Miguel de Cervantes

Don Quixote Begins his Life of Adventure

Mr Alonso Quixada lived quietly for many years in a village in La Mancha in the middle of Spain. He was a tall, thin man, nearly lilty years old. He didn't have a lot of money, but he had friends, a nice house, an old horse, a good dog and food on his table.

But Mr Quixada also loved to read books about **knights.** When he read these books, he was in another world. He forgot about his work and his everyday problems. The books gave him a picture in his head of a more exciting time in more interesting places.

He read all day and all night. He talked for hours and hours to his two oldest friends, Pero and Nicolas, about the stories in these books.

But Mr Quixada was different from his friends. He wanted more than books and conversation. After many years he thought, 'I don't want to sit here. I want to be a knight. I'll leave this village and have adventures.'

Mr Quixada got ready for his new life. He found an old suit of armour, and he made a helmet. Then he thought about his dear old horse: 'A knight's horse has to have a good name. I ll call my horse Rocinante because he isn't a tired old horse now. He, too, is ready for adventures. He and I will find a new, exciting life.'

He thought for eight more days about his new name before an idea came to him. 'I will be Don* Quixote de la Mancha!' he said excitedly.

Every knight in the old stories also had a lovely young woman at the centre of his life. The knight told the world about her, and he fought for her. So Don Quixote had to find the right woman.

Aldonza Lorenzo lived in El Toboso, near his village. She was a happy, fat girl - nice, but not really clever or beautiful. But to Don Quixote she was the loveliest woman in the world. He gave her a fine new name too: Dulcinea del Toboso.

'There is music in the name,' thought Don Quixote. 'I'll fight v, bad men, and then I'll send them to my love. They'll tell her about my great adventures, and that will make her happy. Then they'll sing songs and write stories about the lovely Dulcinea and her knight, Don Quixote.' '

Now this man of big ideas was ready for his great journey. Early one July morning, before the sun was loo hot, Rocinante carried Don Quixote, in his helmet and suit of armour, away from his village and into his new life. Don Quixote wanted to make the world a better place. He smiled happily at the idea of the famous Don Quixote de la Mancha.

' But wait! ' he said to Rocinante and to the sky. 'I can't fight! other knights! First, somebody has to

knight me!' This was a big problem lor Don Quixote, but then he remembered stories from his old books. 'Somebody on the road can knight me,' he remembered. He felt happy again.

After a long day without food, drink or adventures, Don Quixote and Rocinante came to an old building. Rocinante saw a small **inn,** but in **I**)on Quixote's eyes it was a great **castle.**

'Look at this, Rocinante!' shouted Don Quixote. 'This is a good place lor knights and their horses. We'll find important people here. Let's wait. Somebody will come out and invite us inside.-'

But nobody came out and Rocinante was very tired and hungry. Rocinante walked slowly to the hotel door. Two bored young country women stood there. When they saw a strange old man in a suit of armour, with a dirty face and a lance in his hand, they started to run into the inn,

'Don't be afraid!' Don Quixote said quickly. 'You're fine women. I want to help. Tell me your problems, and I'll fight for you!'

But they weren't fine women and people didn't usually speak to them in that way. When they laughed at him, Don Quixote started to feel angry. But the innkeeper heard the noise and came outside.

'Good day, sir,' he said in a loud, friendly way. He didn't want to laugh, but this man at his door looked very strange.

'Sir,' Don Quixote said, 'you have a fine castle here.

Perhaps it is the finest in this country. Now, please take my horse. Give him good food and water because he worked hard for me today.'

The innkeeper looked at Don Quixote's old suit of armour and asked, with a small smile, 'Sir, are you a knight?'

'I am not,' Don Quixote said sadly through his helmet. 'But perhaps you can help me with that problem. Can you knight me?'

The innkeeper didn't know anything about knights, but he wanted happy customers.

'Sir, I'm the right man for the job,' he answered.

'We'll do it in the morning,' said Don Quixote excitedly. 'And tonight I'll wait with my lance and my suit of armour in the chtlrch.'

'That's an interesting plan,' the innkeeper said, 'but there isn't a church near here. You can wait out here and I'll bring you food. Have you got any money?'

'Not a penny,' said Don Quixote. 'I know everything about knights. I know that they never carry money.'

' 1 liar's a mistake, my friend,' said the innkeeper. 'Most knights go on l< uni icys with a squire. The

squire carries the knight's money and clean clothes. You I lave to get a squire. And always take money with you on your journeys.'

'Thank you. I'll remember that. And now I'll get ready for tomorrow. It's a very important day for me.'

Don Quixote put his suit of armour down in front of the inn. Thdir lu- walked up and down. Sometimes he stopped and looked at his suit of armour. Then he started to walk again. Visitors to the hotel watched out til their windows and laughed at him.

Alter some time, a man arrived at the inn with his donkeys. The animals were tired, hungry and thirsty after a long journey, so the man moved Don Quixote's suit of armour.

'Stop! Why are you moving a brother knight's armour? Don't you Is now that is wrong?' Don Quixote called angrily.

'What's happening here?' the man with the donkeys asked. 'Are you i tying to be funny?' He kicked the armour away from the door.

'Help me, Dulcinea delToboso!' Don Quixote shouted.

Then he ran at the man with his lance and hit him on the head very hard, l ire man fell to the ground and didn't move. Don Quixote put his suit ol armour next to the door again and watched it carefully.

But half an hour later, another man arrived with his donkeys. Without a word, Don Quixote ran at *that* man with his lance. He hit the man very hard on his head three or four times. Everybody in the hotel heard the noise and ran outside. They shouted and threw things at Don Quixote.

Don Quixote was very excited. 'This is the life of a knight,' he thought happily. 'I'll fight every man in this castle!'

The innkeeper ran out too, and spoke to Don Quixote.

'Listen, sir,' he said quietly. 'I looked at my books about knights. You don't have to wait for the morning. I can knight you now. Stand here, next to your armour.'

He took Don Quixote's lance, and hit him on the back with it.

'And now you're a knight, and you can leave - tonight!'

Don Quixote smiled happily, and he and Rocinante left the hotel.

The innkeeper was happy too. Don Quixote didn't pay for his food, but nobody was dead.

The next day, Don Quixote was very excited because now he was really a knight. He didn't have to wait a long time for an adventure. He was near some trees and heard the cry of somebody with a problem.

'Listen, Rocinante,' said the knight very quietly. 'Somebody wants my help. I'm ready because now I'm a knight.'

Don Quixote followed the cries and lound a fifteen-year-old boy without a shirt and with his arms round a i ice. An angry man stood next to the tree and shouted at the hoy. 'I'll teach you a lesson.

You'll open your eyes and shiff vou r mouth at work. Do you understand?' Then he hit the hoy on his back.

'Stop, sir! Why are you hitting this child?' shouted Don Quixote loudly. 'You're i man, and he's a young boy. fight with me, your brother knight, and I'll teach you a lesson about a good knight's life.'

' I he man saw Don Quixote's lance and felt afraid. 'Sir, the boy is a had worker. He doesn't always watch my animals. He falls asleep on the job. I lose sheep every day. What can I do with him?'

'You can pay him and send him home. Or I'll put my lance in your stomach,' Don Quixote said. 'Boy, what's your name? Are you a good worker?'

'Sir, my name is Andres. I work very hard, and he doesn't pay me/ the boy said.

'Pay Andres his money, you dog, or I'll kill you!' Don Quixote shouted at the man.

'Sir, you're making a mistake,' the man tried to say. But he saw a strange and perhaps dangerous man in front of him. 'I haven't got any money with me. But I'll take Andres to my house and pay him every penny for his wptk.'

'Sir,' shouted Andres, 'I can't go with him. He'll hit me again.'

Don Quixote spoke to the man. 'Brother Knight, you have to listen to me. Do the right thing or I'll come back. Then I'll kill you. I hope that you remember this.'

'I understand,' said the man. 'I was wrong. The boy and I are going to go to my house, and I'm going to pay him.'

'Very good,' Don Quixote said happily. 'Now the world is a better place.' Then he and Rocinante turned and left.

The man and Andres watched the knight and h is horse go down the road. Then the man said, 'Andres, I'm going to teach you a lesson.'

'But don't hurt me,' the boy said. 'Remember the knight's word.'

'I won't forget. Come here!' Then he caught the boy and hit him many more times. 'Now go and find your good, strong knight. Perhaps he'll pay you for your bad work!'

Three or four kilometres down the road, Don Quixote saw six very rich, important men on horses. They bought and sold fruit and flowers, meat and vegetables. Seven of their workers walked behind

the horses.

‘Here are some knights and their squires,’ Don Quixote told Rocinante. ‘And now I too am a knight.’ He stopped in the middle of the r&l . No person or horse could walk past him.

‘Stop!’ Don Quixote shouted. ‘Is Dulcinea del Toboso not the most beautiful, the most wonderful woman in the world? Tell everybody that, and you can use this road.’

The rich men smiled at the strange man in front of them.

‘Sorry, old man,’ one of them said with a laugh. ‘We don’t know this woman. How can we tell anybody about her?’

‘What?!’ shouted Don Quixote angrily. ‘Are you saying that she is not beautiful?’

And suddenly, with his lance in his hand, Don Quixote kicked Kocinante and they ran at the men. But Rocinante fell over something in i he road, and Don Quixote fell on top of him.

In his heavy suit of armour, Don Quixote couldn’t move, but he diouted at the men from the ground.

‘Stop, you dogs! Don’t try to run away! You’ll pay for this!’

The men on foot heard Don Quixote’s words and one of them took his lance from him. He hit the knight many times and broke the lance.

I hey left Don Quixote on the ground. After a long time, a man from his village found the knight. He put his friend on his donkey and mok him home.

The rich men were in the next big city that night. At dinner everybody enjoyed the story of their adventure with a strange knight.

First Adventures with Sancho Panza

Don Quixote was at home, but he was weak and very ill. He stayed in bed for a long time. Pero and Nicolas visited him often.

‘Those books about knights are bad for our friend,’ Pero said after one visit. ‘He gets dangerous ideas from them. Let’s build a big fire and throw them on it. Then he’ll forget about a knight’s life.’

‘And let’s take away the door to the room too,’ Nicolas said. 'We can build a wall there. Then he can’t put any more hooks in that room.’

After many weeks, the knight felt better. He got up and began to look round his house. T,sense me,’ he said to his friends. ‘Where are my books? 1 can’t find them.’ ‘There are no books in this house,’ his friends said. 'When you were away on your journey, an angry wizard came here. He flew inside, and after a long time he flew away again. I here was smoke everywhere. Later, after the house was clean

again, we couldn't find your books.'

'I read about that wizard!' Don Quixote shouted. 'I I is name is Freston. I'll fight him one day for this, and I'll win!

When he was stronger, Don Quixote began to plan his next adventure. Pero and Nicolas weren't happy with his ideas for new adventures. They wanted a quiet life for their friend. They wanted him to stay at home.

But Don Quixote's plans were more exciting than his old life. He forgot about Pero and Nicolas and their boring lives. He began to talk to a man from his village, Sancho Panza. This fat little man had a hard life with a difficult wife, a lot of work and not very much money. He wasn't important or very clever, and he liked listening to Don Quixote. Each day the knight told him stories from his books. At night, Sancho Panza couldn't sleep. He sat at his window and thought about the exciting lives of knights and their squires.

One day Don Quixote said, 'Sancho,. I'm planning to leave our village. Would you like to come with me on an exciting journey?'

'Sir, I would like that more than anything in the world. But sadly I'm not a knight.'

'My friend, you'll be my squire,' said Don Quixote. 'No job is more important than that. The two of us will do great things. Think about it! You'll be a famous man because you'll be Don Quixote's squire!'

Don Quixote got everything ready for his journey. He remembered the innkeeper's words, and rhis time he took money and clean clothes with him. In the middle of a dark night, he and Sancho Panza left their village without a goodbye to friends or family. They didn't want to change their plans for anybody.

The two men went down the road, Don Quixote on Rocinante and Sancho Panza on his donkey. They talked and talked.

'Will we be rich and important?' asked Sancho Panza.

'Yes, I'll fight other knights and perhaps wizards. Perhaps I'll win a fine horse for you, or a castle for your family - or possibly a small country!'

'A country? Is that possible?' asked Sancho Panza.

'Yes, this often happens with the best knights. One day I'll give you a country — a small one — and you'll be the king. Everybody will listen to you,' said Don Quixote.

'Really? Will my wife listen to me?' asked the squire.

'Yes,' said Don Quixote. 'Everybody!'

Sancho Panza smiled happily. ‘Thank you, sir. You’re very good to me.’

When the sub came up over the trees, the two adventurers saw thirty or forty windmills in front of them.

‘Look over there, Sancho,’ said Don Quixote. ‘We’ll be busy now. Thirty or more dangerous giants are waiting for us. I’ll kill all ol them and we’ll be rich.’

‘Giants? What giants?’ asked Sancho Panza.

‘There! In front of your eyes. Look! Their arms are more than three kilometres long.’

‘Please look again,’ Sancho Panza said kindly. He wanted to see giants, but he couldn’t. ‘Those aren’t giants. They’re windmills. Their arms are sails. The wind pushes them and the sails turn.’

‘I’m sorry, Sancho, but you’re a beginner in adventures. Perhaps you’re afraid of these giants. Wait here and I’ll hght them.’

With these words, Don Quixote and Rocinante ran at the windmills. The knight shouted, ‘Stop, stupid giants! Stop and fight me! I’ll send you away from this place or kill you. My good Dulcinea will help me.’

When Don Quixote and Rocinante were near the windmills, the knight pushed his lance into a sail. The wind turned it suddenly. Then another heavy sail hit Don Quixote and broke his lance. He was sitting on the ground when Sancho Panza arrived next to him.

‘Why didn’t you listen to me, sir? They’re windmills, not giants,’ Sancho Panza said.

‘You don’t understand, friend Sancho. For a knight, things change from minute to minute. This is the work of the wizard, Freston. He took my books from my house, and here he changed giants into windmills. He hates me and all good knights.’

‘Knights have very difficult problems,’ Sancho Panza said. He helped Don Quixote to stand up and climb on Rocinante again.

When the two men were on the road again, Don Quixote began to talk to Sancho Panza about his lance.

‘I read about Don Diego Perez de Vargas, a Spanish knight. He also broke his lance in a fight. The next day he found a very large tree and pulled it from the ground. He made a new lance from the wood and killed many men with it. That’s my plan. I’ll make a new lance from a good tree. Then you’ll see some wonderful fights.’

‘I’m ready, sir. Thank you for this exciting life. But did the giants hurt you badly?’

‘They did, but a knight doesn’t talk about his problems. I’m not dying, so I’ll be quiet about it.’

‘I’m very different from you,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘I have to talk about my problems. When my head or stomach hurts, I tell everybody about it. But I’m only a squire, and not a knight.’

‘That’s right, Sancho,’ said Don Quixote. ‘And remember one more thing. You can’t help me when I’m fighting another knight. Squires can’t fight knights. Don’t forget this.’

‘Sir, I’m not a fighter. I’ll happily watch when you have a fight.’

That night, the two men stopped under a very large tree. Don Quixote found some wood for a new lance, and then it was time for bed. Sancho Panza ate and drank. Then he went to sleep. But Don Quixote knew about a knight’s life from his books. He didn’t eat or sleep that night. He looked at the sky and thought about his wonderful Dulcinea.

♦

The knight and Sancho Panza had many adventures and also some accidents. Don Quixote lost his helmet and the top of one ear in a difficult fight. He hoped for adventures everywhere. When he heard a loud noise, he followed it. When he arrived at a new place, he looked round at everything carefully. He didn’t always find adventures, but he and his squire were happy in this new life.

One day they were between two villages in the mountains. Don Quixote stopped and called to Sancho Panza.

‘Sancho, do you see a knight over there? He’s on a grey horse, and he’s wearing a beautiful helmet. I read about that helmet in one of my books. Look! It shines in the sun.’

Sancho Panza opened his eyes wider and spoke slowly. ‘I can see a man on a donkey with something on his head. Perhaps it’s a helmet, or perhaps it’s a bowl from his kitchen.’

‘Wait here. Later today that helmet will be on my head.’

Then Don Quixote ran at the man with his lance. ‘Show your lance and fight,’ he shouted.

‘I don’t understand,’ cried the man. ‘I’m going to visit a man in the next village. He’s dying. What do you want from me?’

‘Give me your helmet.’

‘It’s not a helmet. It’s a bowl for my work. I’m a doctor. I’m wearing the bowl on my head because it’s raining.’

‘That helmet is mine, you dog! Stop here and fight for it!’

The doctor didn’t want to fight. He jumped to the ground and ran for his life.

The bowl fell from his head, and his donkey followed slowly after him.

‘It’s a fine bowl,’ said Sancho Panza.

Don Quixote put the bowl on his head. He said, ‘It’s a famous helmet, but it’s very big. That knight had to pay a lot of money for this helmet. Or perhaps he got it from a wizard!’

‘Sir,’ said Sancho Panza with a laugh, ‘it’s a bowl!’

‘Friend Sancho, one day your eyes will open and you’ll understand everything. But for now, you have to listen to me.’

‘For now, sir, I’ll happily listen to you. Each day I learn more about the world and about the life of a knight and his squire,’ said Sancho Panza.

Day followed day and month followed month. The two men journeyed down many roads and had many interesting conversations and exciting adventures.

One day, the knight stopped and looked at something about a kilometre away from them.

‘Sancho, do you see those men on horses?’

‘Look again, sir,’ said Sancho. ‘I don’t think those are horses.’

Don Quixote didn’t listen to Sancho Panza. He was very excited.

‘Over there is King Alifanfaron - and over there is the King of the Garamantes. He hates Alifanfaron because Alifanfaron is in love with his beautiful daughter. Look at their knights. This is going to be a good fight.’ Don Quixote happily named many famous knights from his stories.

Sancho listened and didn’t say a word. He couldn’t see any kings or knights or horses.

‘Listen, Sancho, do you hear the horses? They’re excited because the knights are getting ready for the fight.’

‘Don Quixote, I can only hear a lot of sheep.’

‘You’re afraid. Stay here. I’ll come back after the fight.’

‘Please, sir, stay with me,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘They’re only sheep. They won’t hurt anybody. Please come back!’

But Don Quixote heard and saw knights on horses. He and Rocinante ran into the middle of the sheep, and Don Quixote killed seven of them. People heard the noise and ran to their sheep. They shouted at the knight and threw things at him. Something hit Don Quixote on the mouth and some of his teeth fell out. He fell to the ground. The men left him there and carried away their dead sheep.

Sancho Panza ran to Don Quixote. ‘Sir, they were sheep - not kings and their knights! Why didn’t you listen to me?’

‘Sancho, this is Freston’s work. He changes giants into windmills and knights on horses into sheep. Go down that road and you’ll see them.’ After this difficult fight, Sancho Panza took Don Quixote into the mountains. ‘Sir, please forget about adventures for a time,’ he said. ‘Sleep , and eat. Get strong again.’

Pero and Nicolas found them in the mountains and took their old friend and his squire home again.

Old Friends or the Work of Freston?

After another long stay at home, Don Quixote wanted more adventures. His first conversation with Sancho Panza on their new journey was about his love, the beautiful Dulcinea.

‘Friend Sancho, our first stop will be El Toboso because I have to see my Dulcinea.’

It was after midnight when they arrived at the lovely Dulcinea’s village. Everything was very quiet, and the windows were dark.

‘Take me to her castle, Sancho,’ said Don Quixote.

‘Castle?’ cried Sancho Panza. ‘What castle do you mean? Aldonza Lorenzo, I mean Dulcinea del Toboso, and her family live in a little house in a dark back street. And it’s the middle of the night, sir. You can’t wake everybody up at this hour. You can meet your Dulcinea tomorrow.’

Outside the village, the two men found a place for the night. In the morning, Don Quixote sent Sancho Panza into El Toboso with a long letter for his beautiful Dulcinea.

‘Wait here, sir,’ Sancho said. ‘I’ll speak to Dulcinea as quickly as possible and tell her about your grtat fights. Then I’ll come back to you.’ Half a kilometre down the road, Sancho Panza sat down under a big tree. He had to have a plan.

‘What am I doing?’ he thought. ‘I’m looking for a beautiful young woman in a castle in El Toboso. How can I find this woman? There is no lovely Dulcinea! Don Quixote thinks that windmills are giants. He thinks that sheep are strong knights on horses. But wait! Think! I’ll find a girl and take Don Quixote to her. I’ll tell him that *she’s* Dulcinea. He’ll be happy, but she won’t understand. She’ll think that Don Quixote is a strange man. So she’ll turn round and go home. My knight will think the wizard is at work again. Freston changed a beautiful woman into a village girl. Then we can begin our next journey.’

With this plan in his head, Sancho Panza slept under the tree for most of the day. In the evening he woke up and saw three country girls on donkeys on the road. He ran back and shouted to Don Quixote.

‘Come quickly, sir, your lovely Dulcinea is near. She’s coming to you.’ ‘Oh, what beautiful words! Will I speak to her now for the first time? Is it possible?’

‘Possible?’ cried Sancho Panza. ‘You’ll see, sir! She’s with two of the women from her castle. She’s

wearing a beautiful dress, and she's carrying some lovely flowers. Dulcinea and her women are sitting on three of the finest horses in this country. Come! Come!'

'I'll have to give you something for your help, Sancho. When we win something on our next adventure, it will be yours. Or when my three donkeys at home in La Mancha have babies, they'll be yours.'

'Thank you for the donkeys, sir. Don't pay me with the things from our adventures, please,' Sancho said quickly. Then he shouted, 'Look, sir, you can see the three young women now!'

Don Quixote looked at the three country girls. 'Sancho, perhaps Dulcinea is in her castle. I can't see her anywhere.'

'Sir, where are your eyes? Can't you see her and her friends? They're coming this way at this minute.'

'I can see three country girls on donkeys,' said Don Quixote.

'Sir, you're making a big mistake. That's Dulcinea in front of you. Go and speak to your love.'

Sancho Panza ran to the three girls and stopped their donkeys. Don Quixote followed slowly behind and looked carefully at the girl on the middle donkey. She was a fat country girl in a cheap dress.

'What are you doing?' the girl shouted. 'Get out of our way. We don't have time for any stupid games.'

'This is not good,' Don Quixote said to Sancho Panza. 'This is the work of the wizard, Freston. I know that this girl is my Dulcinea. But I can only see an ugly country girl with a loud mouth.'

'What's he talking about?' cried the girl. 'Listen to him.

There's something very strange about these two.' And the three girls kicked their donkeys and left quickly.

Don Quixote followed them with sad eyes. 'Freston really hates me. Why did he change my Dulcinea? She looked fat and ugly, and her words were loud and unkind. Where is my good, pretty girl?'

'This Freston will always be a problem for you,' said Sancho Panza.

He turned his head away from him and tried not to laugh. Sancho was never unkind to Don Quixote.

After a long, sad day, the two adventurers went to sleep under another big tree. In the middle of the night, Don Quixote heard the sound of two horses. It was very dark, but he could see a man in a suit of armour.

'Sancho!' Don Quixote said quietly. 'Here's an adventure. There's a knight and his squire near us. Look! Can you see them?'

‘How’s that an adventure?’ asked Sancho Panza. He was tired and wanted to sleep. But he couldn’t sleep because this new knight began to sing. He sang about the lovely woman at the centre of his life, Casildea de Vandalia. He sang about his fights with the knights of Navarre, of Leon, of Castiile and of La Mancha.

‘La Mancha!’ Don Quixote said very quietly to Sancho. ‘I’m from La Mancha, and I don’t know this knight. But let’s listen and learn more.’

‘You’ll hear more,’ said Sancho Panza unhappily. ‘I think he’s going to sing all night.’

But the knight heard this conversation. ‘Who’s there?’ he shouted.

Don Quixote went to the knight and sat through the dark night with him. They enjoyed a long, friendly talk.

At the same' time, Sancho Panza sat under the tree and talked to the knight’s squire. ‘My mouth is dry with all this conversation,’ said the other squire'. ‘I’ve got something in my bag for us.’ He brought out a big bottle of wine and some bread and meat.

‘This is a wonderful dinner,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘My knight is an interesting man, but I have to live on adventures. He never thinks about his stomach or about my stomach.’

‘Let’s enjoy our food and drink,' said the new squire. ‘Those two can enjoy their ideas and their talk.’ And so the two squires had a good dinner and then fell asleep.

After their long, friendly conversation, the other knight told Don Quixote about his biggest and best fight. ‘I won a gfeat fight with a famous knight. His name was Don Quixote de la Mancha.’

Don Quixote began to feel very angry. ‘Sir,’ he said. ‘1 know that you’re a very good knight. Your fights are, perhaps, famous, but your fight with Don Quixote de la Mancha didn’t happen. Perhaps it was with another knight.’ ‘No, no,’ answered the strange knight, ‘it really was Don Quixote.

He’s the tall old knight from La Mancha with very thin arms and legs, and his squire is Sancho Panza. Listen to my words or feel my lance.’

‘Sir, you’re wrong. Listen to me. *I’m* Don Quixote de la Mancha. Do you want a fight here and now?’ And Don Quixote stood up with his lance in his hand.

‘I’m not afraid of you or any knight from La Mancha. But it’s late and very dark. Let’s wait for the sun. We can fight in the morning.’

Sancho Panza heard the two knights and their conversation about a fight. He woke up the other squire.

‘Did you hear them? First they’re good friends, and now they want to fight.’

‘But it’s worse than that,’ said the other squire. ‘Now ztv?have to fight too. We can’t stand and watch.’

‘That’s not the way in La Mancha,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘I’ll watch. I haven’t got a lance, and I’m not angry with you.’

‘Let’s think about it in the morning,’ said the other squire. ‘Perhaps I can make you angry after the sun comes up.’

In the morning light, Sancho Panza could see the other squire’s face. The man had the biggest nose in the world. It was as red as fire and very, very long. Sancho couldn’t stop looking at it.

Don Quixote wanted to see the face of the knight next to him, but the man quickly closed his helmet. ‘He’s not very tall,’ thought Don Quixote, ‘but he looks strong. I’m not afraid, but I’d like to see his face.’

‘Sir,’ Don Quixote said, ‘please open your helmet. I want to see the man inside the suit of armour.’

‘Let’s fight!’ cried the knight. ‘You can see my face after I win.’

‘But you can see my face now,’ said Don Quixote. ‘Did you really fight *this* Don Quixote?’

‘I did.’

‘Get your horse,’ shouted Don Quixote. ‘I’m ready for you.’

But when Don Quixote and Rocinante began to run at the knight, Don Quixote saw the squire with the red nose. He stopped and turned to Sancho Panza. ‘Do you see that nose?’ he said.

‘Yes, sir, can you help me to climb that tree? I’m afraid of that man and his red nose.’

Don Quixote helped Sancho Panza to climb the tree. The new knight stopped his horse and waited. But Don Quixote didn’t wait for *him*. He ran at the man and hit him with his lance. The man fell to the ground. His squire ran to him and opened his helmet. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza looked at the man — and then they looked again.

‘Sancho, isn’t this my old friend from La Mancha, Sanson Carrasco?’

‘It is,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘Kill him now. I think this is the work of your wizard, Freston. Sanson never fights you, so this isn’t really him.’

‘You’re right,’ said Don Quixote. ‘Let’s kill him. I’m not afraid of Freston and

‘Wait, good knight!’ shouted Carrasco’s squire. ‘He really *is* Sanson Carrasco, and I’m his squire.’

Sancho Panza looked at the squire. ‘Where’s your nose?’ he asked.

‘It’s here, in my bag.’

‘I know you. You’re my old friend Tome Cecial.’

‘That’s right, friend Sancho. We don’t want to hurt anybody,’ said Tome Cecial. ‘Please, Don Quixote, don’t kill Don Carrasco. He read about your dangerous fights in a book by Cide Hamete Benengeli. Don Carrasco came here because he wants to help you. He wants to take you home to your friends before your adventures kill you.’

By this time, Sanson Carrasco’s eyes were open. He saw Don Quixote’s lance near his head. But in Don Quixote’s eyes, this man was not his old friend, Sanson Carrasco. He was a knight.

‘Repeat these words,’ shouted Don Quixote. ‘Dulcinea del Toboso is the most wonderful woman in the world, and I never won a fight with Don Quixote de la Mancha.’

‘Don Quixote, you’re right.

My story was wrong,’ said Sanson Carrasco.

‘Thank you,’ said Don Quixote. ‘Now leave this Find Freston, your teacher. I know you aren’t really my friend, Sanson Carrasco.’

The two men left, but Sanson Carrasco spoke to Tome Cecial. ‘This isn’t the end. Forget my old plan. I don’t like to lose. I’ll fight Don Quixote one day, and I’ll win.’

Exciting Adventures with Animals

Don Quixote and his squire happily began their journey again. The knight sat on Rocinante and thought about his life of adventures. When he remembered his many fights, they always ended well. He forgot about his problems and accidents, and about their many difficult journeys.

Sancho Panza felt good too. ‘That was an interesting adventure, sir,’ he said to Don Quixote. ‘You won that fight with no problems.’

‘Yes, I did,’ Don Quixote said happily. ‘I think that I understand Freston’s games now.’

The two friends enjoyed their conversation about wizards and old friends. Freston made life more interesting for Don Quixote.

In a short time they met a rich man in an expensive green coat on a fine horse. The man looked carefully at Don Quixote. He was interested in stories about knights and here was a man in a suit of armour. He and Don Quixote began a long conversation about the lives of knights.

Don Quixote was happy and busy, so Sancho Panza went for a walk.

He was hungry and wanted to find some food. He found a man with about twenty sheep.

‘Excuse me, sir, can I buy some milk from you?’

‘Yes, do you have a bottle for it?’ the man asked.

‘No, but I have this bowl,’ answered Sancho Panza. He gave the man the doctor’s bowl - Don Quixote’s new helmet. The man put some milk in the bowl and took Sancho Panza’s pennies.

When he got back, some men came down the road.

‘Look, Squire,’ Don Quixote called to him. ‘Bring me my helmet. An adventure is coming this way. I have to be ready.’

Sancho Panza ran to Don Quixote with the bowl of milk. Don Quixote took the helmet from Sancho Panza.

‘Wait, sir! There’s something in your helmet!’ shouted Sancho Panza.

‘I haven’t got time for games, Sancho,’ Don Quixote shouted. He didn’t look inside his helmet. He took it from Sancho Panza and quickly put it on his head.

‘What’s this, Sancho?’ He had milk in his hair and on his face.

‘Is something happening to my head? I’m not hot or afraid, but something is running into my eyes.’

Sancho Panza said, ‘Sir, it’s a strange white milk. It has to be the work of Freston. Here, sir, give me your helmet.’

When he gave it back to Don Quixote, the helmet was clean and dry again. Now the knight was ready for his adventure.

Don Diego de Miranda, the rich man in green, looked round. He saw some men and some horses. The horses pulled a large box. But he couldn’t understand Don Quixote’s idea of an adventure. He asked, ‘What do you see, Don Quixote?’

‘Sir, there are adventures everywhere. And a wizard is following me. He’s always playing games with me. I have to be very careful.’

‘I think that these men are from the king’s castle. Look at the colours on their coats. Perhaps there is something for the king in that large box.’

The horses were near now, and Don Quixote spoke to the driver. ‘Where are you going, my friend? What have you got in that big box?’ ‘I’ve got a **lion** for the king in the box,’ said the driver.

‘Is it large?’ asked Don Quixote. ‘It’s the biggest lion in this country,’ said the driver. ‘Now, please move. The king’s waiting for us. And it’s after the lion’s dinner time. He’s getting very hungry. And lions are dangerous when they’re hungry.’

‘I’m not afraid of a lion. This is one of Freston’s games. Jump down, driver, and open the box. I want to see this dangerous animal.’

Sancho Panza ran to Don Diego de Miranda. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘please stop him. The lion will kill all of

us.'

'Does he really want to fight a lion? What's wrong with him?' asked Don Diego.

'Nothing, really,' said Sancho Panza, 'but he's always looking for a good adventure. He's a knight, you know.'

Don Diego spoke to Don Quixote. 'Sir, think about this. This is the king's lion. Knights don't fight the king or his animals.'

'Sir, this is my adventure. The wizard Freston put this lion here for me. Stay with my squire and watch.' He turned to the driver. 'Now, open that box or you'll die.'

'Please, sir, give me a minute. I'll move the king's men and his horses.'

'Move them quickly!' shouted Don Quixote.

'You know that I don't want to open this box,' the driver cried to the king's men. 'I'm only doing it because I have to.'

Sancho Panza ran to Don Quixote. 'Sir, please don't fight the lion. You'll die. Come away from here.'

'Sancho, leave me here. Go with Don Diego de Miranda. Perhaps I will die. Then tell Dulcinea about my adventures and about my love for her.' The driver opened the box, and then he ran after the other men and horses. Don Quixote sent Rocinante with Sancho Panza. The horse was afraid of lions.

With his lance in his hand, Don Quixote walked slowly up to the open box. The lion saw the knight and opened his mouth very wide. Now everybody could see his long teeth.

'Come out of there,' shouted Don Quixote.

The lion looked at him with his dark yellow eyes. Then, slowly, the animal stood up. He turned round and sat down again. He closed his eyes. Was he asleep?

'Pull him out of that box,' Don Quixote shouted at the driver.

'Never!' said the man. 'He'll kill me. Be happy with your day's work. We know that you won this fight. The lion was afraid of you, so he stayed in his box.'

'You're right,' said Don Quixote happily. 'Write this story down. Show it to the king. Tell him that Don Quixote de la Mancha is not afraid of dangerous lions.'

Sancho Panza and the other men ran back to Don Quixote. 'Look at this!' cried Sancho Panza. 'My knight isn't dead.'

'From this day,' Don Quixote told everybody, 'please call me the Knight of the Lions.'

Don Diego de Miranda invited Don Quixote and Sancho Panza to his big house. They stayed there and ate and drank with Don Diego's family and friends. After four nights at the rich man's house, Don Quixote said, 'Thank you for your good food and conversation. But I'm a knight. I want to be on the road and to do good. Squire Sancho and I are going to have some more adventures.'

'Don Quixote, my family and I enjoyed your exciting stories. Visit us again one day and tell us more about your life,' said Don Diego.

When Don Quixote and Sancho Panza began their journey again, they stopped one night at an inn. They sat at a table and waited for their dinner. Suddenly, a big, loud man came through the door.

'Innkeeper! Have you got any rooms for tonight?' the man shouted.

'Pedro!' cried the innkeeper. 'This will be a good evening. Your theatre company is the best in the country. We always have rooms for you and your men.'

'Thank you, sir. I'll be back in a minute.' Pedro called his men. Then he went into the kitchen and asked some questions about the people in the inn that night.

When Pedro was in the other room, Don Quixote asked, 'Who is this man? Is he famous?'

'Yes, he's famous in every town round here. He has a theatre company, and he has a very clever monkey. The animal can look at you and see inside your head. Then he tells Pedro everything about you. He isn't always right, but usually he is.'

When Pedro came back with his men and his monkey, Don Quixote asked the animal a question about his future.

'Sir,' said Pedro, the animal can't tell you about the future. He only knows about your old life.'

'That's no good to us,' said Sancho Panza. 'We know our old stories. Tell me about my wife, Teresa Panza. What's she doing at home at this minute? That's interesting to me.'

Pedro called to his monkey. The animal talked quickly into the man's ear for a minute. Then it jumped down. Pedro suddenly turned to Don Quixote and took his hat from his head.

'You're the great Don Quixote de la Mancha. You're on an important journey. You're making the world a better place for everybody. You understand the life of a good knight.'

'How do you know this about me?' asked Don Quixote. 'This is my first visit to this place.'

But Pedro was cleverer than his monkey. He always asked questions about people before he talked to them. He knew a lot of stories about Don Quixote and Sancho Panza from his conversation in the kitchen.

'And you, Sancho, are the best squire in the world and the best friend to your knight. Don't be unhappy about your wife. She's working, and she's got a bottle of wine near her hand.'

‘You know my wife,’ said Sancho Panza. But he felt afraid of this man and his monkey.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza stayed away from Pedro and the monkey that night, and they left the inn early in the morning.

Good King Sancho

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza left the inn and forgot about the monkey and the theatre company. They were happier on the road. But Sancho began to think about his home and family.

‘Sir, I felt strange when I met that monkey. How did it know about my wife? Perhaps I’ll go home and look after my family. Is it better to be your squire or a husband and father? Also, at home I have food and wine every day, and I have a bed a night. With you, I have two metres of hard ground at night and nothing in my stomach.’

‘It’s your life, Squire Sancho,’ said Don Quixote. ‘Take the road to your house or follow me. I’ll pay you for your work. How much will it be?’

‘I worked for the father of Sanson Carrasco, sir, when I was young.

He paid me two ducats each month. He also gave me a good dinner at night and a nice bed. I never have these things from you.’

‘What do you think, Sancho? How much for your work and for food? And don’t forget the bed!’

‘I think three ducats for my work. And two ducats more because I’m not going to be a king now.’

‘A king? Where does that idea come from? Did I say that, Squire Sancho?’

‘I remember your words very well,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘I was twenty years younger, and you were too.’

Don Quixote started to laugh, but it was a cold laugh. ‘Twenty years! No, Sancho, that’s not possible - two months, perhaps. But take my money, and go home. I hope that you’re happier there. But you’ll never be a king. I won’t find a small country for you. You’re a donkey, not a king. You’ll be a donkey today, tomorrow and after you die.’

Sancho Panza felt sorry and began to cry. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘you’re right! I really am a donkey. Don’t listen to me. I haven’t got a lot of ideas in my head. Sometimes I talk too much. Please, I don’t want to stop being your squire. I’d like twenty more years with you.’

‘OK,’ Don Quixote said. ‘I’ll give you your job back this time. And I’ll find a country for you too. We’ll have another twenty years and a lot of new adventures!’

That night, the knight and his squire slept under another tree. In the morning they saw some people on fine horses on the road.

‘Look at these rich people, sir,’ said Sancho Panza.

‘Sancho, do you see the beautiful woman on the white horse? Run to her. Say that Don Quixote de la Mancha, the Knight of the Lions, wants to meet her. Speak nicely to her.’

Sancho ran to the woman. ‘Madam, my knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, is near here. He wants to speak to you. He’ll help you in some way. People call him the Knight of the Lions.’ ‘Wait! I have a book about this knight,’ said the lovely rich woman. ‘Does he love a girl with the name Dulcinea del Toboso?’

‘That’s right! And I’m Don Quixote’s squire. My name is . . .’

‘You’re Sancho Panza. Am I right?’

‘Yes, madam. I am.’ Sancho Panza felt very happy. A beautiful, important woman knew his name.

‘My name is Dona Maria,’ the woman said. ‘I want to invite you and your knight to my castle. It’s very near here. Please tell your knight.’ Sancho Panza found Don Quixote and told him about the woman on the white horse. The two men then went quickly back to Doha Maria.

The woman was very excited. She thought, ‘My husband and I read about this strange man and his adventures in a book by Cide Hamete Benengeli. We’re going to enjoy our time with him and his squire. We’ll play some funny games with them. People don’t usually follow ideas from old books. But Don Quixote is really living the life of a knight. This is very interesting!’

‘Let’s go to my castle,’ Doha Maria said to Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. ‘You’ll meet my husband, Don Carlos, there.’

That evening after dinner, Don Quixote talked to Don Carlos and his beautiful wife.

‘I’m going to find a small country for Sancho Panza one day,’ said Don Quixote. ‘He’ll be the king of the place.’

‘I have a small country!’ shouted Don Carlos excitedly. ‘The old king died this year. Sancho Panza can be the king of Baratario.’

‘I would like to try,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘A good squire will be a good king, I think. Can I take my donkey with me? I know that many donkeys work for kings. And many kings are donkeys.’

Dona Maria laughed at these words. She liked Sancho Panza very much and enjoyed his conversation. ‘Now, Squire Sancho, go to bed and sleep well. You’ll have a lot of work tomorrow.’

When everybody in the house was asleep, Don Carlos and Dona Maria talked and laughed about their strange visitors. ‘We’ll have to tell the five thousand people in the town of Baratario about King Sancho so they’re ready for him, their first king,’ said Don Carlos. ‘When he arrives, the people can’t laugh at him. They have to meet their king and take him to the castle. We can’t tell Sancho Panza about our game. Later, we’ll enjoy many stories about the town’s fat little king.’

At the same time, Don Quixote had an interesting conversation with Sancho. ‘This is wonderful. Tomorrow you’ll be the King of Baratario.’ ‘Thank you for this, sir. Do you think that I’ll be a good king?’

‘Yes! But remember your old life - when you weren’t a rich or an important man. And don’t forget your friends and family. Help people when you can. Cut your hair and wash every day. Wear clean clothes and good shoes. Don’t ask for a lot of money. Walk slowly. Speak quietly. Drink very little wine.’

‘Thank you, Don Quixote,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘But I can’t remember all of that. Can you write your words on paper for me? I know I can’t read. But a king has helpers. They can read these words to me every day.’ ‘But a king has to read and write,’ said Don Quixote. ‘Can you write your name?’

‘Yes, I learned that from Sanson Carrasco’s father. But do you think I’m going to be good at this job? I don’t have to be a king. I can be the old Sancho and be happy.’

‘These are intelligent words. My plan worked. You’re ready now for the people of Baratario. You’ll be a king and I’ll be your knight.’

The next day, Sancho Panza dressed in fine clothes and went to his new cou ntry. The important men of the town of Baratario met their new king at the church. Then they took him to his castle. King Sancho sat down amd waited. He wanted to begin his job.

‘King Sancho, you are the king of a very important country, so you have many important jobs,’ said one of his new helpers.’

‘Yes, I understand,’ said Sancho Panza. ‘And I want to be a good king. What is any first job?’

‘There are many problems in Baratario. You will have to find answers to every problem, big and small,’ said the helper.

‘I’ll be very busy,’ said Sancho. ‘Will I have time for food or sleep?’

‘No, not really. The king has to help his people night and day. Look, here is your first problem.’

Two old men came into the room. One of the men used a walking stick because his legs weren’t very strong.

‘Please tell me about your problem,’ said Sancho Panza to the old man without a walking stick.

‘Sir, last year my friend asked me for some money, but only for a month or two. I gave him two ducats. But after more than a year, I’m waiting for my money. Now my friend says that he gave me the money in April. Perhaps he gave me my money, but I can’t remember.’

‘How can I help?’ asked Sancho Panza.

‘Ask him about the money. You’re the king. He’ll tell *you!*

‘What do you say about this, old man with the walking stick?’ Sancho Panza asked the second man.

‘Sir, I gave the money back to him in April,’ said the second man.

‘Will you put your hands on the Bible and repeat those words?’ asked Sancho Panza.

‘Yes, I will,’ said the second old man. Then he turned to his friend. ‘Please take my walking stick for a minute.’

Then he put his two hands on the Bible. ‘I haven’t got my friend’s two ducats. I gave this money back to him.’

‘Are you happy now?’ King Sancho asked the first old man.

‘Yes, perhaps he *did* give me my money, and I forgot about it.’

Then the second old man took his walking stick again and the two friends left the room.

Sancho Panza sat in his king’s chair and thought about the two ducats. Suddenly he shouted, ‘Bring those two old men back to me.’ When they were in front of Sancho Panza, he looked at them carefully. ‘Give me your walking stick,’ he said to the second old man.

‘Here it is, sir,’ said the man.

King Sancho broke the stick and two ducats fell on the floor.

Sancho turned and spoke to the first old man. ‘When you came here, your friend gave the walking stick to you and *then* he put his hands on the Bible. When he finished talking, he took the walking stick - and your money - back. But I understood his game. Now you’ve got your money again. Take it and go home.’

Sancho Panza worked very hard and helped the people of Baratario in many other ways. He put better and cheaper food and wine in the shops. Clothes and shoes were cheaper too. He helped the people with problems with the banks and paid them the right number of ducats for their work. Under King Sancho, families could walk happily at night in the clean, friendly streets and parks. He was, the people of Baratario thought, an intelligent and good king.

But Sancho Panza wasn’t very happy in Baratario because he never got a good breakfast, lunch or dinner. Three times a day, he sat down at his table. The cook put food on his plate, but then the king’s doctor looked at the food. Wait, sir! This isn’t food for a king. Take it away!’ he shouted.

In the end, Sancho Panza was very angry. ‘Doctor, leave this castle and don’t come back,’ he shouted. ‘I want to eat!’

But then a letter came from Don Carlos. It said: ‘King Sancho, be careful. There are bad men in Baratario. They want to kill you. Don’t eat the food from your table.’

This was another of Don Carlos's games. He and Dona Maria enjoyed hearing the stories about Baratario's king.

Sancho Panza felt afraid, but he was also angry. 'I can't live without food,' he shouted. He had some bread and water for dinner. He was very hungry when he went to bed.

In the night, Sancho Panza heard a lot of loud noise. 'Wake up, King Sancho,' his helpers shouted. 'There are men outside the town walls. They want to take Baratario from us. Please help your people!'

'I'm not a fighter. Call for Don Quixote. He loves a good fight.'

'No, you're our king. Put on your suit of armour and stop these men.' They brought Sancho Panza a suit of armour. It was very small, and he couldn't move in it. Then the lights went out, and he fell to the floor. He couldn't see anything or anybody. There was a lot of noise and smoke. Men ran in and out of the king's bedroom. Some men jumped over the king. Some kicked him. Everybody shouted.

Then suddenly the noise stopped, and the game ended. The king's men cried, 'We won! Baratario is ours! Stand up, King Sancho. You're now Sancho the Great!'

But Sancho Panza didn't want to be a king. In the morning, he spoke to the people of Baratario. 'I came here without a penny, and I'm leaving without a penny. I think that is a good thing in a king. But I wasn't born for this life. I'm going to go back on the road with my knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha. Goodbye.'

The Last Days of Don Quixote

Before Don Quixote and Sancho Panza left Don Carlos's castle, Don Carlos gave Sancho a bag of money for his work in Baratario. The knight and his squire liked Don Carlos and Dona Maria very much, but they were happier on the road. That same day, they met some young people and had an adventure.

'Hello!' shouted one of the young men. 'Come and have some food and wine with us.'

Don Quixote was interested in these young people. 'What are you doing here in the middle of these trees?' he asked. 'Where are your homes?'

'We live near here. But we want to learn about people from a different time. We want to have good, happy lives.'

'Young friends, I have the same idea. My name is Don Quixote de la Mancha.'

'We know everything about you,' said one of the young women excitedly. 'We read a book about you last year. You're the best knight in the world. You're famous for your adventures and your good work. And your friend has to be Sancho Panza.'

‘You’re right about that,’ said Sancho happily. ‘I’m the famous squire from your famous book!’

‘And we know about Dulcinea del Toboso. Isn’t she the most beautiful woman in Spain?’ asked one of the boys.

‘She’s the most beautiful woman in the world!’ said Don Quixote. ‘My journeys and fights are all for her.’

The two older men ate and drank and talked about their adventures with the young men and women. They enjoyed a very nice afternoon.

‘How can I thank you for this very fine lunch and good conversation?’ asked Don Quixote at the end of the day. ‘I’ll stand in the middle of the road for two days and nights. I’ll tell everybody about these fine young women. They aren’t as wonderful as my love, Dulcinea, but I’ll sing about them to the world.’

The young people watched Don Quixote. After an hour or two, a hundred bulls came down the road. A number of men on horses followed behind them. The animals ran very fast, and the boys and girls ran quickly behind some trees. But Don Quixote didn’t move. He sat on his horse with his lance in his hand.

‘Move, sir,’ shouted one of the men. ‘These animals will kill you.

Get out of the way!’

‘Bulls! They’re nothing to Don Quixote de la Mancha.’

The hundred bulls ran over Don Quixote and Rocinante and went down the road very quickly with the men behind them.

After a minute or two, Don Quixote stood up and shouted after the bulls. Are you afraid of one knight? Come back and fight me!’ But the adventure was at an end. Don Quixote climbed slowly on to Rocinante.

Sancho Panza ran to him. ‘Your horse is fine, but are you hurt, sir?’

‘Let’s not talk about that, Squire Sancho.’ And with sad smiles, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza left that place and those friendly young people.

That evening, the two men stopped at the door of an inn near the city of Saragossa. Sancho Panza spoke to the innkeeper about some dinner. At the same time, Don Quixote was in his room. He could hear a conversation in the room next to his.

‘Don Jeronimo, before dinner let’s read some pages from that new book, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*,’ said a man.

‘Don Juan, why do you want to read that book? It’s really not very interesting,’ said Don Jeronimo.

‘But,’ said Don Juan, ‘I want to know more about Dulcinea del Toboso. Why did Don Quixote’s love for her die?’

When Don Quixote heard these words, he jumped out of his chair.

‘Don Quixote will never forget Dulcinea del Toboso. He’ll always love her and fight for her!’ the knight shouted.

The three men came out of their rooms at the same time.

‘Are you really Don Quixote?’ asked Don Jeronimo. ‘Do you know the stories in this book?’ He gave the book to Don Quixote.

‘Don’t read these stories,’ said Don Quixote. ‘This writer doesn’t know anything about me or my adventures. Read the book about me by Cide Hamete Benengeli. Forget about this new book.’

‘Sir, we would like to hear everything from *you*. Please eat and drink with us this evening,’ said Don Jeronimo.

‘Thank you. But first, remember one thing. I love Dulcinea del Toboso. She’s the most beautiful, the most wonderful woman in the world.’ And then the three men had dinner and talked for many hours.

Before Don Quixote went to bed, Don Juan asked him about his plans. ‘Are you going to Saragossa tomorrow, Don Quixote? You usually go there for the big fights at this time of year.’

‘Why do you say that?’ asked Don Quixote.

‘We read about your adventures in Saragossa in our book.’

‘But your book is not about me. I didn’t go to Saragossa last year, and I will not go there tomorrow or next year.’

‘I understand,’ said Don Jeronimo. ‘There are big fights in Barcelona too. Perhaps you are going there.’

Don Quixote liked this idea. ‘That’s my plan,’ he said. ‘Good night.’ Don Juan and Don Jeronimo threw their book into the fire. They knew Don Quixote now, and he wasn’t the knight in that book.

Some days later, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza arrived in Barcelona. This was the first visit to the sea for the knight and his squire. Sancho Panza looked at the sea and at the big ships with their sails. ‘What are these?’ he asked. ‘Are they windmills or large animals? How many feet have they got?’

One fine morning, Don Quixote got on Rocinante and went to the beach in his suit of armour. Suddenly he saw another knight, also on a horse and in a suit of armour. When the knight was near Don Quixote, he shouted, ‘Great Don Quixote de la Mancha, listen to me. I am the Knight of the White Mountains. I want to fight with you. The love of my life is more beautiful than Dulcinea del Toboso.’ Don Quixote looked at him angrily. Ah! Do you want to fight me? Lose, and you have to go back home

for a year. Win, and I'll give you my horse, my suit of armour and my money. Quick! What's your answer?'

'Sir, I don't know you,' Don Quixote answered, 'but perhaps you're a famous knight. You're making a mistake. Dulcinea is the most wonderful, the most beautiful woman in the world. I'll fight you and then you'll tell everybody about her. I'm, ready. Are you?'

The two horses ran as fast as possible and the knights began their fight. But the Knight of the White Mountains and his horse were bigger,

heavier and stronger than Don Quixote and Rocinante. They hit the smaller knight and his horse very hard and threw them to the ground. This time Don Quixote and Rocinante were badly hurt.

The Knight of the White Mountains jumped from his horse and put his lance on Don Quixote's stomach. 'Go home for a year or you're a dead man,' he shouted.

'But Dulcinea is the most beautiful woman in the world,' Don Quixote answered weakly. 'I will die for her. Kill me now!'

'No,' said the Knight of the White Mountains. 'You're a fine knight. I won't kill you, but go home.'

'You're kind, sir. I *will* go home,' said Don Quixote. 'But you won't say anything bad about Dulcinea.' 'Right!' said the Knight of the White Mountains. Then he quickly left Barcelona.

Some men from the city followed him and stopped him outside the city. 'Sir, what's your name?' they asked. 'Why did you come to Barcelona?'

'I'm Sanson Carrasco from Don Quixote's village in La Mancha. I'm one of his best friends. I lost a fight to him last year. His life of adventure is dangerous and stupid. Without his ideas on knights and adventures, he is a very intelligent man and a good friend.'

'But we like this knight. We read the books and enjoy his adventures. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza make us happy. Don't change him. His old life was boring - to him and to us.'

'You're wrong. He will be happier at home with his friends.'

At the beach, Don Quixote and Rocinante were very weak. The knight's face was white and he couldn't walk. Some men carried him to a hospital in the city, and he stayed there for more than a week.

'Think of your future, sir,' Sancho said to Don Quixote. 'You have many good stories. Let's forget about adventures and go home for a time.' 'Yes, you're right, Squire Sancho. It's only for a year. After that we'll begin another journey. Perhaps you'll be a king again.'

'Perhaps. I hope that we'll have more adventures,' said Sancho Panza kindly. Then the two men followed the long road to their village in La Mancha.

But Don Quixote wasn't happy. When he arrived at his home, he said, 'Put me to bed, please. I'm not very well.'

Sancho Panza and Don Quixote's friends Pero, Nicolas and Sanson Carrasco sat next to the knight's bed and watched him. The friends wanted to talk to him. But Don Quixote was tired and slept for many hours every day. On the sixth day, the doctor visited. 'Don Quixote is not getting better,' he said.

And then Don Quixote woke up. He looked at his friends and cried,

'I know that this is the end now. My books about knights were wrong, and I was stupid. I, Alonso Quixada - not Don Quixote - am going to die, and I am ready.'

Our knight fell back on his bed. Three days later, he died with a smile on his face. That was the end of a good man and a fine knight.