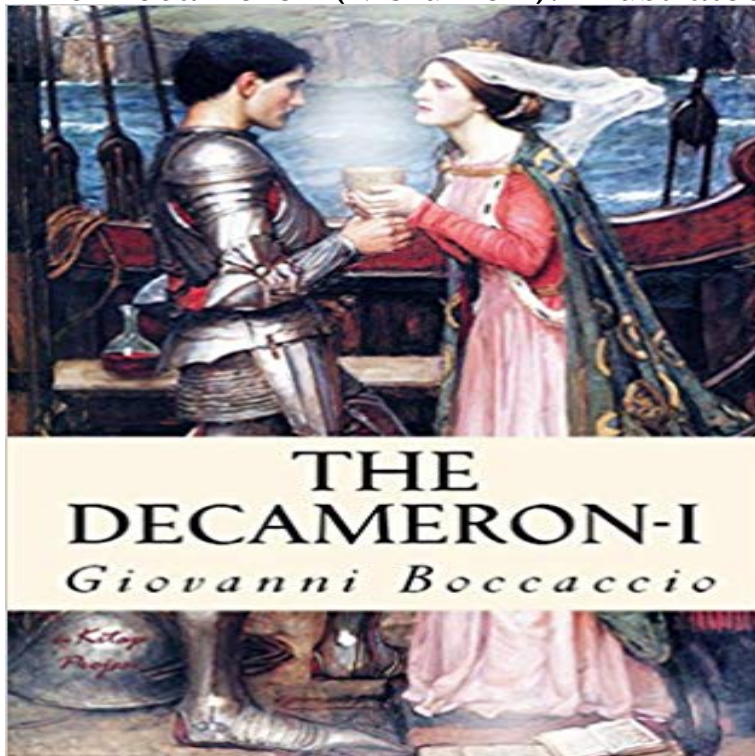


The Decameron (Volume I): Illustrated



Son of a merchant, Boccaccio di Chellino di Buonaiuto, of Certaldo in Val d'Elsa, a little town about midway between Empoli and Siena, but within the Florentine contado, Gio-vanni Boccaccio was born, most probably at Paris, in the year 1313. His mother, at any rate, was a Frenchwoman, whom his father seduced during a sojourn at Paris, and afterwards deserted. So much as this Boccaccio has himself told us, under a transparent veil of allegory, in his *Ameto*. Of his mother we would fain know more, for his wit has in it a quality, especially noticeable in the Tenth Novel of the Sixth Day of the Decameron, which marks him out as the forerunner of Rabelais, and prompts us to ask how much more his genius may have owed to his French ancestry. His father was of sufficient standing in Florence to be chosen Prior in 1321; but this brief term of office but two months was his last, as well as his first experience of public life. Of Boccaccio's early years we know nothing more than that his first preceptor was the Florentine grammarian, Giovanni da Strada, father of the poet Zanobi da Strada, and that, when he was about ten years old, he was bound apprentice to a merchant, with whom he spent the next six years at Paris, whence he returned to Florence with an inveterate repugnance to commerce.

DETAILED CONTENTS
INTRODUCTION PROEM - FIRST DAY
- NOVEL I. - Ser Ciappelletto cheats a holy friar by a false confession, and dies; and, having lived as a very bad man, is, on his death, reputed a saint, and called San Ciappelletto. NOVEL II. - Abraham, a Jew, at the instance of Jehannot de Chevigny, goes to the court of Rome, and having marked the evil life of clergy, returns to Paris, and becomes a Christian. NOVEL III. - Melchisedech, a Jew, by a story of three rings averts a danger with which he was menaced by Saladin. NOVEL IV. - A monk lapses into a sin meriting the most

severe punishment, justly censures the same fault in his abbot, and thus evades the penalty. NOVEL V. - The Marchioness of Monferrato by a banquet of hens seasoned with wit checks the mad passion of the King of France. NOVEL VI. - A worthy man by an apt saying puts to shame the wicked hypocrisy of the religious. NOVEL VII. - Bergamino, with a story of Primasso and the Abbot of Cluny, finely censures a sudden access of avarice in Messer Cane della Scala. NOVEL VIII. - Guglielmo Borsiere by a neat retort sharply censures avarice in Messer Ermino de Grimaldi. NOVEL IX. - The censure of a Gascon lady converts the King of Cyprus from a churlish to an honourable temper. NOVEL X. - Master Alberto da Bologna honourably puts to shame a lady who sought occasion to put him to shame in that he was in love with her. - SECOND DAY - NOVEL I. - Martellino pretends to be a paralytic, and makes it appear as if he were cured by being placed upon the body of St. Arrigo. His trick is detected; he is beaten and arrested, and is in peril of hanging, but finally escapes. NOVEL II. - Rinaldo d'Asti is robbed, arrives at Castel Guglielmo, and is entertained by a widow lady; his property is restored to him, and he returns home safe and sound. NOVEL III. - Three young men squander their substance and are reduced to poverty. Their nephew, returning home a desperate man, falls in with an abbot, in whom he discovers the daughter of the King of England. She marries him, and he retrieves the losses and re-establishes the fortune of his uncles. NOVEL IV. - Landolfo Ruffolo is reduced to poverty, turns corsair, is captured by Genoese, is shipwrecked, escapes on a chest full of jewels, and, being cast ashore at Corfu, is hospitably entertained by a woman, and returns home wealthy. NOVEL V. - Andreuccio da Perugia comes to Naples to buy horses, meets with three serious adventures in one night, comes safe out of them all, and returns home with a ruby.

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