

# Don Quixote

Miguel de Cervantes



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## What's the book about?

Look at the picture on the front of this book. Circle the right words.

- 1 The man on the right is *short* / *tall*.
- 2 The man on the left is *short* / *tall*.
- 3 The man on the right is *fat* / *thin*.
- 4 The man on the left is *fat* / *thin*.
- 5 The two men are from a *small village* / *big city*.
- 6 They are *going on a journey* / *arriving home*.

## 1.2 What happens first?

Look at the pictures. Which man's life do the sentences describe? Write A or B.



- 1 It is from an earlier time in the past.
- 2 It is a more boring life.
- 3 It is more dangerous.
- 4 People usually stay at home.
- 5 People enjoy fights.
- 6 People wear very heavy clothes.
- 7 This life is more possible for people today.

## Don Quixote Begins his Life of Adventure

*He wanted to be one of the men in his books. He wanted to be a knight. He wanted to leave his home and have adventures.*

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 fifty years old. He didn't have a lot of money, but he had friends, a nice house, an old horse, a 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.



**knight** /naɪt/ (n/v) *Knights* lived from about 1200 to 1500. They fought on horses and looked for adventures. When an important person *knighthood* a man, that man was a *knight*.

He read all day and all night. He talked for hours and hours to his two oldest friends, Pero and Nicolás, 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 young fiancée 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.



\* **Don** and **Doña** are Spanish words for Mr and Mrs. Spanish speakers use these words for important people.

**adventure** /əd'ventʃə/ (n) When you have an *adventure*, you do something new and exciting.

**suit of armour** /,su:t əv 'ɑ:mə, ,sju:t/ (n) A knight wore a *suit of armour* because it was strong. People couldn't hurt him.

**helmet** /'helmit/ (n) A *helmet* is a hard hat. Knights wore *helmets* on their heads.

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 best 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 bad men, and then I’ll send them to my fiancée. They’ll tell her about my great adventures, and that will make her happy. Then they’ll sing songs and write stories about 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 too 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 for 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 Don Quixote’s eyes it was a great **castle**.

‘Look at this, Rocinante!’ shouted Don Quixote. ‘This is a good place for 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.

**inn** /ɪn/ (n) An *inn* is a small hotel in the country. The *innkeeper* gives you food and drink and a room for the night.

**castle** /ˈkɑːsəl/ (n) A *castle* is a very big building with tall, strong walls.

**lance** /lɑːns/ (n) Knights carried *lances*. They fought and killed people with them.



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# Don Quixote

Miguel de Cervantes

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Classic

Don Quixote wants a different life, so he leaves his village with Sancho Panza. The two men want to be a knight and his squire from an earlier age. Will they find adventures? Will they be famous? Will they change the world? This is their story.

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