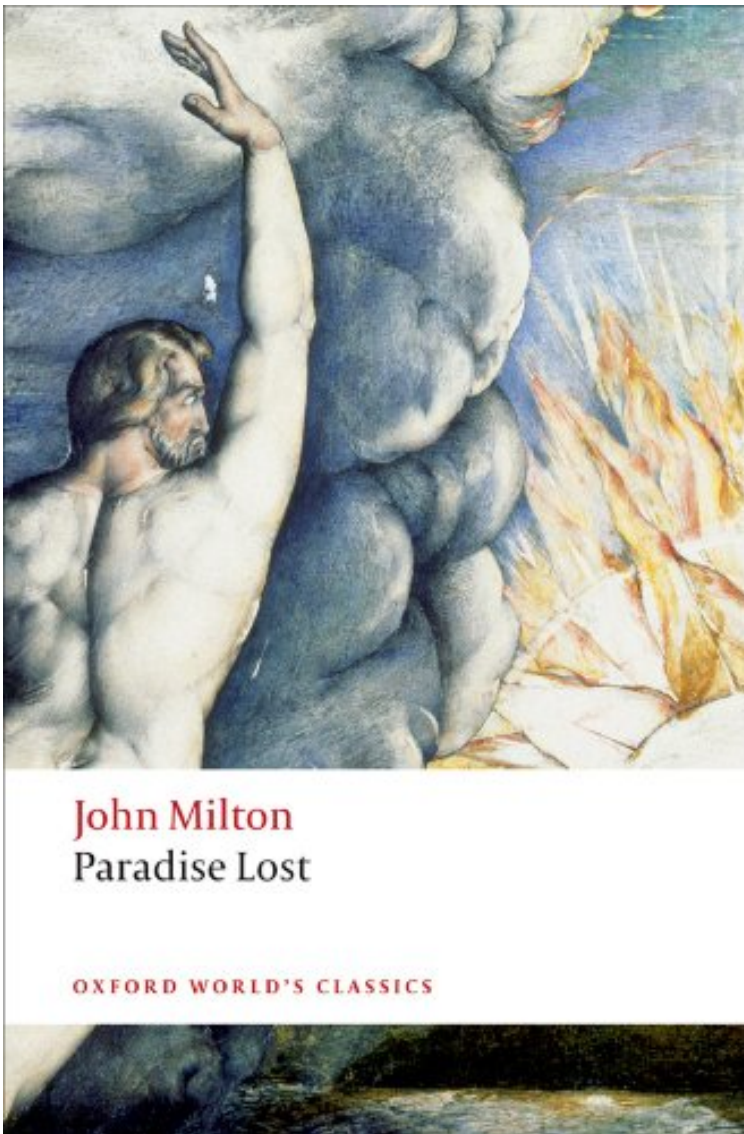


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# Paradise Lost



*Par John Milton*  
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**Par John Milton : Paradise Lost**  
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**Description :** Description du produitThus begins the epic poem, considered the greatest in the English language, as John Milton seeks to "justify the ways of God to men" through relating the story of Satan's rebellion in Heaven, the deception and fall of Man, and the presaged event of Redemption through Jesus, the Son of God...the "Second Adam." An English cleric with a classical education, Milton lost his eyesight in 1652, and thus the story was largely dictated by the blind poet, lending a certain quality of the ancient oral epics, which only serves to enhance the telling of the tale. Weaving classical mythology with a deep knowledge and reference to Scripture, Milton's genius for narrative unfolds what his biographer, Samuel Johnson, called his "peculiar power to astonish." Nadia May has narrated over five hundred audiobooks and has earned the prestigious AudioFile Golden Voice award, as well as fourteen Earphone awards. She is an accomplished film, TV, and theater actress. Nadia's native British voice complements her graduate education in English Literature from UC Berkeley to make her delivery of John Milton's Paradise Lost engaging and

nuanced.

Paradise Lost is one of the greatest epic poems in the English language. It tells the story of the Fall of Man, a tale of immense drama and excitement, of rebellion and treachery, of innocence pitted against corruption, in which God and Satan fight a bitter battle for control of mankind's destiny. The struggle ranges across three worlds - heaven, hell, and earth - as Satan and his band of rebel angels plot their revenge against God. At the centre of the conflict are Adam and Eve, motivated by all too human temptations, but whose ultimate downfall is unyielding love. Milton's influence has been felt by many writers since, none more so in recent times than the novelist Philip Pullman. His acclaimed trilogy *His Dark Materials* takes its title from a line in the poem, and the worlds he created for Lyra and Will have entranced readers across generations. His introduction to the poem is a tribute that is both personal and full of insight; his enthusiasm for Milton's language, his skill, and his supreme gifts as a storyteller is infectious and instructive. He encourages readers above all to experience the poem for themselves, and surrender to its enchantment.

PARADISE LOST the printer to the reader  
Courteous Reader, there was no argument at first intended to the book, but for the satisfaction of many that have desired it, I have procured it, and with a reason of that which stumbled many others, why the poem rhymes not. S. Simmons

The Verse  
The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Vergil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause therefore some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. 1. The defense of blank verse and the prose arguments summarizing each book procured by Milton's printer, Samuel Simmons, were inserted in bound copies of the first edition beginning in 1668, with this brief note. This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

Book I  
The Argument  
This first book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject, man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastes into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell, described here, not in the center (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed) but in a place of utter darkness, fittest called Chaos. Here Satan with his angels lying on the burning lake, thunder-struck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him. They confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; they rise, their numbers, array of battle, their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy or report in Heaven; for that angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium the palace of Satan rises, suddenly built out of the deep. The infernal peers there sit in council. Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe, With loss of Eden, till one greater man restore us, and regain the blissful seat, Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire that shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed, In the beginning how the heavens and earth rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill delight thee more, and Siloas brook that flowed fast by the oracle of God, I thence invoke thy aid to my adventurous song, That with no middle flight intends to soar above the Aonian mount, while it pursues things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer before all temples th' upright heart and pure, Instruct me, for thou knowst; thou from the first wast present, and with mighty wings outspread Dove-

like satst brooding on the vast abyss  
 And madst it pregnant: what in me is dark  
 Illumine, what is low raise and  
 support,  
 That to the highth of this great argument  
 I may assert eternal providence,  
 And justify the ways of God  
 to men.  
 Say first, for Heavn hides nothing from thy view  
 Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what  
 cause  
 Moved our grand parents in that happy state,  
 Favored of Heavn so highly, to fall off  
 From their Creator,  
 and transgress his will  
 For one restraint, lords of the world besides?  
 Who first seduced them to that foul  
 revolt?  
 Th infernal serpent; he it was, whose guile  
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
 The mother of  
 mankind, what time his pride  
 Had cast him out from Heavn, with all his host  
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid  
 aspiring  
 To set himself in glory above his peers,  
 He trusted to have equaled the Most High,  
 If he opposed; and  
 with ambitious aim  
 Against the throne and monarchy of God  
 Raised impious war in Heavn and battle  
 proud  
 With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power  
 Hurl'd headlong flaming from th ethereal sky  
 With  
 hideous ruin and combustion down  
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell  
 In adamantyne chains and penal  
 fire,  
 Who durst defy th Omnipotent to arms.  
 Nine times the space that measures day and night  
 To mortal men,  
 he with his horrid crew  
 1. The first lines introduction of an exemplary man recalls the epics of Homer and Vergil. Miltons theme, however, is neither martial nor imperial but spiritual: humanitys disastrous failure to obey God counterpoised by the promise of redemption. Of mans: The proper name Adam is also the Hebrew word for generic man or humankind. He is both an individual male and, with Eve, the entire species: so God created man . . . ; male and female he created them (Gen. 1.27). Of man translates the Hebrew for woman (Gen. 2.23). fruit: Its dual meanings (outcome, food) are put in play by enjambment, a primary formal device by which Milton draws out sense from one verse into another (The Verse).4. one greater man: Jesus, second Adam (1 Cor. 15.2122; Rom. 5.19). Cp. PR 1.14.5. blissful seat: translates Vergils epithet for Elysium, Aen. 6.639.6. Sing Heavny Muse: the verb and subject of the magnificently inverted sixteen-line opening sentence. By invoking a Muse, Milton follows a convention that dates from Homer. Yet Miltons Muse is not the muse of classical epic (Calliope) but the inspiration of Moses, David, and the prophets (cp. 1718n). secret: set apart, not common. When the Lord descends to give Moses the law, thick clouds and smoke obscure the mountaintop, and the people are forbidden on pain of death to cross boundaries around the mountain (Exod. 19.16, 23).8. shepherd: The vocation of shepherd is a key vehicle for Miltons integration of classical and scriptural traditions. Moses encounters God while tending sheep on Mount Horeb (Oreb) and later receives the law on Sinai, a spur of Horeb (Exod. 3; 19). (Or the doubling of names may simply acknowledge the inconsistency of Exod. 19.20 and Deut. 4.10.)9. In the beginning: opening phrase of Genesis and the Gospel of John.10. Chaos: classical term for the primeval state of being out of which God creates, also referred to as the deep (as in Gen. 1.2) and the abyss (as in l. 21). Sion hill: Mount Zion, site of Solomons Temple, the house of the Lord (1 Kings 6.1, 13). Adding to the persistent doubleness of the invocation, Milton requests inspiration from two scriptural sites associated with Gods presence and prophetic inspiration. Both sites receive dual designations: Mount Horeb/Sinai and Mount Zion/Siloas brook.1112. Siloas brook . . . God: spring whose waters flowed through an underground aqueduct, supplied a pool near (Fast by) Solomons Temple, and irrigated the kings lush garden (cp. 4.22530). Jerome says it ran directly beneath Mount Zion (A. Gilbert 1919, 269). Scripturally, it symbolizes Davids monarchical line (Isa. 78, esp. 8.6). In opening the eyes of the man born blind, Jesus sends him to wash his eyes with its waters (John 9). Cp. 3.3031. oracle of God: the holiest place in the Temple, the tabernacle of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 6.19). The classical Muses haunt a spring (Aganippe) on Helicon (cp. 15n), the sacred well, / That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring (Lyc 1516). In identifying the spring near the Holy of Holies as similarly a site of inspiration, Milton again links scriptural and classical prophetic and poetic traditions.14. no middle flight: Milton will go beyond middle air, whose upper boundary is as high as the peaks of tall mountains, and soar to the highest Empyrean, the abode of God. His soaring ambition recalls the myth of Icarus, whose failure to follow a middle flight caused him to tumble into the sea (cp. 7.1220).15. Aonian mount: Helicon, Greek mountain favored by the Muses (cp. 1112n). Hesiod says that while he tended sheep on Helicon (like Moses on Horeb), the Muses called him to sing of the gods (Theog. 22).16. Translates the opening of Orlando Furioso (1.2) and is reminiscent of Masque 4345; cp. similar claims by Lucretius (De Rerum Nat. 1.92530) and Horace (Odes 3.1.24).1718. 1 Cor. 3.1617, 6.19. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit (l. 21). In Miltons theology, the diverse functions of the Holy Spirit derive from the virtue and power of God the Father, in this case the force or voice of God, in whatever way it was breathed into the prophets (CD 1.6, p. 1194). The site of revelation progresses from Horeb/Sinai to Sion hill/Siloas brook to, finally, the individual human heart.21. brooding: Milton thus renders the Hebrew word translated as moved in the AV (Gen. 1.2) but as incubabat (brooded) in St. Basil and other Latin patristic authors (see also

7.235). Cp. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*: This is that gentle heat that brooded on the waters, and in six days hatched the world (73).24. argument: subject matter; cp. 9.28.25. assert: take the part of, champion.26. justify: vindicate; cp. Pope, *Essay on Man*: Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,/But vindicate the ways of God to man (1.1516). Miltons word order permits dual readings: either justify (the ways of God to men) or justify (the ways of God) to men. Cp. SA: Just are the ways of God,/And justifiable to men (29394).2728. Milton introduces the narrative with a query, an epic convention; cp. Tell me, O Muse, the cause (Vergil, *Aen.* 1.8). Homer also depicts the Muses as all-knowing: Tell me now, ye Muses that have dwellings on Olympus for ye are goddesses and are at hand and know all things (Il. 2.48485).29. grand: great, original, all-inclusive; cp. line 122.30. fall off: deviate, revolt (as in l. 33).33. Cp. Il. 1.8.36. what time: when; cp. *Masque 291*, *Lyc* 28.4449. Him . . . arms: God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness (2 Pet. 2.4; cp. Jude 6).45. I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven (Luke 10.18); cp. Homers Hephaestus hurled . . . from the heavenly threshold . . . headlong (Il. 1.59192).46. ruin: a fall from a great height, from the Latin *ruina*; cp 6.86768.48. adamant: unbreakable (Gk.); cp. Aeschylus *Prometheus*, clamped in shackles of binding adamant that can- not be broken (*Prom.* 6). The myth of adamant persists today; the indestructible claws of the Marvel Comics hero Wolverine are made of adamantium.49. durst: dared.5052. The rebel angels regain consciousness after nine days falling from Heaven (6.871) and nine days rolling in the fiery gulf. Hesiods Titans fall nine days from heaven to earth and another nine from earth to Tartarus (*Theog.* 72025). Milton, like many Christian mythographers, deemed the Titans rebellion a pagan analogue for Satans fall. *Revue de presse* In this landmark edition, teachers will discover a powerful ally in bringing the excitement of Miltons poetry and prose to new generations of students. William C. Dowling, Rutgers University This magnificent edition gives us everything we need to read Milton intelligently and with fresh perception. William H. Pritchard, Amherst College