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Francesca da Rimini in dramatic literature

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FRANCESCA DA RIMINI IN DRAMATIC LITERATURE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Speech

Indiana State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment

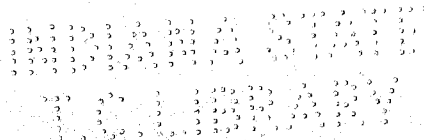
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Master of Science

by

Bill Lattin

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THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis of Bill Lattin, Contribution of the Graduate Division, Indiana State Teachers College, Number 776, under the title Francesca da Rimini in Dramatic Literature, is hereby approved as counting toward the completion of the Master's Degree of 8 hours' credit.

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CHAPTER I
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the late thirteenth century Paolo and Francesca of Rimini were murdered by Giovanni, husband of Francesca and brother of Paolo, when he found them making love to each other. Since that time, the tragedy has found expression in at least eight non-musical dramas; all of these plays were inspired directly or indirectly by Dante's account in The Divine Comedy. It is the purpose of this study to determine so far as possible what actually happened to Paolo and Francesca and then to compare and contrast the dramas one with the other and with the actual historical happenings. The plays are examined for their fidelity to history and for the use of dramatic license by the authors in manipulating characters and plots to achieve dramatic ends. They are analyzed for plot structure, character development, and literary style, and these elements are compared with corresponding elements in the other plays.

The actual history of the principal characters concerned in the tragedy is scant. Paolo and Giovanni were the sons of Malatesta da Verruchio. Giovanni was born in 1248 and Paolo in 1253. Paolo had the nickname "Il Bello"--- "The Handsome," and Giovanni was called "Gianni la Sciata"---

"Lame John"; Giovanni's name is variously shortened and combined with his nickname to Gianciotto or Lanciotto in the historical accounts and in the dramas.¹

The birth dates of Giovanni and Paolo are not contested. On the other hand, the year of Francesca's birth is not certain; it is placed variously between 1255 and 1260. She was the daughter of Guido Vecchio da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna; Malatesta, father of Giovanni and Paolo, was Lord of Rimini. Both were heads of prominent Guelph factions. At a date generally set at 1275, Francesca was married to Giovanni to cement a pledge of good faith between the two Guelph families. About ten years after the wedding Giovanni found his wife in a compromising situation with his brother, Paolo, and killed them both.² The usually accepted date of the murder is 1285; however

¹ Battalini, Memorie Storiche di Rimini e de' Suoi Signore, 1789, excerpts included in introduction to Francesca da Rimini, Francis Marion Crawford, Translated into French by Marcel Schwob (Paris: Librairie Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1902), pp. xxv-xxviii.

² Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, translated and annotated by John Aitken Carlyle, Thomas Okey, and P. H. Wicksteed (New York: Modern Library, 1950), note on p. 35; Charles Yriarte, Françoise da Rimini dans la Légende et L'Histoire, 1883, cited in "Paolo and Francesca in History and Literature," Gertrude Urban, The Critic, XL (July, 1902), p. 435.

Vincenzo Botta, an Italian Scholar of Dante, places the murder in 1289.³ This is practically all that can be reliably determined from history.

The first literary reference to the story of Paolo and Francesca is in the Divine Comedy of Dante, composed about 1310, or twenty-five years after the murder. When Giovanni and Francesca were married, Dante was about ten years of age. Although no records are extant to indicate that Dante knew them, it seems very probable that he did, for he had served in the army with Bernardino, Francesca's brother.⁴ In 1285 Dante was living in the vicinity of Rimini, and he must have been acquainted with the happenings of the tragedy, since later events proved he was a friend of the family.⁵ When political persecution drove him to seek refuge at Ravenna in his later years, his protector was Guido Novello, Francesca's nephew.⁶

³Vincenzo Botta, Introduction to the Study of Dante (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), pp. 164-165.

⁴Loc. cit.

⁵Benedetto Croce, The Poetry of Dante, translated by Douglas Ainslee (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1922), pp. 17-18.

⁶Botta, op. cit., pp. 164-165.

In the Divine Comedy, Dante, with his guide, Virgil, has descended into the second ring of Hell, reserved for those who sinned through carnal lust. Among a host of "dames and cavaliers"⁷ driven about through space by a continual wind, he recognizes Paolo and Francesca. Francesca tells him they are forever condemned because of the love they had known, while Giovanni has been condemned to a lower part of Hell destined for fratricides. Dante wishes to know what induced their sin; Francesca tells him that they read a romance of Lancelot and Guenevere relating how Guenevere first broke the marriage troth with Lancelot. Dante is so touched by their woe, that he falls into a swoon as the infernal tempest drives them on.⁸

As Dante was the first to mention that they were reading a book, it is uncertain whether the romance of Lancelot and Guenevere was the cause of their downfall, or whether Dante added the detail of the romance to his phantasy to give himself the opportunity of condemning

⁷ Dante, op. cit., p. 32.

⁸ Arthur John Butler, The Hell of Dante Alighieri (London: Macmillan and Company, 1892), pp. 58-64.

romantic tales of adultery. Later chroniclers may well have added the incident of the book merely because Dante used it.

That Dante had a definite book in mind is maintained by Mr. Paget Toynbee, an English authority on Dante. In the lines of the Inferno, Dante has Francesca say, "The book, and he who wrote it was a Galeotto."⁹ Toynbee uncovered a manuscript in Medieval French in the British museum in which Sir Gallehaut (the French equivalent of Galeotto) acts as pander in bringing Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenevere together. Lancelot and Guenevere began their breach of faith with a kiss; this detail is repeated in Dante: "[He] kissed my mouth all trembling."¹⁰ The lady of Malehaut, a rival with Guenevere for the love of Lancelot, watched their meeting and coughed when she saw them kiss. In Canto XVI of the Paradiso, Dante speaks of "her who coughed at the first trespass writ of Guinivere."¹¹ Mr. Toynbee made an extensive search and found no other version of the Lancelot du Lac story which included these details. Previous commentators, including G. A. Scartazzini,

⁹ Dante, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁰ Loc. cit.

¹¹ Dante, op. cit., p. 502.

a respected Italian authority on Dante,¹² could make nothing of the reference to "her who coughed." Toynbee, therefore, drew the inference that he had discovered the version known to Dante. It is known as the "Lansdowne Manuscript"; it dates from the thirteenth century, the century of Paolo and Francesca. Its composition is attributed to "Maistres Gautiers Map." This is probably Walter Map, a clerk at the court of Henry II of England.¹³

Dante's mention of Paolo and Francesca was soon followed by a fuller account of the story by Giovanni Boccaccio. Perhaps he was influenced by an artistic desire to improve the story: in his brief statement of the affair in Il Commenta sopra la Divina Commedia, he tells some parts of the story in conversation that no one but the principals could have heard; this is an indication that he was making a departure from actuality. According to Boccaccio, Francesca was led to believe that Paolo, who escorted her to Rimini and the nuptials, was the man she was to marry, although Paolo was already a married man. He stood proxy for his brother in the marriage ceremony. Only in the light of the coming dawn after the marriage night did Francesca realize that the man beside her was

¹²G. A. Scartazzini, A Companion to Dante, translated by Arthur John Butler (London: Macmillan Company, 1893), pp. 454-455.

¹³Paget Toynbee, M. A., D. Litt., Dante Studies and Researches (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1902), pp. 1-37.

not the man she believed to be her husband. Some ten years passed; during this time Francesca bore Giovanni a daughter, Concordia. Though Paolo, now a widower, and Francesca attempted to subdue their love, they were finally persuaded through reading an old romance to imitate Lancelot and Guenevere. Giovanni was informed of his wife's infidelity by a servant: Giovanni then discovered Paolo and Francesca in Francesca's bedroom. Paolo had heard his brother approaching and was about to make his escape through an overhead trap-door when his cloak caught upon a part of the fastening mechanism. Giovanni confronted the two and drew his sword while Paolo was struggling to free himself. Francesca threw herself between the two brothers and Giovanni struck her by accident. A second thrust killed Paolo.¹⁴

Subsequently the same facts were recounted in a Latin chronicle of Florence in 1534. The anonymous writer (called Anonimo Fiorentino) probably took his matter from Boccaccio, though he presented it in a less florid, but

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Gertrude Urban, "Paolo and Francesca in History and Literature," The Critic, XL (July, 1902), 427; The Honorable William Warren Vernon, M. A., Readings on the Inferno of Dante, Volume I (London: Macmillan and Company, 1894), pp. 169-172.

more legalistic style.¹⁵ The popularity of the tale of the two tragic lovers grew until a somewhat amazing entry appears in the archives of Florence in 1581, signed by Giovanni da Sascorbaro:

A few days ago in the church of Saint Augustin in Rimini, they found a marble sepulchre Paolo Malatesta and Francesca, daughter of Guido, lord of Ravenna, who were put to death by Lancilotto, son of Malatesta, lord of Rimini, brother of said Paolo, found under the accomplishment of a dishonest deed, and both miserably killed with the blows of a poignard, as Petrarch describes in his "Triumph of Love." Their clothes were of silk, and although they had been shut up in this sepulchre for so many years, they were found in a perfect state of preservation.¹⁶

In succeeding years many paintings, pieces of music, and poems were devoted to the story, but it is the function of this study to consider only non-musical plays and only such of these as could be obtained for study. At least eight different plays have been written about the Paolo and Francesca story; six of these were available for study. These are Franceska da Rimino by Johann Ludwig Uhland (1807, German), Francesca da Rimini by Silvio Pellico (1818, Italian), Francesca da Rimini by George Henry Boker (1855, American), Paolo and Francesca by Stephen Phillips (1899, English), and Francesca da Rimini by Francis Marion Crawford (1902, French by an American author). The original

¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹⁶ Cited in Urban, op. cit., p. 436.

texts of these plays were consulted when they could be procured. Those studied in the original languages are the plays of Uhland, Boker, Phillips, and Crawford. English translations of the Pellico and d'Annunzio dramas were used. Two other plays are noted but not discussed because of the scarcity of information concerning them. They are Francesca da Rimini by Martin Grief (1892, German), and Francesca da Rimini, by G. A. Cesareo (1906, Italian). Paolo and Francesca appear briefly in a crowd scene in Victorien Sardou's Dante (1903, French),¹⁷ but their appearance is so short as to present no contribution to this study. We may now examine these dramas in detail.

¹⁷ Oscar Kuhns, Dante and the English Poets from Chaucer to Tennyson (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1904), p. 149.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAYS

Francesca da Rimini

by Johann Ludwig Uhland

In 1807, Johann Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862), a German poet, was the first to attempt to dramatize the Francesca da Rimini story.¹⁸ He outlined the intended plot of his five-act play, but he completed only two fragmentary scenes. He used the historic accounts freely and sacrificed the few known facts for romantic effect.

Dante was one of the characters in these two brief scenes. Though he was actually only ten years old at the time of the wedding, he is utilized by Uhland as a benign older bystander who sees what happens and comments upon it chorus-like without participating in it.

The two short scenes Uhland completed are a part of what he intended as scene one of act one. The plot is not advanced greatly in them, but the characters of Francesca and Guido, her father, are established, although not developed. In the opening scene she is a young girl filled with joyous expectations of her coming marriage to Paolo

¹⁸ Edward Sculley Bradley, George Henry Boker, Poet and Patriot (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1927), p. 153.

to whom she has been pledged since childhood. Her father, Guido, is portrayed as a kind man who is happy in his daughter's joy, but he is also a strong partisan of the Guelphs and finds his happiness profitable in that it means a strengthening of strained ties with another Guelph chief-tain, Malatesta da Rimini, and his fierce warrior sons, Giovanni and Paolo.

However realistically these characters may behave in their relations to the situation in which Uhland placed them, the situation is false to the actual happenings.¹⁹ Although Uhland intended in the unravelling of his plot to marry Francesca to Giovanni (called Lanciotto in this version) and to have the murder as its outcome, his finished scenes give slight indication of the known happenings. His version is considered here merely because it is the first known attempt to dramatize the story, and because Uhland left an outline of his intentions in the unfinished section.

Francesca da Rimini

by Silvio Pellico

The first known completed play on the story of Francesca da Rimini is Francesca da Rimini by Silvio Pellico

¹⁹Ludwig Uhland, Gesammelte Werke, Volume I (Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von Philipp Reclam jun., n. d.)

(1783-1854), first given in Milan, and published in 1818.²⁰

His play was warmly received at its première because of its patriotic style, and because the author was a popular hero who had withstood Napoleon.²¹

Giovanni (called Lanciotto in this version) at first is treated almost sympathetically. He loves his wife despite her lack of warmth toward him, but when he realizes that he is rivaled, his pride mounts until he is acting with tyrannical cruelty and suspicion.

Paolo and Francesca are unwilling to descend to illicit love, but desire from the temptation presented by the Lancelot romance at last subdues them. Both Paolo and Francesca are agreeable young persons trying hard to combat temptation, but their characters do not seem deeply conceived.

Pellico's play has no outstanding literary qualities to preserve it in popular favor, but it is well constructed. Pellico was a stage craftsman who knew how to bring his characters into juxtapositions most rewarding in dramatic effect. His Francesca da Rimini would hold interest on stage, though it seems wanting when read. For a tightening of the plot lines, Pellico begins his play after the wedding and only a short time before the tragedy.

²⁰Bradley, op. cit., p. 153.

²¹Joseph Spencer Kennard, A Literary History of the Italian People (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 359.

In Pellico's version the lovers had read the Lancelot romance many years before Francesca married Lanciotto. By reading the tale again their desire is rekindled:

PAOLO. For a time
 I hid my passion, but one day it seemed
 To me as if thou must have guessed my
 secret.
 Concealed among the flowers in the
 garden,
 I, sighing, watched thy windows,
 till I saw
 Thee leave the house, and wander by
 the lake;
 Trembling I hung upon thy path. At
 first
 Thou didst not see me; thy bright
 eyes were fixed
 Upon a book; and on its leaves there
 fell
 A tear.... Much troubled, I accosted
 thee;
 Confused and hesitating were my words;
 Confused thy answer. Thou didst set
 the book
 Before me and we read--together read
 Of Lancelot of the Lake, how love
 enthralled him.
 We were alone and free from evil
 thought.
 Our glances met; I felt my face grow
 pale;
 Thy whole frame quivered--quickly
 didst thou flee!

FRANCESCA. O day of days! The book remained
 with thee!

PAOLO. It rests upon my heart. It made me
 glad
 When I was far away. See--here it is!
 Behold the page our eyes explored together!
 And see: 'tis here the tear-drop fell,
 that day,
 From thy dark lashes!²²

²² Silvio Pellico, Francesca da Rimini, translated by A. O'D. Bartholeyns (London: George Allen and Unwin, Limited, 1915), pp. 52-53 (Act III).

Pellico's Francesca sins only in intent but not in deed. He plainly states that the love of Paolo and Francesca is never consummated physically.

Some historians think that Malatesta da Rimini, the father of Lanciotto and Paolo, had died between the wedding and the murder.²³ Pellico accepts this interpretation and has Malatesta in his grave before the beginning of the play and Lanciotto is lord of Rimini.

The outstanding feature of Pellico's version is the number of lines protesting against tyranny. Joseph Spencer Kennard, an English historian of Italian literature, states the patriotic lines far outnumber the romantic ones, but he cites Paolo's love declaration to Francesca in the final scene as a line in which as much passion is given to love as has been given to patriotism: "T'amo, Francesca, t'amo e disperato e l'amor mio." -- "Even if it must be punished by everlasting chastisement, this love will endure in everlasting passion."²⁴

Francesca da Rimini

by George Henry Boker

George Henry Boker (1823-1890), the American poet and.

²³Battaglini, cited in Crawford, op. cit., p. xxvi.

²⁴Kennard, op. cit., p. 359.

dramatist, wrote the first play in English on the subject of Francesca.²⁵ Boker was generally acknowledged to be the leader of the verse playwrights of America in his time, and his plays were received with acclaim both in the United States and Great Britain.²⁶ Unfortunately, Boker displayed a tendency to imitate Shakespearean lines in many of his plays. One of Boker's great admirers, Richard Henry Stoddards, admitted that Boker's attempts to imitate Elizabethan and Restoration plays showed clearly even in his finer works. Boker's reliance upon the old tragedians hampered his expression and kept his genius from showing itself clearly in his plays, though his poems have been much admired by critics.²⁷

Boker was characterized by the haste with which he could put a play on paper when he had worked the idea over in his mind sufficiently to determine the treatment he wished to give it. In March, 1853, Boker committed Francesca da Rimini to paper in approximately twenty days. The entire play needed only a little polishing to be ready for the hands of the producer.²⁸

²⁵ Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, 1943), p. 352.

²⁶ Montrose J. Moses, The American Dramatist (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1911), pp. 67-70.

²⁷ Moses, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁸ Bradley, op. cit., pp. 123-125.

Boker had based his interpretation of the tragedy on the floridly romantic account of Boccaccio and sought no further for historical veracity. There were many versions of the Francesca story in Boker's time, including Gioachino Rossini's musical setting for Francesca's speech in the Divine Comedy, Leigh Hunt's narrative poem, "The Legend of Rimini," and countless paintings.²⁹ So perhaps it seemed the only way of telling the story better was to tell it differently. Beginning with Dante's line which assigned the murdering brother to the circle of Cain, all treatments of Giovanni had made him a villain; only Pelli-co's play had made him briefly sympathetic, but even there he developed into a cruel, unreasonable tyrant when his jealousy was aroused. Boker's idea of freshening the plot was to make a sympathetic character of Giovanni (called Lanciotto in this version); he would be a fratricide, but he must pass through the agonies of deciding whether such a crime could be committed and whether he could ever be justified in executing it.

There are several versions of Boker's play, for he was a man who wrote plays with one eye on the library shelf and the other on the stage. For general purposes the printed version will be considered and reference will be made to the production-book versions as knowledge of them permits.

²⁹Urban, op. cit., pp. 425-438.

While not compressing the play within the neo-classical time limits, Boker saw much advantage in making the events occur in a short passage of time. Boker followed Shakespeare's technique of seldom referring to passing time; thus one gets the impression that the events take place in rapid succession, although this was not actually the case. The whole play represents the happenings of five days with each scene evolving naturally from the preceding one; the characters do not age. Yet the whole story is here from the negotiations between the two fathers for a blood union of the clans to the murder of the two unhappy sinners.

At the beginning of the play, the positions of the two houses are not in accord with historical fact. While the houses of Verucchio and Polenta were very important in the late thirteenth century, they were not the two halves of Italy as Boker implies. Instead of taking the two houses as Guelph allies strengthening their position by a wedding tie, the Verucchi seem to be the Guelphs and the Polentani the Ghibellines. The impression is given that the two warriors who head the contending factions decide that whatever deep cause has separated them politically and caused so much belligerence can be bridged over by love. This is a very romantic proposition that is forced upon the reader

at the start of the play; but possibly it is best, for it presages the general state of things to come.

Now, while Boker's opening proposition may seem a bit shaky, he reinforces it in the canniest way possible, for before the audience's credulity is demanded, its humor is asked. The news of the match is announced by the clown, Pepé:

I'm laughing at the world;
It has laughed long enough at me; and so
I'll turn the tables. Ho! ho! ho! I've heard
A better joke of Uncle Malatesta's
Than any I e'er uttered.³⁰

Pepé takes the place of the unnamed courtier in Boccaccio's account, but his position is much amplified from this device-character whose only purpose is to inform. Because he is partially deformed and of the lower classes, the best possible position life can offer him is that of a court jester. Like so many jesters in literature, he has a deeply sensitive nature. He resents the position of clown which he fills though his intellect is greater than that of many of the courtiers who lord it over him. Simply because he is in a position which does not allow him to claim personal rights, he has a secret code of justice which tells him how much he will bear from those above him. Hating those he is paid to amuse, he goads them with his jokes until finally the crisis comes. Lanciotto disregards his

³⁰George Henry Boker, Francesca da Rimini (Chicago: The Dramatic Publishing Company, 1901), p. 7 (Act I, scene i).

fool's cap and strikes him. Then his credo pours venomously from him:

You great lords
 Have something you call lordly honor; pray
 May not a fool have foolish honor too?
 Cousins, you laid your hand upon my coat--
 'Twas the first sacrilege it ever knew--
 And you shall pay it. Mark! I promise you.³¹

Pepé's humor becomes increasingly sour, until soon he earns a blow from Paolo, also. Now vengeance is his main objective. Though he may seem to fall into a docile mood for a moment or two, it is only to find an opportunity to wound with a bitter jibe. In true Shakespearean style, the lines of dramatic irony are legion, and a majority of them fall to Pepé's part, for under the mask of the malevolent jester may be seen the peering eyes of sardonic fate. Hardly one of the maledictions pouring from his tongue fails of its mark. His desire to bring havoc upon the heads of his masters is so great that he does not hesitate to report a highly colored story of Paolo and Francesca's love to Lanciotto, although he is shrewd enough to know that Lanciotto may destroy him for carrying such a tale. Boker developed this informer's role to the point of giving it a real place in the framework of the play. The garrulous and gossipy courtier of Boccaccio, the foppish, jealous

³¹ Boker, *op. cit.*, p. 18 (Act I, scene ii).

noble of Uhland's summary, and Pellico's breathless man-at-arms crying out that Paolo has escaped and made for Francesca's rooms - none of these touch the superb character development found in Boker's jester.

Lanciotto became a new conception under Boker's mastery. He is aware of his own grotesqueness and bears it sadly, not daring to hope that he can ever be a lover, but he has a great soul. He protests movingly against his father's match-making which seems to him an unsuited piece of levity in the horrible, sad business of war. When he learns he is the intended groom, he can laugh in good-natured disbelief, although the thought wounds him inwardly. He has deep insight into the hearts of his family through his great suffering and philosophy. He speaks touchingly of human indifference to death:

A few sobs o'er the body, and a few
Over the coffin; then a sigh or two,
Whose windy passage dries the hanging tear;
Perchance, some wandering memories, some regrets;
Then a vast influx of consoling thoughts -
Based on the trials of the sadder days
Which the dead missed; and then a smiling face
Turned on to-morrow. Such is mortal grief.
It writes its histories within a span,
And never lives to read them.³²

Lanciotto is so fair in his dealings with the maid who is forced into his arms that one feels as much pain for him as for her. Lanciotto demands that all his shortcomings

³² Boker, *op. cit.*, p. 22 (Act I, scene iii).

must be told Francesca before Paolo asks her to decide. His physical hideousness must be revealed before she can be wooed. When he finds she has been deceived about his appearance, he willingly offers to cancel the marriage and still allow the truce. When she still remains content to marry him, he knows unbounded joy; but shortly thoughts of his own wretchedness make him doubt that she could really love him. Still, he blesses her for at least the pretence. Through all this, Lanciotto is not too noble to be believable; though deploring warfare, he can still slaughter the Ghibellines without mercy because the convention of war impels him; he can still resent the cruel insults of Pepe, and despise the foxlike Guido da Polenta. It is his love for his brother that brings out the noblest qualities in him; even when confronted with the facts of the crime against him, he blames the informer rather than the fact, implores Paolo and Francesca to deny their clear guilt, and finally kills his wife first to provoke Paolo to uphold his own honor. Boker may have departed from legendary traditions in forcing sympathy so strongly toward Lanciotto, but his artistry almost pardons this.

Paolo in this play is not a feared warrior as he had been hitherto depicted on the stage, but a gentle scholar,

loving deeply but lacking the moral courage of his brother. In trying to be true to Lanciotto in concealing his defects, he succeeds in playing Lanciotto very falsely. Paolo has the sensitivity of his brother, but his beauty is his enemy for his physical attractiveness and courtly bearing make him the more appealing to the tortured Francesca. Paolo, too, feels he has been deprived of the love he needs; while he is handsome and loved by women, his father considers him a mere pawn in the more serious game of death. In sending Paolo as an envoy to Guido, Malatesta informs Guido that Paolo's ransom will be paid only in steel, for Lanciotto the valiant is the more useful son. Paolo, wishing to serve his brother well, still falls into the meshes of romantic love. He is a scholar and sees most clearly through the vivid imagery of his books. When he reads to Francesca of the adultery of Lancelot and Guenevere, he sees himself and her in the pages of the book.

Francesca is the fitting mate to consummate his damnation through belief in romance. Sick of the perpetual treachery of her father and his wily schemes to use her marriage for political gain, she goes with Paolo from her despised home to wed a husband she has not seen. When the truth of Lanciotto's appearance appals her, it is her ironic doom to fall back into deception to attempt to

save herself. Blinded by this sudden glance at truth, she is an easy prey to her father's whispering that Lanciotto will not keep his pledge, that there will be war if she does not submit to him. In her confusion she thinks Lanciotto's ugliness makes him a deceiver, also, for she has connected deceit with ugliness in her father's case. In desperation, her course is to deceive, to proclaim a love for Lanciotto that she does not feel. Finally, Paolo's romantic deception of himself and her leads her into the forbidden state she dreaded. The moment of truth comes too late for Paolo and Francesca, for when they confess their sin at last, death is the result. The most criminal deception by which Boker causes Francesca to suffer is the one most common to that period - the belief in courtly love and courtesy. She says:

The soul that feeds on poesy,
Is of a quality more fine and rare
Than Heaven allows the ruder multitude.³³

- and there we see the subtle lie that makes the tragedy.

The two villains of the piece are the fathers, Guido and Malatesta. They have succumbed to the customs of the world, but their hardening has resulted in different guises. Malatesta affects a fierce, bluff front suggesting that he is an honest warrior who despises weakness. Guido is the fox, ever using wiles to discover his enemy's weakness.

³³Boker, op. cit., p. 46 (Act II, scene ii).

When he is Malatesta's guest he looks for weak spots in the fortifications; when his daughter is about to be released from her pledge to marry Lanciotto, he whispers in her ear that there is trickery afoot and causes her to make her unwilling pledge. Worst of all is his underhandedness in trying to make Francesca believe Paolo to be Lanciotto. The affectionate girl would have married Lanciotto in his ugliness to bring her father peace had he been plain about the matter, but he continued his detestable machination despite the warning of his friend, the Cardinal:

Treachery with enemies is bad enough,
With friends 'tis fatal.³⁴

Had Guido been true, the tragedy might have been forestalled.

Since ten years of historical actuality have been compressed into five days, Boker could mix conditions that were true at various times during this period. He chose to refer to Dante as having reached maturity. Dante is in Ravenna, his last refuge, when Paolo comes wooing by proxy. The poet does not appear as a character. He is the idea of nobility for Francesca, in contrast to the weakness of her father, and the lines wherein she describes Dante are impressive:

As I passed the hall,
I met your solemn Dante, with huge strides

³⁴ Boker, op. cit., p. 42 (Act II, scene ii).

Pacing in measure to his stately verse.
 The sweeping sleeves of his broad scarlet robe
 Blew out behind, like wide-expanded wings,
 And seemed to carry him in his level flight.
 Thinking to pass, without disturbing him,
 I stole on tip-toe; but the poet paused,
 Subsiding into man, and steadily
 Bent on my face the lustre of his eyes.
 Then, taking both my trembling hands in his -
 You know how his God-troubled forehead awes -
 He looked into my eyes, and shook his head,
 As if he dared not speak of what he saw
 Then muttered, sighed, and slowly turned away
 The weight of his intolerable brow.
 When I glanced back, I saw him, as before,
 Sailing adown the hall on out-spread wings.
 Indeed, my lord, he should not do these things:
 They strain the weakness of mortality
 A jot too far.³⁵

Boker does the finest job of making the Lancelot idyll
 breathe of romantic love:

So sat Guenevra and Sir Lancelot,
 Under the blaze of the descending sun,
 But all his cloudy splendors were forgot.
 Each bore a thought, the only secret one,
 Which each had hidden from the other's heart,
 That with sweet mystery well-nigh overrun.
 Anon, Sir Lancelot, with gentle start,
 Put by the ripples of her golden hair,
 Gazing upon her with her lips apart.
 He marvelled human thing could be so fair;
 Essayed to speak; but, in the very deed,
 His words expired of self-betrayed despair.
 Little she helped him, at his direst need,
 Roving her eyes o'er hill, and wood, and sky,
 Peering intently at the meanest weed;
 Ay, doing aught but look in Lancelot's eye.
 Then, with the small pique of her velvet shoe,
 Uprooted she each herb that blossomed nigh;
 Of strange wild figures in the dust she drew,
 Until she found Sir Lancelot's arm around
 Her waist, upon her cheek his breath like dew.

³⁵ Boker, op. cit., p. 36 (Act II, scene i).

While through his fingers timidly he wound
 Her shining locks; and, haply, when he brushed
 Her ivory skin, Guenevra nearly swoond:
 For where he touched, the quivering surface blushed,
 Firing her blood with most contagious heat,
 Till brow, cheek, neck, and bosom, all were flushed.
 Each heart was listening to the other beat.
 As twin-born lilies on one golden stalk,
 Drooping with Summer, in warm languor meet,
 So met their faces. Down the forest walk
 Sir Lancelot looked - he looked east, west, north,
 south -
 No soul was nigh, his dearest wish to balk:
 She smiled; he kissed her full upon the mouth.³⁶

The productions given of Boker's play sacrificed a great deal of the reading edition because of demands by actors and actresses. In 1854, Boker wished to have E. L. Davenport play Lanciotto, but Davenport's ideas of stage effect were disquieting. He thought the lovers should be killed in separate scenes to stretch out the denouement, and he was certain that his wife, Fanny Vining, could do well as Pepe the jester. These suggestions caused Boker to demur on the immediate prospects of producing the play and it was 1855, a year later, before it was actually done. The delay was sufficient to decrease Fanny Vining's interest in the part of Pepe, but it was also sufficient for Mr. Davenport to lose the devotion to it he had expressed in his first letters. He put it into a repertory season where it received only four performances. Davenport played Lanciotto and Mme Ponisi was Francesca. Her notions perhaps influenced

³⁶Boker, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126 (Act V, scene i).

the production, for it began at Act II, scene i, the first scene in Ravenna, and the first in which Francesca appears.³⁷

The play received fitting recognition in 1882. Lawrence Barrett recognized the part of Lanciotto as a challenge to his art. He gathered a brilliant cast and performed the play in Philadelphia. The production-book Barrett used is still in existence,³⁸ and it shows that great liberties were taken with the play in this highly successful production. Boker apparently had more influence in stopping ruinous cutting that he had in 1855, as notes of suggestions appear in his hand on the margin. Act I was returned to the play, the act in which Lanciotto is persuaded to agree with wedding negotiations for himself with Francesca. In Act II the comic passages between Guido and Francesca's maid, Ritta, are cut out, as are all references to Dante. As the last scene in Ravenna closes, all characters in Act II appear on stage and proclaim, "On to Rimini!" and strike a tableau. The Barrett production returned an important scene inexplicably cut from the 1855 version - the scene in which Paolo and Francesca read the old romance and realize their love. The final scene was

³⁷ Bradley, op. cit., pp. 136-143.

³⁸ It is incorporated into the text of the reading edition by means of brackets and footnotes in Arthur Hobson Quinn's Representative American Plays (New York: The Century Company, 1917), pp. 329-384.

separated from Act V and made Act VI, probably to give the crews time to put up a set representing Francesca's bedroom instead of the garden, thus making the scene agree with Boccaccio.

Otis Skinner was Paolo in Barrett's production, and in 1901, because of the recent successes of the Phillips and d'Annunzio productions, he decided to revive the play for an American tour and take the more difficult part of Lanciotto. He took the play to most of the larger cities of the United States including Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore, New Orleans, Memphis, St. Louis, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Detroit. The Barrett production had undoubtedly influenced the Phillips and d'Annunzio versions and Skinner's production probably added impetus to the desire of Crawford to add yet another play, so both of these productions bore unexpected fruit and gave the world some other thought-provoking versions of the Francesca da Rimini legend.³⁹

Francesca da Rimini

by Martin Greif

No version of Martin Greif's drama could be obtained for study, but Edward Scully Bradley, an American biographer

³⁹ Bradley, op. cit., pp. 143-152.

of Boker, summarizes it:

All of the other plays upon the Francesca story are later than Boker's. In 1892 was published the German Francesca da Rimini of Martin Greif. This also presents a very different Lanciotto from Boker's, a cruel tyrant, King of Rimini, who offers peace to Ravenna in return for Francesca's hand. Upon the acceptance of the terms, Paolo is sent to fetch the bride. The young pair, falling deeply in love upon the return journey, confess their love to Lanciotto on their arrival. Greatly exercised, he refuses to give up Francesca to Paolo. He will release her if she does not marry Paolo, but will then continue the destruction of Ravenna. To save Ravenna, Francesca submits to the marriage, and Paolo is banished. But Paolo returns to see Francesca once more. Casting aside discretion they embrace for the first and last time, for Lanciotto, led to the scene by a revengeful noble, slays them both. Amid the ruin, comes news that Lanciotto is deposed.⁴⁰

Paolo and Francesca

by Stephen Phillips

Thomas H. Dickinson in his anthology, Continental Plays,⁴¹ states that the legends of Pelleas and Melisande and of Paolo and Francesca are perhaps derived from a common source. The stories are indeed similar. The best known treatment of the Pelleas story is Maurice Maeterlinck's Pelléas et Mélisande implemented by the music of

⁴⁰Bradley, op. cit., p. 155.

⁴¹Thomas H. Dickinson, Continental Plays, Volume I (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935), p. 269.

Claude Debussy; the Francesca play which achieves a similar mood is the Paolo and Francesca of Stephen Phillips, produced in 1899. Stephen Phillips (1867-1915) was a British verse dramatist. He made extensive use of symbols in his play, but his characters are not mastered by the symbols; rather, they interpret them as expressing the emotions in their own souls. As an example, to Paolo the white road leading straight in the distance to the towers of Rimini is like a cord linking him to Francesca. Corrado, his companion, can see no such lure in the highway, for he is not so emotionally bound to the fortress. Despite what Paolo sees in the road, the other characters see it as they would any other road, and it is a snare only to Paolo. Thus the characters create their own symbols, but the conflict is actually within and between the characters, not enforced from without by Nemesis or Destiny.

Phillips' play presents, eventually, a web which traps all the main characters, but it is a web they spin themselves. It is his technique to allow the tragedy to develop at a faster rate than naturalism would allow by showing us the characters of the principals through the occasional use of symbolism also always held subservient to the characters themselves.

Without apology, Phillips changes the cast of characters to suit his needs. Giovanni has a limp, a hump in his shoulder-blades, but he is not the disjointed, deformed

monster that other dramatists had made of him. He does not excite the sympathy of Boker's Lanciotto, because his distracting disfigurements are removed and he can be seen as he is, without pity or disgust intervening. He is, like most of the Giovannis under examination, closely bound to his brother, bound this time through similarities. Paolo is also a valiant man of war in this play and the brothers have been twin avengers who have subdued the Ghibellines. Giovanni is a man who might reasonably expect the love of Francesca had he not made the mistake of sending his more handsome brother as an envoy to bring her home. When jealousy is aroused in him it grows rapidly, although the remembrance of his old love for Paolo weakens him at times. When he believes Paolo will commit suicide to prevent his being false to Giovanni, the older brother falls into sorrowful relaxation, saddened, but believing this is the only way out. When Paolo vacillates and draws nearer to consummating his love, Giovanni acts quickly according to the code of honor and kills the lovers. Remorse comes, but not the crushing remorse felt by Boker's Lanciotto, for Giovanni feels he has performed a sad, harrowing, but necessary duty and the world will judge him to have done right.

In this play, Paolo's weakness caused the tragedy. Physical bravery has not conditioned him to resist forbidden love. He has brought Francesca to the castle

because his brother is ruler in Rimini and cannot go himself. At Ravenna he fell in love and the return trip brought their passion to great heights. Once returned to Rimini he realizes his false position and, as Pellico's Paolo had done, requests immediate departure so that he might master his feelings, but he does not go. A week passes; he remains vehement in his protestations but has only made gestures toward departure. Rimini is still in sight when his resolution breaks and he determines to go back. But there is nothing comic about the hesitation in the play's true setting. His struggle is real and fearsome. Finally, when he has left the castle, he feels more secure in thinking he has conquered himself, but temptation strikes when he has dropped his guard and he sits in the inn-yard looking back toward the castle:

I have fled from her; have refused the rose,
 Although my brain was reeling at the scent.
 I have come hither as through pains of death;
 I have died, and I am gazing back at life.
 Yet now it were so easy to return,
 And run down the white road to Rimini!
 And might I not return? (He starts up and
looks at the towers, red with sunset.)
 Those battlements
 Are burning! They catch fire, those parapets!
 And through the blaze doth her white face look out
 Like one forgot, yet possible to save.
 Might I not then return? Ah, no! no! no!
 For I should tremble to be touched by her,
 And dread the music of her mere good-night.
 Howe'er I sentinelled my bosom, yet
 That moment would arrive when instantly
 Our souls would flash together in one flame,

And I should pour this torrent in her ear
And suddenly catch her to my heart. (A drum is heard.) A drum!

O, there is still a world of men for a man!
I'll lose her face in flashing brands, her
- voice

In changing cries: I'll rush into the war!

(SOLDIERS pass across the stage. Seeing PAOLO, they cheer and call him by name - then exeunt. He makes to follow, then stops.)

I cannot go; thrilling from Rimini,
A tender voice makes all the trumpets mute.
I cannot go from her; may not return.
O God! What is Thy will upon me? Ah!
One path there is, a straight path to the dark.
There, on the ground, I can betray no more,
And there for ever am I pure and cold.
The means! No dagger blow, nor violence shown
Upon my body to distress her eyes.
Under some potion gently will I die;
And they that find me dead shall lay me down
Beautiful as a sleeper at her feet.⁴²

Feeling himself drawn to Francesca, he yet makes a bold resolve to save his brother's honor, and follows it with a weak execution. He buys a quick poison to end his longings and keeps it close but does not use it. Feeling he will soon take it and die, he returns to Francesca to see her once again before his passing. Their meeting is full of the feeling of death, for he still believes he will stop himself before the moment of danger:

PAOLO. What is that book you read? Now fades
the last Star to the East: a mystic
breathing comes: And all the leaves
once quivered, and were still.

FRANCESCA. It is the first, the faint stir of the
dawn.

PAOLO. So still it is that we might almost hear
The sigh of all the sleepers in the world.

FRANCESCA. And all the rivers in the world.

PAOLO. What is 't you read?

FRANCESCA. It is an ancient tale.

PAOLO. Show it to me. Is it some drowsy
page that reading low I might persuade
your eyes at last to sleep?

FRANCESCA. It is the history
Of two who fell in love long years ago;
And wrongly fell.

PAOLO. How wrongly?

FRANCESCA. Because she
Already was a wife, and he who loved
Was her own husband's dear familiar
friend.⁴⁵

They begin to read, and his last resistance collapses, for Francesca is first to respond to the charm of the story. She calls him Lancelot, and they kiss. There is another day of hesitation, represented by another act, but Paolo is lost from the moment of the kiss and Giovanni's sword is ready when the sin is committed.

The political aspects of the story are greatly subordinated, so that the story may advance unimpeded. Malatesta has died before the story commences in this version and the Ghibellines are conquered and whining beneath the yoke of Rimini. For convenience to the story, the conquered

⁴⁵ Phillips, op. cit., pp. 84-85 (Acts III, scene iii).

town of Pesaro is made to groan under the heavy taxation , imposed by Giovanni. The reason for Paolo's departure is ostensibly to investigate conditions there. His negligence allows the condition to aggravate itself and Giovanni goes with troops and quickly subdues the rebels. This latter incident gives Paolo his opportunity to have the quiet hour of reading with Francesca. Guido is also missing from the story. Although he is alive, and the principal political reason for Giovanni's marriage to Francesca, he has exercised no influence in the shaping of her character, as she has been committed to a convent since childhood.

Francesca's easy submission to Paolo is made more believable by her utter lack of touch with the outside world until Paolo brought her from the convent to her nuptials. Nourished on chronicles of chivalry, she finds herself in unbounded joy riding beside the handsome vavalier, Paolo il Bello. One of the most touching uses of symbolism in Phillips' play occurs with Francesca's first entrance. It is contained in a stage direction:

The doors at end of gallery are thrown open.
Enter out of sunlight PAOLO, leading FRAN-
CESCA by the hand, followed by LADIES and
SQUIRES. Flowers are thrown over them.⁴⁴

So she is pictured in joy, entering out of sunlight. Like

⁴⁴Phillips, op. cit., p. 12 (Act I, scene i).

a child she prefers Paolo to his sterner brother, and her innocence is the main ingredient of her charm. Partially disturbed by the chatter of her maid, Nita, who comments that a maiden's first obligation is to her own preference in matters of love, Francesca is half prepared for the temptation in the reading of the romance. Nita, the maid, is a far cry from her prototype, Ritta, in Boker's play. Whereas Ritta may have given wrong advice, her intentions were loyal; but Nita is a selfish jade who misleads her mistress callously. So Paolo and Francesca, knowledgeable in old romances, but naive to the power of passionate love, fall together and Giovanni's final comment on them is painfully moving:

She takes away my strength.
I did not know the dead could have such
hair.
Hide them. They look like children fast
asleep!

The informer again assumes an important part in the drama; in this play the character is a woman. Phillips had no historical justification for the character of Lucrezia, but she is as real, artistically, as any person in the play. Lucrezia, who has been given refuge at Rimini, is a widowed cousin of the brothers. Her marriage had evidently not deviated from the tradition of the day, but was political; before she was well acquainted with her husband, he had

been killed fighting the Ghibellines. In her refuge she has fallen in love with Giovanni although he suspects nothing of the sort. She has almost subdued her feeling, but there is an almost conscious surge of the old impulses as she finds Giovanni about to marry. Mixed with her subsiding love for Giovanni is an instinct toward the motherhood she can never know. She wants to protect Giovanni in his new role as husband while at the same time she wishes to prevent him from entering into it. She is the first to point out the feeling she has noticed between Paolo and Francesca. She helps Giovanni conceive the plot against the lovers. But the innocence of the new bride has been working upon her, too. Finally, just before the trap is sprung, she is won over to Francesca's side. She lets the long repressed tenderness pour forth to the young girl:

At last the long ice melts, and O relief
 Of rain that rushes from me! Child, my child!
 I clasp you close, close - do you fear me still?
 Have you not heard love is more fierce than hate?
 Roughly I grasp what I have hunted long.
 You cannot know - how should you? - that you are
 More, so much more, to me than just a child.⁴⁵

She is too late. But Phillips cunningly uses her distress to divert the reader from the bloodshed off stage. While Paolo and Francesca are being murdered, Lucrezia is desperately trying to find Giovanni to make some excuse to stay his hand.

⁴⁵ Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 101 (Act IV).

One of the characters seems to be used only as a symbol. Blind Angela sees and forecasts the tragedy in the first act. She cannot be remarkably perceptive because she uses details which would make her a prophetess. In this case, it must be admitted that a reasonably prominent character is used only as a symbol for the suspicion in Lucrezia's mind.⁴⁶

Phillips' drama packs the most emotional power by sustaining what might be called a Gothic mood throughout the entire play, by making all episodes lead naturally to the catastrophe, and by producing characters who are believable throughout. The word imagery creates a vivid sense of twilight melancholy - a twilight in which ideas may be perceived, not obscured. The play makes no pretension to historical accuracy; but if truth of character is a measurement of a good drama, this play is excellent.

Francesca da Rimini

by Gabriele d'Annunzio

Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863-1938), an Italian poet,⁴⁷ wrote the next play on the subject. The first performance

⁴⁶ Phillips also dramatized Scott's Bride of Lammermoor (Barrett H. Clark, The British and American Drama of Today [Cincinnati: Steward and Kidd Company, 1921], pp. 105-106.). Angela closely resembles blind Alice in Scott's novel.

⁴⁷ His real name was Gaetano Rapagnetta. Oscar Kuhns, The Great Poets of Italy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1903), p. 327.

of d'Annunzio's Francesca da Rimini was in Rome in 1901. The performance lasted five hours but held the audience by its vigor and color.⁴⁸ The play wanders far from its plot in the references to all the political, military, and artistic achievements occurring in Italy, but these digressions were felt necessary by d'Annunzio in portraying the confused, troubled, complex, and fiery activity of a man living in Rimini in the next-to-the-last decade of the thirteenth century. In his striving for varied effects, d'Annunzio often seems about to stupefy one with his love for Italian proper names:

The Malatesti? Who then after all
 Are these Verruchio folk? By this alliance
 Shall we have got Cesena,
 Cervia, Faenza, Forlì, Civitella,
 Half of Romagna?
 A hundred infantry!
 To hunt the Traversara region, O
 The mighty succour!
 And Dovadella, and Zello, and Montaguto
 Already in our power perhaps. Gianciotto!
 But who is he, Gianciotto? When I think
 How that Traversarian widow,
 That ancient scabby bitch, has mated with
 (After the nephew of the Pope) the son⁴⁹
 Of Andrea, the King of Hungary....

We find a true picture of the times in this play, but a picture seen more through the eyes of Boccaccio than of Dante. The story of Paolo and Francesca as told by Boccaccio is the basis for d'Annunzio's treatment, though d'Annunzio accents which details he pleases; he elaborates other details

⁴⁸Dickinson, op. cit., p. 269.

⁴⁹Gabriele d'Annunzio, Francesca da Rimini, translated by Arthur Symons (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, Publishers, 1902), p. 33 (Act I).

that he must have gained from Memorie Storiche di Rimini ,
e de' Suoi Signore into the telling and incorporates
 others of his own imagining. Twice he borrows details from
 stories in the Decameron.⁵⁰

This is a play of youth. Neither father is killed
 for dramatic convenience; Guido and Malatesta are alive
 but do not appear on stage. Francesca has two brothers and
 a sister, and Paolo and Giovanni (called Gianciotto in this
 version) have a brother in this play. None of these bro-
 thers and sisters existed in previous dramatic versions
 but they are not apochryphal. Their names are mentioned in
 the Memorie Storiche but little else is said about them.
 D'Annunzio could utilize his inventive powers to the full-
 est in creating characters for them and he makes them each
 an individual.

D'Annunzio also recognizes that Paolo was married be-
 fore his brother; occasional references are made to Orabile,
 his wife, but she never appears, which aids the idea that
 Paolo does not love her but has left her abandoned in one
 of his castles.

The time element is the one which no dramatist up to
 and including d'Annunzio treats honestly. No one has stret-
 ched the time between the wedding and the tragedy to the
 actual ten to fourteen years which elapsed (unless Pellico

⁵⁰

Fourth day, novella five; fifth day, novella eight.

in beginning his play "after the wedding" meant "ten years" after the wedding). So, in condensing the time, d'Annunzio had to omit the children of Francesca and Paolo from his otherwise swelling cast.

No economy is used in the stage effects or in the size of the cast. All the previous Francescas, save Pellico's, had a maid in the cast of characters. This Francesca has six. Previous productions have discoursed of battle; this one transports the spectator to a tower and sees the archers shooting off shafts tipped with Greek fire; arrows whiz in from offstage catching archers in the throat; Malatestino is carried in bleeding with one eye lost. A bleeding bundle containing the head of Montagna dei Parcitadi is kicked about the stage. Minor characters continue to decorate the scene.

Gian Figo, a minstrel and a jester at once, appears at both Ravenna and Rimini. He never has the time to tell a story and his joking is seldom able to lighten the dark tale. Once when he challenges an astrologer's predictions by proving that the seer cannot remember insignificant happenings in the past, Gian Figo's levity is amusing and entertaining. There are merchants and musicians, torch-bearers, doctors, archers, and men-at-arms. To mention the names of Ser Toldo Berardengo, Aspinello Arsendi, Viviano

de' Vivii, Bertrando Luro, Oddo Dalle Caminate, and Foscolo d'Olnano is to occupy about as much time as they are given on the stage.

Francesca's brothers and sister appear only in the first act of the drama, but they impress one. Samaritana looks upon her sister, Francesca, as the greater of the two, because Francesca so much surpasses her gentle sister in ability to command, to feel, to explain. Francesca loves her tender little sister who should not be exposed to the flaming world of the Renaissance. The older brother is a man whose head is filled with notions of alliances, troops, battalions and the merciless slaughter of the Ghibellines. Ostasio is the scheming brain guiding Guido's policy, the coarse hand chastening his soldiers for slackness of duty, the brazen, stolid face of defiance raised in his household against the Ghibellines. His cruelty is largely spent upon Bernardino, his bastard brother, who lacks the arrogance of determination which made success in those days. Bernardino barely escapes a battle with his life, but despite his ineptitude he loves Francesca his sister and would do his best to save her from the loathesome marriage into which he sees her being thrust, but for this he wins a wounded face from Ostasio. Bernardino falls a victim to Ostasio's cruelty, Francesca is a victim of his policy.

The brother of Gianciotto and Paolo is the most fascinating new character. Weaker of frame than his two

brothers, Malatestino compensates through a blind fury in the face of danger and a cunning cruelty even greater than Gianciotto's. Malatestino has lost an eye moments before his first entrance through savage bravery in the assault and his refusal to wear a helmet. As Francesca bandages his face, he frets to return to battle and to kill the prisoner he has just taken because of his hatred of the Ghibellines. When peace descends upon the household, his sly trickery begins to exert itself. Divining the liaison between Paolo and Francesca he drops shaded hints to Francesca that she might escape Gianciotto's knowledge if he, too, might share her bed. Francesca has been troubled by groanings of Malatestino's prisoner who is in chains in a chamber somewhere below her bed-room. Malatestino, in a fretful disquietude at her refusals, goes down and cuts off the head of the prisoner. Returning with his ghastly package, he discloses the lovers' secrets to Gianciotto and maliciously plots with him how the lovers can be trapped. So the character of the somewhat colorless informer in Boccaccio's Commenta has been presented successively as Pepe, Lucrezia, and Malatestino - a truly amazing variety of conceptions.

Gianciotto, himself, is a strongly drawn character. He lacks the fox-like cruelties of Ostasio and Malatestino, but he is all the more terrifying for being a strong man

who need not conceal the reasons for his cruelty. He is first seen as he berates his archers for their bad aim and tameness when actually they have been waging a fearful battle on stage; the unskilled shooting was the result of the strong barrage of arrows they had faced. Gianciotto's demands for unflagging valor from his men continues, but one sees a warming within his rough nature for the valiant deeds of his brothers, and when he finds Francesca had exposed herself to danger to aid in the fighting he praises her as if she were a man, instead of fearing for her safety as Paolo had done. He has a rough tolerance for the members of his family but not the tenderness found in Boker's Lanciotto and Phillips' Giovanni. He is the most terrifying of all the elder brothers met in this series because he is so realistically depicted as a man who believes his conduct is correct according to the standards of his time and so feels only anger and disappointment in Paolo and Francesca. Pellico's Lanciotto, brute though he was, could feel misgivings when he planned the deed. Gianciotto is the man whose motives cannot be questioned because he has the most power.

Neither Paolo nor Francesca are so ideal as in the other versions because they seem true products of their age when constancy to ideals could be followed only with

great peril. They accept the conditions of life and try to live with them. Paolo, for the first time, is presented as a husband who has long tired of his wife, Orabile, and has left her to pine alone. Paolo deceived Francesca in the wedding negotiations by pretending to be Gianciotto, although this is not depicted on stage; he is arriving at Ravenna as the first act closes and some time has passed following the wedding when Paolo meets Francesca in the second act. He confesses that his deception of her has haunted him and asks her forgiveness. There is little time to talk, however, as the battle is beginning and the fire of war fills his nostrils. He discharges his bow like a madman; at first he tries to shield Francesca, but when she protests her willingness to help in the fighting, he commissions her to open the portcullis allowing him great vantage in his aim, but placing them both in great danger from the bombardment of enemy missiles. Filled with great admiration for her bravery and her beauty, he soon leaves the post he wins at Florence and returns to her, forcing his attentions upon her, requiring her to follow him in the reading of the Lancelot and Guenevere romance until passion mutually overtakes them. But Francesca is the stronger in the first encounter and protests against its continuation. When Paolo returns, his passion is ungovernable. He pours out his love in wild prose-poetry:

I will carry you where all things are forgot,
 And no more time made slave
 Is lord of our desire.
 Then shall the day and night
 Be mingled even as one
 Upon the earth as upon one sole pillow;
 Then shall the hands of dawn
 No more unclasp from one another's hold
 The dusky arms and the white arms of them,
 Nor yet untwist
 The tangle of their hair and veins.⁵¹

His words are short and to the point. Drunk with passion, he is on the point of forcing her when the avenging brother comes.

All the characters, the scenes, the thousand colorful details - all these are only meant as a frame for the portrait of Francesca that d'Annunzio created. She is a woman of all moods. All her women reverence her, whatever she does. A Cypriot slave is careful to cleanse away all bloodstains that Francesca might see, though blood cannot frighten her strong nature. She is tender to her sister, Samaritana, in their parting, and she is tender to her maid, Biancofiore, when she reminds her of Samaritana:

She was sweet,
 My sister; was she not sweet, Biancofiore?
 Ah, if she were but here, if she might make
 Her little bed beside my bed to-night!
 If I might hear again
 Her little naked feet run to the window,
 If I might hear her run with naked feet,
 My little dove, and say, and say to me:
 "Francesca, now the morning-star is born,
 And it has chased away the Pleiades!"⁵²

⁵¹ D'Annunzio, op. cit., p. 219 (Act V).

⁵² D'Annunzio, op. cit., pp. 74-75 (Act II).

Indeed, she is more tender with her women than with the men. She understands their hardness and would meet them on their own terms. She dismays even the soldiers when she plays with the Greek fire and imagines its destructive power:

Tell me, is it true
 That it flames in the sea,
 Flames in the stream,
 Burns up the ships,
 Burns down the towers,
 Stifles and sickens,
 Drains a man's blood in his veins,
 Straightway, and makes
 Of his flesh and his bones
 A little black ashes,
 Drawn from the anguish
 Of man the wild cry of the beast,
 That it maddens the horse,
 Turns the valiant to stone?
 Is it true that it shatters
 The rock, and consumes
 Iron, and bites
 Hard to the heart
 Of a breast plate of diamond?⁵³

She sees that she was betrayed into marrying Gianciotto, and feels little compunction about betraying him. She has fallen in love with Paolo when he masqueraded as her lover, and she proves her love in the most striking way possible, by aiding him in his fight against the Ghibellines. Despite her attempts to be as strong as a man, she is still a woman, a woman who in privacy fears the wrath of cuckolded Gianciotto

⁵³D'Annunzio, op. cit., pp. 212-213 (Act V).

should he learn where her heart is placed. She awakes from dreams of terror (which d'Annunzio borrowed from Boccaccio):

In my dream
 I see it as it was in very truth
 A naked woman, through the depth of the wood,
 Dishevelled, torned' by branches and by thorns,
 Weeping and crying for mercy,
 Runs, followed by two mastiffs at her heels
 That bite her cruelly when they overtake her;
 See, and behind her through the depth of the
 wood,
 Mounted on a black charger,
 A dark knight, strong and angry in the face,
 Sword in hand, threatening her
 With a swift death in terrifying words.
 The the dogs, taking hold
 Of the woman's naked side,
 Stop her; and the fierce knight, coming abreast,
 And with his sword in hand
 Runs at the woman so,
 And she, upon her knees, pinned to the earth
 By the two mastiffs, cries to him for mercy;
 And he thereat drives at her with full strength,
 Pierces her in the breast
 So that the sword goes through her; and she falls
 Forward upon her face,
 Still always weeping; and the knight draws forth
 A dagger, and opens her
 By the hip-bone and draws
 Her heart out, and the rest,
 And throws it to the dogs that hungrily
 Devour it of a sudden, but she has lain
 Not long before, as if she were not dead,
 She rises up and she begins again
 Her lamentable running toward the sea;
 And the two dogs after her, tearing her,
 Always, and always after her the knight,
 Upon his horse again,
 And with his sword in hand,
 Always threatening her.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ D'Annunzio, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132 (Act III).

When Paolo's wild love encompasses her, she still fears ,
and forsees the end and speaks of it, but does not
withdraw from the love encounter:

It says
Here in the book, here where you have not
read:
"We have been one life; it were a seemly
thing
That we be also one death."⁵⁵

D'Annunzio's Francesca is a passionate, strong soul, who
falls through her own choice. She is no less true than
the other Francescas that have been presented, and the
variety of characterizations helps to reinforce the words
Dante gave to Francesca: "Love...to no loved one permits
excuse from loving."⁵⁶

Francesca da Rimini

by Francis Marion Crawford

When Francis Marion Crawford (1854-1909) made the last
important dramatization of the Francesca story, he deter-
mined to make it as true as possible. The resulting work
was the most historically correct of any of the versions,
but it is no less romantic than the other versions.

Because of the success of Eleonora Duse in d'Annunzio's
play, Sarah Bernhardt wished a Francesca play she could call
her own. Mr. Crawford wrote such a play and read it to her.

⁵⁵ D'Annunzio, op. cit., p. 220 (Act V).

⁵⁶ Dante, op. cit., p. 33.

It was in French; Edmond Rostand and Marcel Schwob were present at the reading in Bernhardt's home. She was delighted and pronounced it playable, but complained that Crawford's French required polishing and Marcel Schwob undertook the task. Soon after the initial production, the play was published in a paper-back edition; M. Schwob was given credit as translator. Crawford made an English translation later, but it is virtually unobtainable. The Library of Congress notes that only twelve copies were printed.⁵⁷ Bernhardt found the play not a suitable vehicle, as the audience's sympathy was turned toward the injured husband, and one season in her repertory was enough for it.⁵⁸

Except for the prologue, Crawford's play takes place in the concluding months of the lives of Paolo and Francesca. The wedding date was 1275. The date of the murders is variously given as 1285 or 1289. Crawford chose the latter date, making the marriage of fourteen years' duration.

The child of Giovanni and Francesca, Concordia, is first used in Crawford's cast. She loves both parents, the proud and scornful Francesca, and the misshapen, fierce Giovanni. She confides to her father the words of abuse her mother heaps upon him, tells him how Francesca is much more friendly to her uncle Paolo than to him, and sets the

⁵⁷ A Catalog of Books Represented by Library of Congress Printed Cards Issued to July 31, 1942 (Ann Arbor: Edward Brothers, Incorporated, 1943), p. 458.

⁵⁸ Maude Howe Elliott, My Cousin, F. Marion Crawford (New York: Macmillan Company, 1934), pp. 277-278.

fire of jealousy in him. Thus Crawford makes Francesca's daughter take the part of the informer - a part that had passed through such varied hands in the different plays. It is the girl's insistence on searching for a piece of cloth in her mother's room that gives Giovanni the clue that Paolo is hidden there.

Orabile, the forsaken bride of Paolo, appears as an off-stage voice and an onstage corpse. She is not content to remain outside the action as she does in d'Annunzio's version. Tired of her husband's duplicity, she at last follows him to Rimini and hurls insults at him from outside the window where she has seen him with Francesca. For her pains, he murders her in the prison. Thus Paolo is made even less admirable than in d'Annunzio's play.

Francesca, too, is not a noble character. Once betrayed, she feels no compunction at taunting her husband unmercifully with the assertion she will never love him. Nor is her love for Paolo ideal. When she thinks the woman who shouted insults is of common origin, she casts Paolo off for betraying her with a prostitute. She forgives him only when she finds that the woman he killed was his own wife, a person of suitable rank to be considered her rival.⁵⁹

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Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of the American Drama from the Civil War to the Present Day (New York: F. S. Crofts and Company, Publishers, 1937), pp. 209-210.

One can see why she appeared an unsympathetic heroine. Giovanni was the pitied character by default of the other two leading characters.

The accuracy of Crawford's play is based upon the Boccaccio romance, the Memorie Storiche di Rimini accounts, and the Gustave Doré illustrations of the Divine Comedy. The final scene was written so that the stage picture would copy the Doré illustration of Giovanni creeping up behind Paolo and Francesca:⁶⁰

PAOLO. Yes, my love. So, where is your well-loved book?

FRANCESCA. There, under your hand.

PAOLO. "Then when Lancelot found the queen, at that time she was alone. For it was after supper, and the evening was greatly cold, and all men slept."

FRANCESCA. "For too long had they been apart." How long, I ask myself?

PAOLO. More than two months.

FRANCESCA. Yes. "And when that Lancelot perceived the lips of Guenevere, and that too amorously when they smiled, thus had he seen them smile in his dreams..." The light is fading here. I can see it no more.

PAOLO. But we know the words.

FRANCESCA. I know them by heart. And we know the rest. The book says: "She gave him her two hands." so. (They kiss.)

PAOLO. So! So! Ha! (Stabs them.)

FRANCESCA. Paolo! Speak to me!

⁶⁰ Elliott, op. cit., p. 278.

PAOLO. A kiss, before I breathe my last!

FRANCESCA. Heart of my heart! No more! Never
a breeze, a single breeze, to repeat
our death!

PAOLO. Together...we two. (Dies.)

FRANCESCA. Listen, my love! Ah, listen to me
a single moment! Cowardly demon!
I would not kill you had I the
power, fearing to see your face in
Hell! It is not vast enough to
contain your soul and ours! Know
the curse of Cain: live, live al-
ways...or beg divine pardon, a
little space in the middle of the
good Heavens...find Paradise, if
you wish it...go where you wish,
but do not come to the house of the
damned, it has a horror of you,
and Judas would strike your face!
Leave, leave, but look a little for
the last time. Here is what you
have asked for in vain and that
which I have refused you, that which
you awaited day and night, night and
day, and that which you will never
have from me, never, never - look
well - the kiss of love, supreme,
eternal, faithful! Ah, my love,
pardon me if I have tarried...I
come. (Dies.)

CONCORDIA. (Without.) Mama! Mama! Open to me!...
I am going to search for the blue silk...
for the mantle of Our Lady...Mama!
Mama!⁶¹

Francesca da Rimini

by G. A. Cesareo

One other play on the Francesca story is mentioned by
Lander MacClintock in a listing of Italian playwrights:

⁶¹
Crawford, op. cit., pp. 136-140.

"Older men are Arrigo Boïto (b. 1842), who wrote a Nero (1900); G. A. Cesareo (b. 1861), a Francesca da Rimini (1906);...."⁶² Nothing further could be learned about this play.

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Lander MacClintock, Ph.D., The Contemporary Drama of Italy (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1920), p. 217.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

If the romance of Paolo and Francesca was a disgusting, sordid affair, Dante is to blame for twisting the facts to create an idealistic relationship. If, on the other hand, the love of Paolo and Francesca was of the lovely and melancholy sort Dante pictures, the later dramatic adapters did well to idealize the two. As artistic creations, the works of Pellico, Boker, Phillips, and d'Annunzio merit recognition. Crawford's play might be discounted because the following of fact does not implement, but rather detracts from the artistic effect. Uhland's fragments are inconsequential in their incompleteness while Pellico's play would disqualify itself from a lofty place, because, though deeply felt, the writing is pedestrian and only in spots does patriot sentiment enliven it.

Of the three plays left, the reader's choice must determine the best. Those who like the stirring pageantry of the early Renaissance, a faithful picture of the medieval mind, savage, but beginning to notice beauty, will be enthralled by the sensuous detail, the radiant wildness, the

unconquerable spirit to be found in Gabriele d'Annunzio's Francesca da Rimini. One who responds to noble thoughts in noble language presented in a framework of gallantry and romantic sentimentality, yet not so romantic or sentimental as to deny fundamental philosophic and psychological truth, will prefer George Henry Boker's Francesca da Rimini. The reader who is content with a story overshadowed by the melancholy mood of forbidden love enhancing all the actions and characters and uniting all the effects into a singly softly tragic impression may find his enchanted play in the imaginatively unhistorical but deeply moving Paolo and Francesca by Stephen Phillips.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

SUMMARIES OF THE PLAYS

Franceska de Rimino

by Johann Ludwig Uhland

(German, 1807)

Two fragments of Uhland's play were completed, both intended as part of the first scene of Act I. Dante enters from the chapel where the Mayfest is in progress, glorying in the spring-time beauty of Ravenna and hoping for another meeting with Beatrice. As he leaves, Franceska and her maid, Rosa, come out of the chapel. Franceska is radiant with expectations of her coming nuptials with Paolo. In the second fragment her father rejoices with his knights and nobles that his daughter will soon bring him an alliance with the House of Verucchio - with Malatesta da Rimino, and his two valiant sons, Lanciotto and Paolo. A messenger arrives breathless. When questioned, he says he is the servant of Paolo.

Here the play breaks off and the plot must be determined from the "Plan der Tragödie" which Uhland composed.* The scene shows the news being brought by the messenger that Paolo has been killed in the civil war. Guido and Malatesta immediately go into a conclave and decide Franceska

*Ludwig Uhland, Gesammelte Werke, Volume I, pp. 438-445.

must marry Lanciotto. After Francesca submits unwillingly to the ceremony, it is learned that Paolo had merely been taken captive. He escapes from his prison and returns home to the wretchedness of seeing his beloved the wife of his brother. At last, when Lanciotto has joined the campaign against the Ghibellines, Paolo sends a letter to Francesca begging for an interview in the palace garden. The letter is stolen by a jealous courtier whom Francesca had indignantly refused when he had proposed that she should deceive her husband with him. He rushes posthaste to Lanciotto's camp with the missive, and the seemingly gulled husband makes terrible vows against his brother and sets off toward Rimini. Dante is in the camp and hears the jealous noble predicting bloodshed in Rimini that night. In horror he rushes after Lanciotto. Lanciotto is the first to arrive in the garden; when Francesca sees someone awaiting her in the darkness she calls out Paolo's name and rushes to meet her death from her husband's dagger. Paolo makes an entrance and Lanciotto kills him. Dante arrives too late to prevent the tragedy. He closes the play with an epilogue protesting against the cruelty of fate in destroying the lovers, sending them unshriven to hell.

Francesca da Rimini

by Silvio Pellico

(Italian, 1818)

The play begins some years after the wedding of Lanciotto

and Francesca. Malatesta da Rimini had died and Paolo has absented himself since the time of the wedding. Though Francesca has fulfilled the duty of a wife, Lanciotto has begun to see that she does not love him. He consents to send her home to Ravenna and her father, Guido, but Paolo returns from the wars and her departure is prevented. Lanciotto believes the two hate each other because of Paolo's abrupt leaving after the wedding ceremony and Francesca's continued avoidance of speaking of him. He tries to reconcile them. Of course, the reason for their forced avoidance of each other is secret love. When they were much younger they had fallen in love over the pages of the Lancelot romance and vowed to marry. But Paolo had been away too many times to the war, and Francesca had at last submitted to Lanciotto's protestations of love and married him. Forced into intimacy again by Lanciotto, the two realize their love more strongly than ever. Paolo's attentions become so pointed that Francesca renews her pleas to return to her father at Ravenna. Lanciotto again permits her to go, but when she says an affectionate farewell to Paolo, Lanciotto at last sees the truth and forbids her going. Paolo is put into the dungeon while Lanciotto's wrath mounts. Paolo forces his way out of the cell and goes to Francesca's apartment. She refuses to satisfy his passion even when he weakens her resolution by recalling

their feelings of love on reading the romance. But Lanciotto has tracked them down. Accepting no explanation or plea for mercy he strikes them dead.

Francesca da Rimini

by George Henry Boker

(American, 1855)

In Rimini during a lull in the war between the Guelphs and Ghibellines, René, a troubadour, is being coaxed to sing a ballad by the nobles of Malatesta da Rimini's court when Pepé the jester arrives with news that the war may soon end for a marriage alliance is proposed between Malatesta's son, Lanciotto, and a young lady of the Ghibellines. Their mirth is checked by Paolo who rebukes them for making sport of his brother because of his infirmity. Meantime, Malatesta is breaking the same news to Lanciotto who tries to pass it off as a jest because he realizes his grotesqueness. Pepé finds Lanciotto and soon is making painful jokes about the hunchback's love until Lanciotto loses all patience and strikes him. Pepé swears vengeance for this violation of a jester's privilege. Paolo finds his brother about to commit suicide, and stops him, encouraging him with the argument that his nobility of soul more than balances his deformity and that Francesca da Poleta should be proud of his love. He will not believe in his chances,

however, and begs Paolo to wage his suit for him to save him from open laughter. Malatesta agrees with the plan for this would not imperil Lanciotto's safety, and he does not greatly care if Paolo is captured. Before Paolo can depart, Pepé's vicious jesting about his brother comes to his ears and he, too, strikes the jester. Pepé now swears that his vengeance shall destroy both brothers. In Ravenna, Guido da Polenta eagerly awaits the coming of Paolo; to secure his own advantages he tries to make Francesca believe Paolo is Lanciotto, so that she may not rebel against marrying the monster. Despite Guido's threat, Francesca's maid, Ritta, reveals that Paolo is Lanciotto's brother, but is too frightened to say more. When Francesca confronts her father with this revelation he pretends the brothers are so alike his mistake was natural. Francesca is disgusted with her father's lies, and asks Paolo for a true description of his brother. Paolo expatiates on his brother's noble qualities but weakly speaks in half-truths and evasions of his physical attributes. When the bridal party arrives in Rimini, Guido, fearing his knavish schemes will collapse, tries to observe the weak points in his enemy's fortification. When Francesca meets her intended spouse, she is revolted by his appearance. Lanciotto nobly announces that Francesca may be freed from the pact if she wishes, but

he will keep the pact of peace between the houses whatever happens. In a panic. Guido whispers to his daughter that Lanciotto is lying and that they will never escape Rimini alive if she refuses. Utterly sickened by her father's lies, Francesca announces she will go through with the marriage. Lanciotto is almost overpowered with joy, but soon self-castigation combined with Pepé's incessant jeering convinces him that Francesca does not really love him, but marries him from kindness. Ritta, in the meantime, has seen that her mistress has fallen in love with Paolo, and tells of her own sad experience in love to dissuade her from following a useless course. When the wedding ceremony is concluding, news comes that many Ghibelline leaders have refused to follow Guido and are marching on Rimini. Lanciotto takes his forces out to meet them, hoping to purge his raging emotions on the battleground. Paolo has begun reading the story of Lancelot and Guenevere to Francesca, and when he wishes to continue, Francesca orders Ritta away on the grounds that her inattentiveness distracts them both. The magic of the legend entralls them and draws them into an embrace. As they enter the castle to consummate their love, Pepé comes out of concealment, having heard all, and armed now with the weapon that will give him vengeance. The first battle has gone against the Guelphs, but Lanciotto is busy plotting a sunrise assault on the Ghibelline campe when Pepé arrives

with his tale and tells it with malicious relish. Lanciotto kills the jester for impugning the honor of his brother and wife, but feels impelled to return to Rimini to see for himself. Paolo and Francesca have returned to the garden, their love sated for the time; both feel the enormous crime they have committed against Lanciotto. But when Lanciotto arrives he pleads with them to deny their guilt. They will not do so but demand their deaths. Finally, Lanciotto kills Francesca in a frenzy, expecting this act to anger Paolo so that he will defend himself and at least die with honor. Paolo quickly draws his sword but then drops it and stands quietly awaiting his brother's knife. The cries have brought the two fathers to the garden, and Lanciotto curses them bitterly for their part in bringing about the tragedy. Then he falls brokenly across the corpses proclaiming: "Here let me rest, till God awake us all!"

Paolo and Francesca

by Stephen Phillips

(British, 1899)

Giovanni da Verruchio, Lord of Rimini, has crushed the Ghibellines, and to secure his supremacy in his own party of the Guelphs has sent his brother to remove Francesca da Polenta from a convent that he might marry her and form an

alliance with Guido da Polenta, second most powerful Guelph. His brother, Paolo, arrives with the naive young girl and preparations for the wedding begin. Paolo asks leave to go back to the army immediately following the wedding. Giovanni is puzzled but consents. While Giovanni peruses a message of discontent in conquered Pesaro, his cousin Lucrezia comes to warn him to deal carefully with his innocent bride. Disquieted, Giovanni receives blind Angela who prophesies a friend of Giovanni's will betray him with his wife. A week after the wedding, Paolo has still not departed but still declares he must leave. Giovanni decides he might usefully serve him by examining the causes of the discontent in Pesaro and sends him on this mission. Giovanni confides his uneasiness as to Angela's prophecy to Lucrezia, and she points out that no one fits the description of his unwilling betrayer more than Paolo. Giovanni sees the reason for Paolo's departure and hopes he will continue to fly temptation. Paolo gets no further than a way-side inn from which the far-off towers of Rimini can be seen at the end of the straight road he has followed. He realizes he cannot escape his passion for Francesca and returns to Rimini to buy poison. Giovanni, in a frenzy of indecision, goes to an apothecary to buy a love potion insuring Francesca's devotion; while he is bargaining, Paolo enters for

the poison and Giovanni conceals himself. The apothecary will not sell the poison until sure no murder is plotted, so Paolo tells him he loves his brother's wife and wishes to kill himself to prevent a worse crime. Giovanni, horrified, hears his suspicions confirmed, but forces himself not to stop Paolo, believing the sad turn of events the only possible issue of the terrible problem. With the poison in his possession, Paolo decides he cannot die without seeing Francesca and slips into the castle. Suddenly, news comes that Pesaro, unappeased, has revolted and Giovanni spurs away to quell the revolt. Her husband gone, Francesca, alone and depressed in the strange castle, turns to the perusal of an old romance to lull herself to sleep. Paolo creeps in and together they read of the adulterous love of Lancelot and Guenevere. As the lovers in the story kiss, Francesca calls Paolo "Launcelot!" He kisses her in feverish passion. A quick assault has conquered Pesaro; Giovanni has returned in two days time. When Lucrezia tells him Paolo has returned, his wrath mounts. She persuades him to pretend he has only come to the castle for a quick refreshment, and must ride rapidly back to battle. He will, of course, return quietly and trap the lovers. When he has gone, Lucrezia tries to prepare the trap by asking Francesca if she does not wish to talk

to Paolo. Instead, Francesca asks Lucrezia's help in understanding why her husband was so cold to her on his brief return and to request her counsel in what she must think of Paolo. Compelled by the girl's innocence, Lucrezia forgives her and sees her as a daughter she must protect. She makes Francesca promise to sleep with her that night to save her from involvement. She leaves Francesca with her maid Nita, while she goes to search for Giovanni to try to dissuade him from the scheme she had started. Nita, wishing to return to her amours with a servant, Bernardo, tries to persuade Francesca to receive Paolo when he knocks. After some hesitation, Francesca allows Paolo to enter and Nita hurries away. In great passion, Paolo declares his love for her, brushes away her fears of Hell and inspires in her eventually a kindred fervor and they disappear into her bedchamber. Nita returns and finds her mistress gone and is about to search for her, when Lucrezia, still searching for Giovanni returns and finds Francesca gone. When she questions the girl frantically and finally discovers Francesca had been left with Paolo, she fears the worst and rushes toward the bedroom. Giovanni steps out with blood on his hand. Giovanni has the corpses brought out and declares he will have them married after death, but his momentary madness dies away when blind Angela enters the hall proclaiming two liberated spirits have rushed by her.

Lucrezia falls on Francesca's corpse sobbing and Giovanni ,
kisses them in remorse and says in awe, "They look like
children fast asleep!"

Francesca da Rimini

by Gabriele d'Annunzio

(Italian, 1901)

Gian Figo, the jester, arrives in Ravenna to entertain the ladies of Francesca. He has come in advance of the train of Paolo Malatesta da Verruchio who is bringing the proposal of a wedding alliance with the house of Guido da Polenta, Francesca's father. As the jester begins the story of Tristan and Iseult, Guido's eldest son, Ostasio, comes out of the house and scatters the group. He is deep in plotting strategic moves against the Ghibellines, and reckoning up the new strength of the Polentani fortress when the union with the Verucchi takes place. His planning is broken into by the entrance of his illegitimate brother, Bannino, who has been entrusted with protecting a salt shipment. He is battered and woe-begone and the salt is lost. As Ostasio berates him, Bannino dares to plead for his sister, Francesca, whom Ostasio is delivering up to be the bride of the cruel Gianciotto. Ostasio slashes his cheek with a knife and then restrains himself from further cruelty. Francesca comes with her sister, Samaritana, and

the girls bid each other a tender farewell, while Smaragdi, Francesca's Cypriot slave stealthily sponges away Bannino's blood so that Francesca will not see it. Paolo arrives with a stately escort and Francesca sees with joy her handsome husband (she believes), when Bannino's wounded face is seen at a window as he tries to cry a warning to his sister. In a tower at Rimini, archers and men-at-arms await the astrologer's signal from another tower to unleash the fusillade of arrows tipped with Greek fire on the advancing Ghibelline horde. Francesca appears, and with childlike wonder and daring, she plays with the Greek fire, exclaiming on the horrible destruction it can bring. Paolo forces his way up to the tower and stops Francesca's careless handling of the flame which threatens to catch the wooden floor afire. He tells her he has not known peace since he betrayed her into believing he was Gianciotto and even stood proxy at the ceremony. She recalls with loathing how the light of dawn had revealed the true features of her husband. She cannot forgive him until the assault begins and he permits her to open the porticullis of a window, while he stands boldly exposed firing arrows into the midst of the enemy troops; she prays for his safety. He sends an arrow through the throat of a Ghibelline leader who had been shouting into the air insults at his brother, Gianciotto, below, and turns the battle to a rout. In the

breathing space afforded him, Gianciotto comes up to the tower to berate the archers for not giving him effective coverage in the assault. However, when he learns the part Paolo and Francesca have played in the attack, his spirits are lightened and he consents to drink a bowl of wine with them before returning to battle. Malatestino, the younger brother of Gianciotto and Paolo, is carried down from the battlements, a hideous wound on his face. He has refused to wear his helmet and has lost an eye through being struck by a hurled stone. He babbles deliriously about not being able to kill his prisoner, Montagna dei Parcitadi, and when he recovers his senses, he permits Francesca to bandage his eye and rushes off to battle without further medical attention. As the battle ends, news comes that Paolo has been elected head of the commune of Florence, and he takes sad leave of Francesca. During the peaceful period that follows Francesca whiles away the time reading a romance of Lancelot and Guenevere. A travelling merchant arrives with his wares and helps to break the tedium as Gian Figo, the astrologer, a learned doctor, and all of Francesca's women crowd about to examine the merchandise. When the merchant lets slip that he has come from Florence in the company of Paolo, Francesca hurriedly buys gowns for all her maids in order to hurry the merchant off so that she may

await the coming of Paolo. He arrives in a passionate fever to see her again after the two months of separation. When she refuses to respond readily to his words of love, he forces her to read with him from the Lancelot romance. When Lancelot kisses Guenevere, Paolo enforces the parallel by kissing Francesca hingerily. She repulses him. A few days later, Malatestino has observed the conduct of the two, and slyly suggests that he will keep their secret if he is allowed similar favors. Francesca only replies by complaining of the groaning of the prisoner, Montagna di Parcitadi, who is kept in a dungeon below her room. In a rage, Malatestino says he will quiet the prisoner. Francesca divines he means to murder the wretch and cries out. Malatestino tells her she may save Montagna's life by giving him her body. She refuses and he leaves as Gianciotto returns from the campaigns. He only laughs as the death-shriek of Montagna echoes through the castle. As she hears Malatestino returning she departs quickly, and Malatestino enters carrying a bleeding bundle which contains the head of Montagna. He throws it to the floor and quickly avoids his brother's wrath by telling him of his suspicions of the love his brother Paolo has for Francesca. Gianciotto is drinking wine from a silver flagon as the news is revealed. He grips it convulsively and it cracks. He threatens Malatestino's life if he cannot prove his charges. Malatestino outlines a plot: Gianciotto is to pretend anger

at the murder of Montagna and leave as if he were taking Malatestino to his father's camp to accuse him of the murder of a prisoner; then he will steel back and trap the lovers. Paolo arrives just as Malatestino is leaving with the head and the story is told to him. Francesca is summoned to bid her husband farewell. Since Gianciotto has concealed the broken cup, all are required to drink from the same cup as on the day of the battle at Rimini. Late in the night Francesca's maids keep vigil round her bed as she has finally dropped off to sleep. Inspired by the grisly murder, one of them recites the tale of the maid who kept her lover's head buried in a pot of basil. Boccaccio tells the story later in the Decameron. Francesca awakes from a dream, the matter of which D'Annunzio has borrowed from another Boccaccio story. She has been the woman pursued by the fierce huntsman and his hounds who was seen in the Decameron by Nastagio degli Onesti. She dismissed her ladies, but detains Biancofiore because she reminds her of her sister, Samaritana, back in Ravenna. At last she lets her go, and Paolo enters, afire with passion. Soon she submits to him and as he embraces her, Gianciotto is heard approaching. Paolo tries to escape through the trap door into the dungeon below, but his cloak catches in the bolt, and Gianciotto enters before he can escape. He pulls Paolo up by the hair and draws his sword. Francesca throws herself

between them and is stabbed. Paolo catches her and Gian-
ciotto runs them both through. They sway and fall.
Gianciotto breaks his sword across his knee.

Francesca da Rimini

by Francis Marion Crawford

(1902, in French by an American)

Women gather in the bridal chamber of Francesca pre-
paring for her wedding night as the marriage supper draws
to a close. They gossip about how well she has been taken
in in supposing Paolo to be her husband, though some are
sorry for the trick to be played on her. Paolo, Francesca,
and many of the party arrive. Paolo soon makes an em-
barassed excuse to leave for a time. Francesca is pre-
pared for bed and the torches are extinguished. Giovanni
enters stealthily, but a ray of moonlight reveals his
hideous countenance to Francesca. Fourteen years later,
Francesca is speaking to Paolo, while her little daughter,
Concordia, plays near by. Francesca sees Giovanni approach-
ing and gives her daughter into Paolo's charge. Giovanni
is in a fierce stage brought on by Francesca's taunting
and open revulsion to him. He draws a dagger and threatens
to kill her and himself and end their mutual agony. She
proudly tells him there is no reason for this; she has been
a dutiful, faithful wife and has borne him a child, but he
has no right to expect a woman to love him. He returns his

dagger to its sheath but continues to seethe inwardly as his little daughter, Concordia, asks why her mother does not like him as she does his brother, Paolo. The child loves them both and would have them love each other. In the meantime, Francesca begins to listen to Paolo's blandishments, as if to spite her husband's feelings. Their tete-a-tete is interrupted by a woman's voice outside crying out that Paolo is unfaithful to her. Shaken, Paolo has her seized by the guard and taken to prison while Francesca cools toward him, finding he has another lover. Giovanni comes to the prison to examine the woman, but the jailer reports that she has hanged herself. Her corpse is brought out in the presence of Giovanni, Paolo, and Francesca, and Giovanni recognizes her as Orabile, the wife of Paolo. Suspecting his brother's hand in the murder of Orabile, Giovanni requests him to go to Florence to assume the governorship to which he has been elected. Two months later, in the castle garden, Giovanni is apprised that his brother has left Florence. To make Paolo seem the more repulsive to Francesca, he tells her that he believes Paolo was responsible for murdering his wife. Shortly, Paolo arrives and when Francesca questions him as to his wife's death, he admits he paid to have the jailer strangle her. This increases Francesca's love as she sees he would destroy even his wife to have her. Giovanni is heard approaching and Paolo is sent to hide in Francesca's room overlooking the garden. Giovanni soon notices that the window of

Francesca's bedroom has been closed while he talked to her.' She blames the wind, but there is not a breeze stirring. Concordia asks her mother for a piece of blue silk she has in a chest in her room to make a mantle for the Virgin for a coming feast-day. Francesca puts her off, saying she would put the room into confusion looking for it, and Giovanni's suspicions are confirmed. He watches Francesca and when she goes to her room, he silently creeps in after her. Paolo and Francesca read from an old romance of the love of Lancelot and Guenevere. When they imitate the characters in the story and kiss each other, Giovanni leaps upon them and stabs them. Paolo dies quickly, but Francesca lingers a few moments breathing out her life in vitriolic curses on Giovanni. As the husband stands over the corpses, Concordia is heard calling to her mother that she wants to come in to find the piece of blue silk for the mantle of the Virgin Mary.

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