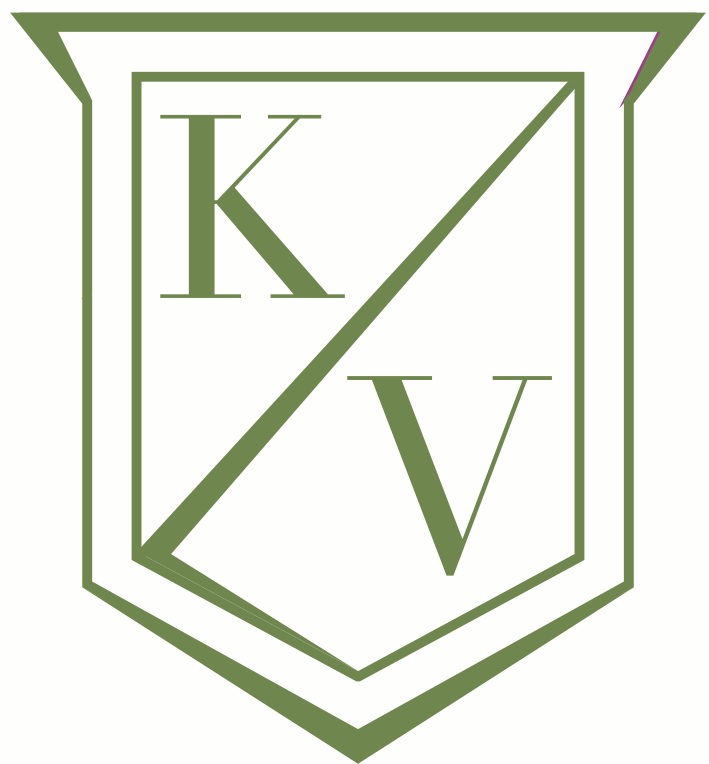


Heroes Who Inspire

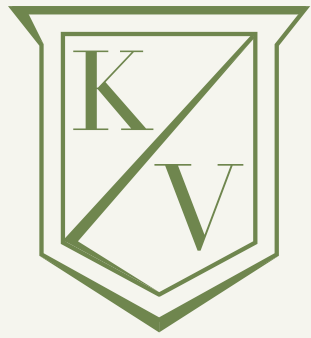
Knightly Virtues



Don Quixote

Learning About the
Virtues of Love and Service

Heroes Who Inspire



THE STORY



Don Quixote

Story retold by the Jubilee Centre for
Character and Virtues

Don Quixote — The Story

Prologue

Quixote is one of the greatest and best loved stories ever. It was written by Cervantes. The original story was over 400,000 words long and was a comedy, tragedy, romance and adventure. The hero of the story is Quixada who wants to be a knight, and sets out for adventure in a rusting suit of armour, on an old horse called Rocinante and with the portly peasant Sancho. His dream is to re-create the knightly quests of the past. To his family and friends, it appears that Quixada has simply gone mad: he mistakes inns and innkeepers for castles and Kings, common peasant girls for fine ladies in distress, shaving bowls for magic helmets, windmills for giants, herds of sheep for armies of enemy knights and chained convicts as oppressed prisoners to be liberated. However, as you will find out in the story perhaps it is not Quixada who is mad but his family and friends.

In the story we find that Quixada can turn things that seem boring into magic and shows great character virtues of courage, friendship and justice.



Don Quixote

Books are bad for you

Alonso Quixada had suddenly gone crazy. The priest and the barber, who were sitting with him in his library, sadly shook their heads.

“Too much reading!” declared the priest.

“The wrong sort of books,” added the barber. “Adventure stories indeed! And tales of witches, battles, haunted castles...”

Quixada’s eyes shone like candles.

“Haunted castles. Yes!”

“The trouble is you believe it all,” said the priest. “You’re really too old for stuff like that.”

“You have your housekeeper and your niece to look after you,” the barber went on. “Why can’t you be normal and contented like other people?”

“What a stupid question,” Quixada thought, with a disgusted expression. “It’s not even worth answering.” He ushered them out of his library and opened another book.

Knock Knock.

“What NOW?” he exclaimed irritably.

In marched his niece and housekeeper. The housekeeper flicked her duster over the dusty bookshelves. “This room’s unhealthy,” she choked. “Atishoo!”

“If only...” thought Quixada longingly, “if only I, too, could live like the brave knights of old.”

His niece dumped a tray on the table. “Such nonsense! Here’s your coffee. Drink it while it’s hot.”

“I’ll do it!” cried Quixada. “I will! I’ll be famous... immortal! Watch me right the world’s wrongs, kill dragons and rescue damsels in distress.”

“Don’t be silly,” said his niece. “Spain doesn’t have dragons...and here in La Mancha there are no damsels in distress.”

“Oh yes there are!” Quixada roared, and sprinted up to the attic.

An ancient iron suit lay on the floor. He scraped off the rust, cranked himself into it, waved a cracked shield and a dented lance, and jammed on the helmet. Then he rushed out to his

decrepit old horse.

“You, my noble steed, shall be re-named Rocinante. And I’ll call myself Don Quixote de la Mancha. Now, what else do I need for my adventure? Hmm...one cannot be a knight without a lady.”

Then he remembered a pretty peasant girl in the village called Aldonza. “She shall be my lady,” he decided. “She will be named Dulcinea del Toboso.”

He rode until nightfall when, exhausted and starving, a terrible thought made him pull up his reins. “I haven’t been knighted yet! Someone must knight me – and quickly!”

A hard day for a knight

Don Quixote had reached a dirty wayside inn where dung-spattered straw blew around the yard, making it stink.

“This,” Don Quixote told himself, “is a great castle with a moat and towers. Sir,” he asked the innkeeper, “are you governor of this noble castle?”

“He’s crazy,” thought the innkeeper. “He’s a strange man, with his odd, long face. But I’d better humour him... “The governor?” he said. “Yes I am.”

“Then stable my horse, and let me rest here tonight after something to eat. But first, get me out of my suit.”

As Don Quixote munched his supper, a man leading his mule to the water trough, tripped over Quixote’s shield, and hurled it aside.

Jumping up, Don Quixote clonked the man on the head. “You dare to lay one finger on my shield!” he shouted. “You’ll pay for it with your life!”

The man fell down stunned. A second man rushed to help, but Don Quixote hit him too. All the people in the inn raced outside and began throwing stones at Don Quixote.

“Vile cowards!” yelled Don Quixote.

He sounded so fierce that they stopped. The wounded were taken away, leaving Don Quixote bruised but triumphant. “Now I have proved my bravery, will you perform the deed of knighthood?” Don Quixote asked the astonished innkeeper.

“I’d better do it before any more trouble,” he thought. So, taking Don Quixote’s sword, he touched each shoulder, proclaiming: “I name you Knight of the Long Face. May God give you fortune and luck in your battles?”

As he jogged away, Don Quixote exclaimed, “Now I’m the Knight of the Long Face, I must get myself a squire.”

Treacherous windmills

The following morning, he met Sancho Panza, a farmer who lived nearby.

“You can’t miss out on being my squire,” said Don Quixote in his most persuasive voice. “Just think what glittering treasure and prizes you might win with me:

So that evening Sancho Panza, with the bags and a leather bottle strapped to his donkey, rode proudly next to Don Quixote. Crossing a high plain, they espied thirty or forty windmills in the distance.

“Look!” shouted Don Quixote. “Over there thirty terrible giants whom I will fight and kill.”

“Giants? Where?” asked Sancho Panza.

“Over there,” pointed Don Quixote, “with the long arms. These giants have arms almost six miles long.”

Those aren’t giants,” Sancho retorted. “They’re windmills. What you think are arms are in fact sails. When the wind turns them, they turn millstones.”

“You don’t know anything about adventures,” replied Don Quixote. “They’re giants, and if you’re frightened, you can hide while I fight them.” Sinking his spurs into Rocinante he charged at them at top speed.

“Flee not, you evil creatures,” he cried, “only one brave knight attacks you!”

A gust of wind arose and moved the sails. Don Quixote shrieked, “You have more arms than any giant should have, and I will make you pay for that.”

He thrust his lance into a sail, but the wind turned it so far that it smashed the lance to smithereens, dragging the horse and his rider with it. Don Quixote went rolling over the plain with yelps of pain.

Sancho Panza prodded his donkey and rushed to help. “Didn’t I tell you to be careful? Didn’t I say they were windmills?”

“You don’t understand,” Don Quixote replied, “An evil enchanter has just turned all these giants into windmills to deprive me of my glorious victory.”

“Those aren’t giants,”
Sancho retorted.
“They’re windmills.
What you think are
arms are in fact
sails. When the wind
turns them, they turn
millstones.”



Deceitful sheep

In the morning, after breakfast, Don Quixote noticed a huge cloud of dust approaching them along the road. "See that, Sancho? That dust is coming from a vast army of knights marching towards us."

"All I hear," said Sancho, "is lots of sheep bleating." He was right.

But Don Quixote whipped up old Rocinante into a gallop, waved his lance and sped across the plain like a thunderbolt.

"Stop!" shrieked the shepherds. But when they found Don Quixote was unstoppable, they drew out their slings and pelted him with stones until he fell down, squealing with agony. Quickly, they rounded up their flocks and fled.

"Are you badly wounded?" panted Sancho running as fast as he could to where Don Quixote lay.

"I think they've knocked all my teeth out. But knights should never complain."

"Didn't I tell you they were sheep?"

"It just shows," replied Don Quixote, "on the edge of victory, my old enemy the enchanter turned the armies into a flock of sheep. Never mind, Sancho. Another adventure awaits us another day."

The sour fruit of freedom

The next day, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza passed twelve men walking in a line, shackled together on a great iron chain. In charge were two men on horseback and another two on foot.

"Look a chain gang of prisoners marched off to be galley slaves on the King's ships," remarked Sancho.

"WHAT?" thundered Don Quixote. "You mean they're being forced, into slavery against their will? How can the King allow this?"

"But they're criminals", Sancho tried to explain. "They've done bad things. This is their punishment."

"However that may be, this is a situation that calls relief of the wretched and the righting of wrongs", said Don Quixote.

"Leave them alone," advised Sancho.

"I'll have a word with them first," said Quixote. "What did you do?" he asked one of the

chained-up men.

“I was a horse thief,” replied the prisoner.

“And you?” he said to another.

“I stole some wine.”

“What about you?” he asked a third.

“This one’s a dangerous villain who’s committed more terrible crimes than the rest”, snarled a guard, threatening the prisoner with his stick.

“I’ve heard enough!” shouted Don Quixote. “Guards, these poor men haven’t done you any harm. Let them go.”

“This man’s a lunatic,” the guards laughed.

“It’s not a joke,” cried Don Quixote, hitting one of the guards who fell to the ground.

“Stop!” screamed the remaining guards.

Sancho drew his sword. Though frightened, he slashed away so fiercely that the guards ran for their lives.

The prisoners quickly seized the opportunity and smashed their chains.

“I’ve given you all freedom,” Don Quixote exulted. “In return, I ask you to go at once to my Lady, Dulcinea de Toboso, and tell her how valiant I’ve been.”

“Don’t be daft,” the prisoners replied. We’re not hanging around for you or the Police. They’ll be looking for us now and they’re vicious.

The prisoners snatched Don Quixote’s coat and Sancho’s hat and cleared off as fast as they could.

Don Quixote climbed back onto Rocinante. “How could they treat us so badly, when we did so much for them?”, he asked, bewildered.

..... **Mad with passion**

Forging their way through forests up to the lonely mountains, to hide from the police, Don Quixote and Sancho now noticed a bag hidden in a pile of leaves.

“What’s this?” exclaimed Don Quixote

“Look!” squealed Sancho, ripping the rotten leather open. “Four fine shirts, lots of gold coins...and a dirty old notebook. Someone’s written a silly poem. Listen.” He read aloud:

*Where gods are cruel and love is blind
Misery has pierced my mind...
Let me die, for I am sure
Without Lucinda, there’s no cure.*

“Aha,” said Don Quixote. “A knight has been spurned by his love and has come here to die in his loneliness. I have to admit, though, knights are better at bravery than verse. Anyway, you keep the money, Sancho. I don’t want it.”

“At last some cash!” exclaimed Sancho, “But what’s over there?” He pointed in the distance where a wild man, with thick beard and ponytail, leaped over rocks.

They caught up with the man who then cried, “If you’ve anything to eat, for God’s sake, let me have it.”

“Sir,” Don Quixote said courteously, “Eat your fill and tell me, who are you and what brought you to this state?”

After eating, the man said, “I am Cardenio, a nobleman from Andalusia. I loved Lucinda from childhood, and she loved me. Her father granted me permission to marry her. Then Duke Ricardo, the most powerful noble in Spain, demanded my services as companion to his son, Fernando.

Fernando and I became friends. He is young, handsome, fun. I told him about Lucinda’s beauty, wit and intelligence, and he...”

Cardenio broke down weeping, before forcing himself to continue. “He betrayed our friendship. He sought out Lucinda and, as his family is richer than mine, he persuaded her father that he, not I, should be her husband.”

“Shocking!” exclaimed Don Quixote.

“He stole her from me, though he was already engaged to be married to the lady Dorotea.”

Howling with misery, Cardenio then ran off and disappeared between shadowy mountain peaks.

“It makes you think, Sancho,” Don Quixote said. “I don’t want anyone stealing my Lady Dulcinea from me. Pen and paper, please.”

Sancho got these from his saddle-bag and watched as Don Quixote scribbled:

Noble Lady,
Sweetest Dulcinea del Toboso
If you're beautiful self scorns
me, my life is not worth living.
Say you will be mine, or I will
end it – to satisfy your cruelty
and my desire.
Your own,
Knight of the Long Face

Sancho had no intention of delivering this letter to Dulcinea. Instead, he planned to ride to the nearest inn and order a large hot dinner. He was tired of snacking on cold food.

..... **Costumes and confusion**

When Sancho reached an inn, he was surprised to see the priest and the barber from La Mancha.

“Where’s Don Quixote?” they demanded.

Sancho explained the effect of Cardenio’s story on Don Quixote. “Here’s his letter to Dulcinea.” He searched the saddle-bags and his pockets in vain. “Oh no! I’ve lost it.”

“She hasn’t a clue who he is anyway,” said the priest, “so that doesn’t matter. What does matter is getting him home.”

“How...?” mused the barber.

“Sancho led them towards the spot where he’d left Don Quixote. They stopped by a river, stumbling over Cardenio, who was told that the priest and barber knew of his story.

“Listen... can you hear singing?” the priest now asked.

What seemed to be a young farmer’s lad was paddling in the river shallows, singing a sad song in a sweet voice.

“Look at his hand!” whispered the barber:

“I see what you mean,” the priest replied softly. “Small and white as alabaster. That’s a girl in disguise.”

“My Lady... do you need help?” offered the priest.

The beauty instantly burst into tears.

“No one can help me. I am Dorotea from Andalusia. I was going to be married, but Fernando, my beloved, jilted me for a girl from a noble family.”

“Fernando!” Cardenio gulped.

“I raced to marry him. I love him still, but came too late. I discovered that his bride, Lucinda, had fainted during the wedding. Just before she fell unconscious, she declared she loved Cardenio. She only agreed to wed Fernando because her parents had forced her.

The priest dissolved the marriage and Fernando fled in a rage. Cardenio had already disappeared. I also ran away to these mountains.”

“I am Cardenio,” that man declared.

“I won’t rest until I see you married to Fernando while I...” he cried with joy, “I will marry my lovely Lucinda. My madness is cured.”

“Excellent,” said the priest. “Now we must care for Don Quixote.”

“The famous crazy knight?” Hearing Don Quixote’s predicament, Dorotea turned to the barber. “Find me a pretty dress. I have an idea...”

..... Demons in the ox cart

They found Don Quixote under a tree.

Dorotea threw herself at his feet. “Are you the Knight of the Long Face?” she asked. “I am Princess Mircomiconna. A giant has stolen my land and threatens to eat my father. Can you help me?”

“A beautiful damsel in distress?” responded Quixote enthusiastically.

“Will you promise not to get involved in any other adventure until you’ve sorted mine out?” pleaded Dorotea.

“I swear,” answered Don Quixote.

From a discreet distance, the barber and priest followed Don Quixote, Sancho and Dorotea across the plain to the inn.

“Don’t get upset with the man in the rusty suit,” the priest told the innkeeper.

“He’s crazy but harmless.”

“He can sleep in the barn loft where I keep my wine. Out of harm’s way,” the innkeeper replied kindly.

At midnight Sancho screamed, waking the entire inn. “Come quickly! My master’s fighting...there’s blood everywhere...”

“EVIL CREATURE!” Don Quixote yelled, brandishing his sword.

“He’s slashed my wineskins,” roared the innkeeper in fury, looking at the floor awash with a lake of red bubbles. “My best vintage, ruined!”

“I’ve killed Princess Mircomicona’s giant,” Don Quixote triumphed. “It was a fierce battle, and I won.”

“You’ve wounded wineskins,” scolded the innkeeper. “Wait until you get my bill.”

“This room is too sodden with blood to sleep in,” yawned Don Quixote wearily. “I’ll go downstairs.”

But downstairs, two ghostly figures with white faces and dark cloaks seized Don Quixote and threw him in a wooden cage mounted on an ox cart. Sancho was also tossed beside his master. There they sat, bruised and dazed, clutching the bars of their prison.

“Knight of the Long Face,” chorused scary voices. “An enchanter sends you and your squire into the unknown. He asks you to promise to go on no more adventures for a year. Do you swear?”

“Y...Yes,” quavered Don Quixote.

“Then we’ll leave you.”

The demons grinned. “It’s worked,” they chortled. The priest and the barber took off their cloaks and scrubbed the paste from their faces. They were taking Don Quixote home to La Mancha.

..... **Farewell good knight**

Don Quixote woke up to find himself back in his own bed.

His niece and housekeeper, overcome with relief, brought him tempting trays of food and drink.

“Thank goodness you’re safe. We’ve been so worried,” they exclaimed.

Don Quixote felt curiously weak, now that he was not spending his energy on adventures - though he remembered how he had wandered in search of quests with Rocinante and Sancho Panza.

Sancho came to visit him.

“Look... You’re famous, just as you wanted.”

Sancho showed Don Quixote a big book, with illustrations of the knight on Rocinante, tilting at windmills and charging at sheep.

“I’m not sure about it,” Sancho said. “It makes you a figure of fun. It’s easy to ridicule, especially when the truth is not clear; but the Don Quixote I know is brave, wise and kind – righter of wrongs, a protector... This storybook Don Quixote is a mockery.”

“I don’t feel well,” murmured Don Quixote, sinking back into his pillow. “I’d like to see a doctor, a lawyer and the priest. I think I’m going to die.”

“He’s suffering from melancholy,” said the doctor, when he arrived. He felt Don Quixote’s pulse. It was very weak.

His friends gathered around. “We must help him,” they exclaimed.

“I must make my will,” the knight announced with a faint spark of his old energy. “I am no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha, but rather Alonso Quixada. I was mad; now I am sane. So near death, I will not joke about names or noble deeds.”

Sancho was unashamedly in floods of tears. “Get up... let’s go on adventures again and have fun. Don’t die of grief – it isn’t worth it.”

Don Quixote hardly listened. “I leave you a sum of money, Sancho, so that you can lead a good and useful life. My housekeeper shall likewise have money... and to my niece, I leave all my household goods”.

With these words, Don Quixote closed his eyes and breathed his last.

That was the end of the Knight of the Long Face. His friends had this epitaph carved on his tombstone.

Don Quixote

He never cared what people thought –
A clown to pompous eyes,
He lived his life a gallant fool
And finally died wise.

Don Quixote — Glossary

Characters

Don Quixote	a Spanish Gentleman of La Mancha; Alonso Quixada's alter ego
Alonso Quixada	an ageing bachelor
Rocinante	Don Quixote's horse
Sancho Panza	Don Quixote's squire
Cardenio	a nobleman from Andalusia

The Story

Alabaster	a semi-transparent mineral often carved into ornaments
Contented	satisfied and at peace
Courteously	politely
Damsels	young, unmarried women
Decrepit	worn out, old or ruined because of old age or neglect
Deprive	to deny the basic needs of people
Distress	to be extremely worried or concerned about something
Epitaph	words written in memory of a person who has died
Immortal	living for ever
Melancholy	a deep and long lasting sadness
Steed	a horse
Squire	a young nobleman acting as a servant to a knight before becoming a knight himself
Valiant	showing courage or determination
Wayside	the edge of the road
Wretched	miserable, unfortunate or pitiable