

AI-Generated Graded Readers

Masaru Uchida, Gifu University

Publication webpage:

https://www1.gifu-u.ac.jp/~masaru/a1/ai-generated_graded_readers.html

Publication date: March 7, 2026

About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice. The text was generated using ChatGPT and prepared for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

This edition aims to support fluency development through accessible vocabulary, expanded narration, and improved readability while preserving the original story structure.

Source Text

Original work: Don Quixote

Author: Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra

English Translation: John Ormsby

Source: Project Gutenberg

<https://www.gutenberg.org/>

Full text available at:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/996/pg996.txt>

Both the original work and its English translation are in the public domain.

Copyright and Use

This simplified edition is intended for educational and non-commercial use only.

The source text is provided by Project Gutenberg under its public domain policy. Users should refer to the Project Gutenberg License for full terms:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/policy/license.html>

This adaptation was generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence and edited for readability and educational purposes.

Disclaimer

This edition is an educational adaptation and is not affiliated with or endorsed by Project Gutenberg.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified by ChatGPT)

Part 1

In a small village in La Mancha there lived a thin gentleman who loved books more than anything in the world. His name was Alonso Quixano. The people of the village knew him as a quiet man who spent most of his days reading. But the books he loved were not ordinary books. They were books about knights—brave knights who rode across the world, fought giants, saved ladies, and won great honor.

Day after day he read these stories. At first he read them in the evening. Then he began to read at night. Soon he was reading almost all the time. He forgot to sleep. He forgot to eat. When the sun rose, he was still reading. When the moon came out, he was still reading.

These books filled his mind with strange and powerful dreams.

“This is the greatest life a man can live,” he said one evening, closing a large book and placing his hand upon it. “To ride across the world as a knight. To defend the weak. To fight evil. To bring justice.”

The more he read, the more real these dreams became.

Slowly, little by little, his mind began to change.

At last he came to believe something that no one else believed.

He believed that the age of knights had not ended.

He believed that the world still needed a knight.

And he believed that he himself must become that knight.

One quiet morning he stood up from his chair and spoke aloud, as if he were already in a great hall before kings and warriors.

“From this day forward,” he said, “I will live as a knight-errant. I will travel through the world. I will defend the weak and punish the wicked.”

The idea filled him with joy.

But a knight needed armor.

So he went to a corner of his house where many old things were stored. There he found pieces of armor that had once belonged to his grandfather. The armor was old and rusty. Some parts were broken. But to him it looked noble and strong.

He cleaned the armor carefully. He repaired what he could.

The helmet was the most difficult piece. It had once been a fine helmet, but half of it was broken. So he made the missing part from stiff cardboard. He worked slowly and proudly.

When it was finished, he placed the helmet upon his head.

He stood very still.

“Yes,” he said softly. “Now I look like a true knight.”

A knight also needed a horse.

In his stable there was a thin old horse that had worked for many years on the farm. The animal was slow and tired, but the gentleman looked at it with great respect.

“You are not an ordinary horse,” he said, touching the animal’s neck. “You will carry a knight.”

But a knight’s horse must have a noble name.

For four days he thought about the name. He walked in his garden and spoke to himself. At last he smiled.

“Rocinante,” he said. “That will be your name. Once you were only a farm horse. But now you will be the greatest horse in the world.”

He was very pleased with this idea.

Now he himself needed a knight’s name.

For a long time he considered many names. Finally he remembered the land where he lived—La Mancha.

“Don Quixote de la Mancha,” he said proudly.

The name sounded grand and heroic to him.

But one thing was still missing.

Every knight must serve a lady.

So he thought about the women who lived near his village. At last he remembered a strong farm girl from a nearby town called El Toboso. Her real

name was Aldonza Lorenzo.

She had never spoken with him.

She did not know his name.

But that did not matter.

In his imagination she became the most beautiful lady in the world.

“You will be called Dulcinea del Toboso,” he said with deep feeling. “You will be the queen of my heart.”

Now everything was ready.

One early morning, before the sun had fully risen, Don Quixote placed on his armor. The metal made soft sounds as he moved. He tied on his sword. He took his lance.

Then he led Rocinante out of the stable.

The air was cool and quiet.

No one saw him leave.

Don Quixote climbed onto the horse and looked across the fields of La Mancha. His heart beat quickly with excitement.

“Today begins my adventure,” he said.

Rocinante walked slowly down the dusty road.

Don Quixote rode forward into the wide world, dreaming of battles, honor, and glory.

But there was one small problem.

A knight must have a squire.

Later that same day Don Quixote met a man from his village named Sancho Panza. Sancho was a farmer. He was short and round, with a kind face and a simple mind. He liked good food, good sleep, and simple talk.

Don Quixote stopped his horse and looked down at him.

“Sancho,” he said in a serious voice, “would you like to become a squire?”

Sancho scratched his head.

“What is a squire?” he asked.

“A squire travels with a knight,” Don Quixote explained. “He helps the knight in battle and in adventure. And if the knight becomes famous, the squire also

receives great rewards.”

Sancho listened carefully.

“Rewards?” he said.

Don Quixote leaned forward and spoke with confidence.

“One day I will win a great island. When that happens, I will make you the governor of that island.”

Sancho’s eyes grew wide.

“Governor?” he said slowly.

“Yes,” Don Quixote replied. “You will rule the island.”

Sancho thought about his poor house and his hard life.

An island sounded very wonderful.

“Well,” he said, “if there is an island, I will come with you.”

And so Sancho Panza became the squire of Don Quixote.

Sancho rode a small donkey, and together the strange pair began their journey.

The knight rode tall and thin upon Rocinante.

The squire rode slowly upon his donkey.

As they moved across the open land, Don Quixote spoke proudly about knights, honor, and glory. Sancho listened and sometimes nodded, though he did not understand everything.

Suddenly Don Quixote stopped.

Far ahead across the fields stood a group of large windmills. Their long arms turned slowly in the wind.

Don Quixote’s eyes grew bright.

“Sancho!” he cried.

“Yes, master?” Sancho replied.

Don Quixote pointed toward the windmills.

“Look there! Thirty terrible giants!”

Sancho looked carefully.

“Giants?” he said.

“Yes!” Don Quixote shouted. “They wave their arms to challenge me. This will be a great battle!”

Sancho shook his head.

“Master,” he said calmly, “those are not giants. They are windmills.”

But Don Quixote had already lowered his lance.

“Cowardly giant!” he cried. “Prepare to face Don Quixote de la Mancha!”

Rocinante began to run across the field.

Sancho watched with fear.

“Master!” he shouted. “They are windmills!”

But Don Quixote was already charging forward.

The spinning arms of the windmill moved quickly in the wind.

Don Quixote rode straight toward them.

And the great adventure began.

Part 2

Rocinante ran across the dry field as fast as his thin legs could carry him. Don Quixote leaned forward with his lance held straight before him. In his mind the world had already changed. The quiet windmills had become terrible giants, each one with long arms turning through the air.

“Stand and fight!” Don Quixote shouted. “Do not think you can escape from the brave knight Don Quixote de la Mancha!”

The wind blew strongly that morning. The great arms of the windmill turned faster and faster. Sancho Panza rode behind as quickly as his donkey allowed, waving his hands in alarm.

“Master! Master!” he cried. “Those are windmills! They are not giants!”

But Don Quixote heard only the sound of battle in his imagination.

Rocinante came close to the nearest windmill. Don Quixote aimed his lance at one of the turning arms and drove forward with all his strength.

For a moment it seemed as if he would strike the giant’s arm and defeat it.

But the windmill arm struck the lance.

The wood broke with a loud crack.

The force of the turning arm lifted Don Quixote and horse together and threw

them violently onto the ground.

Rocinante fell heavily. Don Quixote rolled across the hard earth in a cloud of dust. His armor made a terrible noise as it struck the ground.

Sancho hurried toward him as fast as he could.

“Master!” he shouted with fear. “Are you hurt?”

Don Quixote lay still for a moment. Then he slowly moved his arms and tried to sit up. Every part of his body hurt.

Sancho helped him rise.

“I told you they were windmills,” Sancho said carefully.

Don Quixote looked back at the tall machines standing quietly in the field.

For a moment he was silent.

Then he shook his head.

“No, Sancho,” he said firmly. “A powerful enchanter has changed the giants into windmills in order to steal my victory. This is the work of magic.”

Sancho did not answer. He brushed dust from his master’s armor and helped him climb slowly back onto Rocinante.

Don Quixote sat proudly again.

“Battles often begin badly,” he said. “But the brave knight never loses hope.”

And so the strange pair continued their journey.

As they traveled, Don Quixote spoke often about Dulcinea del Toboso. He described her beauty with great passion.

“There has never been a lady like her,” he said.

Sancho scratched his head again.

“Master,” he said slowly, “do you mean Aldonza Lorenzo? The strong farm girl from Toboso?”

Don Quixote turned toward him with great seriousness.

“Sancho,” he said, “you must understand something important. Her true name may be Aldonza Lorenzo, but for the world she is Dulcinea del Toboso, the greatest lady who has ever lived.”

Sancho nodded politely, though he still looked uncertain.

Some days later, while Don Quixote and Sancho were far from the village,

another event was taking place at Don Quixote's house.

Two men had come to visit.

One was the village priest, Pero Pérez.

The other was the barber, Nicolás.

They both cared about Don Quixote and had become very worried about him.

"His mind has been destroyed by those books of chivalry," said the priest.

The barber agreed.

"He reads them day and night," he said. "That is why he now believes he is a knight."

They entered Don Quixote's library together. The room was full of books. Large books, small books, books with bright covers and old books with worn pages filled the shelves.

The priest looked around and sighed.

"These books are the cause of all his madness," he said.

The barber picked up one of the volumes and opened it.

"What shall we do with them?" he asked.

The priest thought for a moment.

"We must judge them one by one," he said. "Some may be harmless. But most of them must be destroyed."

They began to examine the books carefully.

Each time the priest opened a book he spoke seriously about its story.

"This one is foolish," he said. "It teaches nothing but wild adventures."

The barber nodded.

"Into the fire with it," he said.

One by one the books were thrown out of the window into the yard. Soon a large pile of books lay there.

At last the priest closed the final book.

"Enough," he said.

Outside in the yard a fire was burning. The books of chivalry were thrown into the flames.

The pages curled and turned black.

Smoke rose into the air.

“Now,” said the priest, “perhaps our poor friend will return to his senses.”

Meanwhile Don Quixote and Sancho continued their adventures on the dusty roads of Spain.

One day they saw a strange group of men walking along the road. Several soldiers were guarding a long line of prisoners. The prisoners were chained together by iron links.

Don Quixote stopped Rocinante and watched.

“Sancho,” he said, “those men look very unhappy.”

Sancho nodded.

“They are prisoners,” he said. “They are being sent to the galleys to work as slaves on the king’s ships.”

Don Quixote frowned.

“Forced labor?” he said. “That is not justice.”

He rode closer to the guards.

“Good men,” he said loudly, “why are these men in chains?”

One of the guards answered.

“Because they are criminals,” he said. “They are being sent to the galleys.”

Don Quixote looked at the prisoners carefully.

“Perhaps they have made mistakes,” he said, “but no man should lose his freedom in this way.”

The guards laughed.

“This is the king’s law,” one of them replied.

Don Quixote raised his lance.

“Then the king’s law is wrong,” he declared.

Sancho’s eyes grew wide with fear.

“Master,” he whispered, “this is a bad idea.”

But Don Quixote had already decided.

“Men of sorrow,” he called to the prisoners, “I will free you!”

And with that he prepared to attack the guards.

Part 3

Don Quixote raised his lance high in the air. His thin horse stamped the ground as if it also felt the excitement of battle. The guards looked at him with surprise. They had expected many strange things on the road, but they had not expected a lone knight in old armor to challenge them.

“Release those men at once!” Don Quixote shouted.

The guard who seemed to be their leader frowned and stepped forward.

“Good sir,” he said calmly, “these men are prisoners of the king. They are criminals. We cannot release them.”

Don Quixote shook his head.

“No man should be forced to go where he does not wish to go,” he declared. “Freedom is the greatest gift in the world. Therefore I command you to remove their chains.”

The guards laughed loudly.

Sancho Panza moved closer to his master and spoke quietly.

“Master,” he whispered, “these are soldiers. There are many of them. Perhaps we should leave them alone.”

But Don Quixote had already made his decision.

“If you refuse,” he said to the guards, “I will fight you.”

The leader of the guards looked at the other soldiers and smiled.

“Then defend yourself,” he said.

Don Quixote lowered his lance and rode forward. Rocinante moved with surprising courage toward the group of soldiers.

The guards tried to stop him, but the attack came so suddenly that they were confused. Don Quixote struck one guard with the broken remains of his lance. Another guard stepped back to avoid the horse.

At the same time the prisoners began shouting and pulling at their chains.

Sancho watched with fear.

“This will end badly,” he muttered.

The fight lasted only a short time, but the confusion was great. The guards lost

control of the prisoners. Several prisoners seized stones from the road.

Don Quixote shouted loudly.

“Men! You are free!”

The prisoners quickly broke their chains and scattered across the fields.

For a moment Don Quixote sat proudly upon Rocinante, breathing heavily after the fight.

“You see, Sancho,” he said, “this is what a knight must do.”

Sancho looked at the empty road and then at the fleeing prisoners.

“Yes,” he said slowly, “but I do not think the guards will thank you.”

Don Quixote turned toward the prisoners, who had now gathered some distance away.

“Friends!” he called to them. “You owe your freedom to the brave knight Don Quixote de la Mancha. Now go to the town of Toboso and present yourselves before the noble lady Dulcinea.”

The prisoners looked at one another.

One of them laughed.

Another picked up a stone.

Suddenly stones began flying through the air.

One stone struck Rocinante. Another hit Don Quixote’s helmet with a loud sound.

Sancho cried out.

“Run, master!”

Don Quixote raised his arm to protect his face.

“Ungrateful men!” he shouted.

The stones continued to fall around them. Rocinante turned and ran from the attack. Sancho quickly followed on his donkey.

When they were far away at last, both men stopped.

Don Quixote was tired and bruised, but his spirit remained strong.

“Sancho,” he said, “it is common for wicked men to forget the kindness done to them.”

Sancho rubbed his shoulder where a stone had struck him.

“Next time,” he said, “perhaps we should help people who are less likely to throw stones.”

The journey continued.

During these adventures another strange event occurred in the telling of this story itself.

At first the tale of Don Quixote had been told from an old manuscript that described his adventures. The story followed Don Quixote and Sancho step by step across the roads of Spain.

But then something unexpected happened.

The manuscript suddenly stopped.

It ended in the middle of a battle.

Don Quixote had begun a fierce duel with a strong traveler from Biscay. The two men had raised their swords. Their horses stood close together. The fight had reached its most dangerous moment.

Don Quixote’s sword was already falling toward his enemy.

And at that exact moment the manuscript ended.

There were no more pages.

I must confess that this caused me great disappointment. How could such an exciting battle end without an ending?

I searched everywhere for the rest of the story.

At last I went to a market in Toledo where many old papers and books were sold. People were buying fruit, cloth, tools, and many other things. In one corner a boy was selling old papers written in Arabic.

I looked at the papers with curiosity.

Among them I found a thick bundle of pages.

The writing was strange to me, but a man nearby told me that the text was written in Arabic.

I quickly called for a translator.

The translator began reading the pages.

After only a few moments he smiled.

“This is very interesting,” he said. “It is the continuation of the story of Don

Quixote of La Mancha.”

My heart filled with joy.

The author of the manuscript was an Arab historian named Cide Hamete Benengeli.

According to the translator, Benengeli had written a complete history of the adventures of Don Quixote.

I bought the manuscript at once.

Thanks to this fortunate discovery, the story could continue exactly where it had stopped.

And so, according to the history written by Cide Hamete Benengeli, the battle between Don Quixote and the traveler continued in the following way.

The swords flashed in the sunlight.

The two riders moved closer.

Their horses stamped the ground.

The duel was about to reach its terrible conclusion.

Part 4

The two riders faced each other in the narrow road. Dust rose slowly in the warm air around them. Don Quixote held his sword high, and the traveler from Biscay raised his own weapon to defend himself. Both men leaned forward on their horses. Their eyes were fixed on each other.

For a moment the world seemed very quiet.

Then the fight continued.

Don Quixote’s sword came down with force. The traveler quickly lifted his own blade to block the strike. The metal struck metal with a sharp sound. Sparks seemed to flash in the sunlight.

Rocinante stepped forward, and the traveler’s horse moved sideways. The men tried to find the best position to attack again.

Don Quixote spoke with great seriousness.

“Defend yourself well,” he said, “for you face Don Quixote de la Mancha.”

The traveler answered angrily.

“I do not care who you are,” he replied. “You have attacked me without reason.”

Again their swords met.

Don Quixote pushed forward with surprising strength. The traveler tried to strike back, but Don Quixote’s attack forced him to turn his horse.

Sancho Panza watched the fight with wide eyes.

“Master is truly fighting,” he whispered to himself.

The duel continued for several moments. The swords moved quickly. Each rider tried to strike the other.

At last Don Quixote saw an opening.

He raised his sword and struck with all his strength. The blade hit the traveler’s helmet and knocked it aside.

The traveler lost his balance and nearly fell from his horse.

Don Quixote quickly placed the point of his sword toward the traveler’s chest.

“Yield,” Don Quixote said.

The traveler, seeing that he could not continue the fight, lowered his weapon.

“I yield,” he said.

Don Quixote straightened proudly in his saddle.

“Then listen well,” he said. “You must go to the lady Dulcinea del Toboso and tell her that Don Quixote has defeated you in battle.”

The traveler looked confused but nodded.

Sancho smiled quietly. His master’s strange ideas no longer surprised him very much.

After this victory Don Quixote felt very pleased with himself. He believed that his fame would soon spread across the world.

But not everyone shared this belief.

Back in the village the priest Pero Pérez and the barber Nicolás were still worried about their friend. They had heard stories about his strange adventures on the road.

One evening they spoke together again.

“He will never stop unless we bring him home,” said the priest.

The barber agreed.

“Yes,” he said. “We must find him and return him safely to the village.”

Meanwhile Don Quixote and Sancho continued to travel through the countryside.

Sometimes they slept under the open sky. Sometimes they stayed in simple inns along the road.

During their journey Don Quixote often spoke about the life of a knight.

“Sancho,” he said one evening as they rested beside a small fire, “the path of the knight is difficult. A knight must suffer pain and hunger. But he must never lose courage.”

Sancho looked at the small piece of bread he was eating.

“I understand the hunger part very well,” he said.

Don Quixote did not notice the joke.

“One day,” he continued, “our adventures will be written in books. People everywhere will know the name of Don Quixote.”

Sancho laughed softly.

“If they write about us,” he said, “I hope they also write about the island you promised me.”

Don Quixote nodded with confidence.

“Of course,” he said. “A knight must reward his faithful squire.”

Some weeks later the two travelers arrived in a busy town. People were walking through the streets, talking loudly and carrying goods from the market.

As Don Quixote rode slowly through the town, he noticed that several people were looking at him with interest.

Some whispered to each other.

One young man laughed.

Don Quixote frowned slightly.

“Sancho,” he said quietly, “why are these people looking at us?”

Sancho shrugged.

“Perhaps they like your armor,” he said.

At that moment two gentlemen approached them.

One of them bowed politely.

“Are you Don Quixote de la Mancha?” he asked.

Don Quixote looked surprised.

“Yes,” he replied proudly. “I am he.”

The man smiled.

“Then it is true,” he said. “The famous knight from the book stands before us.”

Don Quixote felt a sudden shock.

“The book?” he asked.

The man nodded.

“Yes. The adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza have already been printed and read by many people.”

Sancho nearly fell from his donkey.

“Printed?” he repeated.

Don Quixote remained silent for a moment.

“Then our fame has already begun,” he said slowly.

But the man continued speaking.

“However,” he said, “another book has also appeared. It tells false adventures of Don Quixote. Many people have read that false story.”

Don Quixote’s face became serious.

“A false Don Quixote?” he said.

The gentleman nodded again.

“Yes. A story written by someone who pretends to know your life.”

Don Quixote raised his head proudly.

“Then I must continue my adventures,” he said. “The world must know the true Don Quixote.”

Sancho sighed quietly.

“And perhaps the true governor of the island,” he added.

Their journey continued once more across the long roads of Spain.

Ahead of them many strange events were still waiting.

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza continued their journey across the wide land of La Mancha. The sun was bright, and the road stretched far ahead through fields and small villages. As they rode, Don Quixote thought deeply about the strange news he had heard in the town.

“Sancho,” he said after a long silence, “it is a great honor to have one’s adventures written in a book.”

Sancho nodded slowly.

“Yes, master,” he replied. “But I do not understand how people can write about us while we are still traveling.”

Don Quixote raised one hand thoughtfully.

“Perhaps the wise historian who writes our story travels close behind us,” he said. “Perhaps he watches everything we do.”

Sancho looked behind them on the road.

“I do not see anyone,” he said.

Don Quixote smiled.

“Great historians often work in secret,” he replied.

The two men rode on for many hours. As the afternoon sun grew softer, they saw a group of travelers ahead on the road. These travelers were speaking excitedly about something.

Don Quixote rode closer.

“Good people,” he said politely, “what are you discussing with such energy?”

One of the travelers answered.

“We are speaking about the wedding of Quiteria and Basilio,” he said.

Sancho’s ears lifted at once.

“A wedding?” he said. “There will be food.”

The traveler continued explaining.

“Quiteria is a beautiful young woman,” he said. “Two men wish to marry her. One is Basilio, who is poor but brave. The other is a rich man who has great land and money.”

Don Quixote listened carefully.

“And which man does the lady love?” he asked.

The traveler smiled.

“She loves Basilio,” he said. “But her family prefers the rich man.”

Don Quixote nodded seriously.

“This sounds like a matter of honor and love,” he said. “We must see this wedding.”

Sancho agreed quickly.

“Yes,” he said, “we must see it.”

So Don Quixote and Sancho followed the travelers to the place where the wedding celebration was being prepared.

When they arrived, the scene was full of life. Many people had gathered. Tables were being set with food. Musicians were playing cheerful music. The smell of roasted meat filled the air.

Sancho’s eyes shone with happiness.

“This is a good adventure,” he whispered.

Don Quixote looked around with great interest. Soon he saw the young woman Quiteria standing near her family. She was calm and beautiful, but her face showed quiet sadness.

Not far away stood Basilio. He was tall and strong, but his clothes were simple.

Don Quixote turned to Sancho.

“Look at him,” he said. “That man is brave.”

Sancho nodded.

“But the other man has more food,” he said.

At that moment the ceremony began. The rich bridegroom stepped forward proudly. The priest prepared to begin the marriage.

Suddenly something unexpected happened.

Basilio stepped forward holding a long sword.

The crowd grew silent.

Basilio spoke loudly.

“Before this wedding begins,” he said, “I must speak.”

Everyone watched him.

Quiteria's eyes filled with tears.

Basilio raised the sword above his chest.

"Since I cannot live without Quiteria," he cried, "I will die before her eyes!"

With those words he pushed the sword into his own body.

The crowd shouted in shock.

Basilio fell to the ground.

Quiteria ran toward him in horror.

"Basilio!" she cried.

The priest bent down beside the wounded man.

Basilio spoke weakly.

"Before I die," he said, "I ask one thing. Let Quiteria marry me for a moment so that I may die as her husband."

The crowd murmured with emotion.

Quiteria fell to her knees beside him.

"Yes," she said through tears. "Yes, I will marry you."

The priest quickly performed the ceremony.

Basilio and Quiteria were married.

The moment the ceremony ended, Basilio suddenly jumped to his feet.

The sword fell harmlessly from his clothing.

The crowd gasped.

Basilio smiled.

"The sword was a trick," he said.

The people began shouting with laughter and surprise.

Quiteria smiled happily.

"Now I am truly his wife," she said.

The rich bridegroom could do nothing. The marriage had already been completed.

Don Quixote stood proudly.

"This is a clever victory for true love," he declared.

Sancho laughed loudly.

"And the food is still here," he added.

The celebration continued with great joy. Music played. People danced. Food was served everywhere.

Don Quixote and Sancho joined the feast.

Later that evening Don Quixote spoke again about the duties of a knight.

“Sancho,” he said, “today we have seen how courage and cleverness can defeat wealth.”

Sancho finished another large piece of bread.

“Yes,” he said. “And I have also seen how weddings can provide excellent meals.”

When the night grew quiet, Don Quixote and Sancho prepared to continue their travels once again.

Ahead of them new adventures were waiting—adventures that would soon lead them into the strange world of a powerful duke and duchess who had already heard the famous stories of the knight of La Mancha.

Part 6

The morning after the wedding of Quiteria and Basilio, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza left the place of celebration and returned to the open road. The sun had just risen above the hills, and a cool wind moved across the wide fields.

Sancho rode happily on his donkey. His stomach was full from the wedding feast, and he felt strong again.

“Master,” he said cheerfully, “that was one of the best adventures we have had.”

Don Quixote nodded with dignity.

“It was a noble event,” he said. “Love and courage defeated wealth and pride. Such victories are worthy of a knight’s presence.”

They rode for many hours across the countryside. The land was quiet. Birds moved across the sky, and the road stretched in long curves through the fields.

After some time they saw two riders approaching from the opposite direction.

The riders were dressed in fine clothing, and their horses were strong and beautiful. One rider wore the clothes of a noble gentleman. The other seemed to

be his servant.

When the riders came close, the noble gentleman stopped and looked carefully at Don Quixote.

A slow smile appeared on his face.

“Good sir,” he said politely, “are you perhaps the famous Don Quixote de la Mancha?”

Don Quixote straightened proudly on Rocinante.

“Yes,” he replied. “You speak to the knight himself.”

The nobleman bowed slightly.

“My master, the Duke, and his noble wife, the Duchess, have heard many stories about your brave adventures,” he said. “They would be honored if you would visit their castle.”

Sancho’s ears lifted again.

“A castle?” he whispered.

Don Quixote answered with calm dignity.

“If the Duke and Duchess wish to receive us, we will gladly accept their hospitality.”

The noble rider smiled again.

“Then follow me,” he said.

Soon the group arrived at a large and beautiful castle. The walls were high, and many servants moved quickly through the courtyard.

The Duke and Duchess were already waiting.

They had indeed read the book that told the story of Don Quixote and Sancho. They knew many details of the knight’s strange adventures.

But instead of laughing openly, they welcomed him with great respect.

The Duke stepped forward and bowed deeply.

“Welcome, noble Don Quixote,” he said.

The Duchess turned to Sancho.

“And welcome to you, wise Sancho Panza,” she added.

Sancho looked around with amazement.

“They know my name,” he whispered.

Don Quixote accepted their welcome with great seriousness.

“Your kindness honors the knight of La Mancha,” he said.

The Duke and Duchess hid their smiles.

They had decided to play a game.

They wished to see how far Don Quixote’s imagination would go.

During the evening meal they asked him many questions about his adventures.

Don Quixote answered proudly. He described his battles, his victories, and his devotion to Dulcinea del Toboso.

The Duchess spoke gently.

“And your lady Dulcinea—she must be the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Don Quixote placed his hand upon his chest.

“There is no lady equal to her,” he said.

Sancho nodded quickly.

“Her true name is Aldonza Lorenzo,” he added.

Don Quixote quickly corrected him.

“Sancho,” he said, “you must always remember that the world knows her as Dulcinea.”

The Duke laughed softly.

“Of course,” he said.

The dinner continued with music, laughter, and conversation.

At last the Duke spoke again.

“Sancho Panza,” he said, “we have heard that Don Quixote once promised you the government of an island.”

Sancho sat up very straight.

“Yes,” he said quickly. “My master promised that.”

The Duke nodded thoughtfully.

“It happens,” he said, “that I control a small island. If you wish, Sancho, we will make you its governor.”

Sancho nearly fell from his chair.

“Governor?” he said.

The Duchess smiled kindly.

“Yes,” she said. “You will rule the island with wisdom.”

Don Quixote was extremely pleased.

“You see, Sancho,” he said proudly. “A knight always keeps his promises.”

Sancho’s face shone with happiness.

“When do I begin?” he asked eagerly.

The Duke answered calmly.

“Tomorrow.”

The next morning a large group of servants prepared a grand ceremony.

Sancho was dressed in fine clothing. A horse was brought for him to ride. Many people gathered to watch.

The Duke spoke loudly so that everyone could hear.

“From this moment,” he announced, “Sancho Panza becomes the governor of this island.”

Sancho bowed again and again.

“I will rule wisely,” he promised.

And so the simple farmer from La Mancha began his strange adventure as a governor.

Meanwhile Don Quixote remained at the castle as an honored guest of the Duke and Duchess, who continued to watch his behavior with great curiosity.

Yet far away another man was already preparing to challenge the knight of La Mancha.

His name was Samson Carrasco.

And his plan would soon bring Don Quixote to the greatest duel of his life.

Part 7

The Duke’s castle was full of noise and movement on the day when Sancho Panza became governor. Servants walked quickly through the halls. Soldiers stood beside the gates. People from the nearby villages came to watch the strange ceremony.

Sancho himself could hardly believe what was happening.

Only a short time before he had been a poor farmer riding a donkey across dusty roads. Now he was dressed in fine clothes and seated upon a strong horse.

Don Quixote watched proudly.

“Sancho,” he said, “remember what I have taught you. A governor must be wise and fair.”

Sancho nodded very seriously.

“Yes, master,” he said. “I will remember everything.”

Before Sancho left the castle to begin his new duty, Don Quixote called him aside and spoke carefully.

“Listen well,” he said. “A governor must judge people with wisdom. You must not accept gifts from those who wish to change your judgment. You must listen patiently to every person who comes before you.”

Sancho tried to remember every word.

“Yes, master,” he said again.

The Duke and Duchess watched the scene with quiet amusement. They had arranged everything as a kind of game, but they were curious to see how Sancho would behave.

Soon Sancho was led away to the place that the Duke called his “island.”

In truth it was only a small town under the Duke’s control. But everyone had been instructed to treat Sancho as a true governor.

When Sancho arrived, the people gathered around him respectfully.

“Welcome, Governor,” they said.

Sancho tried to sit proudly on his chair of office.

“Bring me the first problem,” he said.

A man stepped forward immediately.

“Governor,” he said, “this man owes me money.”

Another man shouted loudly.

“That is not true!”

Sancho looked from one man to the other.

“Explain everything,” he said.

The two men spoke for several minutes. Their story was confusing, but Sancho

listened carefully.

At last he asked a simple question.

“Did anyone see the money change hands?”

Both men shook their heads.

Sancho thought for a moment.

“Then the man who says he paid the money must show proof,” he said.

“Without proof the debt remains.”

The people nodded with approval.

“Our governor is wise,” they whispered.

Sancho smiled proudly.

Several other cases were brought before him during the day. One by one he solved them with simple common sense.

News of his good judgment spread quickly through the town.

Meanwhile Don Quixote remained in the castle with the Duke and Duchess. They continued to ask him many questions about knights and adventures.

The Duchess spoke one afternoon.

“Don Quixote,” she said kindly, “have you heard of the Knight of the Mirrors?”

Don Quixote turned his head.

“No,” he replied.

The Duchess continued.

“He is a knight who claims that he is greater than all other knights.”

Don Quixote placed his hand on his sword.

“Then I must meet him,” he said calmly.

The Duke hid a smile.

“Perhaps you will meet him soon,” he said.

In truth the Knight of the Mirrors was none other than Samson Carrasco, a young scholar from Don Quixote’s village.

Samson had also read the book about Don Quixote’s adventures. But he believed that the knight’s madness must be stopped.

His plan was simple.

He would fight Don Quixote in a duel. If Don Quixote lost, he must promise to

return home and stop his wandering adventures.

Some days later the two knights met on a quiet road at sunrise.

Samson Carrasco wore shining armor covered with many small mirrors. The sunlight flashed from them as he moved.

Don Quixote looked at the strange armor with interest.

“Who are you?” he asked.

Samson spoke in a strong voice.

“I am the Knight of the Mirrors. I have come to prove that my lady is more beautiful than Dulcinea del Toboso.”

Don Quixote’s face became serious.

“That is impossible,” he said.

“Then defend her honor,” Samson replied.

Both knights prepared for battle.

Sancho watched nervously from the side of the road.

“Not another fight,” he muttered.

The two horses moved back several steps.

Each knight lowered his lance.

The sun rose slowly behind them.

Then both riders charged forward.

The horses ran quickly across the ground.

The lances came together with a terrible crash.

Dust rose into the air.

For a moment it was impossible to see what had happened.

Then the dust cleared.

Samson Carrasco lay on the ground.

Don Quixote remained seated proudly on Rocinante.

Don Quixote rode closer and pointed his lance toward the fallen knight.

“You are defeated,” he said. “Now admit that Dulcinea del Toboso is the most beautiful lady in the world.”

Samson, seeing that he had lost, spoke quietly.

“Yes,” he said. “Dulcinea is the most beautiful.”

Don Quixote nodded with satisfaction.

“Then rise and go in peace,” he said.

Samson Carrasco slowly stood up.

His first plan had failed.

But he had not given up.

Secretly he began to prepare another challenge—one that would finally bring Don Quixote’s long adventure to its end.

Part 8

While Don Quixote continued his adventures near the castle of the Duke and Duchess, Sancho Panza was living a very different life in the small town that had been called his “island.” The people of the town treated him with great respect. They called him “Governor Sancho,” and whenever he walked through the streets they bowed politely.

At first Sancho felt very proud.

He sat in a large chair when people came to bring their problems. He listened carefully and tried to judge every case with fairness.

One morning two men came before him with a strange complaint.

The first man spoke loudly.

“Governor, this man borrowed ten gold coins from me and now refuses to return them.”

The second man quickly answered.

“I did borrow the money, but I have already paid it back.”

Sancho rubbed his beard thoughtfully.

“Did anyone see the payment?” he asked.

Both men shook their heads.

The second man held a walking stick in his hand. Sancho watched him carefully.

Suddenly Sancho said, “Give the stick to the other man for a moment.”

The second man hesitated but finally handed over the stick.

Sancho looked at the stick, turned it slowly in his hands, and then suddenly

struck it against the table.

The stick broke open.

Inside it were the ten gold coins.

The crowd gasped.

Sancho smiled.

“Here is the money,” he said calmly. “You hid it inside the stick so you could pretend that you had already paid.”

The people in the room began to whisper with admiration.

“Our governor is very wise,” they said.

But although Sancho judged wisely, he did not enjoy life as a governor as much as he had expected.

The days were long and full of problems. People argued constantly. Every decision made someone unhappy.

And worst of all, the food was not as good as he had hoped.

Late at night Sancho lay awake in his bed and sighed.

“I miss my donkey,” he said quietly.

Meanwhile Don Quixote remained at the castle of the Duke and Duchess. The noble couple continued to arrange strange events to entertain themselves.

One evening the Duchess spoke gently to Don Quixote.

“Your squire Sancho rules his island very wisely,” she said. “But great adventures are still waiting for you.”

Don Quixote bowed his head.

“A knight must always be ready,” he replied.

Some days later Sancho’s government suddenly came to an end.

Late one night soldiers ran into his room shouting loudly.

“Governor! Governor!” they cried. “The island is under attack!”

Sancho jumped out of bed in alarm.

“Attack?” he said.

They placed armor on him and pushed him toward the town walls.

“You must lead us,” they said.

Sancho could barely walk in the heavy armor. When the soldiers began to run,

he fell to the ground several times.

Finally he sat down and refused to move.

“Enough!” he shouted. “I am not made for war!”

The soldiers soon declared that the enemy had been defeated.

But Sancho had already made his decision.

“Take this government away,” he said firmly. “I would rather travel again with my master and my donkey.”

And so Sancho Panza gave up his island and returned to Don Quixote.

When the two friends met again, Don Quixote greeted him warmly.

“Sancho,” he said, “how did you rule your island?”

Sancho sighed deeply.

“Master,” he replied, “it is better to be a free man on a donkey than a governor who cannot sleep.”

Don Quixote smiled.

“Then we will continue our adventures together,” he said.

Soon afterward the two travelers left the castle of the Duke and Duchess.

Their journey eventually brought them to the great city of Barcelona by the sea.

The harbor was full of ships. Sailors shouted as they moved heavy ropes and cargo.

One morning Don Quixote rode along the beach as the sun rose over the water.

Suddenly another knight appeared before him.

This knight wore bright armor and carried a white shield marked with a shining moon.

He was known as the Knight of the White Moon.

The knight spoke in a strong voice.

“Don Quixote de la Mancha, I challenge you to a duel.”

Don Quixote sat proudly upon Rocinante.

“State your reason,” he said.

The Knight of the White Moon pointed his lance toward him.

“If I defeat you,” he declared, “you must promise to return to your village and stop your adventures for one year.”

Don Quixote thought for a moment.

Then he nodded.

“Agreed,” he said. “But if I defeat you, you must declare that Dulcinea del Toboso is the most beautiful lady in the world.”

The knight accepted.

The two riders moved apart on the sand.

Sancho watched with great fear.

“Please win, master,” he whispered.

The knights lowered their lances.

Their horses began to run.

The distance between them closed quickly.

The lances struck with tremendous force.

This time the result was different.

Rocinante stumbled.

Don Quixote was thrown violently onto the sand.

The Knight of the White Moon remained in his saddle and quickly turned his horse.

He pointed his lance at the fallen knight.

“You are defeated,” he said.

Don Quixote lay still for a moment.

At last he spoke quietly.

“I accept the terms,” he said. “I will return home.”

Sancho ran to help him stand.

The Knight of the White Moon removed his helmet.

It was Samson Carrasco.

His second plan had succeeded.

And so Don Quixote and Sancho Panza began their final journey back toward their quiet village in La Mancha.

Part 9

The journey back to the village of La Mancha was quiet and slow. Don Quixote

rode silently upon Rocinante, and Sancho Panza followed beside him on his faithful donkey. The road stretched across the dry plains, and the wind moved softly through the grass.

Don Quixote no longer spoke proudly about great adventures. His defeat by the Knight of the White Moon had forced him to promise that he would return home and stop his life as a knight for one year.

Sancho watched his master with concern.

“Master,” he said gently one afternoon, “perhaps this is not the end of your story.”

Don Quixote looked ahead across the land.

“A knight must keep his word,” he replied quietly.

They continued riding.

Sometimes Don Quixote seemed lost in deep thought. Sometimes he looked at the sky as if remembering many distant dreams.

After several days they finally saw their village in the distance. The familiar houses stood quietly under the sun. Smoke rose from the chimneys, and farmers worked in the nearby fields.

Sancho felt relief.

“We are home,” he said.

Don Quixote nodded slowly.

When they entered the village, several people quickly recognized them. News of Don Quixote’s adventures had already spread far and wide. Many villagers had heard about the book that told the story of his travels.

Soon the priest Pero Pérez and the barber Nicolás came to greet them.

The priest spoke warmly.

“Welcome home, my friend.”

The barber smiled kindly.

“We have worried about you.”

Don Quixote climbed slowly down from Rocinante.

For the first time in a long while he seemed very tired.

“My adventures are finished,” he said quietly.

The priest and barber exchanged a glance.

“Come inside,” said the priest. “You must rest.”

Don Quixote returned to his house, where he lay down in his bed.

At first everyone believed that he was only tired from his long journey. But soon it became clear that he had fallen seriously ill.

Day after day he grew weaker.

Sancho remained near him, deeply worried.

One evening Don Quixote suddenly opened his eyes and looked around the room.

The priest, the barber, and Sancho were sitting nearby.

Don Quixote spoke slowly.

“Friends,” he said, “I believe my life is coming to an end.”

Sancho shook his head quickly.

“Do not say that, master,” he replied.

But Don Quixote continued speaking.

“During my illness I have thought about many things,” he said. “I now understand that the stories of knights filled my mind with foolish dreams.”

The priest leaned closer.

Don Quixote spoke clearly.

“I am no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha,” he said. “I am Alonso Quixano once again.”

Sancho’s eyes filled with tears.

“Master,” he said, “we can still have more adventures. We can become shepherds and travel through the fields.”

Don Quixote smiled gently.

“No, Sancho,” he replied. “Those days have passed.”

He asked the priest to help him write his final will. He thanked his friends for their care and kindness.

Then he spoke once more to Sancho.

“You have been a faithful squire,” he said.

Sancho could not hold back his tears.

“I would follow you anywhere,” he said.

Don Quixote closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them again, his voice was calm.

“Forgive me for the troubles I caused,” he said.

The room was very quiet.

Outside the evening wind moved softly through the village streets.

At last Don Quixote spoke his final words.

“Now my mind is clear,” he said.

And with those words the life of Don Quixote came to its end.

The knight who had fought windmills, freed prisoners, defended the beauty of Dulcinea del Toboso, and traveled across Spain in search of honor was gone.

Sancho Panza sat silently beside the bed.

The priest and the barber bowed their heads.

Thus ended the strange and memorable life of the knight of La Mancha, whose adventures had been faithfully written by the historian Cide Hamete Benengeli so that the world would never forget them.