



The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia (Penguin English Library)

Philip Sidney

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Basilus, a foolish old duke, consults an oracle as he imperiously wishes to know the future, but he is less than pleased with what he learns. To escape the oracle's horrific prophecies about his family and kingdom he withdraws into pastoral retreat with his wife and two daughters. When a pair of wandering princes fall in love with the princesses and adopt disguises to gain access to them, all manner of complications, both comic and serious, ensue.

Part-pastoral romance, part-heroic epic, Sidney's long narrative work was hugely popular for centuries after its first publication in 1593, inspiring two sequels and countless imitations, and contributing greatly to the development of the novel.

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