Don Quixote

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Cervantes was born to a poor household in a small town near Madrid. His father was a surgeon and a barber, and his mother was descended from disgraced noblemen. Some scholars believe that he studied at university in Salamanca or Seville. As a young man he moved to Rome, where he immersed himself in Renaissance art and literature. In his early thirties, he enlisted in the Spanish navy; he spent five years as a soldier and then five more years as a captive and slave in Algiers. He returned to Spain, married a younger woman, and lived a roaming and impoverished life; he was often bankrupt and served several prison sentences. Cervantes began publishing fiction and plays in 1585, but he only found literary and financial success with the publication of *Don Quixote* in 1605. He died in Madrid a decade later, soon after the publication of the second part of the history.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In the second part of the novel, religious tensions come to play a significant role in the plot. After the 1492 conquest of Granada, Spain had become a Christian nation. Edicts passed in 1492 and 1501 forced Spanish Muslims and Jews either to leave the country or to convert to Christianity, and these conversions were brutally policed during the Spanish Inquisition. Muslims who converted to Christianity were known as Moriscos; they were often persecuted and repressed, and they revolted against the crown several times during the 16th century. In 1609, King Phillip the III decreed the Expulsion of the Moriscos, and hundreds of thousands of Moriscos were forced to flee the country.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Don Quixote looks backward to a tradition of chivalry romances, and it looks forward to the modern novel. Chivalry romances were a popular form of narrative in medieval and Renaissance culture. They usually follow heroic knights who embark on dangerous adventures in honor of the women they love. Cervantes both continues this tradition and satirizes it. He often references famous exemplary works like *Amadis of Gaul* and *Orlando Furioso*, both to emphasize their distortions of reality and to honor their romantic, noble values. Though Cervantes locates himself at the end of one tradition, others have located him as the beginning of another: many scholars consider *Don Quixote* to be the first modern novel. Several features earn the novel this title: its multiple perspectives, intertwining subplots, mixture of low and high styles, and self-commentary and self-awareness. *Don Quixote* has influenced a very wide range of writers – from comedic writers like Laurence Sterne, to philosophically-inclined writers like Fyodor Dostoevky, Franz Kafka, and Jorge Luis Borges.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*
- **When Written:** The two parts were written during the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century.
- **Where Written:** The first part was written in various locations in Spain; the second part was written in Madrid.
- **When Published:** 1605; 1615
- **Literary Period:** Spanish Golden Age
- **Genre:** Novel
- **Setting:** Spain, at the beginning of the 17th century.
- **Climax:** Part I has an early climax: Quixote's battle with the windmills. In Part II, the climax takes place either during Quixote's real defeat at the hands of the Knight of the White Moon, or during his imaginative defeat, when he fails to see a castle in place of an inn.
- **Antagonist:** The priest, the barber, and Sansón Carrasco.
- **Point of View:** Third person omniscient, first person.

EXTRA CREDIT

The real Don Quixote? Cervantes' wife's uncle was named Alonso de Quesada. Some consider him to be the inspiration for Don Quixote.

Just like Shakes. Cervantes died on April 23, 1616, the same calendar day as Shakespeare.

PLOT SUMMARY

A middle-aged man named Alonso Quixano, a skinny bachelor and a lover of chivalry romances, loses his mind and decides to become a valiant knight. He names himself Don Quixote de la Mancha, names his bony horse Rocinante, and gives his beloved the sweet name Dulcinea.

In a few days' time, Don Quixote puts on a rusty suit of armor and sets out on his first sally. He is knighted at an **inn**, which he takes to be a castle, defends a young shepherd from his angry master, and receives a beating from some merchants, who are ignorant of the rules of knight-errantry. He returns to his village to recover.

While Quixote is sleeping off his injuries, his friends the priest

and the barber decide to burn most of his chivalry books, which they blame for his madness and recent injuries. Quixote takes this to be the work of evil **enchanters**, who generally plague knights errant. He enlists a peasant named Sancho Panza to be his squire, and they set off for the second sally.

In their travels, Sancho and Quixote encounter many imaginary enemies – giants that turn out to be windmills, enchanters that turn out to be angry muleteers, abductors who are peaceful friars. Wherever they go, people mock them and give them beatings, because their ideas are so strange and ridiculous. They free a group of prisoners, who thank them by pelting them with stones. They meet all sorts of interesting strangers, many of whom are involved in unhappy love affairs. They attend the funeral of a man who died of love for a beautiful shepherdess, and they inadvertently help to reunite several estranged couples. A large, motley cast of characters assembles at a small inn, where misunderstandings and reconciliations follow one another at lighting speed. The barber and the priest disguise themselves and drag Quixote back to the village in a wooden cage, hoping to cure his madness. At the end of part one, he is bedridden and down at heart.

Part two finds Quixote a month older, and eager to set out on his third sally. He learns from the student Carrasco that his adventures thus far have been recorded in a very popular chivalry romance, which has made him and Sancho very famous. Within a few days, Quixote and Sancho set out for El Toboso to obtain Dulcinea's blessing. But neither of them knows where Dulcinea lives, because there is no such person in real life – only a peasant girl named Aldonza, very unlike the ethereal princess of Quixote's imagination. To mend this inconsistency, Sancho tells Quixote that a coarse-looking peasant girl they meet on the road is, in fact, the enchanted Dulcinea. Quixote is miserable to see his beloved take such an incongruous shape.

When they get back on the road, Quixote battles with the Knight of the Forest; this stranger is actually Carrasco in disguise, trying to trick Quixote into returning to the village. Quixote wins the battle, and Carrasco slinks away in shame. Quixote and Sancho Panza have several adventures: they stay with a gentleman, attend a lavish wedding, and investigate the Cave of Montesinos, where Quixote claims to have seen magical, implausible sights.

They become friends with a Duke and Duchess, who are fans of the first part of the history. The Duke and Duchess give them an extravagant welcome, but they play many cruel tricks on them. In one elaborate scenario, an "enchanter" tells the friends that Sancho must lash himself thousands of times if Dulcinea is to be disenchanted.

When the Duke finds out that Quixote has promised Sancho an island as a reward for his service, he makes Sancho the governor of a small town. He expects to humiliate the illiterate, ignorant peasant, but Sancho turns out to be a wise and gifted ruler. After a week, though, Sancho tires of his difficult responsibilities and begins to miss life as Quixote's squire. He resigns, and he and Quixote resume their adventures.

The two friends continue to meet many interesting strangers. They become friends with a gallant captain of thieves and a wealthy gentleman in Barcelona. Quixote battles with a mysterious Knight of the White Moon. It is Carrasco; this time he wins the battle, and as his prize demands that Quixote and Sancho return to the village. Quixote grows sadder and sadder, and begins to lose hope of Dulcinea's disenchantment.

When they return to the village, Quixote becomes very sick. After a long sleep one day, he announces that he has regained his sanity. He now scorns knighthood and detests chivalry romances. There is no more Don Quixote; he is Alonso Quixano the Good. Soon afterward, he dies.

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Don Quixote de la Mancha - A poor hidalgo of nearly fifty named Alonso Quixano, he is a lonely, bookish man with nearly no family and no discernible past, who turns himself through the power of fantasy (or insanity) into a noble knight errant, sometimes also known as the Knight of the Sorry Face or the Knight of the Lions. Quixote is the product of his ideals straining against reality, a righter of wrongs and a comical fumbler. For the first half-century of his life Quixote stays home and reads fiction, from which he derives all his knowledge of the world. When he leaves home, he must face the irreparable differences between the world of chivalry books and the overwhelming, sensuous, contradictory reality of 17th century Spain. Not only that - he must face the disdain and mockery of everyone who wants to disabuse him of his ideals. The difficulties of the world, and the psychological and physical humiliations that Quixote must endure at the hand of his friends, finally extinguish his fantasies.

Sancho Panza – Sancho is a peasant who lives in Quixote's village, and he is Quixote's faithful squire. Sancho's transformation over the course of the two parts of the history is an astonishing one. In the beginning, he is a coarse, greedy, **gluttonous**, big-bellied peasant – or, at least, that is his part to play. He is illiterate and ignorant, and he finds Quixote's ideas mystifying and irrelevant. But as he observes Quixote's marvelous, hopeless, inexplicable courage, his distrust turns to affection and admiration. He begins to listen closely to Quixote's wild-eyed speeches, and he finds them to be beautiful and true. He admires Quixote's intelligence and kind spirit. By the beginning of the second part, he has begun to take Quixote's ideas about self-making to heart; he, too, can be intelligent, big-hearted, and idealistic, if he chooses. Slowly, blunderingly, he does become intelligent and big-hearted. By

the end of the novel, he has turned into a wise arbiter, a fine judge of human nature.

Dulcinea del Toboso – Quixote's beloved. On the one hand, she is a hearty peasant girl named Aldonza de Lorenzo from a neighboring village. On the other hand, she is a beautiful, ethereal princess, endowed with every possible feminine virtue and beauty. She is the height of Quixote's fantasies, the center of his chivalrous worldview, his strength and justification. Her mystery, her perfection, and her absence make her a god-like figure.

Sansón Carrasco – A nosy student who joins the priest and the barber in their quest to put an end to Quixote's knight-errantry. His desire to improve Quixote's mental health becomes mixed with a desire for revenge. He sometimes masquerades as the Knight of the Spangles as well as the Knight of the White Moon.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Cervantes – The editor of the translation of Benengeli's history. According to the novel, he assembled the various parts of Quixote's story and revised them, commenting here and there on plausibility, tone, and intention. He describes himself as a discoverer, not an inventor.

Cide Hamete Benengeli – Quixote's Moorish chronicler, the author of all but the first section of the first part of the history (the author of the first section is not given).

The priest – An old friend of Quixote's from the village. The priest is an opinionated, nosy, narrow-minded man who dismisses all of Quixote's ideas and beliefs, and who exerts a great deal of effort to "reform" him – a task that seems a great deal like breaking his spirit.

The barber – The barber is a friend of the priest's. He follows the priest wherever he goes, and does whatever he says.

The housekeeper – A middle-aged woman who keeps house for Quixote. She disapproves of his projects and ideas, and urges him to stay home and act sensibly.

The niece – A young woman who shares the housekeeper's opinions.

Teresa Sancha – Sancho's wife, a strong, sensible, funny woman. She is content with her life as a laborer, but she is also eager to get ahead.

Mari-Sancha – Sancho's young daughter, who is merry and energetic.

The innkeeper – A friendly but money-savvy man, and a lover of chivalry books.

Maritornes – The innkeeper's servant, clever and mischievous.

Ginés de Pasamonte – A prisoner whom Quixote frees from his chains, and who repays him by stoning him and stealing Sancho's donkey. He later appears disguised as a puppetmaster named Master Pedro.

Grisóstomo – A student who dies of love for Marcela.

Marcela – A beautiful, unapproachable shepherdess.

Cardenio – A high-born young man who runs away to the sierras after he thinks himself betrayed by his beloved.

Luscinda – Cardenio's beloved.

Don Fernando – A friend of Cardenio's, who tries to steal Luscinda away.

Dorotea – A peasant girl, whom Don Fernando seduced and betrayed.

Anselmo – The married friend in the "Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity."

Lotario – The unmarried friend in the "Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity."

Camila – Anselmo's wife.

Leonela – Camila's servant

The captive (Ruy Pérez de Viedma) – A man who was a prisoner of war in Algiers.

Lela Zoraida – A wealthy, beautiful young Moorish woman who wanted to escape to Christian lands.

The judge (Juan Pérez de Viedma) – The captive's brother and father of Clara.

Clara – The judge's daughter.

Don Luis – Clara's beloved.

Barber 2 – The stranger from whom Quixote steals Mambrino's helmet.

The canon – A learned clergyman who discusses literature and realism with the priest.

Eugenio – A goatherd who eats lunch with Quixote, Sancho, the priest, the barber, and the canon on their way back to the village.

Anselmo (Eugenio's rival) – The goatherd Eugenio's rival for Leandra.

Leandra – Eugenio's beloved.

Vicente de la Rosa – A showy soldier who deceives Leandra.

Avellaneda – The author of the spurious history.

The Squire of the Forest (Tomé Cecial) – A peasant from Quixote and Sancho's village who pretends to be Carrasco's squire.

Don Diego de Miranda – A well-to-do hidalgo who hosts Sancho and Quixote at his house.

Don Lorenzo – Don Diego's son, a poet.

Quiteria the Fair – A beautiful bride to Camacho the Rich, though she actually loves the poor Basilio.

Camacho the Rich – Quiteria's groom.

Basilio – The poor man Quiteria loves.

Montesinos, Durandante, Lady Belerma – Fictional characters who Quixote encounters in the Cave of Montesinos.

The Duke and the Duchess – A wealthy, upper-class couple who host Quixote and Sancho and play many tricks on them. They pretend to offer friendship and respect to Quixote and Sancho, but they treat them with contempt and use them solely for their own amusement.

The butler – A servant of the Duke's who helps plan and carry out most of the hoaxes.

Duenna Rodríguez – The Duchess's duenna.

The Countess Trifaldi (The Dolorous Duenna) – A person invented by the Duke and Duchess.

Altisidora – A young girl in the Duke and Duchess's court who pretends to be in love with Quixote.

Tosilos – The Duke's lackey, an all-purpose servant.

Don Juan and Don Jerónimo – Two gentlemen that show Quixote and Sancho a copy of the spurious history.

Ricote – Sancho's friend from the village, a Morisco who has recently been forced to leave Spain.

Ana Félix – Ricote's daughter

Don Gaspar – Ana's beloved.

Roque Guinart – A gallant captain of thieves.

Claudia – Roque's friend.

Don Vicente – Claudia's lover, whom she killed by mistake.

Don Antonio Moreno – Captain Roque's friend, who pretends to have a talking bust.

Don Tarfe – a man who appears in the spurious second half of the history.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

TRUTH AND LIES

At the heart of Quixote's disagreement with the world around him is the question of truth in chivalry books. His niece and housekeeper, his friends the barber and the priest, and most other people he encounters in his travels tell Quixote that chivalry romances are full of lies. Over and over again, Quixote struggles to defend the truthfulness of the stories he loves. In that struggle, he begins to redefine conventional notions of truth in ways that align closely with the philosophical trends of the Enlightenment.

An observation can be called 'true' in at least two ways. Its truthfulness can lie either in its correspondence to objective external reality, or in its correspondence to subjective inner experience. Most characters in the novel refer to the former version of truth, while Quixote and Sancho usually refer to the latter. The first kind of truth is a collective truth, validated by shared experience. If we all see and experience an object in the same way, then it is true that the object exists, and that it possesses the qualities we've all observed. The second kind of truth is more private, and it is validated only by its resonance with the observer's imagination and worldview.

Cervantes satirizes the objective, collective kind of truth in the episode with barber 2, who comes to believe that his saddle and basin are something other than what he sees simply because the people around him have defined them otherwise. The episode shows that the supposedly objective collective reality is actually subject to strange, willful transformations. Cervantes also satirizes that sort of truth in his portrayals of narrow-minded characters with stubborn, myopic ideas. The alternative, imaginative kind of truth, which varies from person to person, finds its main spokesperson in Quixote. For Quixote, chivalry stories are true because people believe in them, not the reverse. He describes truth as something palpable and sustaining, a kind of imaginative warmth and brightness. And he believes that truth is something to aspire to, a vision of the world as it should be.

But the book doesn't simply describe the victory of private truth over collective truth – it is much more ambivalent and complicated. The two kinds of truth create increasing tension in Quixote's imagination, because he finds that living only by private truth is painful, inconvenient, and occasionally unethical. The breaking point, for Quixote, comes just after his encounter with the troupe of actors, when he admits to Sancho that one must look past appearance to find truth – this time, he means collective, objective truth. Quixote tries and fails to reconcile the two kinds of truth, and his failure leads to the novel's tragic end.

LITERATURE, REALISM, AND IDEALISM

In the first half of the novel, Quixote and Sancho seem like caricatures of idealism and realism. Philosophical idealism holds that reality is primarily a set of ideas, private mental constructs; political idealism holds that ideas can meaningfully transform the human world. Philosophical realism holds that reality is primarily material, and that its qualities exist independently of human perception and interpretation. Quixote sees the world around him as a set of beliefs about honor, goodness, gallantry, and courage, and as an opportunity for social change on a large scale; Sancho sees a world filled with detail, with sounds, smells, and textures, and as an opportunity to **eat** well and sleep deeply. Quixote is tall and

skinny, a stereotypical dreamer, while Sancho is squat and round, a bit of a glutton, a lover of earthly things. Quixote tries to fit the world into a set of pre-determined rules, while Sancho faces each event on its own terms.

In parallel with this philosophical scenario, the novel engages with notions of literary realism. The novel as a whole mocks the absurdities, omissions, and general failures of realism in chivalry novels, because its premise is a character who tries to live in the world as though chivalry novels were perfectly realistic. Quixote's endless difficulties and humiliations can be traced to the failures of realism in chivalry tales. But though the narrator acknowledges that chivalry tales are unrealistic, he also makes fun of characters who believe that literature should be realistic exclusively. The priest, especially, is the target of this mockery. The priest's conversations with the canon and with the innkeeper show that any one person's attempt to define realism in literature will necessarily fail to be objective, and will instead reflect that person's private vision of the world. The narrator's disdain for the priest's ideas of literary realism is also a rejection of philosophical realism. These realisms don't take into account the one consistent truth of the novel – the idea that the world is a collection of different perspectives.

Yet the narrator does not come out squarely on one side or the other; the world he creates is tangled, and gives no easy answers. Like public and private truth, realism and idealism must ultimately be integrated, until the difference between them almost disappears. Quixote and Sancho do not remain stereotypes, with distinct sets of qualities: they grow out of their stereotypes into more complete human beings.

MADNESS AND SANITY

Quixote is considered insane because he "see[s] in his imagination what he didn't see and what didn't exist." He has a set of chivalry-themed hallucinations. But then, they are not quite hallucinations, which by definition occur without any external stimulus. They are distorted perceptions of real objects and events. To see giants instead of windmills is, in a way, just a very peculiar interpretation of large, vaguely threatening objects in motion. And many other instances of Quixote's madness – his rigid principles, his obsession with knighthood – are also peculiarities. The priest and the barber, who persecute Quixote in the guise of well-wishers trying to restore his sanity, are simply trying to stamp out his unsettling peculiarity. They are conducting a witch-hunt in the timeless manner of narrow-minded people threatened by strangeness.

Quixote's madness is ambiguous and paradoxical, because he both and does not see; he sees the giants in his imagination, but he does not hallucinate giants in the world outside. His madness consists in his trusting his imagination over his perception, and his imagination is captivated by the values of chivalry books. His madness is a state of thrall to a coherent imagined world. But in the course of his adventures, that world loses its coherence: it is shaken by internal inconsistencies and by the world's complications and contradictions. When Quixote declares on his deathbed that he is finally sane, he means that the imagined world has lost its grip on him, and he is left with a chilling blankness that cannot sustain him.

INTENTION AND CONSEQUENCE

For Quixote, gaps between intention and consequence mark the failures of the chivalric way of life. Quixote tries to help others by following the elaborate conventions outlined in chivalry novels, but his efforts often backfire – most obviously in the episode with the shepherd boy, who is beaten even more severely after Quixote intervenes. The first few times Quixote's efforts backfire, he defends his actions by claiming, in effect, that intention is more important than consequence – that a knight's duty is to react courageously, not to judge precisely.

But as negative consequences pile up, Quixote begins to alter his reasoning. When he observes that appearances can be deceitful, he acknowledges that a person has a responsibility to look past the traps and illusions of appearance to a more solid foundation of truth. If appearances can be deceitful, then a knight should not act impulsively because someone or something looks sinister – he must dig deeper to identify the most ethical course of action. This is a difficult task, and by the end of the novel it seems to overwhelm Quixote. He despairs to see that each event is a tangled ball of motives and desires, to realize that his chivalry rulebook is not an adequate guide to the world, after all.

SELF-INVENTION, CLASS IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

One of the first scenes of the novel is Quixote's self-naming. The scene is a little comical, like a child renaming herself after her favorite cartoon character, yet it's also extraordinary. An aging, poor, frail man claims for himself the power to remake himself entirely, merely on the strength of his belief. He is blissfully indifferent to his own past, his capacities, or the constraints of his situation; he becomes what he wishes to be instantaneously, almost like a god.

Quixote believes that identities and societies are always in flux, always about to be changed by the force of ideals. He believes that each person should be valued on the strength of her character, not on the circumstances of her birth; he thinks that every person, rich or poor, nobleman or peasant, can become good, brave, and courteous, despite the social boundaries that fence us into various stereotypes and stations.

But Quixote's ambitions as a knight are not restricted solely to his own achievements and personal transformations. He wants to bring chivalry and all its kindnesses and virtues to a world

that has grown cynical, selfish, and unimaginative. So, just as he changes himself into what he wishes to be, he changes the world into what he wishes it to be. Since the new world he imagines differs a great deal from the real world that surrounds him, other people consider him insane. But it is a deeply honorable insanity – the sort of insanity that attends every major social change, every fight for justice. Though Quixote doesn't survive his battle with reality, he achieves many small, unexpected victories, and his biggest victory by far is the popularity of the first half of the history. When people all over the world read *The Ingenious Hidalgo*, the idea of "quixotry" is born into the public imagination, and the world is changed just a little in Quixote's image.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

INNS

In this novel, **inns** are halfway points between civilization and the wilderness. They are places where travellers can take refuge from the dangers and weathers of the open road, places of sleep, **nourishment**, and some human order. They are miniatures of human society, with their own rules and customs. But they are changing, unstable structures, defined by the strange collections of people who pass through them. They morph to reflect the societies and that are formed and dissolved daily. When a judge arrives at an inn, it becomes like a court of law; when a priest arrives, it becomes a moral court; when a storyteller arrives, it becomes a stage; and so on. When Quixote arrives at an inn, it generally becomes a castle. In the novel, inns represent people's power to change and recreate the society they inhabit.

ENCHANTERS

Quixote first becomes fixated on the idea of **enchantment** at the suggestion of the priest and the barber, who blame enchanters for the destruction of Quixote's library. From them on, enchanters become for Quixote the explanation for everything mysterious, irrational, and malevolent, for every event that wedges between his expectations and his reality. Enchanters explain away the differences between the world of chivalry books and the world of his experience. But as Quixote begins to lose faith in his worldview, he makes the enchanters responsible not for inconveniences or setbacks but for the distortions in his perception. Their malevolence shifts from the external world to his inner life: he begins to think that his problem is internal. Soon, enchantment begins to represent life's irresolvable, inexplicable contradictions, which corrode Quixote's former certainties. But in the end, those same certainties, the force and coherence of his imagination, are the true elements of enchantment, the madness that places obstacles in Quixote's path. When those certainties are worn away, the evil enchanters disappear, and Quixote is disenchanted once and for all.

FOOD

Food is the thing that Sancho loves and Quixote ignores, it is Sancho's roundness and Quixote's skinniness, the embarrassingly simple foundation for Sancho's realism and Quixote's idealism. Food is the subject of one of Quixote's earliest delusions about knights errant, who, he thinks, only eat about once a month, and food is the ground for one of Quixote and Sancho's first compromises. In the beginning, Sancho loves food and money; by the end of the novel, Sancho is capable of refusing money, but he continues to love food. When Sancho tempers his love for money, he detaches himself from a restrictive, narrow-minded society; but his love for food allows him to remain attached to earthly things. Food is a simple pleasure, but it can also have an effect on the soul. It symbolizes safety, love, the coarser kinds of beauty. But Quixote can never quite see food as symbolic, because he never learns to attach value to earthly things. Until the very end, he prefers spiritual nourishment.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the Penguin Classics edition of *Don Quixote* published in 2003.

Part 1, Prologue Quotes

And to what can my barren and ill-cultivated mind give birth except the history of a dry, shriveled child, whimsical and full of extravagant fancies that nobody else has ever imagined – a child born, after all, in prison, where every discomfort has its seat and every dismal sound its habitation?

Related Characters: Cervantes (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 2

Explanation and Analysis

The narrator begins the prologue with a description of the novel: it is the "history of a dry, shriveled child," the product of its parent and environment, a "barren and ill-cultivated

mind" and a prison cell.

Cervantes blurs the boundary between novel and protagonist: though the narrator first explains that he has given birth to the "history" of a child, he then implies that he simply has given birth to a child. In this way, Cervantes aligns himself with his character, encouraging readers to consider the similarities between Don Quixote and the author. Both create "whimsical" worlds for themselves; both understand the far-reaching influence of literature.

Of course, Don Quixote cannot tell his own world apart from the agreed-upon, conventional reality.

❝ ... from beginning to end [the book] is an invective against books of chivalry ... All that has to be done is to make the best use of imitation in what one writes.

Related Themes:

Page Number: 16

Explanation and Analysis

In the Prologue, the narrator's friend gives him some advice: he should include poems in his manuscript, cite Latin and Greek adages, and mention famous names and places. The friend then goes on to explain that the narrator should simply imitate and mock chivalrous novels.

The unnamed friend, here, speaks in circles, giving contradictory and confusing advice. His final suggestion undermines the previous ones—while this moment provides comic relief, it also raises questions about literary legitimacy and authority. Why does Cervantes create so many frame stories and digressions? Is he mocking the ways that readers and critics assign value and authority to works of art?

While Don Quixote is, in some ways, "an invective against books of chivalry," even the novel's most level-headed and pragmatic characters are ridiculous.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ In short, our hidalgo was soon so absorbed in these books that his nights were spent reading from dusk till dawn, and his days from dawn till dusk, until the lack of sleep the excess of reading withered his brain, and he went mad. ... The idea that this whole fabric of famous fabrications was real so established itself in his mind that no history in the world was truer for him.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:

Page Number: 26

Explanation and Analysis

In this opening chapter, the narrator recounts the origins of Don Quixote's obsession with chivalric stories. The old man argues with the village curate and the barber about some detail; he thinks of nothing else.

This is a clear indictment of the genre: the chiasmic repetition of "dusk till dawn" and "dawn till dusk" shows us the extent of Don Quixote's obsession with these novels. And yet Cervantes seems to mock at once the chivalric novels and the superstitious belief that these novels could affect a reader. The narrator mentions the causal connection between Don Quixote's insanity and the books with a comic confidence; the word "withered," too, has a humorous visual association.

The division between internal, private truth and external truth is an important one in the novel, and the narrator makes it clear even in this first chapter.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ And since whatever our adventurer thought, saw, or imagined seemed to him to be as it was in the books he'd read, as soon as he saw the inn he took it for a castle with its four towers and their spires of shining silver.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 32

Explanation and Analysis

Quixote setts off to see the world as a chivalric knight. On the first evening, he comes upon an inn, which he mistakes for a castle. Here Cervantes establishes a pattern that Quixote will repeat throughout the novel—that is, seeing fantastical elements torn from his beloved chivalric tales where there are only mundane realities—as well as the contrast between the world as it is to the eyes of the apparently objective narrator and the world of the protagonist's imagination.

The latter, however divorced from reality, is a decidedly

more beautiful and interesting place to inhabit, suggesting that Cervantes has a certain affection for Quixote in spite of his madness. Indeed, in this same scene, Quixote formally greets two call girls sitting outside of the inn as if they were great ladies, and later asserts that the stale bread and salty fish he is fed constitute a fine meal. The girls burst into laughter at his expense, but these details nevertheless suggests that Quixote's madness affords him a certain appreciative bliss in the midst of dreary reality. Of course, Quixote's conflation of his inner, imagined world with that of the real, outer world will frequently lead the knight into not simply comedic misunderstandings, but also genuine trouble.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ There is no reason why someone with a plebeian name should not be a knight, for every man is the child of his own deeds.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 43

Explanation and Analysis

Quixote comes across a teenage boy being flogged by his master in the woods, and insists the latter pay the boy his wages. The master, a farmer, promises he will do so later, but the boy objects, insisting that as soon as Quixote leaves the farmer will just start beating him again. Quixote insists that "by the law of the orders of chivalry into which [the farmer] has been admitted," the farmer will be true to his word; when the boy points out that his master isn't a knight (and as such not beholden to any sort of chivalric code), just a farmer, Quixote counters with this comment that anyone can be a knight.

In a way, what Quixote says here is admirable: he's assuming nobility and honor on the part of a stranger, suggesting a sort of generosity in his view of humanity that, one might hope, would inspire the farmer to be a better man. Quixote clearly views knight errantry as something that transcends class boundaries, which should inspire a sense of self-reliance and possibility in this society, which, at the time, remained strictly stratified by class.

Yet Quixote is also blinded by his madness here into only *thinking* he is helping the boy, failing to recognize that others may not live by the chivalric code he holds dear. Indeed, as soon as he leaves, the farmer starts brutally beating the boy again—showing that Quixote hasn't righted any wrong at all, and in fact just seemed to make the farmer angrier. Chivalry here is really just foolishness.

In the second part of the novel, however, the story of Quixote's exploits will have made him the most famous knight in the world, with his adventures read by young and old, rich and poor alike; in a way, then, his pursuit of knight errantry *is* ultimately successful in blurring class distinctions.

Part 1, Chapter 8 Quotes

❝ But Don Quixote was so convinced that they were giants that he neither heard his squire Sancho's shouts nor saw what stood in front of him.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha, Sancho Panza

Related Themes:

Page Number: 64

Explanation and Analysis

In one of the novel's most famous scenes, Don Quixote mistakes a group of thirty or forty windmills for giants and charges them with his lance. Predictably, the lance is shattered, and both Quixote and his horse are dragged across the ground. The modern English idiom "tilting at windmills," meaning to charge at imaginary enemies, is derived from this scene; the phrase is typically used to suggest the misapplication of romantic or heroic ideals, the misinterpretation of an adversary, or the vain pursuit of a (perhaps itself vain) goal. A clear satire of the blind, foolish chivalry of past romantic tales, this moment at once epitomizes the protagonist's madness and his unshakeable belief in his own internal truth. Thus even as his endeavor to defeat the "giants" can only end in catastrophe, Quixote's devotion to the pursuit of what he believes is justice in the face of impossibility is, in a way, almost noble.

❝ Let me add that when a painter wants to become famous for his art, he tries to copy originals by the finest artists he knows. And this same rule holds good for nearly all the trades and professions of importance that serve to adorn a society.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 207

Explanation and Analysis

Here Quixote justifies to Sancho his desire to copy the behavior of Amadis of Gaul, "one of the most perfect knight errants there ever was," by pointing out that, as in all art or professional endeavors, imitation is a means to greatness. As such, the knight who best copies Amadis "will be the closest to attaining perfection in chivalry."

Cervantes is exploring the theme of authenticity and originality. Even as Quixote believes chivalry to be guided by a set of steadfast, internal principles, values, and virtues, he engages only in pale imitations of chivalrous acts; he somewhat ironically attempts to redefine himself by defining himself as someone else. What's more, completing chivalric acts solely for the sake of being the "best" knight is not really chivalry at all, but rather behavior guided by selfishness and vanity.

What's more, the specific actions of Amadis of Gaul that Quixote plans to imitate are the knight's self-imposed isolation and descent into madness on behalf of his beloved; Quixote aims to play the role of the "desperate, foolish, furious lover." Yet, as Sancho soon points out, Amadis (and the other knights Quixote wants to emulate) had specific reasons for his behavior; Quixote insists that going mad for no reason is all the more impressive, yet to do so again betrays the idea of chivalry as something based on a set of sincere motivating principles.

Part 1, Chapter 28 Quotes

❝ An ass you are, an ass you will remain and an ass you will still be when you end your days on this earth, and it is my belief that when you come to breathe your last you still will not have grasped the fact that you are an animal.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), Sancho Panza

Related Themes:

Page Number: 680

Explanation and Analysis

Quixote and Sancho delve into a vicious argument after the former fails to protect his squire from a mob of angry villagers. Tired of being insulted and missing his family, Sancho rails against knight errantry; Quixote, in turn, scornfully offers to pay Sancho what he owes him for his services thus far so that Sancho can be on his way. When Sancho then squabbles over the amount, Quixote verbally attacks his disloyalty and greed, insisting that he "bites the hand that feeds" and is unworthy of the things he has been promised (such as his own island). He calls him "more beast than man" before declaring him forever an ass (a donkey)—and, it follows, a creature who could never appreciate the "raise" in station Quixote would seek to make possible. Sancho has privileged money above ideals; he has placed materialism above belief. To Quixote, who clings so fiercely to the tenets of knight errantry above all else, this makes Sancho less than human.

Part 1, Chapter 30 Quotes

❝ It is not the responsibility of knights errant to discover whether the afflicted, the enchained, and the oppressed whom they encounter on the road are reduced to these circumstances and suffer their distress for the vices, or for their virtues: the knight's sole responsibility is to succor them as people in need, having eyes only for their sufferings, not for their misdeeds.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 271

Explanation and Analysis

In the previous chapter, Quixote learned that the chain gang of prisoners he set free had proceeded to attack his friends. In that moment he'd blushed, suggesting his embarrassment at the role he played, however unintentional, in the attack. Now, though, he vehemently denies any responsibility at all, instead insisting that it's not his job to judge others' misdeeds—it's just his job to help those in need. Thus morality, for Quixote, is not relative, but rather a fixed principle that means he should effectively ignore vice in the name of promoting virtue. Yet this simplistic approach to morality has already proven to have unforeseen consequences, underscoring that the world is a complicated place where good intentions do not necessarily result in good deeds. Furthermore, it's not clear that this is really a deeply-held moral conviction for Quixote or merely a means to assuage his own guilt.

Part 1, Chapter 32 Quotes

I don't understand how that can be so, because to my mind there isn't a better read anywhere in the world ... at harvest time, you see, lots of the reapers come in here on rest-days, and there are always some who can read, and one of them picks up one of these books, and more than thirty of us gather around him, and we enjoy listening to it so much that it takes all our worries away.

Related Characters: The innkeeper (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 290

Explanation and Analysis

Over dinner at an inn, the innkeeper reflects on having heard a priest dismiss books of chivalry and say that they turned Quixote mad. The innkeeper doesn't understand how one could so readily reject such books, because, to him, they provide such pleasure and entertainment for his family. The question as to the value of literature, and specifically chivalry books, comes up many times throughout the novel, usually with priests dismissing them for being too absurd to be morally beneficial (Quixote will have a conversation similar to this one later in the story with the priest from his village and the canon). The priest views literature only has having merit if it grants sensible instruction, which chivalry books clearly do not; however, here it's clear that the books still provide a meaningful service for the innkeeper and his family, and that it is precisely their *lack* of literary realism that makes them so enjoyable; through their fantasy and idealism, the innkeeper can escape the drudgery of daily life.

Don Quixote was developing his arguments in such an orderly and lucid way that for the time being none of those listening could believe he was a madman.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 355

Explanation and Analysis

While at an inn, Don Quixote explains to a diverse audience the nature of taking up arms in contrast to academic pursuits. The other guests are comprised of noblemen and commoners alike, and notably even the many gentlemen in the audience sit with rapt attention as Quixote speaks. That utterly "mad" Quixote can come across as so remarkably cogent while discussing complicated philosophical matters reflects the fact that, however crazy he may be, he is still a man who for nearly fifty years led a contemplative existence before his turn to knight errantry. Quixote is certainly mad in the sense that he lives in a world of imagination, yet even the fantastical world in which he exists is still ordered and internally consistent, allowing him to speak intelligently on topics that relate to society at large.

Cervantes' specific reference to the noblemen in Quixote's audience, meanwhile, could further be read as a jab at the upperclass; gentlemen "much concerned with arms" are particularly enthralled by Quixote's speech, suggesting the gullibility and folly of those typically afforded disproportionate societal respect.

Part 1, Chapter 45 Quotes

It is possible that, since you have not been knighted, as I have, the enchantments in this place do not affect you, and that your understanding is unclouded, and that you can form judgments about the affairs of the castle as they really and truly are, rather than as they appeared to me.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), The priest, Barber 2, The barber, Don Fernando

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 420

Explanation and Analysis

While at an inn, the barber, in an attempt to make a joke at Quixote's expense, affirms that the basin before him is really a helmet, just as Quixote says. In response, the angry second barber (from whom Quixote earlier stole the basin) counters that if that basin is a helmet, then a pack-saddle to which he points must be a "caparison" (a sort of decorative armor for horses)—though on this point, Quixote makes the (unintentionally) humorous response that it's simply a pack saddle.

The priest, who has caught on to the first barber's joke, insists that Quixote is the only one who can decide the truth of the matter—that is, whether the saddle is really a

caparison. This prompts Quixote to make the judicious response that he dare not decide—and, in fact, that only those who have *not* been knighted would be able to make such a distinction. The irony, of course, is Quixote is for once actually stating an objective truth: the object really is a saddle.

This moment reflects the extent to which Quixote interprets his surroundings to best suit his imaginary narrative. Truth is slippery and malleable in the novel, and Quixote somewhat paradoxically admits that he does not see the surrounding world as it really is while having only moments before asserted that a barber's basin is actually a helmet. Perhaps he has been shaken by the sudden support for his vision by the first barber and the priest, which discombobulates him—before, he thought that only he could see the true nature of things, but since these two men seem to agree that the helmet is indeed a basin, perhaps he can no longer trust his own eyes; perhaps the horse saddle is a caparison after all.

This moment also sparks a multi-page debate over whether the saddle is not as it appears, creating riotous laughter for those who know of Quixote's "condition" and sending the second barber into "despair." Even as the scene mocks Quixote, it also positions the all the men's subsequent eruptions of anger as inherently silly; this all started because of a *saddle*. That a violent fight erupts from the mounting tension further satires allegedly noble chivalric battles on behalf of "truth."

❝ But one man had been plunged into the deepest depths of despair, and that was the barber, whose basin, there before his very eyes, had turned into Mambrino's helmet, and whose pack-saddle, he was very sure, was about to turn into the splendid caparisons of some handsome steed.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha, Barber 2

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 420

Explanation and Analysis

Still at the inn, other men who know of Quixote's madness have joined in the joke at his expense, affirming that the objects before them all are indeed a helmet and caparison. This drives the second barber, who knows nothing of Quixote's tendency toward delusion, to "despair"—something the others find just as amusing as their initial trick.

The reader, of course, knows that the objects really are just a basin and saddle, but truth proves far more slippery and subjective in the world of the novel. And however silly this entire episode may be, this scene introduces a legitimate philosophical theory: this is a moment of perspectivism—that is, the idea that one's knowledge is invariably skewed and limited by their individual perspective. So unsettled is the second barber by the others' insistence on the nature of the objects that he nearly convinces himself that he really *is* seeing a helmet and caparison. Simple perspective and persuasion are enough to alter reality in this moment, implicitly calling into question the objective nature of "truth" in the first place.

Part 1, Chapter 48 Quotes

❝ ...whereas drama should, as Cicero puts it, be a mirror of human life, an exemplar of customs and an image of truth, there modern plays are just mirrors of absurdity, exemplars of folly and images of lewdness.

Related Characters: The priest (speaker), Don Quixote de la Mancha, The canon

Related Themes:

Page Number: 444

Explanation and Analysis

Speaking to Quixote and the canon, the priest insists that literature only has value if it accurately reflects reality. This is why he so dislikes books of chivalry, which, in his estimation, portray only absurdity and lewdness. Yet the "image of truth" that the priest wants reflected in literature is really just the image of the world as *he* sees it. Throughout the novel the priest is presented as a narrow-minded character threatened by any sort of difference or strangeness. His aversion to chivalry tales comes from the same place as his desire to make Quixote give up his delusions of knighthood and behave like the man the priest sees him to be, rather than the man Quixote sees himself to be. Shortly after this moment, Quixote will defend the moral benefit of chivalry tales, and in doing so poke holes in the priest's theory of literary realism.

Part 1, Chapter 50 Quotes

❝ Speaking for myself, I can say that ever since I became a knight errant I have been courageous, polite, generous, well-bred, magnanimous, courteous, bold, gentle, patient and long-suffering in the face of toil, imprisonment, and enchantment.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), The priest, The canon

Related Themes:

Page Number: 458

Explanation and Analysis

While speaking to the canon and the priest, Quixote explains the benefits of reading tales of chivalry—which, he declares, are "bound to delight and amaze anyone who reads" them, cure melancholy, and improve one's disposition. In fact, Quixote continues, becoming a part of this world has made him a better man in myriad ways, from boosting his courage to expanding his sense generosity and patience. As such, to Quixote tales of knights errantry are morally beneficial—that is, they can turn readers into better people.

This pronouncement notably contrasts with the priest and canon's earlier assertions that such stories were far too fanciful to be of any moral use; instead of reflecting life as it is, they are full of "absurdity" and "lewdness." Both men believe all literature should be morally instructive (and point toward their specific definition of morality, of course). Quixote's quote here thus pokes holes in the other men's stodgy theory by revealing that books of chivalry—however absurd—have been morally useful for him. Even as the novel mocks the fantasy inherent to the tales that Quixote takes literally, here it also targets the priest's belief in his unique ability to define literary realism; instead, these concepts are the result of the priest's own subjective perspective, rather than a sweeping truth about the nature of literature and morality.

Viewed in another way, this moment also makes a certain case for the bliss of ignorance; Quixote may be mad, but he has found purpose and strength through that madness, and, at least in his own mind, become a much better human being for it. The question, then, is whether Quixote's madness is *itself* noble in that it pushes him to embrace noble qualities.

Part 2, Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ I am merely striving to make the world understand the delusion under which it labours in not renewing within itself the happy days when the order of knight-errantry carried all before it. But these depraved times of ours do not deserve all those benefits enjoyed by the ages when knights errant accepted as their responsibility and took upon their shoulders the defense of kingdoms, the relief of damsels, the succour of orphans and wards, and chastisement of the arrogant and the rewarding of the humble.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), The barber

Related Themes:

Page Number: 493

Explanation and Analysis

At the start of Part 2, the barber tells the story of an educated man who loses his mind and later tries to convince others he has again become sane. The barber hopes to shame Quixote, who, he thinks, will see his own situation reflected in this tale depicting a man who speaks eloquently despite his madness. However, Quixote, who has been back in his village for a month, scoffs at the story and further chides the barber for making comparisons between different people's intelligence, worth, beauty, or pedigree. He goes on to lucidly justify his return to knight errantry, having clearly solidified a defense of himself from naysayers during his convalescence. He has gained enough self-awareness at this point to understand that others view him as crazy, and insists he merely seeks to bring nobility and dignity back to the world—a perfectly cogent rationale for what continue to be the actions of a madman.

Part 2, Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ It's so very intelligible that it doesn't pose any difficulties at all: children leaf through it, adolescents read it, grown men understand it and old men praise it, and, in short, it's so well-thumbed and well-perused and well-known by all kinds of people that as soon as they see a skinny nag pass by they say: "Look, there goes Rocinante." And the people who have most taken to it are the page-boys. There's not a lord's antechamber without its *Quixote*. ... All in all, this history provides the most delightful and least harmful entertainment ever, because nowhere in it can one find the slightest suspicion of language that isn't wholesome or thoughts that aren't Catholic.

Related Characters: Sansón Carrasco (speaker), Barber 2,

Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:

Page Number: 507

Explanation and Analysis

Sansón Currasco is describing the newly published volume of Quixote's adventures, which Quixote has just asserted must require a certain amount of "commentary to make it intelligible." Currasco, however, insists that the book is accessible to all and as such has reached a broad, diverse audience; in fact, Currasco explains, Quixote has become the most famous knight in the world, and stories of his adventures have touched readers old and young alike.

This points to the ability of Quixote to inspire and change the world not despite but *because of* his madness. For one thing, love for his story appears to cross all societal boundaries, including those class distinctions that Quixote believes knight errantry itself seeks to blur. What's more, his story makes people actually experience the world around them differently—for instance, seeing Quixote's own noble steed, Rocinante, in the place of skinny passing horses.

This moment echoes the tale of the helmet in Part 1, during which men around Quixote joined him in asserting that a barber's basin was really a helmet; their insistence on this point was so strong that it caused another barber to question his own reality, and to see the basin transform into a helmet before his very eyes. With both the basin and the horse, truth is a matter of perspective rather than objectivity, and those who assert the rigid nature of reality are mocked as narrow-minded fools; this, in turn, reflects the novel's broader exploration of the nature of reality and fantasy.

Quixote also spoke earlier of the power of chivalry tales to improve people's lives, contradicting the claim that such stories lack the literary realism required to be morally instructive. Quixote here seems proven correct—his adventures instill readers with wholesome delight.

> And so, O Sancho, our works must not stray beyond the limits imposed by the Christian religion that we profess. In slaying giants, we must slay pride; in our generosity and magnanimity, we must slay envy; in our tranquil demeanor and serene disposition, we must slay anger; in eating as little as we do and keeping vigil as much as we do, we must slay gluttony and somnolence; in our faithfulness to those whom we have made the mistresses of our thoughts, we must slay lewdness and lust; in wandering all over the world in search of opportunities to become famous knights as well as good Christians, we must slay sloth.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), Sancho Panza

Related Themes:

Page Number: 536

Explanation and Analysis

Quixote notes that "fame is a powerful motivator," a quest for immortality in that it guarantees that one's stories will be told after they're gone (and, indeed, at this point Quixote's own story has been recorded within the world of the novel itself). Yet because fame is fleeting and inherently more concerned with this mortal world than the "glory of the life to come," he and Sancho must, through knight errantry, fight against the seven deadly sins as put forth by Christianity in order to secure a place in heaven.

In a way, this positions knight errantry itself as a sort of religion, or at least presents Quixote's faith in knighthood as akin to religious belief. For Quixote, knight errantry is a means to actively fight against the seven sins both within himself and in the world around him—it is a sort of prayer, an attempt to enact Christian morality in his own life.

Interestingly, Cervantes was writing shortly before the dawn of the Enlightenment, when reliance on reason largely overtook reliance on mysticism and faith. So while Quixote's pseudo-religiosity here can perhaps be read as support for the Catholicism of Cervantes's time, it's also possible, given the impending, massive cultural shifts soon to come, to read this moment as *mocking* religious belief. Throughout the novel chivalry tales are deemed fantastical, and Quixote mad for his very literal loyalty to them; the implicit equation of knight errantry with Christian practices would, then, implicitly suggest the madness of religious faith.

Part 2, Chapter 17 Quotes

> ...he sometimes thought [Quixote] sane and sometimes mad, because what he said was coherent, elegant and well expressed, and what he did was absurd, foolhardy and stupid.

Related Characters: Don Diego de Miranda, Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 598

Explanation and Analysis

Following Quixote's insistence on "fighting" two lions, the hidalgo Don Diego is utterly confused by the man's behavior. The narrator notes that Don Diego hasn't read the first part of Quixote's story, and as such doesn't know about his specific form of madness. Instead, he regards Quixote "as a sane man with madness in him, as a madman with sane tendencies." That is, Quixote does crazy things, but can eloquently justify his actions, however foolish or absurd. This is in keeping with other characters' observations of Quixote's behavior throughout the novel, and underscores the internal consistency of his madness. Quixote lives in a world of imagination, but that world of imagination still contains its own rules, customs, and logic.

This moment is also a jab at chivalry tales in general, whose heightened air of romance and nobility often masks the fact that the actions of their characters—when taken literally, as Quixote does—can be totally absurd.

Part 2, Chapter 24 Quotes

❝ I cannot bring myself to believe that everything recorded in this chapter happened to the brave Don Quixote exactly as described... Yet I can't believe that Don Quixote was lying, because he was the most honest hidalgo and the noblest knight of his time: he couldn't have told a lie to save himself from being executed. ... so I merely record it, without affirming either that it is false or that it is true.

Related Characters: Cide Hamete Benengeli (speaker), Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:  

Page Number: 648

Explanation and Analysis

The novel contains multiple authorial interjections (really, interjections from the fictional narrator) commenting on the veracity and meaning of the story at hand. Here, the narrator is referencing the "original" words of "author" Cide Hamete Benengeli, as first viewed by an original "translator" (none of whom are real; this has all been constructed by Cervantes). Cide asserts that he is simply a scribe, or a messenger, for the tale that follows—which is too fantastical to be true, yet paradoxically comes from someone he views as a completely honest man.

This latter point is ironic, though not necessarily wrong; Quixote may live in a world of imagination, but he genuinely *believes* that world to be true. As such, he doesn't lie, but rather strictly adheres to his own internal truth—even if that truth contradicts the "truth" of the world around him. In this way, he really *is* an honest man. Cide here also refuses to determine the ultimate veracity of the tale to come, leaving it to the reader to decide what really happened and what did not. This is a sort of meta-commentary on the novel's broader ideas about the subjective nature of truth and the importance of perspective in determining reality.

Part 2, Chapter 31 Quotes

❝ ...Don Quixote was amazed by what was happening; and that was the first day when he was fully convinced that he was a real knight errant, not a fantasy one, seeing himself treated in the same way as he'd read that such knights used to be treated in centuries past.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:   

Page Number: 693

Explanation and Analysis

Quixote and Sancho encounter a Duke and Duchess who happen to be fans, having read of the duo's adventures in *The Ingenious Hidalgo*, and who invite them back to their country house. There, the Duke and Duchess endeavor to recreate the chivalric world of the story they love around their guests, and to treat Quixote with the respect deserved by a knight errant.

Though their behavior may appear somewhat condescending (indeed, they eventually play cruel pranks on Quixote and Sancho), and though they view Quixote and Sancho more as characters from a book rather than real people, this episode sparks newfound optimism in Quixote, who had not long before been losing faith in the world around him. This would again suggest that the so-called "literary realism" earlier put forth by the priest is not a pre-requisite for work to have meaning or moral value; instead, simple idealism can change the world. Quixote's adventures have inspired others, and they now come full-circle to inspire himself.

This moment is strange, however, in the sense that Quixote only now appears to fully believe his own fantasy. There exists a tension throughout the novel between Quixote's imagination and the world around him, yet he does not actually hallucinate fantastical things; rather, he *imagines* them, and then trusts his imagination—he sees "in his imagination what he didn't see and what didn't exist." Seeing the "real" world finally line up with his imagination, then, perhaps throws Quixote a bit, as he is so used to fighting against what his senses tell him is real.

Part 2, Chapter 32 Quotes

❝ My intentions are always directed towards worthy ends, that is to say to do good to all and harm nobody; and whether the man who believes this, puts it into practice and devotes his life to it deserves to be called a fool is something for Your Graces, most excellent Duke and Duchess, to determine.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker), The Duke and the Duchess

Related Themes:

Page Number: 701

Explanation and Analysis

While at the country home of the Duke and Duchess, a priest recognizes Quixote as the mad knight from the famous book and rudely scolds him; the priest had not been a fan of Quixote's exploits and insists he go home and give up his fantasy. Quixote—appearing ever more self-assured throughout the second part of the novel—gives an impassioned speech in response, in which he declares that those who have never lived a life of chivalry—including clergymen—have no grounds on which to judge him. He proudly declares the basis for his pursuit of knight errantry, underscoring his adherence to deeply-held ideals. That Quixote's madness pushes him to devote his life to doing good, as he asserts here, again suggests the nobility of his madness and raises a broader philosophical question: do intentions make the man?

The novel doesn't explicitly answer this, but it does call into question the motives of those who—like the priest—are so offended by Quixote's madness; it would seem they view Quixote's self-assured fantasy as a dangerous break from societal norms and expectations—the same norms and expectations that grant them authority.

Part 2, Chapter 74 Quotes

❝ My mind has been restored to me, and it is now clear and free, without those gloomy shadows of ignorance cast over me by my wretched, obsessive reading of those detestable books of chivalry. Now I can recognize their absurdity and their deceitfulness, and my only regret is that this discovery has come so late that it leaves me no time to make amends by reading other books that might be a light for my soul.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 976

Explanation and Analysis

After returning home Quixote comes down with a fever and sleeps for days. Upon waking up, he declares that he is now sane, completely free of the delusions that fueled his actions throughout the novel. That he regains his sanity after sleep suggests that he is finally waking up from a dream, in a way. Where before he viewed chivalry tales as morally instructive—stories that made him a better man—he now looks back on them as full of deceit and folly. It's true that his delusions led him into frequent danger and trouble, but Quixote's renunciation of *everything* about chivalry in this moment also feels somewhat tragic; he is rejecting delusions, yes, but also the wonder and imagination that fueled his epic journey.

❝ You must congratulate me, my good sirs, because I am no longer Don Quixote de la Mancha but Alonso Quixano, for whom my way of life earned me the nickname of "the Good". I am now the enemy of Amadis of Gaul and the whole infinite horde or his descendants; now all those profane histories of knight-errantry are odious to me; now I acknowledge my folly and the peril in which I was placed by reading them; now, by God's mercy, having at long last learned my lesson, I abominate them all.

Related Characters: Don Quixote de la Mancha (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 977

Explanation and Analysis

Believing his is going to die, Quixote continues his final confession by not only renouncing chivalry, but his name

itself. He again becomes Alonso Quixano, albeit with the added moniker of "the Good"—which would suggest a certain virtue in this return to sanity. Indeed, this moment could be read as the triumph of a madman over his delusions. However, the loss of Quixote also feels like a loss of self. It is, at the very least, a loss of the character readers have come to know and love over the past thousand pages.

Throughout the novel Quixote's madness has been presented as at once absurd and noble, in that it has pushed Quixote to fight for deeply-held ideals and inspired a sense of adventure, self-reliance, and wonder in both himself and all who read his story. Madness made Quixote stand apart from the strict, narrow-minded world in which he lives, which makes his return sanity feel somewhat like a defeat rather than a triumphant return to self. That he dies shortly after this confession could thus be read as the passing of a man finally at peace, or as evidence that sanity—at least, the complete rejection of imagination—spells the death of all that makes life exciting and unique.

> For me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him; it was for him to act, for me to write; we two are one.

Related Characters: Cide Hamete Benengeli (speaker), Don Quixote de la Mancha

Related Themes:

Page Number: 981

Explanation and Analysis

These lines appear in the final moments of the story, after Quixote has renounced his madness and died. On one level, this moment makes clear that, for all his mockery, the narrator maintains great affection for his creation. So closely does he identify with Quixote that they are in fact "one" man. Perhaps, this moment suggests, Quixote represents the author's dream—his own foray into fantasy—of what he could be if only he could transcend the chains of sanity and societal expectations.

This quote is also a direct repudiation of the spurious second part of Quixote's story written by another author, which the narrator has denounced multiple times in the novel. There really *was* a second volume written by another author around 1614, which pushed Cervantes to finish his own volume. By writing that Quixote is only for the narrator to "write," Cervantes is establishing ownership of his characters and attempting to proactively reject any other outside attempts to continue Quixote's story. Quixote's tale—and, by extension, the world of chivalry and knights errant—is truly over.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1, PROLOGUE

Cervantes begins his novel with a series of anxieties and complaints. He wants to believe that his book is brilliant and beautiful, because he is its parent, though he also refers to himself as its "stepfather"; but "like gives birth to like," so the book must be riddled with all of the flaws of its author, who is foolish and unlearned. Moreover, since Cervantes first imagined the book in prison, the book must also mirror prison's confinement and unpleasantness. Cervantes urges the reader to make up her own mind about this strange creation.

The author begins by telling us that, above all else, he is not to be trusted. He loves his book unreasonably, like a parent loves a child, so there's a certain clarity that must be absent in his perspective. He also suggests that the book resembles its author and the unique circumstances of its creation, whereas realism holds that the book resembles the world.

The author wishes that he could have avoided writing any decorative front matter for the novel. The prologue, he says, was harder to write than the novel itself. Once, he complained to a friend of his that the novel was boring, unoriginal, and unlearned, because it didn't include any notes, marginalia, quotations, or poems by famous authors. His friend scolded Cervantes for his laziness and advised him to write the poems himself and credit them to famous poets, ignoring any objections from academics. Then his friend listed some topical Latin maxims for Cervantes to use when appropriate, and suggested that he give famous ancient names to characters and places so that he can explain the names in endnotes. The friend promised to fill up Cervantes' book with all sorts of learned notes.

First of all, we must certainly assume that the friend in question is Cervantes himself, conducting a satirical internal dialogue about contemporary measures of literary quality. On the one hand, thinks Cervantes, literary quality is usually measured by scholarly quotes and poems, and since there are none in his novel, it must not be of high quality. But, he responds to himself, if it is so easy to just tack them on to any finished work, they must be merely extraneous decorations, rather than signs of true knowledge or wisdom. He is gently mocking the literary trends of his day.

Most importantly, says the friend, there is no real need to cite scholars and philosophers because the purpose of the book is completely new. The book was written to mock chivalric romances, so all it needs to do is imitate and satirize these romances. Above all, it should instruct and delight all who read it, simply and straightforwardly.

Cervantes (in the guise of his sensible friend) informs us that the novel is primarily a satire of chivalric romances, popular medieval stories about knights who go on noble, dangerous adventures to win love and glory. Yet the author himself warned us that he is not to be trusted. This is his stated *purpose; whether or not it is the novel's* true *purpose is for us to decide.*

The author says that his friend's words made such a deep impression on him that he decided quote them in full in the preface. He wants the reader's gratitude not for Don Quixote but for the hilarious Sancho Panza. The prologue is followed by a series of poems, written by fictional and invented characters in praise of the novel, its heroes and heroines, and Don Quixote's horse Rocinante.

The author's "friend" advised the author to invent poems of praise and attribute them to famous personages, and here the author takes his advice. Right away, the book becomes a little blurry on questions of authorship. Why should the author warn us that such poems are faked by the author himself, but present them anyway?

PART 1, CHAPTER 1

The author introduces a rather poor and unglamorous hidalgo, a country gentleman of nearly fifty years whose last name might be Quixada, Quesada, or Quesana. The hidalgo lives with a young niece and a middle-aged housekeeper in some little village in La Mancha, a region in central Spain. He enjoys nothing so much as reading chivalric romances, and takes especial pleasure in their elegant and confusing turns of phrase; he is intimately familiar with the histories of the famous knights of old, like Sir Belianis and Amadis of Gaul. He spends so much time reading these romances that he loses his sanity and comes to believe that everything written in the romances is absolutely true.

In ordinary chivalric romances, and in the great epics that preceded them, the heroes are beautiful, young, and strong. The hero of this story is an older man, a frail, unglamorous man whose real name translates to something like jawbone or cheesecake. Cervantes himself was in his late fifties when he published the first part of the novel, so both Cervantes and Quixote reinvent themselves at an unusually late stage in their lives.

One day, the hidalgo decides to become a knight errant himself; he plans to travel the world searching for adventures and helping people in need. He cleans off an ancient suit of armor and adds a homemade cardboard visor to the helmet. Then he names his old, frail horse 'Rocinante,' to honor its new position as the horse of a famous knight errant, and he renames himself Don Quixote de la Mancha. Every knight errant is in love with a beautiful lady, so Don Quixote selects for his beloved a girl named Aldonza Lorenzo – a pretty peasant girl from a nearby village, whom Don Quixote had never met, and who may or may not have existed. He renames her Dulcinea del Toboso.

The hidalgo loses his sanity when he starts to believe that the romances show the world as it really is. But the romances distort the world in many crucial ways. One could say that their failures to represent the world truly, their failures of realism, are the cause and content of the hidalgo's madness. But his madness, here, is also an act of self-invention: he alters himself by renaming himself. In the guise of Don Quixote, he has entered the chivalric world in his imagination.

PART 1, CHAPTER 2

Soon afterwards, one morning in July, Don Quixote puts on his armor, mounts his horse, and begins his first sally as a knight errant. He worries that he hasn't yet been knighted, and resolves to ask this favor of the first person he encounters in his travels. He imagines that the author who records his adventures will describe the morning in lofty and romantic terms, and even writes some of the description in his head.

Quixote is not entirely blind to the discrepancies between his life and that of a knight errant's, but he believes that the discrepancies are easily bridged. The question of authorship also arises: if Quixote is writing the description of the morning in the story, is he perhaps also writing the story itself?

After travelling all day, he arrives at an **inn** at nightfall. But since he sees everything as it would appear in his favorite books, he sees a beautiful castle instead of an inn, and he sees two ladies instead of the two call girls sitting by the door. He addresses them very formally, and they burst out laughing. The innkeeper steps outside and invites Don Quixote to spend the night. He helps Quixote dismount and the girls take off all his armor except his helmet and visor, which he insists on wearing inside, because the visor is attached to the helmet only by a few ribbons and he doesn't want to tear them. Inside, Don Quixote is served stale bread and salty fish; the girls have to feed him because he's using his hands to hold up his visor. The bad **food** seems to him like a very fine meal.

At the beginning of the story, two disparate worlds exist side by side, almost without touching: the world of the novel, and the world of Quixote's imagination. The world of the novel seems to be the perspective of an omniscient, objective narrator, who describes things in sober, naturalistic detail. The world of Quixote's imagination is an amalgam of chivalric romances. He sees not outward, into the narrator's world, but inward, into his imagined world. The two worlds touch comically when Quixote interacts with people, who to the reader are suddenly both ladies and call girls at once.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3

When he finishes **eating**, Don Quixote falls on his knees and begs the innkeeper to knight him – but only after he spends a sleepless night in the castle's chapel, as custom dictates. The innkeeper realizes that his guest is not entirely sane and decides to go along with the game. He tells Quixote that he himself was once a great knight; he also tells him that the chapel had burned down, but that he can keep vigil anywhere he likes. He then asks Don Quixote whether he has any money; Don Quixote does not, because knights in chivalric romances do not carry money. The innkeeper replies that money is simply a detail that the authors did not bother to record, and that real knights errant and their squires always carry money and medicine.

The episode at the inn shows Quixote's attempts to behave in perfect accordance with the rules of chivalry, as they are described in his old books. But since the world around him is so different from the world of the books, he is often forced to compromise, to adjust his idealistic vision to the mundane and complicated reality of sixteenth-century Spain. Instead of a chapel, he must make do with a yard. Instead of leading a pure, ascetic, penniless life, he must worry about money and salves.

Don Quixote goes out to a side yard, places his armor on top of a well, and begins his vigil. As he's pacing up and down, a guest comes out to give his animals some water. When he reaches to move Don Quixote's armor, our knight cries out to stop him; when the guest ignores him and flings the armor aside, Don Quixote smashes him unconscious with his lance. He does the same thing to another guest. Friends of the two men run outside and pelt Quixote with stones, but Quixote and the innkeeper object so violently that they stop.

Quixote must also compromise the ideals of knighthood. A knight's duty is to help afflicted people, to fight injustice and protect the helpless – but knights are also proud, and must always defend their honor. In responding to a perceived slight, Quixote badly injures two innocent men. The rules of chivalry, when carried into the real world, can be contradictory.

The frustrated innkeeper decides to knight Quixote right away. He slaps Quixote on the neck and thumps his shoulder with Quixote's sword. The two call girls help Quixote put on his sword, and he rides off into the early morning.

Quixote finally becomes a knight in very inglorious fashion. There is no vigil, no castle, and no princess. But Quixote is satisfied. In his imagination, he has become a knight.

PART 1, CHAPTER 4

As he rides away from the inn, Don Quixote decides to return home to gather money and supplies and to find himself a squire. Suddenly he hears moaning from the woods nearby, and when he follows the sound he finds a fifteen-year-old boy being flogged by a big farmer. He rides up immediately and challenges the farmer to a duel. The farmer explains that the boy is a shepherd in his employ, and that he is being punished for his carelessness. Don Quixote demands that the farmer pay the boy all the wages owed, on pain of death; the farmer promises to pay the boy later. At this point, the boy objects that as soon as Quixote is out of sight the farmer will beat him more than ever, but Quixote assures him that the farmer will honor his oath.

Quixote is delighted to come upon a person in need, because helping such people is the knight's vocation. The world has shown him that knights are indeed still necessary. But he does not stop to investigate whether or not the boy deserves the beating he's receiving. It seems that in the world of the chivalry books, only knights can mete out just punishment: when a farmer punishes, he is simply injuring someone weaker than he is.

As soon as Don Quixote rides away, the farmer ties the boy to the tree and beats him more brutally than before. Meanwhile, Don Quixote rides on in a happy and self-satisfied mood. He encounters a group of merchants, whom he takes for errant knights, and resolves to act as a knight would act in one of his books. He raises his lance and demands that they acknowledge that Dulcinea is the most beautiful lady in the world. The confused merchants ask to see this Dulcinea, but Quixote insists that they must acknowledge her beauty from afar. The merchant jokes that even if the lady were deformed and strange-looking, he would admit what Quixote wants just to please him, but the joke enrages Quixote so much that he charges at the man. But Rocinante trips and flings Quixote off, and one of the travellers beats him badly. The travellers leave the battered knight lying helplessly on the ground.

These two episodes both demonstrate the disconnect between intention and consequence in Quixote's actions. Quixote intends to help the young shepherd, to save him from a beating and to ensure that he receives his wages. He thinks that the farmer's promise is enough, since promises are hardly ever broken in the world of chivalry books. But Quixote's intervention only does the boy harm. In the second episode, Quixote wants to glorify his beloved, in the end he only injures an innocent man. The gap between intention and consequence, an extension of Quixote's madness, corresponds to failures of realism in chivalric novels.

PART 1, CHAPTER 5

Since he is too hurt to move, Don Quixote decides to pass the time by reciting passages from a book about a certain Marquis de Mantua. When a farmer from his village passes him, Quixote speaks to the man as though he were the Marquis himself. The farmer recognizes him and helps him back to their village. He tries to bring the hidalgo to his senses by pointing out that he is not any of those men from books but a farmer called Pedro Alonso, and the knight himself is Señor Quixana. Quixote replies that he can be any knight he likes, and all of them together, because his accomplishments will be greater than all others.

Friends and strangers consider Quixote insane because he does not recognize certain accepted truths. If many people look at a building and call it an inn, and one man looks at the building and calls it a castle, the man is considered insane. In a way, it is true than the building is an inn only because many people agree that it is an inn. But here Quixote begins to define truth as possibility, as something imagined and willed.

When it gets dark, the farmer takes Quixote back to his own house, where Quixote's friends the priest and the barber are discussing the knight's disappearance with his housekeeper and his niece. Both women blame books of chivalry for Don Quixote's absence and both believe him to be a little mad. The farmer carries Quixote to his bed, where he tells the gathered company that he received his bruises while battling ten giants. Meanwhile, the farmer tells the concerned priest the full story.

The truth, for Quixote, is the world as it should be; and for him the world should be as it is in the chivalry books. From one perspective, it is true that Quixote received his bruises when he was pelted with stones at the inn. But, following Quixote's aspirational sort of truth, his bruises should have come from valiant battle. The past has been rewritten in his imagination.

PART 1, CHAPTER 6

The next day, while Don Quixote is sleeping, the priest, the barber, the niece, and the housekeeper decide to look through Quixote's books, which they consider to be the root of his problem. The housekeeper wants the priest to sprinkle holy water over them, but the more worldly priest knows the best way to disarm the harmful books is to burn them. They go through the books one by one to decide which deserve to go into the flames; the priest has put himself in charge, and his criteria are not very clear. He condemns some books for their bad moral influence, some for their absurdity, some for dullness. He also throws all the heftier volumes out onto the burn pile out of laziness. Some of the books he spares because he has read and enjoyed them; this includes the *Galatea* of Cervantes, whom the priest knows personally.

The book often satirizes false or hypocritical figures of authority like the priest. He has complete confidence in his judgment, which he considers representative of an especially sane and virtuous segment of society. He is certain that he knows how to identify morally upstanding, realistic, and entertaining books, because he believes there is a single correct perspective on morality, realism, and pleasure. Yet the reader can see that his judgment is far from impartial, so his self-confidence and self-seriousness become comical.

PART 1, CHAPTER 7

Soon, Don Quixote begins to shout, leaps out of bed and charges here and there with his sword, thinking that he is a fictional knight called Reynald of Montalbán. He falls asleep again and the housekeeper burns all the condemned books. The priest and the barber decide to wall off the room that had held the chivalry books and to tell Don Quixote that it was all an **enchanter**'s doing. When Don Quixote gets out of bed two days later and finds his library missing, the women tell him just that. Quixote decides that a famous enchanter wishes him ill.

Theoretically, the priest, the barber, the niece, and the housekeeper conspire to cure Quixote's madness and retrieve him into a world of simple truth, peace, and common sense. Yet they make use of destruction and deceit. Though the four friends say their only aim is Quixote's well-being, their behavior is full of hostility – the subconscious hostility of people fighting for their version of reality.

Don Quixote spends the next twelve days talking to his friends the priest and the barber and convincing a neighbor of his, a farmer called Sancho Panza, to go adventuring with him as his squire. He tells Sancho that very likely he will soon make him governor of an island, as a result of one adventure or another. He gathers money and provisions in preparation for his second sally. They ride out at night without saying goodbye to friends and relatives.

If Quixote were to say to his four well-wishers that he will soon give them islands, they would consider the promise absurd and impossible. Sancho Panza is a little more malleable in his ideas: his sense of the world is not quite as fixed. He can imagine a world where he receives a present of an island, and he decides to believe in it.

PART 1, CHAPTER 8

Soon after they leave the village, Don Quixote and Sancho come upon thirty or forty windmills. Where there are windmills, Don Quixote sees giants with very long arms, despite Sancho's objections. He charges a moving windmill with his lance, and it shatters the lance and drags him and his horse painfully across the ground. When Sancho runs over to help him, he tells his squire that the same **enchanter** that stole his library must have turned the giants into windmills at the last moment.

Quixote saw the inn as a castle from the beginning to the end of his earlier adventure. But this time, he sees giants only at the beginning; afterwards, he sees windmills. He initially looks inward, into the chivalric world where large looming things are always fearsome giants, but the blows of reality force him to look outward.

They resume their travels in the direction of the Pass of Lapicé. Don Quixote plans to replace his broken lance with a thick branch, as did some fictional knight, and tells Sancho that he will never complain about any pain. Sancho replies that he complains about all his pains.

Though it's pain that turns Quixote from the imagined to the real, he makes a point of discrediting pain: matters of the body are much less important to him than matters of the soul. Sancho, we see, is the opposite.

They spend the night in a forest, where Don Quixote makes his new lance from a branch. He stays awake all night thinking about Dulcinea, like the knights in his books. He doesn't **eat** breakfast in the morning for a similar reason. In preparation for adventures, Don Quixote tells Sancho that he must not fight knights – only other squires and laymen.

Quixote chooses to ignore pain, exhaustion, and hunger because he's imitating the ethereal knights in his books. Of course, the fictional knights don't eat or sleep because the authors chose to omit such crude details. So Quixote's behavior is life imitating unrealistic art.

They soon come upon two friars on mules and a coach surrounded by footmen carrying a lady on her way to Seville. Quixote decides that the two friars are **enchanters** who have abducted a princess. He demands that they release the princess; when the confused friars deny the charges, Quixote charges at them with his lance. One friar jumps off his mule and the other rides away as quickly as he can. Sancho starts to strip the fallen friar, considering the clothes fair spoils of battle, but the friar's servants beat him up.

Cervantes often puts religious figures in Quixote's way, perhaps to emphasize the ludicrous gap between intention and consequence. Quixote intends to help a troubled princess; instead, he beats up a monk. We've noticed by now that Quixote is very impulsive. The trait is most likely a real world reflection of unreflective, action-loving chivalry books.

Meanwhile, Don Quixote greets the lady in the carriage and asks her to present herself to Dulcinea del Toboso and describe the adventure in full. The Basque coachman overhears Quixote and tells him to get away, and they begin to battle. The coachman smashes Quixote badly on the shoulder, but the knight grits his teeth and advances. Here, the narrator says, the author stopped his story; but the second author managed to find the conclusion to the tale, which is told in the next section.

On the face of it, Quixote is getting into random destructive brawls with strangers. But there is a clear logic to his actions. A knight must always be dignified and brave, because he is the final stronghold of nobility, courage, and altruism in a decaying world. So Quixote must bravely battle anyone who speaks to him disrespectfully, or else he is betraying the chivalric order and everything it represents.

PART 1, CHAPTER 9

The narrator begins by expressing his disappointment that such a wonderful story ended so prematurely, and says that a great knight like Don Quixote deserves to have a sage of his own to record all of his deeds and thoughts – since all the knights of old had such sages. Since some of the books in Quixote's library are recent, after finishing the first part of the history the author determined to search for the continuation of the knight's story. He says that he found it in a heap of papers for sale in Toledo, written entirely in Arabic by a historian called Cide Hamete Benengeli. He paid a Moorish man (a term then applied to Muslim people of Arabic or African descent) to translate the entire text.

Here begins a complicated tangle regarding authorship. The author explains that he looked for a continuation of Quixote's tale after reading the first eight chapters: this means that he is not their author, but something like their collector. He pieced together the first eight chapters with the translation of the rest. Of course, we readers know that this authorship story is only a sub-narrative of the novel. Cervantes wrote the book from beginning to end.

The first notebook begins with an illustration of the moment before the fight between Don Quixote and the coachman. Rocinante looks very skinny and weak, and Sancho is short and round. The author notes that the following history might be inaccurate, since, he says, it is widely known that Arabic people often lie, and the author probably did not quite do justice to Quixote's adventures. This is reprehensible, says the author, because histories must be absolutely accurate and unbiased, since "history is the mother of truth." If the book is flawed in any way, it is this Benengeli's fault and not Quixote's.

Both the narrator and the characters express racist opinions about Muslim people and Jewish people. The Spanish Inquisition began in 1478, a little over a century before Cervantes wrote his novel, and Quixote's time is characterized by heightened religious hostilities. It's possible that the book's racism is meant to accurately depict the historical period.

This new history begins by saying that the coachman delivered the first blow, which took off part of Don Quixote's helmet and half his ear on his left side. Then the angry knight struck the coachman very hard straight on the head, so that the heavily bleeding man fell off his horse. Quixote agreed not to kill the coachman once the frightened ladies in the coach promised to meet with Dulcinea and tell her about his great victory.

Quixote's imagined knightly adventures result in very real physical injuries. In Quixote's pain and wounds, the real and the imagined worlds collide. Quixote is not simply walking around in a fantasy land, as children do: the real world crashes into Quixote's imagined world and demands recognition.

PART 1, CHAPTER 10

When Sancho sees that his master has won the fight, he comes over to ask him for the promised island. Don Quixote explains that this isn't an island-acquiring kind of adventure, but that islands are surely in their future. When they ride away, Sancho suggests that they hide out in a church in case members of the Holy Brotherhood (a kind of religious police force) come looking to punish Quixote for the harm he caused to the coachman, but the Quixote responds that knights are not subject to such laws. The knight and the squire discuss Quixote's bravery and then Sancho dresses Quixote's wounds. Quixote wishes he had with him a potion called the Balsam of Fierabras, which instantly heals all wounds.

Though Sancho is a realist who sees inns and windmills instead of castles and giants, he admires Quixote and he's cautiously open to his ideas. He knows that peasant farmers don't usually come into possession of islands, but he doesn't let his experience dictate the range of the possible – in other words, he thinks there might be mysteries in the world that haven't entered into his particular experience. The priest and the barber, on the other hand, believe that their perspectives are the only possible true and sane perspectives.

When Quixote notices the harm done to his helmet, he swears (like a knight of old) not to **eat** bread or sleep with his wife until he metes out revenge on the coachman. Sancho points out that the man has probably been punished enough, and Quixote retracts his oath; instead, he decides not to eat bread until he wins Mambrino's helmet (a famous helmet from a book).

Just as Sancho allows Quixote to revise his realism, Quixote sometimes allows Sancho to revise his idealism, his knightly vision of the world as it should be. In a chivalry book, a knight would have his revenge no matter what. But Sancho points to the particular circumstances of the offense, and Quixote adjusts the ideal to suit the real.

Sancho offers Quixote some food, but he replies that knights in books **eat** rarely, sometimes not for a month at a time – they usually eat during lavish banquets, or they gather things in forests. Sancho apologizes for his ignorance, explaining that he cannot read or write, and says that he will carry only nuts and berries for Quixote from now on. The knight objects that he *can* eat other things if need be. They ride on, and when night comes they decide to sleep under the stars with some goatherds.

The elaborate dignities of knightly life often clash with the needs of the body. A proud and noble knight doesn't beg or scrounge for food: therefore, he eats only when he is showered with luxuries at court. Quixote believes in dignity and nobility, but he doesn't want to starve. He decides to allow for some flexibility in the rules.

PART 1, CHAPTER 11

The goatherds had been boiling goat meat in a pot over a flame, and they invite Sancho and Don Quixote to share their meal. Quixote magnanimously invites Sancho to **eat** with him as equals, because everyone is equal in the pursuit of knight-errantry. After the meal, Don Quixote makes a sentimental speech about the golden age of mankind, when food was shared and readily available. Everyone was simple and truthful, modest and chaste. Now the world is darker and more complicated, so knights errant must defend the innocent and helpless. The goatherds listen silently and uncomprehendingly.

Sixteenth-century Spain was a place of sharply defined social hierarchies. Quixote is a hidalgo, so he is more noble than Sancho, who is a peasant. But in knight errantry, a person's values and virtues matter more than birth: nobility is based on merit, not heredity. As Quixote makes clear, his idea of chivalry is deeply sentimental and nostalgic. His role, he believes, is to bring back a time of goodness and decency.

Soon, a young man who knows the goatherds comes along and sings a love ballad he wrote, accompanying himself on the violin. The ballad describes a beautiful but stony-hearted girl who won't reply to her lover's pleas. After the song, a goatherd applies rosemary and salt to Quixote's ear wound.

The goatherds may not understand Quixote's theories about goodness, but they seem to understand certain basic aspects of human well-being much better than he does. They feed him a nourishing meal and heal his wounds, as though he were a child.

PART 1, CHAPTER 12

Later that evening, a boy comes by to say that a famous student and shepherd named Grisóstomo died of unhappy love for a shepherdess named Marcela this morning. His friend Ambrosio is insisting that he be buried just as he specified, out in the wild where he first saw the shepherdess, and the goatherds decide to go see the burial.

Quixote's own village does not seem like a place where beautiful young men fall so deeply in love that they die of it. But Quixote stumbles on a situation, indeed a little world, that is as romantic and high-minded as the world of his books.

One of the goatherds tells Quixote that the dead man was a wealthy gentleman, a former student at Salamanca University, and a skilled poet. He had recently gotten a large inheritable and was handsome, kind, and well-liked. One day, a few months after he returned from Salamanca, he and his student friend Ambrosio dressed up as shepherds and went into the hills to follow around the shepherdess Marcela, with whom Grisóstomo had fallen in love.

The world he enters (which is probably not so unusual in the villages and pastures of sixteenth-century Spain) is one where people will abandon their lives for love - where people are willing to reinvent themselves entirely. The ideal of love is more important than status or possessions to Grisóstomo.

Marcela, the shepherd continues, is the beautiful daughter of a rich farmer. She became so beautiful that every man who saw her fell in love with her, but she didn't want to marry just yet. One day she decided to become a shepherdess, and soon all sorts of poor and rich men became shepherds to be closer to her. But though she is universally adored, she does not love any man or give any man favors, which makes all the men rail against her cruelty and coldness. After the conversation ends, Quixote and Sancho sleep in a shepherd's hut – Quixote thinking all night of Dulcinea, Sancho snoring peacefully.

Love is an overpowering force, in this world. This plotline is like a little fairytale set within the larger, harsher, cruder world of the novel – the sort of fairytale that Quixote loves. The only thing the fairytale is missing is a noble knight to defend the innocent, beautiful lady. Here Quixote steps in. Though the world around him often mocks and punishes Quixote for his ideals, sometimes it seems to transform in his likeness.

PART 1, CHAPTER 13

The next morning the party sets out to attend the funeral. On their way they encounter a party of shepherds, horsemen, and servants, also on their way to the funeral. One of the travellers ask Don Quixote about his strange outfit, and when he responds that he's a knight errant devoted to helping the helpless, they all conclude that he is insane. To humor him and to amuse himself, one of the horsemen compares Quixote's profession to that of a monk, and Quixote replies that in some respects it is more necessary and more difficult. The horseman wonders why knights in danger commend themselves to ladies instead of to god, and Quixote replies that they commend themselves to both.

Knighthood and religion, knights and priests, are compared and connected in many ways throughout the book. Several scholars have called Quixote *the first novel to describe a world in which man has been abandoned by god. In Quixote's mission to help the helpless, he resembles the Good Samaritan (though nearly every person he meets mocks him for it). Christianity tells the weak to trust themselves to god, but Quixote makes them his own responsibility.*

The horseman asks Don Quixote to describe his beloved, and the knight describes Dulcinea's perfect beauty – a mixture of all the beauties described by poets. She is not of noble lineage, but she is not common.

Here we begin to see that Dulcinea, as she is in Quixote's imagination, may not be real. She is the ideal of woman, rather than a woman of flesh and blood.

To the side, they see twenty shepherds dressed in black carrying a bier (a plank) weighted with a corpse covered in flowers. They set it down and begin digging a grave. Ambrosio, who is among the shepherds, tells the travellers that Grisóstomo was brilliant, polite, friendly, generous, and lovely in every way, but Marcela turned him cruelly away. Before his death, he asked Ambrosio to burn the verses he wrote in her honor. A horseman named Vivaldo objects to this plan and takes on the papers from Ambrosio's hands. On it is a poem called "Song of Despair," the last thing the dead man ever wrote. Vivaldo agrees to read it out loud to the others.

Unlike other characters in this story, who have complicated, sometimes contradictory personalities and earthly, material existences, the characters in their fairy tale exist only in absolutes: absolute goodness and amiability, absolute beauty, absolute coldness. Though Don Quixote himself, as we will see, deals in many wonderful contradictions, he often sees people as either utterly good or bad, utterly beautiful or wretched.

PART 1, CHAPTER 14

The song rails again Marcela's cruelty and indifference, describes the man's profound despair, and declares his imminent death. Suddenly the beautiful Marcela herself appears on top of a hill nearby; she has come to defend herself against the many people who blame her for Grisóstomo's death. She explains (very elegantly and beautifully) that she is not obligated to love the men who love her, because true love is rare and unpredictable, and that therefore she is not to blame for anyone's lovesick suffering. She chooses to live freely in nature. After she finishes her speech and disappears back into the forest, some men rise up and follow her; but Don Quixote rises with his sword to prevent anyone from intruding on this honorable woman. Finally they bury Grisóstomo and scatter flowers on his grave.

Though the tradition of courtly love idolizes women who are beautiful, gentle, and weak, many characters in the novel admire women who are not only beautiful but also strong, willful, and intelligent, like the shepherdess Marcela. But she is unreal in a different way, because she is a collection of ideas. In a way, the men who vie to marry her want to transform her from an idea to a wife, someone who plucks chickens, wipes up dirt, births children, and in general becomes earthly and impure. Quixote wants to defend this girl made of ideas from the men who want to make her real.

PART 1, CHAPTER 15

Sancho and Don Quixote spend hours looking for Marcela to offer their protection, but she seems to have disappeared. They sit down to rest in a valley, where there also happen to be a herd of pony-mares with a group of muleteers. Rocinante tries to court the ponies, but they attack him. Don Quixote decides to avenge Rocinante by taking on the large group of men. He pummels one, and the rest surround the two friends, beat them badly, and then run away.

You may have noticed by now that most of Quixote's actions are both foolish and painfully loveable. Quixote's great charm is one of the more mysterious achievements of this novel. Does he defend Rocinante's honor because he must do so to remain a knight, or because he is selfless and soft-hearted, or because he is simply a fool?

Sancho and Quixote are left lying helplessly on the ground. Quixote decides that the beating is a punishment from the god of battles for fighting with men who are not knights, which is not allowed by the codes of chivalry. Next time they encounter non-knights, says Quixote, it is Sancho's responsibility to do battle with them. Sancho complains about his bruised ribs and asks if knight-errantly involves many such beatings. Quixote explains that many knights have suffered in their adventures, but the suffering is not dishonorable. Sancho doesn't care about honor but about his aches.

Quixote decides that his adventure ended badly only because he disobeyed the laws of chivalry - because he did not follow them precisely. Had he obeyed those laws, a bad outcome would be impossible. He believes in the integrity of the chivalric world, because he believes in its conception of human nature and human goodness, and he assumes that this conception must be upheld through elaborate rituals.

Don Quixote asks Sancho to put him on the donkey and try to find them a place to stay for the night. Sancho says wryly that he thought knights were supposed to sleep in the open air; Don Quixote explains, with a little embarrassment, that this is true only when they have no choice. Sancho does as his master asked and before long they come upon an inn, which Don Quixote thinks is a castle.

Sancho teases Quixote about his impossible rules regarding food and sleep, and Quixote hesitantly adjusts those rules. He doesn't disown them, however; he only finds that they are more lenient than he had thought, and that perhaps they do not express quite as well as he'd thought the nobility and virtue of knighthood.

PART 1, CHAPTER 16

When they arrive, the innkeeper's wife asks her pretty daughter and a servant, a strange-looking girl called Maritornes, to make up beds for the two travellers. The attic beds are paltry and uncomfortable. The girls dress the guests' wounds as best they can. Sancho explains to them that Don Quixote is a knight errant, "someone who's being beaten up one moment and being crowned emperor the next." In the meantime, Maritornes makes a secret date with a muleteer guest also staying in the attic for later that night.

In Sancho's clever and apt description, knight-errantry makes it possible for a beggar to become a king, and a king a beggar: it dashes though all social boundaries. As Quixote described earlier, knight-errantry looks backward to an imaginary paradise where all people are kind to one another, all people enjoy safety, food, and plenty, and therefore in a sense all people are equal.

Here, the author praises Benengeli for describing the sordid events that follow in such careful detail. That night, the two adventurers are kept up by their aches. Don Quixote begins to fantasize about the castle, and thinks that the innkeeper's daughter is a lovely princess that has fallen in love with him and promised to spend the night with him. Just then, Maritornes comes in looking for the muleteer. Don Quixote takes her for the lovelorn princess and takes her in his arms; all her plainness and coarseness seems to him like the most delicate beauty. He speaks to her gently and formally of her loveliness and of his fidelity to Dulcinea.

We know that, for Quixote, the boundary between imagination and reality is quite blurry. For others, this is the essence of his madness. In this episode, we see how quickly his fantasies transform into reality. As soon as he imagines that the innkeeper's daughter is a princess who loves him, his reality changes, and a lovesick princess appears.

The girl tries to break away, but Don Quixote hangs on to her. The muleteer angrily begins to pummel the knight and walk all over him, assuming that he's trying to steal his date. Soon everyone is pummeling everyone in the dark, after the innkeeper's lamp goes out. Finally everyone just returns to bed.

Once again, Quixote is punished harshly for his romantic misconceptions, for his seemingly harmless dream life. People do not take kindly to his imaginings, perhaps because they resent any challenge to their version of reality.

PART 1, CHAPTER 17

The battered Don Quixote wakes up in the dark and tells Sancho in strict confidence that the beautiful princess of the castle came to his bed to seduce him, but then some **enchanted** Moor or giant beat him very badly. Sancho complains that the enchanters got to him too, and laments his difficult path as a squire.

Quixote does not have to fall from his imagined reality; the enchanters are there to help him account for the gaps and inconsistencies in his chivalric account of events.

Don Quixote decides to make some of his magic balsam, and asks Sancho to get him oil, wine, salt, and rosemary. The innkeeper gives Sancho what he asks for; Quixote mixes a few pints together and drinks it, immediately throws up, sweats, and sleeps for three hours. On waking, he feels much better, so he concludes that the balsam has worked. Sancho has a much, much worse time with the balsam, until he thinks he's about to die; he's left shattered and exhausted. Don Quixote explains that the balsam probably only works on knights; he leaves Sancho to recover and sets out to look for more adventures.

Quixote creates a mixture that is essentially an emetic, a substance that induces vomit. But the Balsam of Fierabras is a potion, not a medicine; it has its effect not through chemical reactions but through a reaction of ideas. The earthly properties of things like oil and salt matter much less to Quixote than their spiritual or magical meanings.

When the innkeeper asks for his payment, Quixote explains that knights do not pay such fees and quickly rides away. The innkeeper then tries to get the money from Sancho, who refuses in similar terms. Suddenly four cloth-teasers staying at the **inn** decide to have a little fun and begin tossing Sancho into the sky from the middle of a blanket. Quixote hears Sancho's screams and rides back to succor him, but the cloth-teasers only stop when the fun tires them. Maritornes brings him some water and wine and they soon leave without paying, though the innkeeper takes Sancho's saddle-bags as payment.

Quixote deals mostly in abstractions of goodness and assistance, but he often fumbles in practice. He knows that knights do good in the world, and that to be a knight one must follow certain unspoken rules, including the rule that knights do not pay for food or shelter. So in theory he is doing good in the world when he refuses to pay, but in practice he is robbing a poor innkeeper.

PART 1, CHAPTER 18

As they ride away, Don Quixote says that the **enchanters** must have stopped him from helping Sancho, and Sancho says that with all these enchanters and misadventures maybe they should go home and look after the harvest. Quixote says that there's no pleasure like defeating an enemy, but Sancho counters that their only pleasures have been awful beatings. Suddenly they see two dust clouds approaching them from either direction; they are herds of sheep, but Don Quixote thinks they are armies. Quixote takes a story from one of the books to explain the battle.

Quixote sees their adventures thus far in a golden light – the imaginary halo of how they should be, how they will be, and all they represent. For him, even the painful and humiliating adventures are colored pink by good intentions. But Sancho can't see this halo very well. He only sees a series of pathetic series of beatings and absurdities.

"Seeing in his imagination what he didn't see and what didn't exist," Don Quixote describes in great detail the soldiers not approaching them, as Sancho listens with excitement. Suddenly, though, he hears sheep bleating and becomes suspicious. Don Quixote charges at the sheep and the shepherds pelt him with stones. A stone bruises his ribs and some others smash his potion bottle, some teeth and some fingers. He slides off his horse, and the shepherds ride away. Don Quixote explains to Sancho that **enchanters** turned the armies into sheep to spite him. Quixote had had a little of the balsam before it shattered, and both of the friends throw up – one from the emetic, the other from disgust.

Quixote does and does not see: seeing what is not there is a hallmark of madness, but Quixote also sees what is, in some sense, there – he is looking at a picture in his mind's eye. His complete faith in this picture is a hallmark of his insanity, because it marks his inability to distinguish fantasy from reality; but it also presents itself as a kind of sanity, because it is sane to believe in something one so sees so clearly.

Sancho decides to leave Don Quixote and go home. The knight perceives his squire's unhappiness and assures him that better times are ahead. They realize that the saddlebags are missing, so they have nothing to eat. Sancho asks Quixote to gather the nuts and berries he's always talking about, but Quixote admits that he'd rather have bread and fish. He laments his many missing teeth and they set off to find a place to sleep.

Sancho's faith in Quixote's imaginary world is wavering – it has been waning and waxing ever since they set out. Quixote is a little down at heart as well. He sets his sights on earth for a little while, thinking about bread, fish, teeth, and sleep.

PART 1, CHAPTER 19

When night comes, the two friends have neither **food** nor a place to sleep. Suddenly they notice lights coming at them from a distance. Soon they see a group of figures in white carrying torches and a plank covered in a black mourning cloth, and followed by six men on mules. Imagining this is an adventure from his books, Quixote approaches them and tells them his duty is "either to punish you for the wrong you have done or to avenge you for the wrong done you." The riders brush him off, so Quixote grabs one of their mules by the bridle, which makes the mule and rider fall over. The riders shout insults at him, so he charges the whole group, wounding many people and scattering the rest, who seem to be unarmed.

The world in Quixote's eyes is divided into the wrongdoers and the wronged, along with a few knight-avengers. Quixote believes that everyone he meets requires either punishment or help. This misconception, too, derives from the particularities of the chivalry books he loves: nearly every plot point in such books is a knight battling evil, helping the innocent, or loving chastely. In making Quixote's life imitate art, Cervantes is satirizing the omissions and naiveté of chivalry books. But perhaps Cervantes is also praising Quixote for his faithful reading.

One of the fallen figures tells Quixote that he is a student and priest who has come with eleven other priests to bring a dead body to its funeral. The man died of fever, and Quixote is satisfied that he does not have to avenge his death. The man thinks that Quixote has done not good but harm, because he has maimed many innocent people, but Quixote explains that he had no choice but to attack a group that looked so suspicious. Sancho takes some of the group's **food** and decides to rename his master Knight of the Sorry Face, because he looks very pathetic at that moment. They walk a little, settle down in a valley, and make a nice meal of the priests' food.

Once again, Quixote has insulted and hurt a group of defenseless priests. As readers, we feel sorry for everyone involved. But it's important to note that priests are not entirely innocent in this novel; remember the priest from Quixote's village who burned Quixote's books. Quixote's explanation shows that he feels compelled to act impulsively, confusing impetuousness with courage.

PART 1, CHAPTER 20

Quixote and Sancho hear the sound of rushing water, along with a frightening pounding noise. Don Quixote declares his boundless courage in a long and florid speech and decides to go investigate. Sancho points out that they can simply go around the noise and avoid unnecessary danger, begs him to consider his own fate, his wife and family, and tries to convince Quixote at least to wait until morning to go investigating. His master won't be reasoned with, noting that it's Sancho's birthright to be cowardly, while it's his duty to be brave, so Sancho decides to trick him by tying together Rocinante's hind legs. Quixote can't make Rocinante move, try as he may, so after many protests he resigns himself to waiting until morning.

Knights are supposed to be fearless, but they're also supposed to do good, not harm: these two rules seem to contradict one another quite often in Quixote's experience. To avoid danger would be cowardly, but to lead a friend with a dependent family into danger is inconsiderate. Quixote tends to focus on courage. Though he said earlier that everyone is equal in the pursuit of knight-errantry, now he claims that he was born to courage and Sancho to cowardice – that they are unequal by nature. Quixote's ideas are sincere but confused.

To pass the time, Sancho tells a story about a shepherd in love with a shepherdess. She made him so jealous that he left her, and once he left her she fell madly in love with him. The shepherd decided to go to Portugal but the shepherdess followed him there, all the way to the river between the two countries. Eager to get away from the lovesick woman, the shepherd asked a fisherman with a small boat and three hundred goats to transport him across. But the boat could only fit one person and one goat, so the fisherman had to transport each goat first, one by one by one… Here Sancho insists that Quixote keep track of each goat or else the story will end. Quixote is bemused by this request but admires the story's originality.

Sancho is trying to get his way through trickery: he made up the story to get Quixote to fall asleep counting goats. Quixote is easy to deceive and manipulate because it does not occur to him to suspect people of deceit. His vision of the world is clear and simple, single-layered and orderly. Evil villains may lie, but friends and ordinary citizens tell the truth and make their intentions clear, as Quixote does.

At this point nature calls to Sancho, but he's too frightened to wander off, so he tries to relieve himself very quietly to avoid disturbing his master. Don Quixote points out the smell, they joke about it, and spend the rest of the night chatting. When morning comes, Sancho quickly unties Rocinante. Don Quixote notices that his horse is moving once again and sets off to investigate the pounding sound. Sancho cries in fear for his master's life and decides to come with him after all.

People in chivalry books very rarely eat, drink, sleep, or perform any other basic bodily functions. Many people have thought that certain aspects of human life are too dull, repulsive, or animal to include in literature or history. But this novel is famous for helping to create a more inclusive kind of literature.

After walking a little, they see that the sound is coming from some fulling-hammers (machines used in cloth-making). They laugh at their foolishness, though Quixote is also embarrassed and angry. Sancho mocks Quixote's earlier overblown pronouncements on courage and destiny so much that the knight hits him a few times. He explains that's his job to be brave, not to distinguish among various sounds. In his anger, he alternates between calling Sancho "a miserable peasant" and very intelligent. He points out that Sancho talks more than any squire in the chivalry books, and asks Sancho to show him more respect.

Sancho's mocking is rowdy and funny, but you could say that it has philosophical value as well: it shows Quixote the contradictions and absurdities in his claims. Sancho's mocking implies that Quixote ideals are not always adequate guides to action, that there might be certain grey areas and exceptions Quixote has never considered. But Quixote holds to the idea that, for a knight, action is more important than understanding.

PART 1, CHAPTER 21

Soon, it begins to rain. In a little while, they see a man riding toward them with something gold on his head. Don Quixote is certain the man is a knight riding a noble steed and that the gold object is Mambrino's helmet, though Sancho is mocking and skeptical. The man is a barber on a donkey; he's wearing a shiny basin on his head to protect him from the rain. Quixote charges at him, and the terrified barber slides off his mule and runs away, dropping the helmet on the ground. Sancho laughs to see his master so excited over a barber's basin, but Quixote explains that an **enchanter** must have transformed its appearance out of malice. Sancho swaps his donkey's saddle with the stranger's saddle and they go back to the main road.

Quixote mistakes a glittering thing for gold; he is too preoccupied with both the appearance of the object and with its deeper meaning to see its basic identity as an object among other objects – like someone who looks at a cup and sees its color and its metaphorical significance as a vessel but fails to recognize that it is a cup. Quixote sees objects and events at a spiritual and a superficial level, but not with the plain sight that lies between the two.

As they walk, Sancho wonders whether it wouldn't be better for them to serve an emperor in a war. Don Quixote explains that a knight must first wander the world and gain fame; then he will arrive at a kingdom and a beautiful princess will fall in love with him, and he will win her heart once and for all in some athletic contest. Then the knight will go off to serve the king in a war, leaving the princess in tears. Only after he returns from war can he ask for and receive the princess's hand in marriage. And when the king passes away, the knight becomes king and marries his squire to a lady-in-waiting. Quixote reflects that his own lineage is not very noble, but seems sure that love and courage will suffice for any king.

For Quixote, the path to fame and glory is incredibly specific. In the books he loves, all knights follow this one particular path; the stale and repetitive plots of these books have convinced him that life, too, has one particular plot, and no other plotlines are possible. For a contemporary parallel, think of someone who has watched nothing but romantic comedies that describe flirtation, courtship with roses and romantic dinners, marriage, and children. This person might think that love must always take this particular course.

PART 1, CHAPTER 22

Soon after this conversation, the friends see twelve men all shackled together, followed by four armed guards. Don Quixote decides he must help the men, since they are being forced to act against their free will. He asks each convict about his crime, and each describes his crime obliquely, so as to inspire sympathy. The first two say they are imprisoned for being in love and singing, though they are both thieves; others are pimps, pedophiles, and murderers. But Don Quixote takes pity on them and asks the guards to let them go free. Naturally the guards refuse; Quixote attacks, and the prisoners run free.

Just as knights in chivalry books don't often stop to unravel the histories of victims and enemies, Quixote does not try very hard to understand the root causes of the events that he witnesses. His idea of justice is very simple: if someone is being mistreated, he is a victim. The past and the future don't matter very much to the knight: there are only present injustices.

Quixote asks the prisoners to present themselves to Dulcinea, but the murderer Ginés de Pasamonte explains rudely that they must go into hiding. Quixote becomes angry, so the prisoners shower him with stones and strip the friends of some of their clothing. The mean leave them lying helplessly on the ground.

The cruelty of the prisoners does not fit well into Quixote's worldview. He knows that knights are beloved because they protect good people from bad people. The people whom he helped were suffering, so they must have been good: so why did they act so heartlessly?

PART 1, CHAPTER 23

Sancho becomes afraid that the Holy Brotherhood will come after them. As they ride along, Quixote dreams of knights while Sancho dreams of **food**. They come across a rotting bag containing beautiful clothes, a handkerchief filled with very valuable gold coins, and a notebook. Sancho happily scoops up the money as Quixote investigates the notebook. Inside, he finds a despairing love poem, an accusatory letter to a deceitful woman, and many other such epistles.

Cervantes often highlights the contrast between Sancho's realism (his preoccupation with bodily needs, material goods, and practical concerns) and Quixote's idealism (his exclusive interest in ideas, symbols, and spiritual goods). Quixote dreams of stories, Sancho dreams of food; Quixote grabs the poems, Sancho grabs the money.

Soon after, they see a ragged, half-naked man run wildly over nearby rocks and disappear. Don Quixote decides to go looking for him, though Sancho thinks it would be best to leave him be and keep the money that most likely belongs to him. They come across a dead mule and a goatherd with his goats. He tells the friends that six months ago a handsome and richly dressed young man appeared in these wild parts and abandoned his bag and mule. He comes out every once in a while in an insane fever to steal **food** from the goatherds, though sometimes when he visits he seems perfectly civil and sane. Just then the young man comes towards them, and Quixote impulsively embraces him.

Quixote is interested in the story of the young poet and wants to help him, if possible. He senses that some romantic tragedy is afoot – the sort of tragedy that is his bread and butter. As usual, Sancho is more interested in the money. Quixote's intuition is confirmed by the goatherd's story. Perhaps he feels a particular affinity for the young man, because he, like Quixote, is thought to be insane.

PART 1, CHAPTER 24

The young man tells the group his story. His name is Cardenio. When he was younger, he fell in love a beautiful girl named Luscinda, and they decided to marry. At that time, a famous man called Duke Ricardo asked Cardenio to stay with him in Andalusia as his older son's companion, and Cardenio had no choice but to agree. He left in two days for the man's estate.

Cardenio is one of a group of characters in the novel whose personalities and life stories happen to align very well with the style and substance of chivalric novels. From the very beginning, Cardenio's story deals in extremes: the two lovers are beautiful, and their love is perfect.

There, he became close with the duke's youngest son, Fernando. Fernando was in love with a beautiful peasant girl and wanted to take her virginity; to take his mind off this infatuation, Fernando decided to come live with Cardenio in his home village for a few months. By the time the two friends departed, Fernando had already seduced the girl and fallen out of love with her. Cardenio told Fernando of Luscinda's charm and beauty at such length that after a single look Fernando fell in love with her too.

Yet though the story does have a classic fairy tale shape, it is also deeply imbued with social and class issues of sixteenth-century Spain. Cardenio and Luscinda are a good match both because they love each other and because they possess approximately equal wealth and social status.

Cardenio mentions that he had lent Luscinda *Amadis of Gaul*. This sends Quixote on a rant about books of chivalry, and the two men get into a strange dispute about some detail from a chivalry book involving a queen's honor, which sends Cardenio into a fit of madness. He strikes Don Quixote and runs away.

Cardenio and Quixote quarrel because both have failed to distinguish between fiction and reality. But Cardenio probably thinks that the fictional queen must have been unfaithful because Luscinda was unfaithful; for him, life influences art, not the other way around.

PART 1, CHAPTER 25

Don Quixote retracts his request that Sancho keep quiet. Sancho asks why he had made such a fuss about a fictional queen with a man he knew to be somewhat insane, and Quixote explains that it's a knight's duty to defend all honorable women against all kinds of people. He tells Sancho not to string together so many absurd proverbs; he also explains that everything he does is sensible because it accords with the laws of chivalry.

In the beginning, Sancho is quite respectful and submissive with Quixote, who is more noble and more learned. But gradually Sancho has learned to argue with Quixote, to hold his own in debates. Although he is illiterate, he can recite an apparently infinite list of proverbs. These proverbs are a form of shared, oral wisdom – wisdom available to people of all classes.

As in many other arts and professions, explains Quixote, greatness in knight-errantry is achieved by imitation. For this reason, he will imitate Amadis of Gaul in secluding himself and acting insane in honor of his beloved. It's even more impressive, he says, to go mad without any particular reason. In the meantime, Sancho must deliver Dulcinea a letter in verse. Sancho complains that sometimes knight-errantry seems like a bunch of lies, but Quixote angrily explains that **enchanters** are making everything related to knight-errantry look like mirage and folly out of spite.

Here Cervantes engages ideas of authenticity and originality. Quixote believes in a chivalrous world of clear, essential values, solid first principles. But Cervantes' novel abounds in imitations - copies of some authentic, original principle. This chain of copies recedes backward in time, but the farther you follow the chain, the more copies you find. The original, the authentic, is not there.

By chance, the murderer Ginés de Pasamonte happens to pass by the spot in the wild sierras where Sancho and Quixote have chosen to spend the night, and he quietly steals Sancho's donkey. Sancho is so grief-stricken in the morning that Quixote promises to give him three of his five donkeys when they return to the village. They keep walking and soon Don Quixote picks a mountain, where he strips and begins lamenting to the skies about Dulcinea; Sancho watches closely to report in detail to Dulcinea.

Quixote, who is actually insane, is also imitating insanity. His real madness can be described as a habit of imitating chivalry stories. So Quixote, a person who is insane because he imitates stories, is pretending to be insane by imitating a story. His real insanity and his pretend insanity are mirror images.

Don Quixote rips some paper from Cardenio's notebook to write a letter to Dulcinea and a warrant for three donkeys for Sancho; he asks Sancho to have the letter copied out on fine paper and to sign it himself, and it won't matter that the handwritings are different because Dulcinea can't read – she was brought up in seclusion by her parents Lorenzo Corchuelo and Aldonza Nogales. Sancho realizes that Dulcinea is a peasant girl named Aldonza Lorenzo. Sancho says she is strong, loud, and merry, not at all a princess; but Quixote explains that for his purposes she's just as good as a princess. Most poets invent their beloveds to have something to write about; so Quixote just imagines Dulcinea is as he wishes her to be, and therefore she is magnificent and unequalled. Sancho takes the letter and the warrant and leaves to find Dulcinea.

Throughout the novel, it is often unclear whether or not Dulcinea is real, and her reality seems to change as the book progresses. Here, Dulcinea is both real and imaginary – she is both the windmill and the giant. That is to say, she is half Aldonza Lorenzo, a rowdy peasant girl from a neighboring village, and half Dulcinea, a composite of imaginary qualities. She exists both in the world of the novel and in Quixote's imagination. For Quixote, the true Dulcinea is as she should be or might be - as he wishes her to be.

PART 1, CHAPTER 26

Sancho makes his way back to the inn to find something to eat. At the inn, he runs into the priest and the barber from his village; they have set out to bring Quixote home in order to cure him of his madness. Sancho tells them about their recent adventures, and by and by realizes he'd lost the notebook with the letter and donkey warrant. Sancho tries to recite the letter from memory for the priest, but he makes a funny jumble of it. When he tells the men about Quixote's promise to give him an island, they become convinced that he is as mad as his master, but decide not to correct him because he's so entertaining. The priest decides to dress up like a masked damsel in need in order to lure Quixote back to the village. They convince Sancho to help then by saying that Quixote needs to be set on a governmental and not on a religious path, since religious figures have no property to give away.

The priest and the barber assume that Quixote's madness is a terrible misfortune, and they spare no effort to try to cure it. Yet when they realize that Sancho is suffering from the same ailment as his master, they don't try to restore his sanity, because his madness is too amusing. In other words, Sancho's madness (as they see it) delights and pleases them. Just before he burned Quixote's books, the priest said that good books must give pleasure. There is a connection between the imaginative quality of Sancho and Quixote's madness and the magic of a good book.

PART 1, CHAPTER 27

The priest borrows a dress and a few other things from the innkeeper's wife for his maiden costume, and the barber disguises himself as a squire with a fake red beard; then the priest decides such a costume is indecent and decides to switch outfits with the barber when the time comes. The next day they start to find their way back to Quixote's hiding place, with Sancho's help. They all decide that Sancho would go on ahead to find his master and tell him he had visited Dulcinea and brought back her kindly reply.

The priest and the barber consider themselves to be virtuous figures of authority, in perfect agreement with morality and good sense. But their behavior is manipulative and deceitful. The priest feels no moral guilt about lying to Quixote and Sancho, but he is too correct to wear a girl's costume. With this absurdity, the author emphasizes the weakness of the priest's moral foundation.

At some point on their way, they hear a beautiful voice singing a sad song. They walk toward it and see a man whom they recognize as Cardenio from Sancho's story. The priest approaches him and implores him to come back to civilization. Cardenio explains that the thought of his unhappy life sometimes takes away his reason, and tells the men his life story in full – the same story he had left unfinished in his conversation with Don Quixote.

The priest wants to bring the stray sheep back to the flock, to take the two insane men, Quixote and Cardenio, and reinsert them back into the civilized world. Insanity, here, is a step back from the rule-bound world of human society, and a rejection of that society as the one true society, the best possible world.

Cardenio's story continues where it left off. An affectionate letter from Luscinda convinced Fernando that it was time to ask for her hand in marriage, but he was afraid that his father wouldn't give his permission before finding out Duke Ricardo's plans. Fernando offered to speak to Cardenio's father, meaning all the while to steal Luscinda for himself. To ensure success, he sent Cardenio back to Andalusia to borrow some money from Fernando's brother. Before leaving, Cardenio and Luscinda spoke with certainty of their upcoming marriage, though she seemed strangely sorrowful.

Cardenio's convoluted story makes it easy to see why he has chosen to live in the wilderness. His simple love story is convoluted at every turn by social subtleties – courtship rules, class considerations, and middle men. Love and marriage are part of a complicated game of social-climbing and money-grabbing.


Four days after Cardenio left for Andalusia, he received a letter from Luscinda, which sadly stated that Fernando has spoken to her father and has asked for and received her hand in marriage. Cardenio rode home right away and met Luscinda at her window. She was already in her wedding dress. She told him that if she couldn't prevent the marriage she would kill herself just after the ceremony with a dagger hidden in her bodice. When it was time for the wedding, Cardenio hid himself and watched. He saw her hesitantly accept Don Fernando as her husband and then faint straightway. While was unconscious, Fernando found a note in her bodice and sat down to read it. Cardenio fled the house in despair and soon left the city, cursing Luscinda's unfaithful nature. Three days later he reached a distant sierra and began living a life of privation and madness.

As we've said before, Cardenio's story in many details resembles tragic tales of courtly love, and Cardenio's manner of speaking is as roundabout and florid as the prose in chivalry books. The resemblance between Cardenio's tale and Quixote's books is important in two ways. It sends up the priest's claim that the books are unrealistic. It also gives some credence to Quixote's vision of the world, which does sometimes cohere with his reality.


PART 1, CHAPTER 28

Cardenio's story is interrupted by a sad voice. The priest and the barber follow the voice to find a boy in farmer's clothes bathing his white feet in a river. They hide behind a rock and see the boy lift up a beautiful face and let down a lot of beautiful golden hair. When the men come out of hiding, the beautiful girl in boy's clothes begins to run away, but trips and falls. The priest assures her that they won't do her any harm, and asks her to tell her story.

At this point in the novel, the plot multiplies into several interlacing story lines. Suddenly we are not only following Quixote – we are meeting many new characters who all tell their own individual stories. This narrative device is a way of describing the world as the intersection of countless different perspectives. The interlacing, web-like structure will also become a characteristic of the modern novel.

She tells the men that she is Dorotea, the daughter of a rich farmer in Andalusia. A nobleman named Don Fernando fell in love with her, promised to marry her, seduced her, and abandoned her. Soon he left town, and Dorotea heard word that Fernando married a beautiful noblewoman named Luscinda. She dressed up as a farm boy to go find him and reproach him for his ignoble behavior, with a servant boy for a companion. Cardenio pales when he recognizes these familiar names.

At this period, if a man and a woman agree to marry – even if they're alone in a dark room – they are from that moment on married in the eyes of god. It was not uncommon to consummate the marriage after the betrothal but before the ceremony. So marrying Luscinda after promising to marry Dorotea would be considered bigamy.

When Dorotea reached Luscinda's town, a man on the street told her the story of the wedding. Luscinda took her vows and immediately fainted; Don Fernando found a note in her bodice stating that she was already engaged to Cardenio, and that she planned to kill herself after the wedding. He fell into a rage and would have stabbed her, if he hadn't been stopped. He left town soon afterwards. Luscinda found out that Cardenio had fled also, just after the wedding, and she ran away from home to try to find him. Dorotea decided to keep looking for Don Fernando to make him marry her. But when she reached a secluded part of the woods with her servant boy, he tried to rape her, so she pushed him over a cliff and started working for a herdsman; when the herdsman tried to seduce her, she fled into the wilderness.

Luscinda and Dorotea are beautiful, honorable, and troubled women – perfect candidates for knightly assistance. Both women are assailed by villainous men, who try to steal their innocence and dignity. But neither of them is helpless. Both Luscinda and Dorotea bravely set out on their own to find their lovers and right the wrongs done to them. Their stories both contain gaps that are filled when the stories are combined; without the other, they are incomplete. This structure foreshadows the sprawling social novels of the 19th century.

PART 1, CHAPTER 29

When she finishes her story, Dorotea asks her three listeners where she could spend her life in anonymity and seclusion. Cardenio reveals his true identity, and tells her that he and she could still marry the people they desire, since they are both still free: Cardenio can still marry Luscinda, and Dorotea can still marry Don Fernando. The priest invites them all to restore their strength in their home village, and the barber tells them the strange tale of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza and describes their plan for restoring Quixote to sanity.

These beautiful, high-born characters present such a contrast to Quixote and Sancho that they seem like fragments from a separate literary work. They are utterly high-minded and serious, while Quixote and Sancho are often comical, earthly, and absurd. Cervantes takes great care to humanize characters from many different social strata. When he places the two different kinds of stories side by side, he sets high-born, romantic characters and crude, physically flawed, comical characters on equal footing.

In the meantime, Sancho returns and tells them he found Quixote **hungry**, weak, and unwilling to return to the village before he proves his courage. Sancho is anxious that Quixote will never get around to becoming an emperor and giving him an island. Dorotea offers to play the damsel in distress in the charade, since she has read many books of chivalry and knows all the rules. She takes out a beautiful dress and transforms herself back into a lady. The priest tells Sancho that Dorotea is the princess Micomicona, who has come from far away to seek help from the famous knight Quixote. She needs Quixote to defeat an evil giant that has seized her kingdom.

The priest and the barber have so little faith in Quixote's worldview that they fail to recognize that Dorotea is just the sort of damsel in distress they need – the sort of person Quixote wants to help. They ask her to play a damsel in distress, to pretend to be what she is already. Dorotea and the other three characters of this tangled subplot represent a kind of compromise between Quixote's imaginary world and the real world of the novel.

Dorotea, the priest, and the barber go to find Don Quixote. Dorotea falls on her knees and begs him to restore her to her rightful place as princess of an African kingdom. Don Quixote readily agrees, promising not to involve himself in any other adventures in the meantime, and the company sets off. From some distance away, the priest disguises Cardenio by cutting off his beard and dressing him in the priest's cape. The priest stops Don Quixote and begs him for assistance also; Don Quixote recognizes his friend and agrees to help, feeling some confusion. Dorotea tells him that the way to the kingdom of Micomicón lies through Quixote's village. The priest mentions that he and the barber were robbed on the road by criminals from a chain-gang. Quixote blushes at this story and asks for no more explanations.

The priest's determination to weave an intricate web of lies contrasts with Quixote's perfect honesty and gullibility, his confidence that the world is single-layered and straightforward. The priest's lie about the robbery guilts Quixote into agreeing to all the priest's requests, but it also forces Quixote to face the consequences of his actions. The ethical value of each action is more complicated than he'd thought.

PART 1, CHAPTER 30

Sancho points out to the company that it was Don Quixote who had freed the prisoners, and that he had warned his master against it. Quixote irately explains that it is his job to help people in need, not to determine their moral fiber. Dorotea asks him to calm down and remember his vow to her, and tells him the princess's story in greater detail. When the princess became an orphan, the evil giant invaded her kingdom, so she set out for Spain to seek the help of the famous Don Quixote. Dorotea tells Quixote that he must journey back to her kingdom, defeat the giant, and then make her his wife.

We saw in the previous chapter that Quixote felt guilty and embarrassed to learn that the chain-gang prisoners attacked his friends – mainly through his blush and his silence. But here he denies any feeling of responsibility. He is determined to view his actions and his responsibilities simply. Quixote is the opposite of a moral relativist.

Sancho is delighted to learn that his master will soon be emperor of a kingdom, but Don Quixote declines the princess's offer of marriage. When Sancho angrily exclaims that the princess is much better than Dulcinea, Quixote pummels him and explains that he does everything only for Dulcinea's sake, and all his strength comes from her image. Sancho apologizes for speaking rashly and the two become friends again.

Here, we learn another aspect of Quixote's idealism. In his worldview, even his physical strength has its source in an idea – the idea of Dulcinea. It also displaces moral authority on this imagined figure, who therefore takes the place traditionally occupied by the Christian god.

Don Quixote asks Sancho about his visit to Dulcinea. But suddenly they see Ginés de Pasamonte riding toward them on Sancho's donkey; Sancho yells at him angrily and he hops off the donkey and runs away. Sancho kisses and hugs his long-lost donkey with joy. Meanwhile, the rest of the company discusses Quixote's strange gullibility on matters of chivalry and his incongruous good sense.

This chapter contains one of the famous errors of the original edition of the book. Sancho's donkey reappears, even though originally there was no account of its theft. One could argue that Cervantes is making a point about the necessary incompleteness of stories, the gaps inherent in every perspective.

PART 1, CHAPTER 31

Quixote says Sancho must have found Dulcinea sorting gold or pearls, but Sancho pretends that she was sieving buckwheat in the yard. When Quixote says she must have been lofty, Sancho says she was even taller than he is; when Quixote says she must smell exquisitely, Sancho says she was a little sweaty. Sancho also tells Quixote that Dulcinea tore up the letter and requested that he come see her at once. Instead of the traditional jewel, he says, she gave him bread and cheese. Quixote decides to go see Dulcinea as soon as he helps the princess.

The heart of the book is Sancho and Quixote's conversations, their affectionate and quarrelsome back-and-forth. Their conversations pick out a tenuous middle ground between the real and the imaginary, even when they can't find that middle ground themselves. Sancho's description evokes Dulcinea's virility, which Quixote sublimates into femininity.

Sancho asks him why he embarrasses the discreet Dulcinea by sending all these people to her to speak of Quixote's love, and Quixote explains that a knight's love is chaste; a knight expects nothing in return for his valor. Sancho remarks that one's love for god is meant to be similarly pure and selfless, though he prefers a love that yields some rewards. Don Quixote compliments his good sense with amazement.

Quixote's love for Aldonza/Dulcinea might in reality resemble Fernando's lust for Dorotea – a gentleman's lust for a peasant girl, a recurring literary trope. But Quixote transforms that earthly passion into a completely platonic love.

In a little while, the company sits down to **eat**. Suddenly a boy runs down from the road and hugs Quixote's legs in tears – it is the shepherd boy that had been tied to a tree and beaten by his master. Quixote tells the story to the others, noting how necessary knight-errantry is in this day and age. But the boy points out that after Quixote left his enraged master beat him so badly he spent months in the hospital. Quixote decides that his mistake was leaving the scene too soon, and vows to punish the cruel master – just after he fulfills his vow to the princess. Sancho gives the boy some bread and cheese, and Andrés asks Quixote never to help him ever again and curses him as rushes away.

In these chapters, Quixote is often confronted with the negative consequences of his actions. By trying to protect the shepherd boy, he caused him to receive a much more vicious beating and to lose his job. But unlike earlier, Quixote takes responsibility for the negative consequences of his well-intentioned interference. He decides to punish the boy's master – if not to undo the harm he has unwillingly caused, the at least to avenge it.

PART 1, CHAPTER 32

The company makes their way back to the **inn** where the two friends had stayed previously. The innkeeper and his wife welcome them cordially and prepare them a nice meal while Quixote takes a nap. When the innkeeper hears the priest mention the harmful effect of chivalry books on Quixote's sanity, he wonders how this could be, for he sees many tired workers take great pleasure and find relief in these same books. His wife, servant, and daughter all agree.

Various characters debate the value of chivalry books on several occasions in the novel, and the debate usually circles around ideas of usefulness, instructiveness, and pleasure. The priest has claimed that only sensible, instructive books give true pleasure. But chivalry books are neither sensible nor instructive, and they give the innkeeper, his family, and many others genuine pleasure.

The priest asks to see these books, so that he can determine which of them are harmful and must be burned. The innkeeper objects to his condemnations, and the priest explains that the bad books are "full of lies, absurdities, and nonsense," but the good books are all true. The innkeeper says that the truthful books are too boring and that he prefers books with magic in them. The priest scornfully points out that nothing in the books is true, and the innkeeper replies with equal scorn that he knows truth from lies, but that these books must be true enough if they were published with the royal seal. The priest notices some papers in the priest's collection titled "The Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity," and the priest offers to read the story out loud.

The underlying question, here, is: how can books that bring pleasure and relief to their readers be called harmful? The innkeeper says that the books must be true because they are stamped with the royal seal, but his words imply that something that brings people joy is true simply because it brings joy – because it takes shape so vividly and powerfully in their imaginations. This sort of truth relates closely to the novel's perspectivism, the idea that no single worldview is absolutely true.

PART 1, CHAPTER 33

The story describes two young men named Anselmo and Lotario, who once lived in the city of Florence. Anselmo has a penchant for chasing women, but Lotario is more interested in hunting and sport. One day, Anselmo marries a beautiful girl named Camila. After the marriage takes place Lotario is careful not to visit the young couple too often, so as not to endanger either person's honor, despite Anselmo's insistent invitations.

This tale is a story within a story – like the Dorotea/Fernando and Luscinda/Cardenio subplots, it gives the novel a many-layered quality. Unlike the complicated novel that surrounds it, this promises to be a story with a clear moral lesson.

When the two friends are walking around one day, Anselmo confesses to Lotario a strange, nagging desire: to be sure of his wife's fidelity, he wants Lotario to try to seduce her (and, hopefully, fail). Lotario is shocked by his friend's request and explains as well as he can that Anselmo should be content to know that his wife always behaves honorably and virtuously, instead of doubting her and risking both her honor and his own. The test could only have two outcomes: Camila can emerge just as honorable a woman as she was previously, or she can be dragged down to vice. Women are fallible, he says, and men should take care to make it easy for them to remain virtuous.

The argument between the two friends comes down to two views of human nature. Anselmo believes that his wife contains some essential core of personhood that dictates all possible actions. This personhood is always, to some degree, latent – always waiting to be expressed more fully. Lotario believes people are always changing; he believes that a difficult situation could very well change the nature of Camila's virtue, rather than simply test it.

Anselmo admits that his plan is wicked and senseless, but says that nothing else can cure his desire. He tells Lotario that he can trust only him with the plan – any other person would dishonor him. When he sees it is no use arguing, Lotario agrees to his friend's request, but he secretly plans to deceive him somehow – to satisfy him without dishonoring him or his wife with false advances.

Like the priest and the barber, Lotario decides to deceive his friend in order to help him. In a way, this tendency is the opposite of Quixote's. Quixote takes care that each present action is honorable, no matter what the consequences; Lotario behaves dishonorably to ensure a positive outcome.

The next day, Lotario comes to his friend's house for **lunch**. Anselmo insists on rushing off on some business matter and leaves his friend and his wife alone. Camila is very virtuous and modest, so the two say hardly a word to each other while Anselmo's gone, but Lotario reports to his friend that he's begun the courtship process by praising Camila's beauty. Lotario also agrees to write her sonnets and give her expensive presents, and reports to his friend that Camila has remained virtuous in the face of all this flattery. But one day Anselmo hides and watches the two in his absence; when he observes their cordial silence, he realizes his friend has been deceiving him. Lotario guiltily apologizes and promises to really put the plan into action this time.

At this point, both Camila and Lotario are models of virtue. But Anselmo is not satisfied: he wants to dig deeper into what he imagines to be his wife's reserves of virtue. In a sense, he is like Quixote, because he thinks that he can reach the truth through lying. But for Quixote, lying (or rather fantasizing) is a way of creating a new truth; for Anselmo, it is a way of reaching back to a preexisting truth.

For convenience's sake, Anselmo decides to leave town for a week. He tells Camila that Lotario will come keep her company and dine with her while he's gone, despite her demure objections. Everything goes according to plan; to ensure propriety, Camila asks her maid Leonela to chaperone whenever she and Lotario are in a room together. But despite Camila's modesty, Lotario cannot help admiring her beauty and wit when he is so constantly in her company, and so he slowly falls in love with her. To her shock, he begins to woo her, so she writes an alarmed letter to her husband.

At the beginning of the story, Lotario is an ideal friend and a perfect gentleman. Here, we see him begin to change; he begins to contemplate seducing his best friend's wife. He himself is a good example of his own model of human nature – something shifting and changeable, something that is often altered by a person's circumstances and behavior.

PART 1, CHAPTER 34

In the letter, Camila implores her husband to come home as soon as possible, hints that Lotario has been overstepping the bounds of propriety, and asks permission to stay at her parents' house during his absence. Anselmo is glad that Lotario is finally following the plan, and writes back instructing Camila to stay home and wait for him. Soon after she receives her husband's reply, she begins to warm to Lotario's advances despite herself and finally lets him seduce her. Lotario doesn't mention to her that the seduction was her husband's idea.

Now, both Lotario and Camila have been deeply altered by Anselmo's game. We can relate the idea of changeable human nature to Quixote's courageous desire to reinvent and define himself through his actions. Though his ideas are sometimes mutually contradictory, he generally believes that we are not born ourselves, but make ourselves.

When Anselmo comes home a few days later, Lotario tells him that his wife has been absolutely steadfast and virtuous. But Anselmo wishes to test Camila still further: he tells Lotario to write love poems addressed to an imaginary girl named Chloris. He plans to tell Camila about Lotario's crush on another woman and observe her reaction to the love poems. Meanwhile, Lotario tells Camila about Anselmo's plan so that she can respond to the poems appropriately. The next day Anselmo asks Lotario to recite his poems; Camila takes pleasure in them, since she knows they are truly addressed to her; her pleasure represents her fall into vice but to her husband it represents her intractable virtue, since it proves that she feels no jealousy about this imaginary Chloris.

At first, the two men were in mutual agreement, and Camila was the deceived. Now, Camila and Lotario are deceiving Anselmo. In a general sense, the story describes a world of gaps and omissions: no one sees the complete picture, and someone is always the deceived. Once again, we return to the novel's perspectivism. Just as person does not possess a unitary and stable nature, an event does not have a single true interpretation.

Camila worries to her servant Leonela that she gave herself to Lotario too quickly, but the clever and experienced girl eases her conscience by describing Lotario's virtues. Once Camila has talked to Leonela so frankly, the girl has the boldness to bring her own lover into the house, and Camila doesn't dare reproach her. One night, Lotario sees Leonela's young man leaving the house at dawn and assumes it is another one of Camila's lovers. Blinded by a desire for vengeance, Lotario goes to Anselmo and tells him that Camila has agreed to sleep with him. He tells Anselmo that he and Camila have scheduled a secret meeting in the garderobe (closet) and invites him to hide nearby and watch the meeting take place.

Now, the system of allegiances, understandings, and omissions becomes even more complicated. Camila and Leonela have become accomplices, in a way, in their respective romantic dalliances. As the lies deepen, the characters' perspectives begin to waver and blur. Camila needs Leonela to reassure her in the rightness of her affair. As people change, they don't change neatly and simply: the change always seems to proceed from order to confusion.

Soon after this conversation, Lotario regrets his outburst and tells Camila what he has done. She explains that the man was Leonela's lover, not hers, and comes up with a secret plan to remedy the situation. She tells Lotario only to come to the garderobe as agreed. The next day, Leonela and Camila meet in the closet to act out a little scene for Anselmo's benefit before Lotario arrives. Camila plays the role of the virtuous woman to perfection. She pretends that she intends to stab Lotario for sullying both her honor and her husband's with his advances, or to kill herself instead. Anselmo almost intervenes but instead decides to watch everything play out.

After watching Camila play the character of a virtuous woman so well, we can't help but wonder whether or not her earlier modesty and good behavior were also cleverly acted parts. At the inn and in the wilderness where Sancho and Quixote travel, people assume various ordinary and extraordinary roles (the frequent cross-dressing is one example). When people are away from society, the artificiality of society and social roles comes into view.

Soon, Leonela comes back with Lotario. Camila recites a long, indignant speech and springs at him with a dagger; when he holds her back, she gives herself a shallow but bloody wound in her armpit and faints. Lotario leaves to get help, astonished at his mistress's wonderful acting. Leonela dresses the shallow wound and the two women discuss how to explain the wound to Anselmo. The happy husband himself leaves unnoticed and runs to Lotario's house to thank him in tears for showing him his wife's true goodness. The deception goes on for months thereafter.

Throughout the novel, people note Quixote's contradictory combination of simplicity/insanity and intelligence. Perhaps Quixote seems simple and loveable because he is incapable of playing any role other than his own. Though he is explicitly playing a role – that of a knight errant – his complete faith and consistency render that role more real, somehow, than the more concealed roles of the others.

PART 1, CHAPTER 35

The story is almost over when Sancho runs in yelling that Don Quixote has been battling a heavily bleeding giant in his room; the innkeeper angrily deduces that Quixote has been slashing at wineskins in his sleep. The half-dressed knight doesn't wake up from his sleepwalk battle until the innkeeper pours ice water on his head. Sancho admits with confusion that the **inn** really must be **enchanted**, since he saw Quixote cutting off the giant's head.

This time, Quixote doesn't simply see a giant that is not there, as in the adventure of the windmills. He is seeing though the distorted looking-glass of sleep. His separation from reality is not quite as stark anymore. But just as Quixote begins to depart from the purest form of his madness, Sancho begins to approach it: he takes the episode as proof of enchantment.

Once everyone calms down, the priest finishes reading the tale. Lotario, Camila, and Anselmo live happily and deceitfully for a few months, and Leonela also pursues her affair with impunity. One night, Anselmo catches a man jumping out of Leonela's window. She tells Anselmo that he is her husband. Anselmo doesn't believe her and threatens to kill her out of rage, but she holds him back by promising to tell him an important secret the following day. Anselmo calms down a little and tells his wife everything that's happened.

The vision of love and marriage in this tale is very far from Quixote's idealistic conception of love. For Quixote, love is an intellectual, spiritual event, far above the worldly fray. In this story, love is uncontrolled and erotic – based not on stable admiration but on shifting desires.

Camila panics, assuming Leonela's secret has to do with her affair. She sneaks out of the house, and runs to Lotario, begging him to find her a place to hide. Lotario takes her to a convent the following day. When Anselmo goes to look for Leonela in the morning, he finds that she has escaped. He soon finds out that both Camila and Lotario have gone missing as well. In despair, he goes to visit a friend in a nearby village. On the way, a stranger tells him some interesting gossip: a servant girl named Leonela has told everyone that Lotario has run away with his best friend Anselmo's wife, Camila. The despairing Anselmo comes to his friend's house, records the entire course of events, and dies of grief. Some time afterward Lotario dies in battle and Camila dies quietly in the convent.

Scholars have written that, in the classical tradition, stories describing the events leading up to a marriage are usually comedies with happy endings, and stories describing the aftermath of a marriage are tragedies with unhappy endings. This certainly holds true, in this case. What is the moral of this tale? It is not simply to avoid curiosity. Perhaps the moral is this: the farther one looks inside a person, the more complicated and many-layered that person becomes – the farther the typical happy ending recedes.

PART 1, CHAPTER 36

Just after the story ends, the innkeeper announces that a strange party has arrived: four men in black masks on horseback, a sad woman in white, and two servants. When the woman and one of the men let their masks slip off, Cardenio recognizes the faces of Don Fernando and the beautiful Luscinda. Luscinda begs Don Fernando to let her go to Cardenio, and Dorotea implores Fernando to honor his promise and marry her; her low birth, she says, should not be an obstacle to the noble marriage because of her virtue and beauty. Don Fernando is so moved by Dorotea's speech that he lets Luscinda go and promises to marry Dorotea.

All of a sudden, several plotlines are resolved at once in this magical inn, which throws all the characters together in a sort of cramped carnival. The two happy love stories form a counterpart to the tragedy of "The Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity." If the Tale contrasted Quixote's idealistic love with its emphasis on desire, this subplot contrasts idealistic love by dwelling on money and status – prosaic, worldly concerns.

PART 1, CHAPTER 37

Everyone cries in joy except Sancho, who suddenly realizes that Dorotea is not really a princess and can't give him any estates, and that the giant is really Don Fernando. Don Quixote finally wakes up. Sancho informs him that the giant's blood has turned into wine, and that the princess has become a peasant girl. Don Quixote tells him he must be mad to say such things, or that **enchanters** must be responsible for these transformations, but Sancho says that these transformations are as real as the blankets that bruised him.

Don Quixote's madness converts wine to blood, like Christian faith does on certain occasions – particularly during communion, when bread and wine are considered to be the body and blood of Christ. Quixote embodies certain aspects of Christian faith and morality, applied to a comical, secular world.

Meanwhile, the priest tells Don Fernando and his attendants the story of their adventures, and Don Fernando and Dorotea agree to help complete the project of returning Quixote to his village. Don Quixote comes down and asks Dorotea whether she has been transformed from a princess from an ordinary person, but she denies any such transformation, and begs him to leave for her kingdom tomorrow.

In order to cure Quixote of his delusions, everyone around him takes great pains to sustain those same delusions (at least for some time). The paths of sanity seem much more devious and tortuous, in this book, that Quixote's steadfast path. The people around him treat him with a slightly paradoxical mixture of contempt and affection, like a child, and their attempts to cure him bear the marks of that paradox.

Just then some more travellers arrive: a Christian man dressed in Moorish clothing and a veiled Moorish woman. Dorotea and Luscinda invite her to stay in their room in the attic, since there is no space anywhere else. The man accepts on her behalf, adding that she cannot speak Spanish. He explains that she is Moorish in origin but Christian at heart. When she removes her veil, she is incredibly beautiful – as beautiful as Luscinda and Dorotea. The man tells them her name is Lela Zoraida, but she cries out in broken Spanish that her name is now Lela María.

The small, dilapidated inn brings together two unlikely casts of characters. There are the divinely beautiful women and romantic noblemen, and then there is the deformed-looking Maritornes, who is most likely a prostitute, and Quixote and Sancho, with their emetics and missing teeth. Cervantes uses more humor and (sometimes squeamish) detail to describe the lower-class characters, so that they seem more human and more relatable – generally considered a quality of realistic literature.

Over **dinner**, Quixote exclaims with satisfaction that knight-errantry must be a marvelous thing if it can bring together such a diverse and interesting group of people. He goes on to compare the pursuits of arms and letters: the goal of letters is to interpret the law, but the goal of arms is to enforce the law and bring peace. He also compares the sacrifices required: the student suffers from poverty, but the knight suffers all sorts of privation and physical pain. Everyone at the table is impressed by his intelligence and good sense.

Until he was almost fifty, Quixote lived a contemplative life – he lived through reading and imagining. His decision to go into world is surprising, both because he is a scrawny, weak, and almost-elderly man, and because it requires him to shift drastically from one mode to another. The change can be construed as a movement from idealism to realism.

PART 1, CHAPTER 38

Don Quixote continues the comparison. He says that arms could not exist without letters, because wars are subject to laws, and letters could not exist without arms, because soldiers must enforce the law. He also says that even if the suffering experienced by men of arts and letters is comparable, the rewards of soldierly are far smaller, so it must be nobler. Don Quixote talks so much that he forgets to **eat** anything. Soon the table is cleared and everyone asks the new guest to tell his story.

For all his dreaminess, Quixote displays a very practical mindset. He says that the purpose of letters (this includes poetry, history, any kind of writing) is to write laws and direct wars – not create beauty. His idealism, too, is meant to serve a practical purpose, to change the world in tangible ways. Beauty is only a small part of that change.

PART 1, CHAPTER 39

The guest tells them that he comes from a family in a village of León. His father was somewhat wealthy but wasteful with money, so when his three sons were of age he gathered them together for an important announcement. He told them that he intended to divide his property into four parts, keeping one and distributing the three others, and that the three sons must each become one of three things: a man of letters, a merchant, and a soldier. The guest, who was the oldest son, chose to become a soldier; the middle son, a merchant; and the youngest a man of letters.

This novel follows Quixote for a while, but now its attention seems scattered – it proceeds apparently randomly from one story to the next. But the stories are connected by small details, like a chain of associations. This story, for example, links to Quixote's speech about arms and letters because the three sons choose between arms, letters, and business.

Soon afterwards (twenty-two years before the present moment) the guest left home and joined the Spanish army, which was waging war against the Ottoman empire. He was captured by the king of Algiers and spent several years travelling with him at sea as a captive. He mentions a fellow-captive named Don Pedro de Aguilar, who, it turns out, is Don Fernando's brother.

The stories are connected not only through ideas but through their cast of characters – in this story, the link is Don Fernando. Like all the disparate perspectives in the novel, the stories do in the end refer to the same world.

PART 1, CHAPTER 40

The guest travelled as a captive to Algiers and lived there in a compound for high-born Christian prisoners of war. The prison yard was next to the house of a wealthy Moorish merchant named Hajji Murad. One day, the prisoners saw a cane with a heavy handkerchief extend from one of the windows. Several men tried to take it, but the person inside would only allow the captive to take it; when he approached the window, he saw a glimpse of a beautiful white hand. The handkerchief contained Moorish gold coins called zianyis.

Right away, we can tell that this will be a story like that of Fernando's and Cardenio's – a story about noblemen and immortally beautiful women, a serious and romantic story. Our capacity to group the stories into one sort or another alerts us to the artificiality of various modes and styles. Neither kind of story really represents the world as it is, because the world is too various – neither is truly realistic.

Soon another handkerchief appeared; it contained a much greater number of gold coins and a piece of paper with Arabic writing and a picture of a cross. The captive asked a friend of his to translate the writing. His friend was a renegade, meaning a Christian man who has chosen to live in Moorish society. The letter told the story of the daughter of the rich Moorish merchant. When she was a little girl, a Christian slave of her father's told her about Christianity and the Virgin Mary, whom she calls Lela Marien. In the letter, she asked the captive to help her travel to Christian lands; she also explained that she was young, rich, and beautiful, and promised to marry him if he wished. The renegade offered to help the captives escape with the girl, because he too wished to return to Christian lands.

This part of the novel is partially autobiographical. Cervantes himself was a war prisoner in Algiers for nearly five years, decades before he began writing his novel, though the end of his captivity was not nearly as glamorous as this character's – he was ransomed by his parents. In writing this story, Cervantes resembles Quixote. He is re-writing his own life to make it more dramatic, more heroic, more like the chivalry tales in Quixote's library.

With the renegade's help, the captive wrote a reply: he offered his help and asked her whether she had any ideas for escape. She wrote back with the following plan: she will give the prisoners a great deal of money, which they will use to ransom themselves, travel back to Christian lands, buy a boat, and pick her up from a seaside villa of her father's. The captive began to carry out the plan by ransoming himself and three friends.

Like many other women in the novel, this girl is both helpless and not. She does need men to help her, but only because her society has given her very few rights. Men help women, in this novel, not because they are constitutionally smarter or stronger, but because they are freer.

PART 1, CHAPTER 41

Soon the renegade bought a boat, and the captive gathered a Moorish crew and sailed with the renegade to a town called Cherchell near Zoraida's villa. He came to the villa and received permission to enter by telling Zoraida's father that he was a slave looking for salad leaves. Zoraida came out into the garden to speak to him, dressed very richly and beautifully. Zoraida spoke to the captive in front of her father in a sort of double-talk, and he told her that they would be sailing for Spain the following day.

This romance is very different from both Quixote's platonic love and the crisscrossed love stories that have just been resolved. The subplot romances are based on economic and social likeness, but this is a romance of unlikeness.

The next day, the renegade took the Moorish crew hostage in order to force them to sail to Spain. They went to get Zoraida from the villa at night when her father was asleep, since she insisted that he must not be touched. But he woke up and began shouting, so they tied him up and took him hostage onto the boat, along with a trunk full of money and jewelry. Hajji Murad begged for his and his daughter's freedom, but the renegade explained that his daughter has chosen to become a Christian and planned the escape herself. When he heard this news, Hajji Murad threw himself into the sea. The men rescued him and left him with the other Moorish prisoners on a little island.

Though Zoraida's story seems to be about freedom and boundary-crossing, it is also a journey from one tower to another – from one religious and cultural loyalty to another. Her choice shows courage and independence, but it is also a kind of obedience: she is following the instructions of her father's slave, the woman that was like a mother to her when she was younger. She is not going from civilization into the wilderness, like Quixote and Sancho.

As they were sailing away, the Moorish man's curses still ringing in their ears, they came upon another ship, which signaled them a greeting. The renegade decided not to reply, thinking it must be a ship of French pirates. When the mysterious vessel came closer it fired two cannonballs at the captive's ship, which rapidly began sinking. The men on the ship (who were indeed French) explained that they fired because it is impolite to ignore a greeting; they helped Zoraida and the others onto their ship and took all their valuables. However, they gave the company a little boat and enough supplies to complete their journey. The next day, the captive and the others reached the Spanish coast.

It's hard to say whether the French sailors are in earnest when they cite impoliteness as the reason for their attack. Like many other parts of this novel, their comment is probably a mixture of humor and seriousness. In any case, it is an extreme example of the rule-bound society in which Quixote sows disorder: even in the lawless reaches of the ocean, even in the mouths of ruthless pirates, society asserts its strict rules.

The company began walking in search of some settlement. On their way they came upon a shepherd boy, who became so frightened when he saw people in Moorish clothes that he ran away shouting. Some coastguards came their way expecting a Moorish army and finding instead a small group of Christians. One of the former captives recognized a coastguard as his uncle, and the guards helped the group reach a nearby town. Soon everyone split up. Now, says the captive, he is travelling with Zoraida to find his father or his brothers, who might help him get settled with his new bride.

As soon as they step off the boat, society pulls them in. Right away, they are accosted by guards anxious to uphold the recent anti-Moorish laws. Luckily, one man's family ties help them transition smoothly from sea to civilization. The ever-present buzz of the legal system in the novel's background is naturalistic and prosaic, like the novel's inclusion of bad jokes and bodily functions.

PART 1, CHAPTER 42

That night, another group of guests arrives at the **inn**: a judge, his beautiful sixteen-year-old daughter, and their servants. They are on their way to America, where the judge has been offered a job. When the former captive hears that the judge is called Juan Pérez de Viedma, he realizes that the judge is his brother, but before identifying himself decides to test the judge's loyalty. The priest offers his assistance. The priest tells the judge that a captive friend of his in Constantinople had the same last name as the judge. He says that the friend's name was Ruy Pérez de Viedma, and retells the captive's story about the division of property and his military adventures and captivity, up until the episode with the French ship. With tears in his eyes, the judge tells the group that this man is his dearly beloved brother.

Yet another group of people have crowded into the inn, and another cast of characters with their dramas and tragedies have wandered into the small world of the novel. The inn is the serendipitous point where characters and plotlines converge, where strangers from all walks of life find an unexpected point of contact. It is out on the road far from any town, but it also a shelter: it is something in between wilderness and civilization. So it is a place where social boundaries are more flexible and chaotic than in a village or town.

Convinced now of his good intentions, the priest brings in Ruy Pérez and Zoraida and tells the judge their identities. The brothers reunite joyfully. They decide to travel to Seville right away so that their father could attend Zoraida's baptism and the wedding. Soon afterwards, everyone turns in for the night – everyone but Don Quixote, who decides to keep guard outside the **inn** to ensure the women's safety. Just before dawn, Dorotea hears a beautiful voice coming from outside.

Finally, we are coming back to our knight errant. It is important to note that Don Quixote has not heard many of these stories – he has been raving in the sierras, or asleep. Yet Cervantes depicted his personality and perspective so clearly in the first part of the novel that he remains somehow omnipresent to us as we follow the other characters.

PART 1, CHAPTER 43

The voice sings a sad love song addressed to Clara, the judge's daughter. Dorotea wakes her up to listen, but as soon as Clara makes out the words she begins to shake and cry, and covers her ears. After the song ends, she tells Dorotea her story. The boy singing is her neighbor, the son of a wealthy gentleman. They fell in love, though he could only ever communicate with her through her window, and decided to get married. But soon afterwards Clara and her father set out for their journey to America. Two days after they departed, Clara realized that the boy was following them in a footman disguise. Now, she is worried that her father will recognize him and punish them for their love. She doesn't think that they will be permitted to marry because the boy's family is nobler and wealthier than hers.

Like the other subplots, this is a romance shot through with economic and class considerations. The love itself is simple and fairy tale-like, but the evil giant standing in its way is mild social inequality. The poetic and the prosaic walk arm in arm, like the different casts of characters at the inn, and, to some extent, like Quixote and Sancho themselves. Cervantes doesn't just lump these two categories together, but rather shows the way they intertwine – most clearly, in Sancho and Quixote's dialogues.

Meanwhile, the innkeeper's daughter and the servant girl Maritornes decide to have some fun at Don Quixote's expense. They watch him sighing for Dulcinea through a hole in the hayloft, which opens from the inside of the **inn** onto the courtyard. The innkeeper's daughter interrupts his lovesick monologue to beckon him over to the hayloft window, and he imagines that the beautiful princess of the castle is trying to make love to him. Don Quixote rides up to the hole in the hayloft and explains to the two girls that he cannot respond to their advances because of his love for Dulcinea. Maritornes asks him at least to give the innkeeper's daughter his hand. When Don Quixote politely extends his hand through the window, Maritornes ties his hand to the hayloft door and the two girls run away.

Quixote is a frequent target of jokes in this book. It's possible that Maritornes also wants to take revenge for Quixote's earlier bizarre advances, when he imagined her as a princess. Either way, this scene once again shows Quixote punished for his idealism and high-mindedness. The scene is also a strange inverse of the captor's story, when Zoraida lowers money into a courtyard from a concealed window.

Don Quixote sits very still, because if Rocinante moves out from under him he'll be left hanging painfully by one hand. He decides that the **enchanters** have played yet another trick on him. He is still trapped in the same place the following dawn, when four new guests arrive at the inn. When Rocinante moves away to flirt with one of the strangers' horses, Don Quixote is left hanging painfully by one arm from the window, yelling with all his might.

Don Quixote is too good-hearted, and has too much faith in ordinary people, to think that someone at the inn is responsible for his embarrassing predicament. The 'enchanters' are a cipher for the gap between people as they are and people as he imagines them: it is the material he uses to fill the gap and cover it up.

PART 1, CHAPTER 44

The innkeeper hears Quixote's noise and runs outside. Maritornes hears it as well, so she runs to the loft and quickly unties him. Don Quixote gets back onto Rocinante and alludes angrily to his **enchantment**. The new guests tell the innkeeper that they're looking for a boy dressed as a footman; one of them notices the judge's coach next to the **inn** and explains that the boy must be around here somewhere, because he's following the coach. They split up to look for the boy, and one finds him sleeping outside.

Here is another instance of cross-dressing at the inn. In this case, the costume disguises not gender but social position: a boy of noble birth is dressed as a servant. Just as Quixote's knight costume is both pretense and reality, some of the disguises at the magical inn are half-real, too. Clara and Luis are separated by Luis's high status, so through his disguise he is shedding his status and rejecting its significance.

Don Luis, which is the boy's name, recognizes the man as one of his father's servants. The servant tells the boy that they're there to take him home, but he replies that he won't come home until he has settled his affairs. Nearly all the guests at the **inn** come out to listen to the argument. The judge recognizes the boy as his neighbor's son and takes him aside to speak to him in private.

The inn has served as a castle and a church (remember Quixote's baptismal knighting ceremony), and now, with the judge's arrival, it has become a court of law. It is a place where people debate right and wrong, where people's fates are decided.

Meanwhile, two guests that tried to leave without paying are giving the innkeeper a heavy beating, and the innkeeper's daughter runs over to Don Quixote to beg him for help. He runs over, but not before receiving Dorotea's permission to undertake another quest; but when he sees the squabble he stops in his tracks, explaining that he can only fight knights, not low-born people like these guests. The innkeeper's family is furious at Quixote's apparent cowardice. Soon enough, though, Quixote persuades the guests to stop beating the innkeeper and pay what they owe.

In certain situations, Quixote has hesitated to jump into battle. It is hard to say whether his forbearance is cowardice or respect for knightly rules. Either way, in this case his restraint is for the best. He helps the innkeeper not through violence but through reason – we could say, not arms but letters.

Meanwhile, the judge asks Don Luis to explain his strange outfit and behavior. Don Luis tells the judge that he loves his daughter Clara and wants to marry her, and begs for the judge's permission. The judge tells him he must think it over. Just then, *another* guest arrives at the **inn** – barber # 2, from whom Quixote stole Mambrino's helmet and Sancho stole a pack-saddle. Barber 2 recognizes Sancho and cries thief, but Sancho explains that the pack-saddle and the barber's basin were spoils of war, not thefts. Quixote interferes to say that they took Mambrino's helmet and a horse's fine caparisons, not a basin and saddle, and if they've been transformed it must be the work of the **enchanters** always plaguing knights errant.

Once again, Quixote must face the consequences of his good intentions. Quixote believed that he was acting in accordance with the knightly code when he seized the helmet from the stranger on the road. In reality, he was just acting like a criminal – a small-time highway robber. The chivalry code and the legal system are often at odds. As we've seen, Quixote doesn't think that he's subject to ordinary rules like paying for one's food and shelter. He lives by his own moral code, not his country's.

PART 1, CHAPTER 45

The barber from Quixote's village decides to play along with Quixote's delusion for fun's sake, and tells barber 2 that the contested object is definitely a helmet and not a basin; the other men all agree. The new barber begins to weaken in his convictions and wonders whether the stolen things really are a helmet and caparisons. Quixote says that it looks to him like a pack-saddle and not a caparison. He suggests that maybe only he has been affected by the **enchanters** in this castle, since he is a knight, and that perhaps someone else might be able to perceive things objectively.

This is a silly, nonsensical scene. It is also one of the most philosophical moments in the entire book, a textbook introduction to perspectivism. But if a crowd of people directing their gazes at an objects A and B claim that they are objects C and D, to what extent do they really become objects C and D? For this barber, they transform in an instant.

Don Fernando announces that they should take a secret vote to decide the nature of the pack-saddle/caparisons. Barber 2 is miserable to see that his basin has transformed into a helmet, and is worried that his pack-saddle will soon become caparisons. Don Fernando announces that everyone agrees that the object is a horse's caparisons. Barber 2 swears on his soul that it looks to him like a pack-saddle, but, as he says, "the lords make the laws." Don Luis's servants, who aren't in on the joke, as well as some recently arrived members of Holy Brotherhood, are all infuriated by this nonsense. Don Quixote charges at one of the peace-officers and all kinds of little fights break out among the guests.

Quixote and Sancho have observed that the inn is haunted by enchanters. The transformations of the barber's things are so sudden and strange that they do indeed resemble enchantment; and just like the transformations Quixote and Sancho ascribe to enchanters, they take place in the eye of the perceiver. The barber's innocuous comment is quite profound: he means that reality as we see it is created not by nature but by "lords," the ruling classes.

Suddenly Quixote decides that they are all in a book that describes someone called King Agramante, or perhaps that the situation resembles one in the book, and shouts at everyone to calm down and make peace with one another. After his speech, everyone more or less settles down. The judge describes his dilemma to the other men, and they collectively decide that Don Fernando will tell the servants that he has invited Don Luis to spend time with him in his estate in Andalusia. But just when everyone is at peace again, one of the officers of the Holy Brotherhood remembers that he has an arrest warrant for Don Quixote, issued after he freed the group of convicts. He grabs the knight, who begins to choke him; only Don Fernando manages to pull them apart. Quixote indignantly explains that knights errant are not subject to society's laws.

Once again, Quixote comes to the rescue using words, not force. In this situation, his obsession with chivalry books doesn't distort reality; rather, it teaches him how to approach reality more wisely. When members of the Holy Brotherhood invade this increasingly magical inn and try to arrest Quixote, they are enacting a conflict between the general legal system and the small and particular system of the inn, whose center is Quixote and his peculiar morality.

PART 1, CHAPTER 46

The priest explains to the officer that there is no point in arresting Don Quixote, since he would be released immediately because of his madness. The officers are so astonished by his madness that they satisfy themselves instead by ending the fight between Sancho and the barber: they return the pack-saddle to the barber, and the priest pays him for his basin. Don Luis's servants agree to Don Fernando plan because of his high rank. Since the main conflicts have now been resolved, Don Quixote implores Dorotea to continue their journey to her kingdom, and Dorotea politely consents.

In the standoff between public and private morality, private wins - even if it wins in a way that's quite humiliating to Quixote. Because of his madness, the officers of the law don't touch him. This sentence has two meanings in one, because his madness has two meanings in one. It is both a kind of confused helplessness and an inspired private vision of the world.

Here, Sancho interrupts to say that Dorotea can't be a real princess, since she has been kissing Don Fernando on the sly. Quixote yells at Sancho to be quiet, but Dorotea gently interjects to say that an **enchanter** must have caused Sancho to see the impropriety he described. Don Quixote agrees and forgives Sancho on the spot, adding that most events at the **inn** take place via enchantment.

Quixote generally acts very politely, but he is often angry and condescending with Sancho. His squire is the loud voice of the other reality, the world Quixote recognizes but chooses not to believe in. He directs his anger and confusion about that world at Sancho.

The company of friends thinks of a plan that would allow the barber and the priest to bring Quixote back to the village without having to drag Dorotea with them. They build a wooden cage, disguise Don Luis's servants, and trap him in the cage while he's asleep. When Quixote wakes up, he thinks that he has been abducted by ghosts and **enchanters**. The disguised barber tells Quixote in a frightening voice that it is time for him to unite with Dulcinea, which makes Don Quixote quite content. The servants load Quixote's cage onto an ox-cart in the inn's courtyard.

The priest and the barber have been trying to take charge of Quixote for quite a while, and here they let go of any pretense of civility. Just as the officers of the Holy Brotherhood wanted to imprison Quixote for his crimes against the crown, the priest and the barber cage him for his crimes against naturalism and common sense.

PART 1, CHAPTER 47

Don Quixote is perplexed to discover his predicament, since it does not correspond to any knight histories he has read. He wonders whether chivalry has gradually changed – whether new versions have been invented to suit the present time. Sancho doubts that Quixote's abductors are ghosts, because they are clearly men of flesh and blood, but Quixote explains that such an earthly appearance can only be an illusion. Soon everyone says their goodbyes and the company sets off: Don Quixote in the cage on the ox-cart, along with the officers, Sancho, and the priest and barber in disguise.

For the first time, Quixote admits that the world around him is truly inconsistent with the books he loves. When he asks himself whether chivalry has changed, he is admitting the possibility that chivalry might be something more than a bunch of fairy-tales and old-fashioned rules – something more abstract. It's partly for honoring this deeply buried abstraction that readers respect and love him.

Seven canons (priests) catch up with them on the road and one of them asks the company about Don Quixote's cage. Don Quixote asks him whether he knows anything about knight-errantry, because if not he won't bother with explanations; the canon replies that he is an expert. Don Quixote explains that he has been placed into the cage by **enchanters**, but Sancho interrupts to say that in his opinion his master is not enchanted at all, because he can **eat**, sleep, and talk like anyone else, while enchanted people can do none of these things. He also points out that the guards aren't enchanters but merely the barber and the priest in disguise, and they should be ashamed for hindering Quixote from helping the princess and reaping his rewards. The barber exclaims that Sancho must be as crazy as his master, but Sancho stubbornly explains that everyone has his own goal, and an island is his, and it's no worse than anyone else's.

Don Quixote's guarded reply marks the slow development of his secondary realism, his drifting fall from the world of his imagination. He has learned that many people in the world do not and will not believe in chivalry and knight-errantry, and he no longer expects to change their minds. But just as Quixote is falling to meet the others, Sancho is rising to meet Quixote. The squire is becoming more confident in his defense of his master's worldview. When the barber calls him insane, Sancho replies, in effect, that the world is not clearly divided into sanity and insanity.

The priest and the canon ride ahead so that they can talk in peace. The priest tells the canon Quixote's story. The canon says that chivalry tales are "absurd stories, concerned only to amuse and not to instruct." He doesn't understand how they can amuse anyone, though, since they are full of absurdity, ugliness, disorder, and people can only enjoy beauty and harmony. Though novels don't have to be true, he says, they must strive to achieve the appearance of truth by imitating life as it is. The author should also display a wide range of knowledge and experience, styles and genres, to make a variegated and dazzling whole.

The priest and the canon's "learned" conversation crystallizes the absurdities and internal contradictions in discussions of literary realism. On the one hand, says the canon, books should be realistic – they should depict life as it truly is. On the other hand, they should omit absurdity and disorder. But life is full of absurdity and disorder. In fact, the canon is merely saying that his *view of reality excludes absurdity and disorder. Each person has her own realism.*

PART 1, CHAPTER 48

The canon mentions that he himself began writing a book of chivalry, but he never finished it; he was discouraged to observe that the masses seem to only to like bad and messy plays, and good literature never makes any money. Or rather the directors of the theaters assume that the masses only like bad plays and so generally avoid good literature. The priest interrupts to say that books of chivalry should mirror life by depicting customs and truth, but instead they show "absurdity," "folly," and "lewdness."

This respectable canon begins to seem a little absurd. Did he really stop writing his book because it was too good? He dislikes chivalry books for being too amusing to be instructive, so when he says that the book was too good, he probably means that it was too boring. Along with many other characters, he is prudishly suspicious of any kind of fun.

To support his point, the priest describes foolish plays that ignore conventions of youth and age, poverty and wealth, folly and seriousness; they also ignore geographical and historical continuity and present miracles that are almost sacrilegious. These plays may be entertaining to the masses, says the priest, but good plays are both entertaining and beneficial to the viewer – especially to his intelligence and moral sense. The canon and the priest agree that some authority needs to censor and regulate Spanish literature.

When the priest says that popular plays ignore conventions, he means that they disrupt stereotypes – that they try to show the world differently than he sees it. When he says that good plays should be beneficial to the viewer's moral sense, he means that plays should instruct viewers in his morality, which he believes to be objectively true.

At this point, the canon joins the priest and company for a meal in a pretty valley. Sancho comes over to Quixote's cage and whispers to him that his captors are merely the priest and the barber, who envy his great adventures. Quixote replies that only **enchanters** would be able to trap him in a cage so easily, and therefore the people that look the like the priest and the barber must be enchanters. Sancho tells him that he will put to him a question that will disprove this idea of enchantment. After some hesitation and embarrassment, he asks whether Quixote has needed to go to the bathroom while in the cage. Quixote answers in the affirmative.

Even though Quixote is beginning to have some doubts, he still chooses his beliefs over his observations. He expects his observations to adhere to his beliefs, not the other way around. His beliefs are the most unchanging part of his experience, while "all that is solid melts into air" – the material world around him is fluid and changeable. Nevertheless, with Sancho's help, he is learning to take it into account.

PART 1, CHAPTER 49

Sancho tells Quixote triumphantly that **enchanted** people don't have that need, and therefore he must not be enchanted. But Quixote explains again that times have changed, and enchanted people do all sorts of things they didn't before – "the customs of the times" do not prove anything when it comes to enchantment. Sancho does not try to argue, but insists that they must try to get Quixote out of the cage. He asks the priest to let Quixote out so that he can relieve himself. Quixote explains that there's no chance of him fleeing, since he is enchanted, so the priest lets him out.

Now Quixote has become more sure of his theory about enchantment, chivalry, and knight-errantry. These three things are not particular to any place and time – they can reincarnate anywhere, in any era. In light of this realization, Quixote's project of resuscitating knight-errantry seems very reasonable.

After he returns, the canon asks him how it can be that such an intelligent man believes all the lies in chivalry books. He encourages Quixote to read all the wonderful truthful books instead, like history books and the Bible. Quixote answers that it is folly to say that knights errant never existed, when so many people believe their stories to be true; they are as true as the sun is bright, ice is cold, and the earth is sustaining. Quixote gives examples of both real and fictional events to prove his point.

When the guests at the inn all looked at a barber's basin and called it a helmet, the basin, to some mysterious degree, transformed into a helmet. Similarly, when thousands of people imagine the stories in chivalry books and believe them to be true, the stories acquire the quality of truth. They are true because they are bright in people's imaginations. For Quixote, anything that sustains us is true.

PART 1, CHAPTER 50

Quixote goes on to describe the pleasures and splendors of chivalry books: the magical places, the beautiful princesses, the horrible monsters and exquisite palaces. He tells the canon that these books cure sadness and improve one's personality: he himself has become gentler, braver, and more polite. A poor man like him cannot show his generosity except through valiant deeds, so he hopes to become an emperor so that he can help his friends – for one thing, he'll be able to give Sancho an island.

The canon and the priest agreed earlier that chivalry books and frivolous plays are too unlifelike and absurd to be morally beneficial. But Quixote explains clearly that chivalry books have made him into a better person, despite their implausibility. The other men's theories are full of holes.

As the group **eats** lunch, a goat and its goatherd leap out at them from the bushes. They invite him to sit and eat with them and tell his story. Sancho decides to go off and eat a pie all by himself, while Quixote declares he needs spiritual sustenance more than he needs food.

Despite Quixote and Sancho's gradual transformations, the book insists on their basic types: Sancho is short, plump, gluttonous, and practical, while Quixote is tall, skinny, and dreamy.

PART 1, CHAPTER 51

The goatherd, whose name is Eugenio, begins his story. In a nearby village lives a wealthy farmer with a very beautiful daughter named Leandra. When she turned sixteen, men from all over the country came to ask for her hand, including the storyteller himself. The farmer knew Eugenio to be well-born, Christian, wealthy, and intelligent, but Eugenio's rival, Anselmo, possessed the same qualities. Finally, the farmer decided to let his daughter choose her own husband.

We recognize this storyline right away. The repetitiveness of the subplots is perhaps meant to poke fun at the overly similar plots of most chivalry books. Leandra's story, so far, is almost identical to Marcela's. Her family is hoping to make a marriage of equality – a marriage based on social and economic correspondence.

Just then, a retired soldier named Vicente de la Rosa came to town. He wore many bells and whistles and brightly-colored suits, told fantastical stories, played the guitar, and wrote poems. Leandra fell in love with him and the pair ran off together without getting married. Three days later, a search party found Leandra stranded in a cave in the mountains: the soldier had run off with her clothes, her money, and her jewelry. She left to live in a convent, and Eugenio and Anselmo were left lovelorn and despairing. They decided to become shepherds and spend their time singing about Leandra's loveliness and cruelty in the mountains, and many of her other suitors followed their example.

In this story, a certain new kind of love interferes with the family's sensible designs. Leandra's love for the soldier is not a platonic love like Quixote's, not a love of likeness or unlikeness like Luscinda's or Zoraida's – it's just a love based on empty charm. More than anything else, it resembles the love affair between Camila and Lotario: it is similarly spontaneous, instinctive, and impractical. Just like Camila, Leandra ends up in a convent, a prison for the impulses.

PART 1, CHAPTER 52

Don Quixote tells the goatherd that he would rescue Leandra from the convent right away, were he not engaged in another quest. The goatherd says that Quixote must be mad to speak this way and they have a very messy **food** fight on the picnic blanket. The fighting is interrupted by the sound of a trumpet. The people of the nearby village have been holding public rain prayers, and a group of penitents in white carrying a holy image comes toward the company. Quixote imagines that the image is an abducted lady and charges at the penitents. When he orders them to set the lady free, they realize that he is a madman and begin laughing. One penitent comes over to Don Quixote, splits his sword in two with a cudgel, smashes his shoulder, and throws him to the ground.

We are coming to the end of the first part of the novel. It is important to remember that, originally, the novel ended here; Quixote did not publish the second part until 1615, a decade later. Most scholars agree that he did not initially plan to write a second part. Quixote's final fight of the original novel is not a silly food fight, but a true fight: it is as filled with misplaced nobility and illusion as the best of them. We are glad that Quixote gets to come home wounded in battle, not confined to a cage.

Sancho sees that his master is not moving and begins crying, lamenting, and singing his praises: he was brave, generous, humble, "imitator of the good, scourge of the wicked." Don Quixote wakes up and agrees to come back to the village while his shoulder heals. They arrive six days later. The story ends here, because the author has not been able to find any reliable information about Quixote's third sally. He did find a lead casket full of poems about Dulcinea, Rocinante, Sancho, and Don Quixote, written by a ridiculous group called "The Academicians of Argamasilla."

Sancho's moving soliloquy paints a loving, contradictory picture of Quixote: a strange mixture of the admirable and the comic, the good and the pathetic. Sancho describes Quixote both as he wishes to be and as he appears to the rest of the world, both his big-hearted intentions and his impractical fumbling. He paints a picture of Quixote that brings the imaginary and the real worlds together, and that establishes Quixote as real in between them.

PART 2, PROLOGUE

The author does not want to begin the prologue by badmouthing the author of the spurious second Don Quixote, though he resents that this fellow called him old, one-handed, and envious. In fact, he is grateful that this author complimented his *Exemplary Tales*.

Someone really did publish a spurious second part of the History, in 1614 – a man writing under the pseudonym of Avellaneda. Cervantes rushed to finish his own second part, because he wanted to reclaim his inventions.

Instead, the author wants to begin the prologue with some parables. The first one describes a madman from Seville who would inflate dogs' bellies by blowing into them through a little tube. "Do you think it's easy to inflate a dog?" he would ask. Do you think it's easy to write a book? asks the author. The second parable describes a madman who would drop rocks on dogs' heads for fun. Once he dropped a rock on a man's beloved pet, and the man beat him badly, saying: "Couldn't you see, you monster, that my dog's a whippet?" The madman hid away for a month and then came back out onto the streets with his rocks, but he never dared drop any on any dog's head, saying each time to himself: "This one's a whippet; stay clear!" The author compares the rocks to his books.

Parables are didactic tales that clearly illustrate a moral or principle, like "The Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity." But these parables are none too clear. The sly author claims that he doesn't want to badmouth Avellaneda, the author of the spurious history, but mostly likely the parables are doing just that. Avellaneda thinks writing a good book is easy as inflating a dog, says Cervantes; Avellaneda's terrible, silly book is a rock dropped on readers' heads.

The author repeats that he does not resent the author of the false *Quixote* but emphasizes that this second part was written by the same author as the first, and is generally continuous with the first. This is the final, conclusive history that takes us to the end of Quixote's life.

The question of authorial authenticity is complicated. The narrator claims that the true author of both parts is Cide Hamete Benengeli (everything except the first section of the first part); then there is the anonymous translator; and the narrator merely edits and transcribes.

PART 2, CHAPTER 1

Cide Hamete Benengeli writes that after Quixote came back to his home village, the priest and the barber did not come to see him for a month to avoid stirring up old memories. Finally they come to visit him and he speaks very sensibly on many different subjects – until they begin discussing the war with the Ottoman Empire. Quixote tells them that the best possible solution is to call all the knights in Spain and send them into battle. The two men realize that he still believes in knight-errantry and therefore must be as mad as ever.

We have said before that Quixote's romantic ideals are not just aesthetic: he wants to remake society entirely. In this light, his interest in the war and his proposed solution are significant. He believes that knights can best serve the Spanish empire – not only because of their exceptional strength and courage, but also because of the force of their moral conviction.

The barber decides to tell them a story about a learned man with a BA who lost his mind and spent a lot of time in a Sevillian insane asylum. After a few years, the man wrote to the archbishop to say that he was absolutely sane, and that his family was keeping him in the asylum in order to rob him of his income. The archbishop sent a chaplain to ascertain whether the man was sane or not. After speaking to the student and listening to his learned and sensible opinions, the chaplain decided that the man was sane and deserved to be removed from the asylum.

The learned man in the story resembles Quixote in that he acts and speaks with a peculiar mixture of sanity and insanity, intelligence and delusion. The barber wants to make Quixote see himself as this doubled, split personality, with one foot in reality and one foot out of it, so that Quixote might see his own absurdity and renounce it.

The man was glad to hear the news, but he asked to say goodbye to his friends in the asylum before leaving, and the chaplain decided to accompany him. The man told some of his friends that he was sane now, and that he was leaving the asylum for good. One of the men in the asylum was so upset by these news that he called himself Jupiter and threatened to withhold rain from the region for three years. The student replied that, since he was Neptune, he could protect the region from drought. The chaplain told him he'd better stay with Jupiter for now and left him in the asylum.

The man is intelligent and sensible when he speaks of world issues with the chaplain. But once he is speaking to his mentally ill friends in the asylum, he himself becomes mentally ill. The barber tells the story to shame Quixote, but in fact the story describes the fragility and elusiveness of sanity. Perhaps the man simply adapts to his circumstances, like a chameleon.

Don Quixote reproaches the barber for making such callous comparisons. He explains that he is not a madman trying to prove his sanity; he is only trying to show the world that it is wrong not to revive the wonderful practice of knight-errantry, which does so much good, and exemplifies so many great human qualities. Knights nowadays, he says, are spoiled courtiers instead of hardened warriors. Jupiter will not rain, but he "shall rain as often as I like."

After his lonely convalescence, Quixote is not quite as cheerful and oblivious as we left him. He is more self-aware, more canny. He knows very well that other people consider him insane, and he has created a strong defense.

The barber apologizes, and the priest tells Quixote that he can't help but feel that all the histories of knights are dreams and lies. Quixote explains that this is "an almost universal misconception to the light of truth," a truth that is almost "palpable" with one's senses. The priest asks him some questions about the nature of famous giants, knights, and princesses, and Quixote responds in vivid detail. Just then, they hear the housekeeper and the niece shouting in the yard.

Earlier, we saw Quixote describe truth as something that sustains people. Here, he clarifies his position. He tells his friends that they are wrong about the nature *of truth. The truth is not the opposite of a dream or a lie: it is something that warms a person (as dreams and lies sometimes do), something that a person feels as true. He is describing an unscientific, non-factual truth.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 2

The two concerned women are trying to stop Sancho Panza from coming into the house, worried that he will remind Quixote of his old mischief. He comes in at Quixote's request, and the priest and barber wonder where the knight and squire's shared madness, their "fabric of absurdities," will lead them. the priest notes that the master's "madness" and the squire's "foolishness" are somehow complementary and mutually necessary.

The priest refers rightly to Quixote and Sancho's interdependence. At the beginning of the book, Quixote seems to be the mind and Sancho the body; hence "madness" (a blindness to earthly, bodily life) and "foolishness" (a blindness to the life of ideas).

Sancho and Quixote are also discussing their complementarity: Quixote explains to Sancho that master and servant are part of one body, so that when one is injured the other feels pain as well. Quixote asks Sancho about his reputation in the village, and Sancho tells him most people consider him insane, though brave and funny. Quixote takes these news quite well, explaining that all great heroes had fatal flaws. Sancho also tells him he heard word of a book called *The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha*, written by Cide Hamete Brinjalcurry (as Sancho remembers it), which describes all the adventures of their first two sallies in great detail.

But as the book progresses, and as their friendship deepens and changes them, Sancho helps Quixote acquire a body and Quixote helps Sancho acquire a mind – or at least that's how the two feel; in reality, they are merely helping one another make use of these somewhat latent faculties. They are deeply grateful to one another; nothing is quite so lost as when it's already yours, but somehow out of order.

PART 2, CHAPTER 3

Sancho leaves to get the student who had told him about the book. Quixote is surprised that his adventures have been recorded so promptly, but assumes that a book about a knight errant must be accurate and admiring. Sancho returns with Sansón Carrasco, the young student from Salamanca, who tells Don Quixote that he has become the most famous knight in the world, since people everywhere are reading about his marvelous adventures. They complain only that the history includes irrelevant stories like "The Tale of Inappropriate Curiosity."

One of the main themes of the first half of the history is the relationship between Quixote's life and books of chivalry. Now, Quixote's own life has become a chivalry book – in a way, his dream has come true. The second half of the history will describe the relationship between his life and the book of his life. He will have to contend with his own literary double, a ghostly byproduct of self-invention.

Quixote asks Carrasco whether the book described every adventure in detail, hoping that it has omitted some of the more embarrassing ones. But Carrasco explains that historians must describe events truthfully, while poets can describe events "not as they were but as they should have been."

Right away, Quixote is a little anxious about this double. Is he just like him, or perhaps worse or better? Quixote has the idealistic impulse to edit out the more naturalistic and embarrassing aspects of the novel.

Carrasco tells Sancho that he is also an important and beloved character in the book, which is read by children and adults, servants and lords, so that every skinny horse in sight becomes a Rocinante. Everyone finds it delightful and harmless because every word is "wholesome" and "Catholic." Quixote says almost in one breath that a book about his deeds must be glorious and beloved, and that very few people must enjoy such a book. Carrasco explains again that the book is widely beloved, though some criticize its inconsistencies: who stole Sancho's donkey, and when was it returned? What happened to the gold coins Sancho found in the sierra? After **lunch**, the conversation resumes.

The student Carrasco tells us several very important things about the first volume of the history. First, it is an equalizer: people of all ages and social stations enjoy it. Quixote believes that knight-errantry should blur class distinctions, and in a small way he has succeeded. Second, Carrasco says that all skinny horses have become Rocinantes. Quixote's adventures have transformed the way people experience the world around them – in this small way, but, implicitly, in larger ways as well.

PART 2, CHAPTER 4

Sancho explains that his donkey was stolen the night after the adventure with the dead body, and a few days after that he saw the donkey carrying Ginés de Pasamonte and took it back. Carrasco explains, though, that the author mentions Sancho riding the donkey before he retrieves it from Ginés. Sancho also explains that he gave the gold coins to his wife. Carrasco tells them that some people have been asking about a second history, clamoring for more "quixotry" where Quixote fights and Sancho talks. Sancho is sure that soon enough he and his master will provide the author with plenty of material for a second book. Quixote hears Rocinante neigh, which seems like a good sign, so he decides to strike out on his third sally within the next few days.

After Cervantes published the first volume of the history, critics pointed out certain gaps and inconsistencies, the main one being the mysterious reappearance of the donkey that never disappeared. Cervantes takes the opportunity to clarify some of the inconsistencies, using Sancho as a mouthpiece. Here, we see the birth of the word "quixotic." We also observe the beginning of a literary self-consciousness in Sancho and Quixote; they now conceive of their adventures as both actions and plot points.

Sancho is concerned that his master attacks too freely and irresponsibly, and warns Quixote and Carrasco that he will take care of his master but he won't fight for him anymore. "Being brave is halfway between the extremes of being a coward and being foolhardy," and Sancho implies that his master is too far to the right of the spectrum. Carrasco tells him not to worry, because he will be rewarded with a whole kingdom for his trouble; Sancho counters sensibly that "too much would be just as bad as too little," though he would be a great governor if given the chance. Quixote agrees and asks Carrasco to keep his imminent departure hidden.

We have said that Quixote represents the head and Sancho the body. But we learn (in the previous summary block) that Quixote is beloved for his actions and Sancho for his words – an apparent inversion (the body being responsible for action and the head for speech). Perhaps readers love the two characters not for the qualities they already possess but for the qualities they are developing.

PART 2, CHAPTER 5

The translator says as preface to chapter five that he considers the events of the chapter to be mere invention, because they show Sancho speaking too wisely and sensibly. Sancho comes home in a very happy mood and tells his wife Teresa that he's excited to join Quixote on his third sally. He speaks so elaborately that at first she can't quite understand him, but soon she gives her blessing and tells Sancho to come back with more money and perhaps a husband for their daughter Mari-Sancha. Sancho promises to marry her to a nobleman, but Teresa says it's better to marry an equal, so that no one mocks her or tells her she's out of place; she believes that people should generally stay in their place. Sancho replies that that their daughter would soon learn to act like a lady, and that it's stupid to turn down nobility and wealth.

It seems that the translator (neither the supposed author, Cide Hamete, nor the narrator/editor Cervantes) has had little experience with character development, because he can't seem to believe that Sancho's conversational skills have improved so much since the beginning of the first sally. Character development was a relatively uncommon literary technique at the time of the novel's writing. Yet we have seen Sancho learn many ideas and turns of phrase from Quixote. Here, he jumps at the opportunity to show off a little.

They bicker for a while but they stick to their positions. Sancho explains that the present matters more than the past, and one's good deeds and fine character can matter more than one's lineage. He speaks very well and even corrects Teresa's diction. The thought of her daughter married to a nobleman makes Teresa cry, but Sancho comforts her as best he can, and the conversation ends peacefully.

Sancho corrects Teresa's mistakes just as Quixote often corrects his *mistakes. Sancho's efforts to speak and think well affirm Quixote's idea about social equality (which Sancho faithfully repeats to Teresa) – the idea that people can choose their stations in life, because character is more important than heredity.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 6

The niece and the housekeeper see that Don Quixote is planning another sally and try to convince him not to leave. The niece tries to tell him that stories about knights errant aren't true, and that he's fallen into all sorts of delusions about his own age, strength, and worldly status. Quixote explains that people can both rise and fall in status, and that nowadays families are great because they show "virtue, wealth, and generosity": wealthy men who do not have these qualities are not great, and poor men who are virtuous and polite are considered great. He tells the niece and housekeeper that the only two ways to achiever "riches and honor" are letters and arms, and since arms are his calling, they must not stand in his way. Just then, Sancho comes to speak to his master.

The niece and the housekeeper here stand for a certain kind of crude realism. We have defined realism not as one single objectively true picture of the world, but as one person's private vision. The niece and the housekeeper place their faith in the former, narrower definition. They believe that their idea of Quixote is the only true idea – that he is a poor, weak, pathetic old man, and nothing more. But Quixote explains that people are defined not by their circumstances but by their actions.

PART 2, CHAPTER 7

The despairing housekeeper runs to find Carrasco and asks him to stop Quixote from running away again. Carrasco promises to do all he can. Meanwhile, Sancho tells Quixote that he's ready to go looking for new adventures. Quixote corrects his vocabulary mistakes and both mocks and compliments him for his endless strings of irrelevant proverbs. Sancho asks Quixote for a fixed monthly wage, rather than a share in some future conquest, but Quixote explains chivalry books never mention squire's wages, and he does not want to go against tradition.

Quixote theoretically believes that people can choose to be whatever they wish. But we can see that Sancho's clumsy, transparent efforts to become wise and eloquent irritate Quixote a little bit. Quixote is admirable and idealistic, but sometimes he has a rotten temper. He can't always live up to his own ideals, just as Sancho can't always speak up to his own actions.

As Sancho processes his disappointment, Carrasco comes in and ceremoniously encourages Quixote to set off on his third sally without delay. He even offers to be Quixote's squire. Sancho breaks down in tears and swears to be loyal to his master, wages or no wages. They gather provisions, and three days later the two friends leave for El Toboso.

Sancho's stereotype is a down-to-earth, uneducated peasant, more interested in food and money than in ideals or abstractions. But here Sancho surpasses his stereotype; he chooses friendship and squiredom over money and comfort.

PART 2, CHAPTER 8

Quixote tells Sancho that he wants to receive Dulcinea's blessing before beginning any new quests, and asks Sancho to direct them to her house when they reach El Toboso the following day. Quixote imagines Dulcinea shining her light from a castle balcony, but Sancho says that when he last saw her she was shouting over a yard wall, and her light was clouded by dust from sieving wheat. Quixote explains impatiently that Dulcinea does not sieve anything, but pursues only activities appropriate to her station, so an **enchanter** must have created the illusion Sancho describes.

Quixote and Sancho have several conversational dynamics. They make a certain kind of joke over and over again: Quixote says a word that he means metaphorically, and Sancho interprets it literally. Sancho's misinterpretation of the word "light" may seem naïve and goofy, but it is an important correction to Quixote's one-sided perspective.

Quixote talks about the harmful effects of fame, and is moved to reflect that knight-errantry accords well with Christianity, since a knight must battle not only villains but also the seven deadly sins within and without him. Sancho asks him whether it would not be easier become famous and secure a spot in heaven by becoming a saint, rather than a knight, but Quixote explains that "chivalry is a religion," and knights can become saints as well. They approach El Toboso just as it becomes dark.

The book has made several tentative comparisons between Quixote's belief in knight-errantry and religious belief. The comparison is especially significant because the novel was written just before the beginning of the Enlightenment, a period that emphasized reason and self-sufficiency over mysticism and faith.

PART 2, CHAPTER 9

At midnight, the two friends enter the town. Quixote asks Sancho to lead them to Dulcinea's palace; Sancho, who has never been to see Dulcinea, evades the question and suggests that they wait until morning. He wonders why Don Quixote doesn't lead them there, and the knight explains angrily that he has never seen Dulcinea and loves her only by hearsay. Sancho takes the opportunity to say that he has never seen Dulcinea either, since he delivered Quixote's message by hearsay, but Quixote assumes he's joking.

Quixote is becoming more canny and self-aware; his perspective is doubling into his vision of the world and the crudely 'realistic' perspective of most the people that surround him. But Dulcinea remains his particular blind spot. His idea of her has not doubled at all; he seems incapable of imagining her through the eyes of others.

Quixote asks a stranger on the road to point them to Dulcinea's castle, and the stranger directs them to the house of the village priest, who has a list of El Toboso's inhabitants. Sancho convinces Quixote to spend the night in the forest outside the village, and promises to go looking for Dulcinea in the morning.

As in the adventure of the fulling-hammers, Sancho convinces Quixote to approach a new situation during the day, instead of at night. He is encouraging Quixote to see things clearly, in the light of day, instead of imagining them romantically in the moonlight.

PART 2, CHAPTER 10

The author tells us that he almost omitted this chapter, since the events in it "approached the limits of the imaginable." But, says the author, the truth of events survives as a thin film on top of them, no matter how absurd they may be. In the morning, Sancho leaves to find Dulcinea in order to arrange a discreet meeting. As soon as he leaves the forest, he sits down under a tree and begins thinking about his absurd predicament: how can he find a princess of unearthly beauty in El Toboso, especially if he's never seen her? Then he remembers that his master often looks at one thing and sees something else entirely, and decides to try and convince Quixote that some peasant girl is Dulcinea, and that an **enchanter** has transformed her into a peasant girl in Quixote's eyes.

There are several important moments in this section. First of all, the author proposes an idea about the nature of truth that coheres closely to the idea we've been extracting from Quixote's conversations and pronouncements. The truth of events is not contained within *the events themselves – it lies on top of them, somehow, like a dilution, the oil extracted from a plant. The truth of a story is not defined by its plausibility, but by its effect on someone's imagination.*

Sancho sits by the tree for another few hours; as soon as he sees three peasant girls riding toward him on donkeys, he hurries back to his master and tells him that the beautiful Dulcinea and her two maids are riding toward them as they speak. They ride out of the wood, but where Sancho pretends to see beautiful ladies on fine horses Quixote only sees peasant girls on donkeys. Sancho rides toward the girls, kneels by the one in the center, and addresses her in the most flowery and respectful tones. She rudely tells him to get out of the way. Quixote, who can only see a very plain-looking peasant girl, tells her that an **enchanter** must have distorted her image in his eye, but affirms his love for her. The girl mocks his sentimentality and tries to push through; her donkey throws her off, but she springs back on athletically and the three girls ride away. Sancho continues to describe Dulcinea's heavenly appearance, and Don Quixote is miserable that the evil enchanter has deprived him of the experience of her beauty.

We have said that Dulcinea is Quixote's blind spot: she is entirely imaginary, unspoiled by any real-world correspondence. Sancho has listened to his master's speeches so faithfully that for him, too, she has become purely imaginary – even though at first she was a very corporeal peasant girl named Aldonza Lorenzo. Now, Dulcinea has separated completely from Aldonza. Sancho does not even try to find her: she no longer bears any relation to Dulcinea. Because Dulcinea is Quixote's sanctum, it is especially tragic that he is forced to see her as a harsh peasant girl, unmistakably bodily with her animal strength and bad smell.

PART 2, CHAPTER 11

Sancho tries to cheer up his master, but with little success. Fortunately, they are distracted by a cart full of people dressed as demons, angels, kings, knights, and other characters. Don Quixote stops them and angrily asks them who they are, and the coachman patiently explains that they are a travelling acting troupe. Quixote reflects that he had assumed there was an adventure to be had, and that one must look closely to see beyond appearance to truth.

This episode marks an important change in Quixote's perspective. In the first part of the history, Quixote asserted that he was right to judge events by appearances only (attacking because something looked sinister). Now, he acknowledges that it is his responsibility to look beyond appearances.

Just then, another member of the company dances up to them, and his noisy bells scare Rocinante so much that it races away and flings Quixote to the ground. Quixote wants to punish the actors for their impudence, but Sancho reminds him that everyone loves actors and protects them. When Quixote shouts threats at the actors, they pick up sharp stones for defense. But Sancho begs him to consider the potential injuries, pointing out that it's "more foolhardy than brave" for one person to attack many, and they peacefully back down from the fight.

In the beginning of the novel, Quixote was always the master and Sancho the servant: Quixote made decisions and spoke the truth, while Sancho blundered and followed. Here, Sancho makes the decision and speaks the truth –and what is more, Quixote willingly concedes him the authority. Their relationship is becoming less unequal.

PART 2, CHAPTER 12

Don Quixote thinks wistfully that he might have won some good spoils had he attacked the actors, like the queen's crown and the angel's wings, but Sancho reminds him that actors' props are made of tinsel, not real gold. Quixote sadly compares the falseness of theater to life's role-playing. When Sancho tells him the comparison is clichéd, Quixote admires his good sense. Sancho agrees that Quixote's intelligence has rubbed off on him. They spend the night in the forest near El Toboso.

Quixote believed that the barber's basin was Mambrino's gold helmet, just because it shone. Now, he has learned to distinguish real and false gold. Why did he trust his instincts so completely, in the beginning? Chivalry books and fairy-tales usually follow one hero's perspective. Books like that teach readers that there is one right perspective.

Just as they're falling asleep, two men on horseback approach them. The man in armor lies down on the grass and sings a forlorn love song. Then he speaks rhetorically to the fickle beloved, wondering whether it isn't enough that he has forced every knight of La Mancha to admit that she is the most beautiful woman in the world. Suddenly the Knight of the Forest hears voices and walks over to the two friends. He talks to Quixote about love and knighthood while their squires have a conversation of their own.

Cervantes' novel, on the other hand, combines many contradictory voices into one imperfect whole. When we realize that our perspectives and personalities are choices instead of necessities, we become aware of playing the role of ourselves. Playacting becomes very important in this part of the novel. Quixote recognizes the stranger as a knight because he is carefully performing knighthood.

PART 2, CHAPTER 13

The squires discuss the hardships and rewards of their chosen lifestyle. Their masters seem very strange to them; the Squire of the Forest mentions that his master is only pretending to be insane to help another knight. Sancho replies that his master is all innocence and kindness, though he is silly and easily deceived. The Squire of the Forest shares a bottle of wine and a rabbit pie with Sancho, who, it turns out, is a master at judging wine.

Sancho believes that Quixote is innocent because he never pretends to be someone he's not. Even though Quixote chose to become a knight, he also believes knighthood was his destiny (the opposite of choice) – the only possible reality. In this way, his innocence and his madness overlap.

PART 2, CHAPTER 14

The Knight of the Forest tells Quixote that he is in love with a woman named Casildea de Vandalia, who has asked him to perform a seemingly endless chain of dangerous quests. Most recently, she has asked him to travel through Spain and force all the knights of the country to admit that Casildea is the most beautiful woman in the world. He's especially proud to have defeated the famous Don Quixote. Don Quixote is outraged at this falsehood, and suggests that it was perhaps not Quixote himself but a lookalike, since he himself is the famous knight from La Mancha. To settle the question, they decide to battle when morning comes; the winner of the battle will be able to do what he likes with the loser.

In this scene, Quixote must face two doubles. There is the mysterious Knight of the Forest, who travels the country defending his beloved's beauty just as Quixote travels defending Dulcinea's beauty. There is also the imagined Quixote that the knight claims to have defeated. These doubles, which play-act at being Quixote, suggest that Quixote's own life might be an act.

Just before dawn, they wake up their squires and tell them to get ready for the battle. When it becomes light, Sancho notices that the Squire of the Forest has an enormous, hideous purple nose and climbs a tree in fear. The Knight of the Forest is wearing a visor and a gold cape covered with shiny moons, so he is renamed Knight of the Spangles. They back up and charge at one another; Don Quixote's horse is faster, so Quixote throws the Knight of the Spangles to the ground. He takes off the knight's helmet to make sure he survived the fall and discovers that the mysterious knight is Sansón Carrasco. The Squire of the Forest runs up to them, without the horrible nose, and asks them not to hurt the young graduate. Sancho recognizes the squire – it's a neighbor of his from the village named Tomé Cecial. The Knight of the Spangles admits Dulcinea's beauty and he and his squire limp away. Quixote and Sancho, though, remain convinced that the two men are enemies disguised by **enchanters**.

At night the two strangers seemed interesting and mysterious, but in daylight they look like actors with all their props on display. The shiny moons are like the false-gold trinkets of the actors. After the battle, it turns out that they really are actors, playing at being a knight and a squire. Yet Sancho and Quixote are unwilling to believe that the strangers are really friends of theirs from the village. They have placed their faith in knight-errantry, and they need to believe that the first exciting adventure of their third sally is real, not make-believe. Once again, enchanters fill the gap between how life should be and how life really is.

PART 2, CHAPTER 15

Carrasco had planned with the priest and the barber to let Quixote leave on his sally and to force him back home through the trick described above: he would disguise himself as a knight, challenge Quixote, and make him return to the village. Now that the trick has failed, Carrasco wants to play a second trick on Quixote to take his revenge.

Had Carrasco's plan worked, Quixote would have been defeated by his own shadow– his own double. The false, theatrical version of him would have prevailed. Fortunately, it is the real Quixote who prevails, so he marches bravely on.

PART 2, CHAPTER 16

Quixote is overjoyed by his recent victory. He and Sancho discuss whether the knight and squire were really Carrasco and Tomé Cecial, as they appeared to be. Quixote explains that since the graduate has no good reason to challenge him to fights, he must be a stranger transformed by **enchanters** to resemble Carrasco. An older man in green riding a grey horse comes up behind them. Quixote notices the surprise in the stranger's eyes and explains that he is a knight errant. The man is glad to learn that knights errant still roam the world, though he'd assumed such knights had never truly existed.

Once again, Quixote's preconceived ideas about people override his observations. He believes that Carrasco is a well-meaning friend, and he seems almost incapable of suspecting him of foul play. Ordinary people do not transform themselves deceitfully – only enchanters playact in this malicious way. For Quixote there are good people, and evil enchanters, and little in between.

He tells the friends that his name is Don Diego de Miranda; he is a wealthy, virtuous, generous hidalgo. His son is a student and poet, which the man considers a frivolous pursuit. Quixote responds that poetry is an honorable, delicate pursuit, not for the vulgar-minded (which, he points out, refers to ignorant people of any social class). He also declares that "poets are born not made." The man is impressed by his reasoning and good sense, but just as the conversation comes to a close they see a cart with royal flags coming toward them.

This conversation highlights the complications in Quixote's ideas about class and self-making. On the one hand, he says, both rich and poor can have vulgar minds. On the other hand, one is born a poet: a person can't become a poet by learning and hard work. He believes that people have destinies, but that glorious destinies fall to both rich and poor.

PART 2, CHAPTER 17

Don Diego tries to warn Quixote that the cart is probably carrying royal property and ought not be tampered with, but Quixote thinks that everything that comes his way is an adventure. During his master's long speech, Sancho had wandered off to buy curds from some shepherds. When Quixote calls him over he finds no place to put the curds except his master's helmet. And when his master puts it on to prepare for battle, the curds run down over his face, so that he thinks his brain is melting out of his ears. He is angry to realize that the liquid is curds, but Sancho swears that the devil himself must have put them there.

Just when Quixote is proud and dignified, pleased at his recent victory and waxing eloquent about the nature of poetry, Sancho gets sour cheese slime all over his face. Every time, Quixote falls from grace – not morally, but spiritually. When he assumes that the curds are his melted brains, we see that he too has become anxious about his sanity.

When the cart drives by them, Quixote asks them about the purpose of their journey. The driver explains that he is delivering crates containing two wild lions to the king of Spain. Quixote asks him to release the lions so that he can prove his courage by defeating them. He ignores the green man's prudent warnings and forces the driver to open the crates. The driver asks if he can first take himself and his animals to a safe distance, and Sancho and Don Diego follow suit. "O you of little faith!" says he in response to the other men's fear.

Quixote's phrase rings familiarly in the reader's ears. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" says Jesus to his followers in the gospel of Matthew, and then he calms a storm. Consciously or not, Quixote tells the others he is about to perform a miracle. But his miracle is not supernatural; it is a secular miracle, an act of courage.

As the keeper prepares to open the crate, the author exclaims in praise of Quixote's bravery. The first crate contains an enormous lion, which yawns, looks at Don Quixote, and turns its back languorously. Don Quixote and the other men count this a glorious victory, and Sancho renames him Knight of the Lions. Don Diego says to himself that Quixote speaks very sensibly but acts quite insanely. Quixote hears or intuits these thoughts and admits that his actions appear mad, but he points out that "it is a fine sight" to see a knight acting bravely, helping others, and seeking adventures. He adds that it is better to seem foolhardy than cowardly. After travelling for a few hours, they reach Don Diego's house.

Chance saves Quixote from a gruesome death. All the onlookers agree that the important thing is not the lion's indifference or the brevity of the "battle" – Quixote's courage is central, and defines the event as a victory. In other words, it is not circumstances that define a person but that person's beliefs and choices. Quixote belief in individual agency is contagious. Yet Quixote himself, here, is newly preoccupied with appearances: he imagines that he is a "fine sight" for others.

PART 2, CHAPTER 18

The two friends receive an affectionate welcome at Don Diego's comfortable house. His son Don Lorenzo inquires about the strange visitor, and Don Diego asks him to judge for himself whether the knight is mad or sane. Don Lorenzo goes into Quixote's room, talks to him about poetry, and asks him what he studied at university. Quixote tells the young man that he studied knight-errantry, a subject that contains most others; one must be a jurist, a theologian, a doctor, an astrologer, and pure, chaste, and generous to boot. Don Lorenzo replies that he doubts that such wonderful men ever existed or could exist, but Don Quixote assures him that such knights were indispensable and are sorely lacking today. Don Lorenzo determines that he is a "splendid madman." He tells his father that Quixote would not be himself without his madness.

Don Lorenzo, the young poet, steps out of thin air to become the most affectionate and comprehending listener Quixote has ever had. He admits that Quixote is not in his right mind, but to him the question of his sanity is not central: Quixote is "splendid," sane or not. Quixote's strange passions and convictions make him mysterious and loveable, and bring joy to others. By his own definition, Quixote is true – he brings light and warmth to people's imaginations. It is this kind of truth that makes us love some characters and not others.

Over **lunch**, Quixote asks Don Lorenzo to recite some his poetry glosses (verse summaries of other poems). The poems are quite elegant and Quixote fervently admires them. The two friends stay at Don Diego's house for four more days and decide to leave for the jousts at Saragossa, intending to stop at the Cave of Montesinos on the way. Before riding away, he advises Don Lorenzo to trust strangers' opinions of his poetry more than his own, since "there is no father or mother who thinks his own children are ugly."

Quixote echoes Cervantes, who also compared works of fiction to children in the prologue to the first half of the history. Quixote and Cervantes have a great deal in common. Cervantes reinvented himself when he was about fifty, just like Quixote, and he did so by creating and to some extent becoming Quixote.

PART 2, CHAPTER 19

On the road, Sancho and Quixote encounter a group of two students and two farmers. One of the students invites Quixote to join them at the wedding of a wealthy farmer and a beautiful girl – Camacho the Rich and Quiteria the Fair. Everyone will be there except her former beau, a talented poor boy named Basilio who has been desolate ever since the engagement. Sancho commiserates with the boy and says that everyone should marry for love, but Quixote hushes him up. They approach the village just before dark, and our knight and squire sleep in the woods.

Sancho has watched his master make speeches and pass judgments on every occasion. Now, he himself wants to try making a speech. He is learning to analyze the world around him, to take a moral stance. Though Sancho comes out on the side of love, which is of highest importance to Quixote, his irritable master tells him to be quiet.

PART 2, CHAPTER 20

In the morning Quixote walks over to wake up Sancho, saying to himself that the simple, innocent person sleeps best and lives most happily. Sancho wakes up and rails against Basilio, who is foolish to try to marry above his station. Quixote hushes him with irritation, noting that if Sancho talked his fill he wouldn't have time to **eat** or sleep. They ride into the field where the wedding is to take place: it is covered in tents containing a dizzying amount of food and drink. While Sancho finds something to eat, Quixote watches the performers. A little later, Sancho and Quixote finally argue about whether Basilio or Camacho deserves Quiteria's love. Sancho is on Camacho's side, because his food is rich and good, and Basilio has nothing nourishing to offer, and Quixote is once again amazed at and irritated by his volubility.

Quixote's opinions of Sancho are oversimplified and static. He thinks of their friendship in terms of self-congratulatory opposites. He is lofty and thoughtful, while Sancho is base and stupid; he is delicate and tortured, while Sancho is hearty and content. But Sancho is changing, and these generalities are tearing at the seams. The day before Sancho tried to argue for Basilio, and now he is trying to argue for Camacho; but Quixote just wants him to stop philosophizing and act like an ordinary peasant. Quixote has yet to quite grow into his generosity of spirit.

PART 2, CHAPTER 21

Quixote and Sancho admire the bride and groom. As they approach, a man dressed in black and red yells to stop them. The man is Basilio, and he despairingly tells Quiteria that she cannot marry Camacho, since she has already promised herself to Basilio. He declares that he will remove the obstacle to the marriage by ending his life, and immediately throws himself on his sword. Everyone rushes to help him, as he lies bleeding on the ground, and he says in a weak voice that if Quiteria would marry him in the moments before his death, he would feel that he didn't die in vain. He refuses to confess to the priest until Quiteria fulfills his request. Under such pressure, Camacho consents.

Quixote's stance on wealth is not very clear. On the one hand, he constantly lets money slip through his fingers, and he willingly gives away all he has to Sancho on several occasions. His interest is in beauty and ideals, not base worldly things like money. On the other hand, he has said that he became a knight to gain glory and wealth. We have not yet seen whether Quixote's sympathies lie with Basilio or Camacho.

A pale Quiteria approaches the dying man and the priest quickly marries them. As soon as they receive the priest's blessing, Basilio jumps up and removes the sword from his body, which had gone not in his flesh but through a metal tube filled with blood. Camacho and his friends run to attack Basilio but Quixote wards them off with a conciliatory speech and his sword. Camacho decides to throw the party anyway, and Quixote and Sancho follow the bride and groom to Basilio's village, though Sancho is sad to leave the mountains of **food** and wine.

In this episode, romantic poverty triumphs over wealth, and Quixote takes poverty's side. Quixote is supposed to be seeking wealth, but in practice it does not matter much to him. This is another in a line of episodes to feature some form of theater. Quixote observes that one can achieve one's goal by playacting and cleverness, instead of force. He does his part to help Basilio by speaking instead of fighting.

PART 2, CHAPTER 22

The two friends stay with the couple for three days. Quixote tells Basilio that his trick was not dishonorable, because it was meant to achieve a "virtuous end" – a marriage based on love. He advises Basilio to value his wife's virtue and loyalty above all else.

In the past, Quixote has valued right action over consequence. Basilio inverts this system: he acts deceitfully so that he can marry the person he loves. A wiser Quixote recognizes the value of this unfamiliar system.

Quixote finds a guide to show them the way to the famous Cave of Montesinos, and they set off. They buy several hundred yards of rope on the way and reach the cave the following day, all covered over with weeds and brambles. Quixote clears an opening with his sword and the two other men lower him into the dark opening. They let down all two hundred yards, and after waiting for a half an hour they pull him back up, though they only begin to feel Quixote's weight a little while later. As they pull him out, he seems to be asleep. When they finally wake him up, he tells them he has seen magnificent, magical sights.

We have seen before that Sancho urges Quixote to sleep through the night and take action in daylight, when the external world is clear and the dream world recedes. Here, Quixote plunges from day into night, from safe reality into a mysterious cavern. Perhaps he has become a little tired of seeking adventure in ordinary, daytime reality, so he is trying to withdraw further into dream life.

PART 2, CHAPTER 23

After **lunch**, Quixote describes his adventure. About thirty yards from the bottom of the cave, he decided to rest in a little alcove and suddenly fell asleep. He woke up to see a beautiful field and a castle of crystal. An old man in a purple cloak came towards him, telling him that the **enchanted** inhabitants of the castle have waited for his arrival for a long time. The old man, who is Montesinos himself, told Quixote that he once cut out his friend Durandarte's heart to bring it to lady Belerma – a story Quixote had read in a chivalry book.

Quixote's story about the Cave of Montesinos in many details resembles a story he once told Sancho, in which a knight dives into a frightening lake and finds himself in a beautiful kingdom full of flowers and pretty girls. The adventure confirms all of Quixote's expectations about life as a knight-errant, and affirms his usefulness and importance.

He took Quixote into a room in the palace, where the dead knight Durandante lay sighing and asking Montesinos to cut out his heart. Montesinos explained that the great **enchanter Merlin** has trapped the knight, his squire, Lady Belerma and many others inside the cave. He said to Durandante that he cut out his heart long ago, just as he'd asked, and that he has brought with him the great knight Don Quixote, who has come to revive the practice of knight-errantry. A strange-looking Lady Belerma joined them, and Montesinos explained that her suffering has robbed of her great beauty.

Just as Quixote suspected throughout the book, an evil enchanter is responsible for everyone's troubles. This part of the story accords perfectly with chivalry romances, except for one detail: the tragic beloved, Lady Belerma, is not beautiful – she is quite ugly. The comic, absurd adventures of the novel have changed Quixote's worldview: he has created a place for ugliness and disharmony.

The guide wonders how Quixote could have seen so much in the span of thirty minutes, but Quixote explains that he was there for three days and three nights. Sancho does not believe Quixote's story, but he doesn't suggest that his master's lying: rather, he thinks Merlin put the memories in his head. But Quixote insists that everything he described is real. He even saw the **enchanted** Dulcinea and the other two peasant girls playing in the fields. Sancho, who invented this enchantment, almost laughs out loud. Quixote tells them that one of Dulcinea's maids asked Quixote to lend her mistress some money, and Quixote gave her all he had. Sancho is sad that enchanters have stolen his master's sanity.

Quixote either invents or dreams the adventure in the cave. We have been tracing the path of his imaginative decline and disenchantment, and this (conscious or subconscious) invention marks an important fall. He has been disappointed with his sallies, and he has tired of trying to align his imagination with reality, so he invents an adventure that does correspond perfectly his imagination. He is trying to cut ties with reality.

PART 2, CHAPTER 24

Cide Hamete Benengeli prefaces the chapter by saying he can't believe that Quixote's story is true, nor can he believe that Quixote lied, though there's a rumor that he admitted to inventing the story on his deathbed. As they ride along, the three travellers see a man carrying arms to a nearby **inn** for some important event, and they are so curious that they too decide to spend the night at the inn. They also run into a young man on his way to enlist in the royal army, and Quixote delivers an elegant speech about the honor and glory of war. The three men arrive at the inn that night.

The adventure did not take place, yet it was perfectly real for Quixote. It occupies a middle ground between truth and falsehood. It has no real-life counterpart, not even a false one, as in the adventure of the windmills. And we can't help but feel that Quixote knows that the adventure is a little too perfect, too complete; we sense a dash of self-awareness.

PART 2, CHAPTER 25

When they get to the inn, Quixote finds the arms carrier and asks him to tell his story. One day, a councillor from a nearby village (a member of local government) went looking for his missing donkey. Another councillor told him that he saw the donkey in the forest nearby and offered to help look. They walked into the forest and began braying; both were excellent brayers and gave each other many compliments. They found the donkey only after it had died, but they told everyone about their adventure and their talented braying. Soon rumor of the braying had spread to nearby towns, whose inhabitants incessantly mocked the village of the braying councillors. Finally the men of the village decided to take up arms against the town that mocked the most. The man is carrying arms to be used in the battle.

Generally, this story is a good example of the absurd, the grotesque, and the comic in the novel. It alludes to the pettiness and ridiculousness of people in charge. More particularly, it is a story about the contrast of a small world and the full world surrounding it. In the small world of the village, the braying councillors do not seem ridiculous; they simply possess an unusual talent. But the full world outside passes judgment and defines the braying as ridiculous.

Just when he finished his story, a man with a green patch on his face comes in to announce that his fortune-telling ape and his puppet show are on their way. The innkeeper tells them that the man is a famous puppeteer named Master Pedro. The man comes back with his puppets and an old ape. Quixote asks the ape to describe his future, but Master Pedro explains that the ape only answers about past and present events. Sancho asks the ape to tell him about his wife Teresa, and the ape jumps on Master Pedro's shoulder and chatters for a while. Master Pedro kneels before Quixote and praises him for reviving knight-errantry, and tells Sancho that Teresa is carding flax (cleaning and preparing cloth for weaving) next to a jug of wine.

A puppeteer is an oft-used metaphor for a novelist, who controls invented characters from behind the scenes, and makes them move and talk almost like real people. Master Pedro has a great deal in common with the author of the histories; both tell Sancho and Quixote about their past and present.

Quixote is impressed by the ape's skill but tells Sancho that Master Pedro must have made a deal with the devil. Quixote also asks the ape whether the events in the Cave of Montesinos were true or false. The ape chatters, and Master Pedro explains that the experience was partly true and partly false.

The stand-in for the novelist himself tells us that the most recent adventure took place in the twilight zone between truth and falsehood. But the scam artist can say this with assurance only because it is an accurate description of most events.

PART 2, CHAPTER 26

In a few minutes, the puppet show begins. An assistant tells the story of Don Galiferos, who rescued his wife Melisendra from captivity. When he starts to describe the enemy army chasing after the couple, Quixote springs up to defend them and smashes all the puppets with his sword, to Master Pedro's horror; he also scares away the ape. When he's done, he announces proudly that knights errant are clearly indispensable to society. The grief-stricken Master Pedro replies that his intentions may have been good, but the fact of the matter is that Quixote destroyed his livelihood. Sancho interrupts to say that his master is kind and generous and will pay for all the damage.

Quixote has a certain readerly quality in overabundance: he is a master of suspension of disbelief, the feeling that allows readers to get caught up in stories that aren't true. Suspension of disbelief is usually thought to increase the pleasure of reading. Quixote is so advanced in the art of suspension of disbelief that even the most artificial stories are real and true to him, in his inexhaustible imagination.

When Quixote realizes what he's done, he says sadly that the **enchanters** once again distorted his perception of reality to suit their wishes. He thought the puppets were real people, he says, so he tried to defend them. The enchanters are responsible for the sad outcome, but he will willingly recompense Master Pedro for the ruined puppets. Quixote still seems to believe that the husband and wife puppets are real people, but he pays Master Pedro what he owes him. He and Sancho leave the **inn** early the following morning.

As usual, Quixote invokes enchanters to explain the gap between imagination and reality. In the past, though, his imagination (for example, his idea of the Knight of the Spangles) was more real than fact (the student Carrasco in costume). Here, fact prevails over imagination.

PART 2, CHAPTER 27

Cide Hamete begins by explaining that Master Pedro is actually Ginés de Pasamonte, the chain-gang prisoner. To hide from the authorities, he disguised himself with a patch and became a puppeteer. Before entering a village, he would ask people in the previous village for gossip and important events and then use his knowledge to tell people's fortunes, pretending that the information came from the ape.

As a puppeteer, a fraudulent fortune-teller, and a master of disguise, Ginés de Pasamonte is collage of the author. Like Ginés, an author travels around gathering knowledge about people, and then gives that knowledge back slightly changed, and disguised as new truths.

Don Quixote and Sancho spend three days on the road. On the third day they run into a noisy army: the village famous for its braying councillors is on its way to fight another village. Don Quixote rides up to them and gives a long speech explaining that they don't need to defend their honor, since individuals cannot dishonor an entire village. There are only four good reasons to go to battle, he says: to defend Catholicism, to defend one's own life, to defend family and possessions, and to obey one's king. It is not Christian to seek revenge for a harmless prank. Sancho speaks up to agree with his master and brays a little, but the villagers think he is mocking them and beat him badly. The two friends hurry away. The villagers wait all day for the opposing army, but it never shows, so they go home in peace.

Quixote has a habit of giving good advice that he himself does not follow. We have described the split between Quixote's imagination and the reality around him; a similar split takes place between his ideals, which dwell in his imagination, and his actions, which are bodily, impulsive, and somewhat unpredictable. Quixote is troubled by the split between thought and action. He believes that it is unchristian to attack people frivolously, yet he acts against this belief quite often. Nevertheless, his speech does the village good.

PART 2, CHAPTER 28

Sancho is angry that Quixote did not defend him from the villagers, but Quixote explains that "courage which is not based on prudence is called foolhardiness." Sancho is lonely for his family so he and Quixote determine the sum of his wages thus far, so that he can collect and leave, if he so chooses. But when Quixote harangues him viciously for his disloyalty and stupidity, calling him an ass and an animal, Sancho repents and decides to continue being a squire. They spend the night under some poplar trees.

Quixote's friendship with Sancho in this section is very stormy. First, Quixote repeats something Sancho has said: this is both a compliment and an insult, because Quixote has learned from Sancho but does not realize it. He calls Sancho an animal for caring more about money than about ideals. Quixote's notion of self-making is rising from animal to human, from materialism to beliefs.

PART 2, CHAPTER 29

Two days later the two friends reach the river Ebro. On its shore Quixote notices a small boat, which he takes to mean that someone is calling for his help. Despite Sancho's objections, they tie their animals to a tree and board the boat, which floats off on the current. Quixote thinks that with the help of **enchanters** they are travelling for thousands of miles, and that perhaps they've already crossed the line of the equator, though Sancho points out that they can still see their animals on shore. People say that the lice on board die when that line is crossed, so Quixote tells Sancho to check himself for lice, which are of course as numerous as ever.

Quixote jumping into a mysterious boat is similar to Quixote diving into a mysterious cavern. Both are escapist impulses; Quixote is desperate to find a world of magic and adventure that corresponds to the world in his imagination. In contrast to this tragic, romantic impulse, we see Sancho's hairy legs covered with lice. This episode is defined by a contrast of high and low styles.

They see some water-mills in the middle of the river. Quixote explains to Sancho that though they look like water mills, they are really a city that the **enchanters** have transformed in their mind's eyes. The boat begins to speed up, and the millers on shore, realizing the strangers will be swept into the mill and killed, run out to stop the boat with long poles. Quixote takes these flour-covered figures for enemy warriors and yells at them to free their prisoner, whoever he or she may be. The millers ignore him, topple the boat, and save their lives.

As Quixote's desperation grows, his adventures become more and more dangerous; this one, like the adventure of the lions, is nearly fatal. The second part of the history, which chronicles Quixote's decline, is more tragic than the first half of the history. The two books together trace an arc from the comic to the tragic, though the two elements also mingle in both books.

When the fishermen to whom the boat belonged see the boat smashed to bits in the mills, they angrily demand recompense. Quixote tells them he will pay for the boat once they release their prisoner. The fishermen are understandably perplexed, and Quixote gives up trying to make sense of this adventure and pays them for the boat. He concludes that the world is contradictory and illusory, where several **enchanters** work at cross purposes. The author concludes by saying that the two friends "went back to their animals, and to being animals."

Just like that, Quixote gives up his certainty about the world. He no longer believes that the world is orderly, knowable, and clear. Now he thinks that world has many layers, some more real than others. The layers do not make up a coherent picture, a whole, single world: there are just many different worlds, defined by different desires and ideals. Quixote is only one small part.

PART 2, CHAPTER 30

The next day, Sancho and Quixote run into some falconers and a beautiful lady on horseback. Sancho introduces himself and his master, and the lady tells him that they are well-known in these parts and invites them to spend some time in her country house. The Duchess calls over the Duke, who had also read *The Ingenious Hidalgo*, and they decide to receive him as knights errant used to be received in the old chivalry books. They love the knight's history and are delighted to meet the two friends in person. The Duchess especially "simply adored" listening to Sancho's nonsense.

For the first time, Sancho and Quixote spend time with people who know them more as characters than as real people. The Duke and Duchess love the book and its protagonists, but there is something condescending about that love. They decide to recreate the world of chivalry books around their new guests – the world in which Quixote actually lives.

PART 2, CHAPTER 31

The Duke had given his servants orders in advance instructing them to treat Don Quixote as a knight errant, so when the company gets to the castle two servants in beautiful livery ceremoniously lift Quixote off his horse and sprinkle him with perfumed water, shouting a formal welcome to the "crème de la crème of knight-errantry." At this moment Quixote finally believes that he is a real knight errant.

Only a little while ago, Quixote had started to lose faith in the world. Now, reality and imagination are in harmony. The world finally resembles the world of chivalry books, and Quixote believes in his own fantasy. But hasn't he believed it all along? Perhaps not, or not quite.

Don Quixote is escorted into a beautiful private suite. He finds Sancho and scolds him for his rudeness, warning that his bad behavior might make Quixote look like a "charlatan." Quixote changes into a fine shirt and is escorted to an extravagant dining room. The two friends and the Duke and Duchess are joined by a sullen-looking priest. Quixote and the Duke politely discuss seating arrangements, and Sancho decides to tell a story. A rich hidalgo from his village invited a poor farmer to **dinner**, and they both insisted that the other sit at the head of the table until the hidalgo forces the farmer into the seat of honor and says angrily that "wherever I sit will be the head of the table as far as you're concerned." Don Quixote is endlessly embarrassed.

But maybe Quixote is not fully taken in by the charade. Perhaps if he had met the Duke and Duchess in the first part of the history, he would have been completely gratified. But he is still shaken from his recent disillusionment about the world. When he scolds Sancho and worries about looking like a charlatan, we see that he considers the whole event as a sort of performance. They must act their parts well. Sancho, too, is aware that their hosts are not entirely well-meaning. His anecdote hints that the Duke and Duchess's generosity is put-on, and can become condescension at any moment.

The Duchess inquires about the Lady Dulcinea, and Quixote mournfully admits that **enchanters** have turned her into an ugly peasant girl. Here the priest realizes the man in front of him is the Don Quixote from the famous book, which he despised, and yells at him to go home and give up all his nonsense.

Even in this chivalry idyll, there is an angry priest who abuses and mocks Quixote, and tries to take away his fantasies. Priests are usually villains in the novel.

PART 2, CHAPTER 32

Quixote replies with barely restrained rage that churchmen that have seen nothing of the world have no right to cruelly reproach people or to dictate to others how to live their lives. It is neither sinful nor senseless to wander the world helping people, which is always his intention. The angry priest asks Sancho whether he is the squire that was promised an island, and Sancho answers defensively in the affirmative. On impulse, the Duke promises to give him an island in Don Quixote's name, and the priest storms out.

We have every reason to believe that, for fifty years, Quixote himself lived a bookish, provincial life like the priest. He then set out to travel the world as a knight so that he might learn about the world as it really is. Perhaps, to some extent, he expected the world to change him.

The Duke compliments Quixote on his speech, and the knight explains that he doesn't need to seek revenge, because the priest offended but did not affront him: children, women, and church people can offend but not affront. After the meal is finished, four servant girls come in carrying fine silver pots and towels and wash Quixote's beard, as a prank. They also take Sancho away to be washed, at his request.

Quixote is learning to follow his own advice about fighting and vengefulness. Earlier in the book, anyone who even hinted something insulting about Quixote, knights, or Dulcinea was in for a beating. Though Quixote's confidence seems to be on the decline, he is acquiring a more stable sense of himself.

The Duchess asks Quixote to describe Dulcinea's beauty, but Quixote explains that he can only remember her in her distorted, **enchanted** state. The Duchess says that the history led her to believe that he had never seen Dulcinea, and that she does not really exist. Quixote answers evasively that only god knows whether Dulcinea exists, but that he himself certainly did not invent her, and that he imagines her as possessing all the feminine perfections that a lady should have. The Duke suggests that if she does exist, she is not of noble origin, and Quixote replies that Dulcinea has the qualities of a queen, which is more important than her lineage.

Quixote betrays some tragic doubts about Dulcinea. For one thing, he admits that she has dimmed somewhat in his mind. He also says something truly mysterious. Dulcinea might not be real, but he did not invent her: Dulcinea might not exist in the world, but she does not exist solely in his imagination. Where does she exist, then, if not in the world nor in his imagination? She is transitioning, fading.

The Duchess assures Quixote that she believes that Dulcinea is real, but she wonders why Sancho found her sieving buckwheat – not a very noble occupation. Quixote answers that he believes that he has become immune to **enchantment**, and that the enchanters harm him by enchanting others close to him, like the beautiful Dulcinea. Suddenly a pack of maids and servants run in carrying a trough of filthy water. They are chasing Sancho, who refused to be washed in dirt. The Duchess sends them away. Quixote leaves to take a nap and Sancho spends the afternoon talking to the Duchess.

Earlier, Quixote always said that enchanters had transformed things and people in his mind's eye. But here, he wonders whether Dulcinea is enchanted not in his eyes but in reality. Perhaps he feels the enchantment wearing off – the bright, confident insanity that made him see things so differently. He can't quite trust himself anymore to be the bearer of enchantment.

PART 2, CHAPTER 33

The Duchess asks Sancho whether he ever delivered the message to Dulcinea, and whether he completely invented her reply. Sancho paces around the room and replies that his master is insane, though he often speaks very intelligently, so Sancho sometimes makes him believe certain things that aren't true. As an example, he describes his enchanting of Dulcinea.

Sancho understands that Quixote has a separate, imagined view of the world, and he thinks that he can add a little unreality to it at will. He doesn't realize that the imagined view has a delicate logic that shouldn't be disturbed.

The Duchess implies that someone who obeys a madman must be mad himself, and Sancho explains that he is too fond of his master to abandon him. The Duchess tells Sancho that she knows for certain that the peasant girl on the donkey truly was Dulcinea, and she was definitely enchanted. He is relieved to hear it, because he doesn't want to have the power to enchant people as he did the peasant girl, and he doesn't want to think that he tricked his master. He also describes to her the adventure of the Cave of Montesinos. In a little while, Sancho leaves to take a nap.

Sancho's reply conflates madness and fondness. In a way, his love for his master is a kind of madness, because it signifies imaginative acceptance of Quixote's worldview. But Sancho's realism makes it difficult for him to see it as the only reality. He is relieved to hear from a Duchess that Dulcinea is truly enchanted, because it helps him make the leap of faith.

PART 2, CHAPTER 34

The Duchess and the Duke decide to play some amusing tricks on their guest. One day, they decide to take the two friends hunting with a large, noisy group of men and animals. When they are deep in the woods, a huge wild board comes running toward them, and several people spear it though. They carry the boar to a nearby clearing, where a meal has been laid out for them. Sancho says in a long-winded speech sprinkled with proverbs that hunting seems like a cruel amusement. Don Quixote scolds him for his foolish proverbs, but the Duchess jumps to his defense, saying that his mismatched proverbs are more delightful than appropriate ones.

In her compliment to Sancho, the Duchess invokes the tradition of literary nonsense, which became widely popular in the 19th century with the writings of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. The most basic principle of literary nonsense and nonsense verse is that something that does not make sense, that has no clear meaning, can be funnier and more delightful than something with meaning. Hence, Sancho's unsuitable proverbs are more delightful to the Duchess than suitable ones.

The company rides back into the woods as it gets dark. Suddenly, they see fire all around them and hear thousands of loud instruments, as well as a Moorish battle cry. A young man in costume introduces himself as the devil; he has come with troops of **enchanters**, Dulcinea, and Montesinos to tell Don Quixote how Dulcinea is to be disenchanted. He tells Don Quixote to wait there for instructions. In a little while the piercing noise resumes; three old men sitting on top of fire-lit carts introduce themselves as sages and enchanters.

This scene resembles Sancho and Quixote's encounter with the troupe of actors, who also had a devil and princess among them. But this adventure took place in the second part of the history, and the Duke and Duchess have not read about it. They assume that Quixote is as innocent and easily fooled as he was in the very beginning.

PART 2, CHAPTER 35

Suddenly they hear the clanging replaced by pleasant music, and they see a large chariot filled with penitents in white, carrying at the center a beautiful girl dressed in silver. A veiled figure in black stands next to her. The chariot stops, the music falls silent, and the figure in black removes his veil to show a frightening, death-like face. He calls himself Merlin and recites verses that describe Dulcinea's **enchantment** and explain that she will be disenchanted if Sancho lashes himself three thousand and three hundred times. Sancho is outraged and refuses to lash himself at all. Quixote and the Dulcinea stand-in scold him for his cowardice and laziness, and the Duke tells him that he must lash himself to get his island. Finally Sancho consents, and the strange army disappears back into the forest.

This scene echoes several adventures: the encounter with the penitents carrying a holy image, and the encounter with the Knight of the Spangles, who was dressed in glittery silver like Dulcinea. Everything about the scene seems a warning to Quixote to be skeptical, to disbelieve: the girl among the penitents is not the holy Dulcinea – she is like the impostor knight, distracting with shine and false gold. The Duke and Duchess's amusement is not very kind, because it hinges on the friends' humiliation.

PART 2, CHAPTER 36

The preceding adventure was planned and carried out by the Duke, the Duchess, and their butler. Since it was so amusing, they planned another for the following day. Sancho asks the Duchess to proofread his letter to his wife. In the letter, he describes some of his recent adventures, encloses the hunting outfit given to him by the Duchess, and announces his new governorship. They walk into the garden so that the Duchess could show the letter to the Duke.

The word "amusing" appears many times in the chapters about the Duke and Duchess – both in conversation and in the narrative. The narrator mocks the noble couple by parroting their affectation. The self-conscious, upper-class word conveys the mixture of affection, condescension, and mockery with which the couple treats Quixote.

Suddenly they hear the sound of a drum and fife, and they see three musicians in black and an enormous veiled man with a huge beard. He introduces himself as a messenger from the Countess Trifaldi, also known as the Dolorous Duenna. She is seeking Don Quixote's assistance. The Duke assures the messenger that the knight is at her service. He comments to Don Quixote, who is standing by his side, that he must be a famous knight indeed, and Quixote is glad that his is such a necessary profession.

The Duke and Duchess are mocking the thing Quixote cares most about – his usefulness in the world, his basic vocation as protector of the helpless. Though Quixote does not act as though he sees through the charade, his earlier self-consciousness and new suspiciousness of others suggests that some small part of him can sense the deceit.

PART 2, CHAPTER 37

Sancho does not want Quixote to take on this quest, because he is suspicious of duennas in general. Doña Rodríguez responds that squires in general are likewise the enemies of duennas, who are virtuous and downtrodden. Suddenly they hear a fife and drum announcing the arrival of the Dolorous Duenna herself.

Sancho's inexplicable hatred of duennas seems to be nothing more than comic relief. It also adds to the class tensions of these episodes – especially the false friendship of the royal couple.

PART 2, CHAPTER 38

A dozen veiled duennas in mourning enter, followed by the veiled Countess Trifaldi and the messenger Trifaldin. In very lengthy and hyperbolic terms, she explains her problem. She once served as governess to the Princess Antonomasia of the kingdom of Kandy, a beautiful and clever girl of fourteen. Many men fell in love with her, including one very talented, musical, intelligent knight named Don Clavijo. He won the heart of the princess and his promises of marriage persuaded the duenna to allow him to visit the princess's bedroom. Soon the princess became pregnant, so Don Clavijo promised to ask for the princess's hand in front of the Vicar-General.

This episode echoes several earlier ones. Like the bedecked soldier Vincente de la Rosa, Don Clavijo is talented and irresponsible. Once again, the low-born and talented person is the villain: the story has a kind of anti-egalitarian moral, since it negatively stereotypes people whose rise by personal merit and not by birth. The story neatly appeals to Quixote's knightly sensibility, since he believes knights should defend innocent, wronged ladies.

PART 2, CHAPTER 39

After a few days of questioning, the Vicar-General sanctified the marriage. The princess's mother, Queen Maguncia, was so upset by the marriage that she died of sorrow. The funeral was interrupted by the Queen's cousin, the giant Malambruno, who came to punish the newlyweds: he turned the princess into a brass monkey and the knight into a metallic crocodile, and he placed a metal column between them. The column states that the lovers will be disenchanted when Don Quixote fights the giant. The giant then punished the duennas by causing them to grow bristly beards. Here the duennas lift up their veils and show the beards to Quixote and the rest, lamenting their fates and fainting away.

"Antonomasia" looks a lot like "Micomicona" – the two names share most letters. And since both stories feature a giant, we can assume the butler modeled this hoax on the earlier hoax perpetrated by Dorotea and the others. "Antonomasia" is also a Greek word that means to rename. The transformation of the couple recalls Ovid's Metamorphoses, *ancient stories that describe lovers turned into animals and plants. Quixote's life in the second half of the story becomes more and more self-consciously fictionalized: it resembles the first book and many others, like* Metamorphoses.

PART 2, CHAPTER 40

Quixote vows to help the duennas and the petrified lovers. The Duenna explains that Malambruno promised to send a magical wooden horse to carry the knight to the faraway kingdom, the one described in a famous chivalry tale. The horse will arrive a half-hour after midnight, after the duenna sends the giant a special signal. The horse's name is Clavileño the Swift, it can carry two riders, and it is operated by a wooden peg.

Just as the first part of the story echoes Ovid, the second part echoes Homer's Iliad, *in which a hollow wooden horse is used to invade the city of Troy. It is a symbol of cunning and deceit. In* The Iliad, *the kingdom that the wooden horse invades is destroyed; here, the kingdom invaded is a magical kingdom, meant to represent Quixote's fantasies.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 41

A little after dark, four men carrying a wooden horse run into the garden. The brave knight and squire are told that they must ride blindfolded to avoid dizziness, since the horse will fly high above the ground. At first Sancho is unwilling to risk his life to help duennas, but once again the Duke makes the present of the island contingent on Sancho's participation in this adventure. Just before mounting the horse, Quixote says to Sancho that even if the adventure is a trick, it is still glorious to embark on it.

Quixote is experiencing a sort of double consciousness. Part of him believes in this adventure, because it corresponds perfectly to his earlier understanding of the world. But his understanding is transforming, and there is another part of him that knows it is a trick – the part of him that has assimilated new knowledge about the world.

The two friends are blindfolded and mount the wooden horse. As soon as Quixote turns the peg, he hears everyone shouting goodbyes and exclaiming how high and how quickly they are flying – just like Icarus! Sancho says that he can feel the cool wind whistling, since people in the garden are pumping air at his back. Quixote explains that they are in the second region of the air, where there is hail and snow; the third is the region of thunder and lightning; and the fourth is the region of fire. They feel their faces warmed by a strategically placed fire, so they assume they have entered the fourth region.

The Duke and Duchess forge a correspondence between expectation and observation: they create the illusion of flight by supplying scraps of the experience of flying. In this way, the Duke and Duchess betray their poor understanding of Quixote's imagination and of the nature of his idealism. In the first part of the history, Quixote kept the faith even when his observations did not conform with his expectations. One can't force belief.

To imitate landing, servants set fire to the horse's tail and explode all the firecrackers in its wooden belly: the horse flies into the air and thumps down onto the ground. By now, the duennas have disappeared and everyone else lies in a pretend faint on the ground. The adventurers take off their blindfolds and see a white parchment: it states that Malambruno is satisfied, and that the duennas and the newlyweds will be restored to their original states. Quixote wakes up the Duke and Duchess and tells them the good news. Sancho tells the Duchess that he sneaked a look under his blindfold and saw the earth look as tiny as a mustard seed, and people as tiny as hazelnuts, and the sky, all sorts of other things, though the queen points out that his proportions are off. Quixote cautiously admits that he felt wind and fire, but goes no further. He tells Sancho that just as he wants everyone to believe his descriptions of the sky, Quixote wants him to believe his description of the Cave of Montesinos.

It is not entirely clear whether Sancho really believes in his story or whether he just wants praise and attention from the Duke and Duchess. Since Sancho doesn't often lie just for fun, it is probably something in between: the sensations of flying and the desire to please caused him to imagine the earth from above. It seems that Sancho has become more quick to believe in magic than Quixote. As we've said, Quixote has become more realistic and Sancho more idealistic: they've learned well from one another. Quixote's comment to Sancho shows that he no longer thinks that everything vividly imagined is true. Truth is something apart from imagination.

PART 2, CHAPTER 42

The Duke and Duchess enjoyed the adventures so much that they decide to give Sancho his island right away. Sancho is delighted by the news, and the governor predicts that once Sancho begins governing he'll never want to stop, because it's so much fun to order people around. Quixote heartily congratulates his squire, emphasizing, though, that the island is a gift from god and not a reward for his merits. He gives Sancho a great deal of useful advice, emphasizing virtue, fairness, mercy, and selflessness.

The gift of the island is another trick, in its way, because it is meant to confirm Quixote's delusions. But, joke or not, the gift is real. Unlike the earlier jokes, this one bleeds over into reality. Quixote is remaking the world around him to be more like the world he imagined.

PART 2, CHAPTER 43

In the last chapter Quixote advised Sancho about his soul, and here he advises him about his body. He tells Sancho to be clean, tidy, and well-groomed, to buy his servants liveries, to **eat** and sleep in moderation, avoid belching, and to stop mixing proverbs. Sancho comes out with a string of proverbs, and says he will mostly remember the advice about belching and trimming nails, but not much else. Quixote curses his silly proverbs, wondering how he thinks of them so easily. Sancho wonders whether his master thinks him incapable of governing well, but Quixote says that he will do well, because "heaven always favours good intentions."

This conversation describes an odd power struggle between the two friends. First, Quixote puts himself in a position of authority by giving out a great deal of unasked-for advice. Sancho waves him off with his string of proverbs. We see, here, that Quixote's irritation with Sancho's nonsensical proverbs is mixed with envy. He himself doesn't quite have the imagination to think of them so easily.

PART 2, CHAPTER 44

That same night, the Duke sends Sancho with a large retinue to his island. The retinue is led by the inventive butler that impersonated several people in the earlier adventures, including the Dolorous Duenna. When Sancho notes the amazing resemblance, Quixote says the resemblance must be meaningless, because it "would imply a major contradiction," and there is no sense digging into such contradictory mysteries.

This scene resembles a conversation between Quixote and Sancho in the first part of the history, when a disguised priest and butler were transporting a caged Quixote back to his village. Then, Quixote denied any resemblance between his friends and his abductors; here, he merely says that there resemblance between the Duenna and the butler is too complicated to consider.

As soon as Sancho leaves for his island, Quixote misses him so much that he becomes visibly melancholy. He **eats** dinner, goes to his room, and gets into bed. When he opens the window for some fresh air, he hears two people talking in the courtyard. A girl named Altisidora is confessing her unhappy love for the recently arrived stranger to another girl. Altisidora begins playing a harp and singing about her love for the knight from la Mancha, her jealousy of Dulcinea, and her own beauty and youth. Quixote says to himself that he loves only Dulcinea, shuts the window and lays down to sleep.

Quixote's love for Dulcinea and his imagined version of her are under attack once again. Altisidora's attempt at seduction – whether it is her own idea or the Duke and Duchess's – undermines Dulcinea. It says: "Why on earth are you clinging to a phantom? There is a girl right in front of you who possesses all of Dulcinea's charms, and she is alive and real."

PART 2, CHAPTER 45

Sancho arrives at a flourishing town of five thousand people called Baratario, which the Duke tells him is the Island of Barataria (Hankypanky Island). The townspeople come out to salute him, he receives the keys to the city in a formal ceremony, and then he is escorted into the courtroom. Immediately, two men burst in: a farmer and a tailor. The farmer brought the tailor some cloth and asked him whether it was enough material for a hood. The tailor said it was enough; the farmer asked whether it was enough for two, then three, then five hoods, and the tailor said yes each time. When the farmer came for his hoods, the tailor gave him five tiny ones – one for each finger. Sancho said that the farmer will lose his cloth, the tailor will lose his fee, and the hoods will go to the prisoners.

The novel has grown increasingly political. It emphasizes various kinds of social prejudices and inequalities during Sancho's brief reign as governor of Barataria. Such positions were only open to members of the ruling class, because it was assumed that only wealthy and refined people could be capable leaders. Here, Cervantes makes a governor of an illiterate peasant: he turns everything upside down. And, of course, Sancho governs excellently and fairly. In this episode, he punishes both men for their deceit.

Next, two old men come in. One claims that he lent the other ten escudos (gold coins), but when he asked the other to pay him back, he claimed that he already returned the debt. The man offers to swear an oath that he repaid the other, but asks him to hold his cane as he swears. Sancho is satisfied by the oath and lets them go, but calls them back at the last minute. He opens the cane, finds the ten coins inside, and returns them to the lender. Everyone is amazed by his wisdom.

The second case also concerns deceit. Technically, the borrower does not lie in court: just before he swears his oath, he hands the lender the cane containing the debt. But this version of truth and falsehood is too minute, too contingent on context. Sancho (perhaps following Quixote's example) cares more about intention, about a more abstract kind of justice.

A woman bursts in dragging a man. She cries that he raped her in the fields and demands justice. The man explains that he was walking home after a bad sale, slept with the woman, and paid her, but she decided to drag him to court. He swears he did not rape her. Sancho takes all the money in the herdsman's wallet and gives it to the woman, who counts it and hurries out. Then Sancho tells the man to run and get his money back. They stumble back in, clutching one another – the woman has the money tightly bound in the fold of her skirt and the man is trying to wrestle it away from her, but without much luck. Sancho takes the purse from the woman and gives it back to the man. She is clearly much stronger than the man, he says, so the man could not have raped her. Once again, the court is in awe of his good sense.

In the course of his travels, Sancho has learned to use deceit as a tool. He learned from the priest and the barber who caged Quixote, he learned from the student Carrasco, and perhaps he even learned from the disgraced borrower. The priest, the barber, and Carrasco thought they used deceit for good (though it seems to have only caused harm); the borrower used it for selfish reasons; and Sancho uses deceit to serve justice. Deceit can have so many purposes that is seems morally neutral. A lie, on the other hand, is something with a constant negative value.

PART 2, CHAPTER 46

In the morning, Quixote joins the Duke and Duchess at breakfast. When he passes Altisidora on the way, she pretends to faint into her friend's arms. Quixote hints that he knows the cause of her frailty and asks her friend to place a lute in his room. The girls tell the Duchess that Quixote plans to sing later that night and she thinks of another prank. She also sends a messenger to Teresa Panza carrying Sancho's letter and riding costume.

Quixote has developed the self-consciousness to doubt the Duke and Duchess, but not a young, innocent, pretty girl – chivalry's sacred object. She is the last person he would suspect of maliciousness or dishonesty. He trusts her with a naiveté that has become almost unusual for him.

Later that night, Quixote finds a guitar in his room and performs a ballad hinting at Altisidora's impetuous flirtation and describing his loyalty to Dulcinea. Suddenly, a rope with a hundred goat bells and a sack of cats are dumped onto his balcony and make terrible noise. A few of the cats run into the room, somehow extinguish all the lights, and one of them tears up Quixote's face. Quixote assumes the cats are evil **enchanters**. Altisidora tends to his wounds and reproaches him for his hard-heartedness.

Quixote also believes Altisidora because her advances correspond to his former expectations (as in the adventure with the "princess" at the inn). And then, as usual, he is hurt and humiliated. His physical injuries have become symbolic of the harm done to his imagination.

PART 2, CHAPTER 47

After Sancho deliberates in the courtroom, he is taken to a dining room in a beautiful palace. The table is laid with mouth-watering **food**, but a doctor at his side forbids him from eating anything except wafers and quince jelly. Sancho, a great lover of food, angrily orders the doctor to leave the room and let him be.

Sancho's love of food and sleep has come to represent both his realism and his low social status. Now, the doctor is trying to make him suitable for governing by forcing on him a refined, upper-class palate.

Just then, a messenger arrives; he's carrying a note from the Duke informing Sancho that enemies will soon attack the island and that Sancho's life might be in danger. Just as Sancho is about to **eat** his dinner, a farmer arrives on a business matter. The man explains that one of his sons, who is "possessed by the devil," fell in love with a strange-looking girl, and he has come to ask for a letter of recommendation and six hundred ducats (gold coins) for the dowry. Sancho angrily throws him out.

Sancho has not only learned to use deceit – he has become expert in recognizing it in others. In the absurd, overblown story, Sancho sees the Duke and Duchess's trickery. He knows that people sometimes take him for a fool, but he won't be taken advantage of.

PART 2, CHAPTER 48

Don Quixote stays in his room for five days while the cat wounds heal. Late one night, the duenna Rodríguez walks into his room unannounced. They are both a little embarrassed by the late hour and the possibility of impropriety. The duenna tells her long and plaintive life story. She was left an orphan and then a widow with a clever, beautiful daughter. The son of a wealthy farmer seduced the daughter by promising marriage, but now he refuses to make good. In the course of her story, the duenna mentions that Altisidora and the Duchess both have certain embarrassing illnesses. Just as she finishes her gossip, the door swings open, the candles go out, and two figures give Quixote and the duenna a mean beating in the dark. The duenna leaves groaning without another word.

It seems that the duenna is an accidental victim of the Duke and Duchess's games. Their charades have convinced her that Don Quixote really is a heroic knight who helps any innocent person in trouble. Once again, the Duke and Duchess have helped realize Quixote's dream while trying to mock and undermine it. Whether or not Quixote suspects foul play, he determines to help the duenna. Helping others is more important to him than his own dignity.

PART 2, CHAPTER 49

Sancho realizes that the job of governor and judge is difficult and exhausting. He finally **eats** some dinner, and requests simple and hearty food from then on. He also tells his servants his general plans for the island: he wants to kick out the lazy and idle people, protect farmers, and respect religion. Everyone admires his good sense.

Sancho is weighted with many responsibilities, but many of them are self-imposed. He surprises himself with his own idealism and selflessness. He believed Quixote when he said Sancho could be anything he pleased.

After he finishes his **dinner**, Sancho and his servants go out to make the nightly rounds. They hear two people fighting and go to investigate. Man 1 won a large sum in a gambling house, and man 2 helped him by ruling a dispute in his favor. Man 2 asked man 1 for a large tip, but he gave him only a small one, so they began fighting. Sancho orders #1 to give #2 one tenth of his winnings, and then a little more for charity; he also orders #2 to take the money and leave the island the next day. Sancho decides to close the gambling houses, but his clerk suggests that some of the houses are run by wealthy and powerful people, and shouldn't be tampered with.

Sancho has begun thinking on a grand, idealistic scale about social welfare. He immediately puts his thinking into action by taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, like Robin Hood. He wants to use his power to lessen suffering and drive out corruption. Right away, he runs into a familiar problem: wealthy people are the ones who truly hold the power, or, as the other barber said, "the lords make the laws."

Just then, they see a constable dragging a young man. The constable says that the young man began running as soon as he saw the police, so they assumed he was doing something illegal. The curt young man cleverly avoids answering Sancho's questions, and Sancho threatens to make him sleep in jail. The young man swears that they can't make him sleep in jail – no matter what, he can keep himself awake. Sancho lets him go with a warning.

Sancho has a soft spot for cleverness and wit – in this case, it is the innocent version of deceit, because it twists the truth for pleasure and not for gain. Quixote had advised him to be merciful when possible, and here Sancho takes his advice.

Soon two constables appear with a beautiful young woman in man's clothes. She explains that she is the daughter of a wealthy hidalgo, who forbid her from ever leaving the house. She was so tormented by curiosity about the world that she convinced her brother to switch clothes with her so that they could sneak out. When they saw the police, they decided to run away. A few more constables come by with her brother, who is dressed in woman's clothes. Sancho chastises the girl for her melodramatic speeches and escorts them both home.

Here, Sancho is clearly going above and beyond his basic duties as governor, since there is no question of legality in this situation. He assumes the role of a kind of public sage and advice-giver; he also seems to be able to tell bad people from good instinctively. It is Sancho's moment to shine, to display his intuitive wisdom in contrast to Quixote's more bookish intelligence.

PART 2, CHAPTER 50

Cide Hamete explains that the two mysterious assailants were Altisidora and the Duchess, who eavesdropped on the duenna's conversation with Don Quixote and wanted to take revenge on her for telling unflattering tales. While Quixote recovers, the Duchess sends a page to deliver Sancho's letter, his travelling suit, and a string of corals to his wife Teresa. He arrives at Sancho's home and tells Teresa that she is now the wife of a famous governor. He presents her with a string of corals and a friendly letter from the Duchess, which asks Teresa to send a pound of acorns.

Sancho's letter to Teresa echoes Quixote's letter to Dulcinea. The first letter was flowery and impersonal, and it was never delivered; the second letter is funny and practical, and sends along concrete proof its contents – the hunting suit and the necklace. The two letters give good occasion to compare Quixote and Sancho.

Teresa is so delighted by the letter and the news that she runs outside to make announcements. She sees the priest and Sansón Carrasco walking down the street and tells them she had become the wife of a governor. They are so perplexed by the news that they come in with her to speak to the messenger, who explains that the island is really a town. Teresa starts planning all the purchases she must make in town, like nice clothes and a carriage. Carrasco thinks the whole story must be some sort of hoax, or another one of Quixote's fantasies, but the page replies that he is a real page, and Sancho is a real governor, etc.

As Quixote's plot grows sadder, Sancho's begins to brighten. But this moment is a triumph for both friends. The priest and Carrasco are the people who have doubted them most – who have tried to sabotage their plans and prove their foolishness. Now, they are made to feel foolish. If Sancho has truly become governor of an island, then perhaps they've been wrong all along – perhaps they are the insane ones.

PART 2, CHAPTER 51

On the second day of his governing, Sancho **eats** a meager breakfast and goes into the courtroom. A man comes in and begins to describe a dilemma. A river cuts a lord's estate in two parts, and a bridge crosses over it. The owner of the river decreed that every person that wants to cross the bridge must state his purpose to several judges; if he tells the truth, he can cross, but if he lies, he must be hung. One man told the judges that his purpose is to be hung. If the judges allow him to cross, then his statement will have been a lie, and he should have been hung; if they hang him, then he told the truth, and he should have been allowed to cross. Sancho responds that this man deserves to live as much as he deserves to die, so it's better to be merciful and let him live. Everyone is satisfied with the decision.

Sancho's deliberation in this case outlines two kinds of legal thinking. One kind asserts that we must always follow our laws as precisely as possible; the more carefully we interpret the existing laws, the more just the decision. Another kind of legal thinking deals with justice in the abstract. It holds that, in every decision, one must compare common-sense justice to the approximate sketch of justice that is the legal system. The man in question did not commit any crime or harm anyone, so Sancho chooses to overlook the intricate law and invokes justice more abstractly: an innocent person does not deserve to die.

Sancho **eats** a hearty lunch and then reads a letter from Don Quixote that contains more advice. Quixote tells Sancho to be clean, polite, ensure that his island has plenty of food, avoid creating too many laws, visit prisons and markets, and act virtuously. He alludes to his cat wounds and says that he wants to resume his travels shortly. Sancho dictates a reply in which he complains of exhaustion and hunger and describes some of his recent cases. After he finishes the letter, he spends the afternoon creating by-laws: he lowers the price of shoes, creates wage limits, establishes punishments for street noise, and creates many other laws that are still in use to this day.

Here, Sancho's conduct as a governor is even better than Quixote's advice. Sancho doesn't simply content himself by resolving to be fair and create prosperity; he makes concrete and immediate changes. He tries to create greater equality in his community. And the novel commends him very highly for his efforts: his laws are considered so wise that they remain in effect, despite his illiteracy and the brevity of his term.

PART 2, CHAPTER 52

One day, when Don Quixote is dining with the Duke and Duchess, the duenna Rodríguez and her daughter burst in. The duenna begs Quixote to challenge her daughter's seducer to a duel to force him to marry her, and Quixote quickly consents. The Duke offers to find the offender and to set up the duel six days from then. Once the two women leave, the messenger brings in Teresa's letters to the Duchess and to Sancho. The Duchess reads the letters out loud for everyone's amusement. In the letter to the Duchess, Teresa sends her thanks and asks for money to buy clothes and a carriage. The letter to Sancho is joyful and incredulous.

The Duchess still considers the whole charade a means to "amusement." But to Sancho and Teresa, the charade is completely real; their lives are transformed. They have changed their ideas of themselves and of their place in the world. Other events in the novel have contained a similar contradiction When two people look at a single entity, one believing it real and the other imaginary, the entity itself becomes both real and not.

PART 2, CHAPTER 53

Sancho is in bed on the seventh night of his tenure as governor when he hears shouts announcing the arrival of enemy troops – another one of the butler's tricks. Servants suit Sancho in armor, which is so heavy and stiff he can barely move. When he tries to walk he falls helplessly onto the floor, and his islanders trample over him while someone shouts nonsensical orders. Sancho, curled up blindly in his armor, soon hears shouts declaring victory. His servants take off his armor and he faints from shock and pain. When he wakes up, he saddles his donkey and announces his resignation: he would rather be free and poor than a hungry and busy governor. Everyone bids him a sad goodbye.

This novel is full of physical humiliation, but Sancho and Quixote both usually come out with their dignities intact. Harsh beatings don't completely destroy them, though they do gradually wear them down; the two friends live for a set of ideals, and they are willing to suffer for them (though this is relatively new quality in Sancho). Sancho does not leave the island as a defeated man, but as a man who has made a considered choice.

PART 2, CHAPTER 54

The Duke and Duchess decide that a lackey should take the place of the seducer in the duel. Meanwhile, Sancho is travelling to the Duke's palace on his donkey. He comes across six pilgrims, who begin singing for alms in a foreign language; one of them recognizes Sancho – it is his old neighbor Ricote. The company sits down to **eat** lunch and Ricote describes everything that's happened to him since the king of Spain expelled Spanish Moors (Moriscos) from the kingdom. After the law was passed, Ricote left Spain to look for a new home for him and his family while they stayed in Algiers.

In this episode, Quixote alludes to a historical event called the Expulsion of the Moriscos: between 1609 and 1614, just before the second part of the novel was published, King Phillip III of Spain forced the Moriscos to leave Spain. Moriscos were descendants of the Muslim population of Spain that had converted to Christianity. By including this recent historical event, Cervantes further politicizes the novel.

Though he is sad to be exiled, Ricote thinks that the king's decision is wise. He travelled to France, Italy, and Germany, where he decided to settle. He came back to Spain with a group of pilgrims to dig up his hidden treasure and collect his family from Algiers. Sancho tells him that his treasure might not be there, because many jewels were confiscated from his family at the border. Ricote says the treasure must be intact, since he never told anyone its location, and offers Sancho a lot of money to help him dig it up, but Sancho politely refuses. He tells Ricote that a Christian man named Don Gaspar fell in love with his daughter and followed her abroad.

Scholars disagree about Cervantes' attitude toward the Expulsion. On the one hand, Cervantes seems to blame the edict for creating needless tragedy. On the other hand, Ricote himself admits that there is some sense in the edict – that the political fears behind it have some legitimacy. We should also note that the formerly greedy Sancho refuses money, just as he refused the governorship and its implicit financial rewards.

PART 2, CHAPTER 55

When it gets dark, Sancho and his donkey fall into a wide pit on the side of the road. They spend the night stuck inside. In the morning, Sancho notices a gap in the side of the pit, and he and his donkey crawl through it into a large cavern. Meanwhile, Don Quixote rides out that same morning to practice for his duel. He rides by the pit and faintly hears a voice shouting for help. At first he thinks it's Sancho's ghost, but soon he realizes it's Sancho himself and leaves to get help from the castle. When Sancho is out, the two friends return to the castle and Sancho explains to the Duke and Duchess that the governorship was too much for him, and that he wants to become Quixote's squire once again.

Sancho's fall into the pit echoes Quixote's descent into the cave of Montesinos. But his fall is accidental, and the pit is dark and empty, with no hint of imagination or adventure. Symbolically, it is another moment of disenchantment for Quixote. But at the same time, Sancho is showing his loyalty to both Quixote and knight-errantry by quitting his post. The two friends are slightly at cross-purposes.

PART 2, CHAPTER 56

Soon the day of the duel arrives. The Duke instructs the lackey Tosilos, who is meant to replace the duenna's daughter's seducer in the battle, not to endanger his life or Quixote's. The battle takes place on a large platform, surrounded by thousands of spectators, including the duenna and her daughter. But just as the battle is about to begin, the lackey notices that the duenna's daughter is very beautiful and decides that he'd like to marry her. When the battle begins and Quixote charges at him, the lackey calls over the master of the field and says that he agrees to marry the girl, and the battle is called off.

Once again, the Duke and Duchess's hoax, which is meant to ridicule Quixote and his fantasies, actually makes those fantasies comes true. The charade turns into a real marriage – real redemption for the duenna's daughter, who wanted marriage and security. The world changes slightly to become more like Quixote's vision of the world, where knights help troubled maidens.

But when Tosilos takes his helmet off, the duenna and her daughter yell out that the actual seducer has been replaced by the Duke's lackey. Quixote calmly explains that the illusion must be the work of **enchanters**, who changed the man's face into that of the lackey. The Duke suggests that the man be locked up for a while to see if he returns to his original form. The duenna's daughter agrees to marry the man, whoever he is, and everything ends well.

At this point, it is not clear whether Quixote truly thinks the contradiction is the work of enchanters, or whether he suspects the Duke and Duchess of foul play but does not want to be impolite. Perhaps Quixote's idea of enchantment has come to refer to the contradictory and mysterious aspects of the world, and not to real magic.

PART 2, CHAPTER 57

Quixote grows tired of his idle life in the castle and decides to take to the road. One morning he and Sancho gather his belongings and ride out into the courtyard, where they hear Altisidora sing a song that curses Quixote for ignoring her love - also for stealing her heart, three nightcaps, and two garters. Sancho confesses to taking the nightcaps and quickly returns them, and Altisidora realizes to her embarrassment that she herself is wearing the missing garters. Everyone says their goodbyes.

Altisidora's performances mostly serve to debase Quixote's ideas of romantic love. In that way, the episode is tragic. But it also has the cheerful absurdity of the squabbles at the inn. It is tragic in its effect on Quixote's feelings, but it is comic in that it represents a more complete worldview, where absurdity, ugliness, and pettiness have their rightful places.

PART 2, CHAPTER 58

Quixote is delighted to be on the road once again, free from love affairs, luxuries, and obligations. Sancho is happy because the butler gave him two hundred escudos for emergencies. They come across a dozen farmers sitting next to large objects covered in cloth. One of the farmers unveils the objects, explaining that they are wood sculptures for a village church. Quixote says that all the Christian saints depicted by the sculptures were fine knights, because they fought to help the helpless and defend their nations. He considers the encounter a good omen. The difference between saints and knights, he says, is that saints fight like angels, and knights fight sinfully, as all men.

The novel as a whole traces the transformation of Sancho and Quixote's characters. But the transformation is not smooth and steady – rather, it is cyclical. Both men evolve by leaps and bounds, sometimes acting like their new selves and sometimes like their old ones – a realistic depiction of personal change. Because the two friends have gotten a new start, they briefly act like the people they were when the novel began: Quixote is optimistic and carefree, and Sancho is simple and a little greedy.

The men ride away, and Sancho tells his master that this was the gentlest adventure they've ever had. Quixote agrees and warns Sancho not to take omens too seriously, because sometimes they are only coincidences. Sancho comments that Altisidora's flirtations were very brazen, and Quixote explains that true love strips the heart of shame. Sancho wonders why a beautiful young girl fell in love with a scrawny old man. Quixote tells him that there is both a beauty of the body and a beauty of the soul, which is visible in a person's virtue and kindness.

Quixote can't seem to make up his mind about signs and omens. He often interprets objects and events as good or bad omens, but he doubts that any such thing as an omen can exist. How is a person to know whether something is an omen or a coincidence? Something becomes an omen under the charm of a creative interpretation. Quixote is beginning to doubt his interpretations, which used to seem invincibly true to him.

Suddenly, Quixote gets caught in a slim green net hanging from a tree. Two beautiful girls costumed as shepherdesses come out from the forest and explain that they and a group of their friends and family are playing at "creating a new pastoral Arcadia," and that they hung the nets to catch birds. They invite the friends to be their guests. Quixote thanks them, introduces himself, and offers his knightly services. The girls are delighted to meet Quixote himself, of whom they've read in the famous chronicle. The two friends join the company for **lunch**.

In the first part of the novel, Sancho and Quixote encountered several shepherds and shepherdesses. Now, in the self-consciously fictionalized second part, they encounter pretend shepherdesses. Many of the people the two friends encounter - these imitators, the troupe of actors, and the disguised puppet master/ former bandit – are not what they seem to be. Sancho and Quixote are learning that personality is often a type of performance.

Quixote thanks the girls for their hospitality and promises to profess their unsurpassed beauty (surpassed by none except Dulcinea) at the jousts in Saragossa. He rides out to the road to profess the girls' beauty, when he sees some herdsmen guiding a herd of bulls; Quixote refuses to get off the road until the herdsmen acknowledge the beauty of the shepherdesses, and the two friends get badly trampled. They set off again, hanging their heads in shame.

Quixote is snapped back to his more fallen state by yet another physical and emotional humiliation. The friends have escaped the lies and complications of court society, but even the wilderness of the road shelters actors and contradictions.

PART 2, CHAPTER 59

Sancho and Quixote wash off the road dust in a stream. Sancho wants to have **lunch**, but Quixote is too upset to put anything in his mouth. He was born to always be dying of his thoughts, he says, and Sancho was born to eat. He is so humiliated by his ignoble defeat that he wants to die of hunger. Sancho tells him that he will feel better after he eats and sleeps. Quixote agrees to nap if Sancho promises to give himself some of the lashes that will disenchant Dulcinea. They sleep most of the day and hurry to a nearby **inn**, which Quixote calls an inn and not a castle (and so does the author). They get a room and a meager dinner.

Quixote has always held fast to the belief that all his misfortunes have been caused by evil enchanters, by unfriendly and irrational outside forces. We are startled to hear him admit that the cause of his troubles is internal, that his own thoughts cause him the most harm. And we note another milestone in Quixote's disenchantment when he sees an inn as an inn, and not as a castle.

As they **eat**, they overhear some people in the next room talking about the second part of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. The two men agree that the second part is much worse than the first, especially because it describes Don Quixote out of love with Dulcinea. When don Quixote springs up challenging anyone who says such a thing, the two gentlemen come in and greet him with pleasure – one is called Don Juan and the other is Don Jerónimo. They hand Don Quixote the second volume of the history. Quixote looks through it and makes several criticisms – it calls Sancho's wife Mari Gutiérrez, when in reality her name is Teresa.

Quixote and Sancho establish the inauthenticity of the Avellaneda second volume by citing two inaccuracies: Quixote falling out of love with Dulcinea, and the misnaming of Sancho's wife. But we have seen that Quixote does, in a way, fall out of love with Dulcinea in the second part, because she is fading from his imagination. And Sancho's wife has been called several different names in the history. The original is always lost; the line between the inauthentic and the authentic (the true and the false) is blurred.

They continue talking over **dinner**. Don Jerónimo says that the second book depicts Sancho as an unfunny glutton. Sancho tells the gentlemen that the Sancho and Quixote in the false second book aren't the same as the Sancho and Quixote in the first book. Quixote refuses to read any more of the second book so as not to sully his thoughts. When he hears that the second book describes his adventures in the jousts at Saragossa, he changes his plans and decides to avoid Saragossa and go to Barcelona instead. They sleep and leave the next morning.

In this scene, Quixote and Sancho have finally come face to face with their fictional doubles. They are forced to enter into a sort of competition with these doubles: they must prove their reality as against the reality of the doubles. Quixote decides to avoid Saragossa to separate himself from his double and to overpower him.

PART 2, CHAPTER 60

The two friends travel uneventfully for six days. On the night of the sixth day Sancho quickly falls asleep and Quixote stays up thinking about Dulcinea. He rouses Sancho and tries to lash him, or to make him lash himself. Sancho walks away into a clump of trees and feels human limbs hanging from the branches– the trees are full of bandits' corpses. In a little while the sun rises and suddenly they find themselves surrounded by real bandits. The bandits begin to rifle through their packs, but their captain rides up and stops them. His name is Roque Guinart, and he is delighted to meet the famous knight Don Quixote.

In this episode, Quixote acts out at Sancho with a sudden burst of violence: he pushes Sancho to the ground and tries to beat him. With this outburst, he shows his despair at Dulcinea's transformation and tries to prove his loyalty to her – all because his loyalty is fading. We should also note that after all Quixote's imaginary battles of good against evil with windmills and sheep, his encounter with a real bandit is friendly and peaceful.

A young man in beautiful clothes rides up to the captain and begs for his help. He introduces himself as Claudia, the daughter of a friend of the captain's. She fell in love with a young man named Don Vicente, who seduced and betrayed her; she found out that morning that he was marrying another woman, so she put on man's clothes, found Don Vicente and shot him twice. Captain Roque and Claudia ride to the spot where she'd shot him, and they see that he is dying in his servants' arms. Don Vicente tells Claudia he never intended to marry another woman and offers to marry her on the spot. Claudia faints and Don Vicente dies. Claudia decides to spend the rest of her life in a convent.

This story has so many elements from previous subplots that it seems like a quilt made from patches of earlier stories. The betrayed young woman is like Dorotea and the duenna's daughter; the dying lover is like Basilio; the heroine locked up in a convent reminds us of Camila. As the novel winds to a close, the stories become more and more repetitive, as though Cervantes is admitting the limited possibilities of fictional narratives.

Captain Roque tells Quixote that he is a good-natured person, but that he has been dragged into a life of crime by a desire for revenge. Quixote is surprised that a criminal can be so just and sensible. Meanwhile, the company of robbers has captured some new victims – two army captains, two pilgrims, and a coach filled with ladies. Roque at first decides to take all their money, but since they are soldiers and women he takes pity on them and confiscates only a small fraction of their property. They are all very grateful and obsequious. Roque writes a letter to his friend in Barcelona to say that the wonderful Quixote and Sancho are on their way there, and asks his friend to welcome them.

Most of the novel has taken place in the outskirts of civilization. The societies that formed in the outskirts have different rules and systems, but they function relatively well, and present an alternative to organized society. This band of thieves is another such alternative. They do not represent lawlessness, but an alternate system of law. Cervantes places particular emphasis on Captain Roque's precise and thoughtful moral code, a thief's code like that of Robin Hood.

PART 2, CHAPTER 61

Sancho and Quixote travel with Captain Roque and his band for three adventure-filled days and nights. They part in Barcelona, which amazes the two friends with its ships, fanfare, and glamour. Roque's friend and some other gentlemen ride up to them and welcome them as the genuine Don Quixote and Sancho Panza from Cide Hamete's history. But as they ride alongside the gentlemen into the city, some boys put burs under the tails of Rocinante and the donkey, who throw Quixote and Sancho in the dirt. They pick themselves up, bruised and embarrassed, and ride to Roque's friend's house.

Other than the mock-society of the Duke and Duchess's court, the episode in Barcelona is the only part of the novel that takes place in thick of society. The city is large and overwhelming, full of mysterious rules and hierarchies, and it pulls the two friends in by the collars. When the upper-class gentlemen welcome Don Quixote and Sancho Panza as the real adventurers, their fraudulent doubles hang behind them like shadows.

PART 2, CHAPTER 62

This friend, who is called Don Antonio Moreno, decides to play some tricks on his guests. He takes Don Quixote into a room that is empty except for a bust on a slab and tells him that the bust was created by an **enchanter**, and can answer any question – except on Fridays, when it never speaks. Since it is Friday, they decide to test the statue the next day. Meanwhile, they go for a ride about town. Don Antonio secretly puts a sign on Don Quixote's back that reads: "This is Don Quixote de la Mancha." When Quixote hears everyone read it aloud, he thinks that he must be very famous.

This episode combines the Duke and Duchess's egotistical and malicious pranking with Master Pedro's "talking" monkey. Like the Duke and Duchess, Don Antonio tricks Quixote into feeling that he is very famous and well-respected. In reality Sancho and Quixote are quite famous, yet their real fame is replaced through this trick by false fame - a kind of subconscious humiliation.

The next day, Don Antonio leads Quixote, his wife, and some friends into the room with the bust. First, he asks the bust what he is thinking, and the bust replies that it does not read thoughts. Next, he asks it how many people are present in the room, and the bust replies correctly. One woman asks how to become beautiful; the bust tells her to be virtuous. Another asks whether her husband loves her, and bust advises her to observe his behavior. One man asks what his son wants; the statue tells him the son wants to bury him. After another couple of questions, Don Quixote steps forward and asks the bust three questions: were the adventures of the Cave of Montesinos real or dreamt? Will Sancho lash himself? Will Dulcinea be disenchanted? The bust replies that the adventure contained both reality and dreams, and answers in the affirmative to the other questions. Sancho complains that it gives obvious and roundabout answers.

Like Master Pedro, the bust gives general, fortune-cookie answers to every questioner. Such a technique is founded on the idealistic belief that people are ultimately all alike: all female beauty arises from virtue, all sons want to bury their fathers, and all strange experiences are part reality, part dream. This last fragment of common sense is the compromise the world offers to Quixote in exchange for his faith and his madness. The world teaches him that his fantasies are not more true than reality, but they do form a small part of that reality. It is a washed-out, ambiguous compromise.

Cide Hamete explains that the bust, pedestal, and slab were hollow and led down into the room below, where a clever man responded to the questions. Don Antonio amused himself and his guests with the bust until the inquisitors ordered him to take it apart. One day during his visit, Don Quixote wanders by a printing house and decides to go inside. A man shows him a book he has translated from Italian. Quixote praises the art of translation and describes its shortcomings and difficulties; a translation, he says, is like a tapestry seen from the wrong side. He also sees some people working on the second part of his own history and tells them the book should be burned.

Quixote repeats a familiar wisdom: a translation is always in some sense lacking in comparison to the original. More specifically, his metaphor suggests that the original is blurred by wrong-colored threads, and that a translation is inherently messy and disorderly. This theory applies to the entire novel, which is itself (Cervantes would like us to believe) a revision of a translation. Cervantes purposely discolors and disorders his novel, because fiction is always an imperfect translation from life.

PART 2, CHAPTER 63

Later that same day, Don Antonio takes Quixote and Sancho to see the galleys. The men lift anchor and the ship quickly sails out to sea. Soon, they approach a brigantine (a smaller boat); two drunk men on that boat shoot and kill two men on the galley, so the admiral seizes the brigantine and sails it to shore, intending to hang everyone on board. He hangs a noose around the neck of the captain, a handsome young man. The captain explains that she is actually a woman in men's clothing, a Christian born to Moorish parents, and her name is Ana Félix. Her family took her to Algiers after the king expelled the Moors from Spain, and a man named Don Gaspar followed her into exile.

The novel is tying up loose ends. It returns to the Expulsion of the Moriscos, which we access through Sancho's neighbor Ricote. Ana Félix is the second Moorish woman in the novel. Like Zoraida, she takes charge of her own fate. With regard to the book's racism (which might express Cervantes' own opinions or might accurately depict the attitudes of the time), it is important to note that both sympathetic Moorish women are Christian converts.

Rumors of Don Gaspar's beauty reached the king of Algiers. Ana realized Don Gaspar was in danger of abduction, because beautiful young men are more highly valued in that part of the world than pretty women. She dressed Don Gaspar in women's clothing and brought him to the king, who decided to keep Don Gaspar as a present for a friend and hid him away in a private apartment. Meanwhile, the king sent her to Spain to dig up her family treasure, entrusting her to the Moorish crew of the ship.

Ana Félix is not only strong-willed and independent, for a female character of the time – she actually rescues the man she loves. They have switched gender roles as they've switched costumes. The story shows that the world truly has changed since chivalry days, as Quixote has said..

When she finishes her story, someone throws himself at her feet: it is her father Ricote, who had boarded the ship out of curiosity. He confirms her story, and the admiral lets her go free. With the help of a renegade on board, they decide to return to Algiers and rescue Don Gaspar. In the meantime, Don Antonio offers to host Ana Félix at his house.

According to the new law, Ricote and Ana Félix will not be permitted to stay in Spain. But they cannot return to Algiers, an unfamiliar and unwelcoming place. The exiled Moriscos are known as a generation of displaced wanderers.

PART 2, CHAPTER 64

Quixote offers to go rescue Don Gaspar himself, but Sancho and the others convince him it would not be practical. Two days later, the renegade sails to Algiers. Quixote is walking aimlessly on the beach one morning when a knight with a moon on his shield greets him. He tells Don Quixote that he is the Knight of the White Moon, and he has come to do battle with him over the respective beauties of their ladies. If Quixote loses, he must return to his village for a year and forgo all adventuring. They agree to do battle. But when they charge at one another, the other knight's horse gallops so quickly that the knight knocks Quixote off his horse at the first collision. Quixote is so weak and injured that he must be carried back to Don Antonio's house.

The episode of the Knight of the White Moon not only parallels the earlier episode with the Knight of the Spangles – the mysterious knight is one and the same. Both literary doubles and plot doubles have begin to converge into one, like a single image coming into focus. The idea here is that certain events or traits that seem opposed yet complementary to ours turn out to be a hidden part of ourselves, the concealed side of identity.

PART 2, CHAPTER 65

Don Antonio follows the Knight of the White Moon to his hotel room to find out his true identity. The Knight tells him that he is the student Sansón Carrasco, and he has tricked Quixote into returning to the village so that he might regain his sanity. Don Antonio scolds the student for trying to cure such a wonderful madness, and predicts that no cure is possible. Meanwhile, Don Quixote stays in bed for six days, bruised and depressed. Don Antonio announces that the renegade has returned with Don Gaspar; the news only make Quixote sad, because it means he won't get to rescue the boy himself.

We have compared Don Antonio's trickery to that of the Duke and Duchess. But it seems that his attitude toward Quixote's fantasies is quite different, and more respectful; although he considers his fantasies a kind of madness, it is a wonderful madness. In this, he resembles the poet Don Lorenzo. He brings up a familiar question: what is Quixote's madness? It is a certain kind of personhood, or is it an incurable illness?

Don Gaspar joyfully reunites with Ana Félix. Don Antonio offers to pull some strings and obtain permission for Ana and Ricote to stay in Spain, but Ricote declines the favor, explaining that the King of Spain was right to cleanse the country so completely. In a few days Sancho and Quixote leave Barcelona and begin travelling back to their village.

Once again, Cervantes makes a Morisco support the Expulsion of the Moriscos – a puzzling and paradoxical move. Through Ricote, Cervantes acknowledges that the brutal expulsion did serve to protect Spain from a real threat of internal enemies.

PART 2, CHAPTER 66

Sancho tries to cheer up Quixote by blaming their misfortune on fate, but Quixote tells him that there is no fate, only the eye of heaven, and therefore "every man is the architect of his own fortune." He has not been a very careful architect, he says sadly, and now he must go home in disgrace.

In this significant conversation, Quixote looks forward to the humanistic views of the Enlightenment. God is fading from the world, and humankind must assume responsibility for every event on earth.

Five days later, they arrive at a village near their own. People are celebrating at the **inn** when they arrive, and the villagers ask the two travellers for their advice. One very fat man has challenged a very skinny man to a race, and the fat man claims that the skinny man should carry in iron the difference between their weights. Sancho determines that the fat man should instead lose weight, so that he and his opponent weigh the same amount. Everyone is grateful for Sancho's wisdom, but Quixote rushes on.

Through his governorship, Sancho has come to represent the need for social equality in at least two ways. First, because he proved that an illiterate peasant could make a wise and competent governor. Second, because in his brief tenure he tried to make egalitarian reforms. It seems that this episode deals with a similar issue: the fat (or prosperous) man should compete fairy with the thin (or underprivileged) man.

The next day, they encounter a man with a pike and some travelling bags. It is the Duke's lackey Tosilos, and he urges Quixote to come and stay at the Duke's castle. He tells Quixote that he (Tosilos) was never enchanted, that the Duke beat Tosilos for disobeying his orders on the battlefield, and that the duenna's daughter has become a nun. He invites the two friends to share his **lunch**. Quixote does not want to eat with this messenger who pretends not to be enchanted, but Sancho eats with a good appetite. In a little while, the travellers take to the road.

Quixote does not want to believe that his victory on the Duke's battlefield was neither real nor truly helpful to anyone. He is clinging to this last bit of glory, and he shows his disbelief by refusing Tosilos's food. In a way, though, Sancho's good appetite negates his master's abstinence. The food is good, and Tosilos is telling the truth.

PART 2, CHAPTER 67

Quixote asks Sancho whether the lackey mentioned anything about Altisidora. He is grateful for her love, though he has nothing to give her in return, because he is loyal to Dulcinea and because "the treasures of knights errant are like fairy gold, false and illusory." Now that Dulcinea is on his mind, he urges Sancho to lash himself and hurry along Dulcinea's **disenchantment**. Sancho resists, finding it hard to believe that his lashes have anything to do with a woman's enchantment.

Quixote's description of knighthood as "fairy gold" is ambiguous. On the one hand, fairy gold resembles the possessions of actors, who delight everyone they meet. It is gold that can't purchase food or drink, but it can give spiritual sustenance. On the other hand it is "false and illusory." For the first time, he speaks with disappointment about his vocation.

Meanwhile, the two friends pass the meadow where they met the party of pretend shepherds and shepherdesses, and Quixote decides that he and Sancho will also become shepherds for their year at home. They'll adjust their names and choose shepherdesses to love, though Sancho declines to choose any shepherdess other than his wife. Quixote is excited to spend a year playing various instruments and writing love poems. They spend the night out under the stars.

Quixote has firmly identified himself as an actor, a performer – a vast change from his former notion of himself as a modern-day saint, a righter of wrongs. People like Carrasco and the Duke and Duchess have enmeshed him in so many hoaxes and performances that he seems to have absorbed falseness by contact.

PART 2, CHAPTER 68

Quixote rouses Sancho and urges him to give himself some lashes. Sancho grumbles and waves his master away, and Quixote scolds him pitilessly for his ingratitude. But then Sancho speaks to him about the beautiful relief that sleep brings, and Quixote praises his wisdom.

The two friends at first take opposing positions: Quixote is for self-lashing, and Sancho is for sleep. But they understand each other so well, and have taught each other so much, that each can quickly switch to the other's perspective.

Slowly, they begin to hear deafening noise: some men are taking six hundred pigs to a fair. The animals trample over the two friends, and Quixote explains sadly that they must be divine punishment for an unworthy knight. Sancho falls back asleep while Quixote sings a song he wrote about seeking death, and death's strange force in life. The next morning, they encounter a group of armed men. The men quietly surround the travellers, point lances at them, and lead them to the Duke's castle.

Throughout this chapter, Quixote's spirits decline. He is depressed by his recent defeat, by Dulcinea's enchantment, and more broadly by his overall failure as a knight. He is thinking about death perhaps because death seems to him like the appropriate punishment for such failure – but also he is singing about the death of his imagination.

PART 2, CHAPTER 69

The men carry Don Quixote and Sancho into a dark, torch-lit courtyard. In the middle of the courtyard, they see a platform carrying Altisidora's corpse. The Duke and Duchess seat themselves beside it, along with two mysterious men in black. A servant dresses Sancho in a black robe painted with flames and a cardboard cone over his head. A young man stands by the corpse and sings a song describing Quixote's murder of Altisidora. The mysterious men, the judges of the proceedings, tell Sancho he must receive a variety of beatings to bring Altisidora back to life. Sancho angrily refuses, especially since his beating must be carried out by the twelve duennas. Finally, though, he gives in, and in the middle of the punishment Altisidora wakes up and thanks him. The night is over and the two friends retire to sleep in their old room in the Duke's castle.

This final prank brings Quixote one step closer to disillusionment. If in the beginning of their acquaintance with Quixote the Duke and Duchess tried to arrange everything according to Quixote's notions of knighthood, and so briefly convinced him of being a real knight, in this episode they accuse him of being the opposite of a knight – a killer of innocent maidens. It is appropriate that Sancho's costume includes a cardboard cone, like that worn by Inquisition victims, because Sancho and Quixote's real crime is their unorthodox ideas.

PART 2, CHAPTER 70

Cide Hamete explains that the student Carrasco found out Quixote's location from the Duke's page, spoke to the Duke about his adventures with Quixote, rode to Barcelona to defeat Quixote, and finally stopped by the Duke's castle on his way home to report on the results of his venture. When the Duke found out that Quixote and Sancho would be travelling home near the castle, he planned this one final hoax with Altisidora. Cide Hamete writes that the hoaxers were probably as mad as the two friends.

The Duke, the Duchess, and the student Carrasco go to great lengths to prove Quixote's madness. They become passionately fixated on his deviance. Their absolute conviction that their worldview is true and Quixote's is false is a kind of insanity in itself. Insanity, here, is blindness to the truth of multiple perspectives.

Meanwhile, Altisidora steals into the friends' room, where Sancho is sleeping soundly and Quixote is lying awake. She tells Quixote that his neglect killed her for a little while. Sancho asks what she saw in the underworld, and she describes devils playing pelota (a game like squash or baseball), but using books instead of balls. One of the books was the second part of the history of Don Quixote, and they thought it such a bad book that they plunged it deeper into hell.

Although Altisidora has behaved maliciously toward Don Quixote, her account of hell is a friendly gesture toward the knight, because it affirms the reality of Don Quixote as he is in Cide Hamete's novel, and not the foolish Quixote of the Avellaneda version.

Don Quixote tells Altisidora once again that he loves only Dulcinea, and she tells him angrily that she does not really love him, and that last night's events were only a hoax. The Duke and Duchess also come to visit, and Quixote tells them that they should give Altisidora useful tasks to distract her from her infatuations. They agree that Quixote and Sancho will leave the following day.

Tosilos and Altisidora have both plainly said that certain events at the castle have been hoaxes, and Quixote can easily deduce that all the adventures there have been false ones. If that's so, then Sancho cannot disenchant Dulcinea by lashing himself.

PART 2, CHAPTER 71

Quixote is depressed to have to return to his village, but thrilled that Sancho is capable of resurrection (it was not too difficult to convince himself that Altisidora had really been dead). Sancho is annoyed that he was not paid for the resurrection, and Quixote offers to pay him for Dulcinea's lashes. Sancho decides each lash will cost a quarter of a real, calculates the total sum, and joyfully retreats behind some trees to begin self-mortification. Quixote stays nearby and counts. After giving himself a few painful lashes, Sancho decides to raise the price to half a real per stroke. Quixote agrees, but instead of lashing his own back Sancho begins lashing the trees and moaning theatrically.

To avoid that disastrous conclusion, Quixote tries to forget that this latest adventure was a hoax. But forcing oneself to forget something is not the same as forgetting it, and forcing oneself to hope is not the same as hoping. Quixote's offer to pay Sancho is a desperate act. Whether or not Quixote is conscious of Sancho's trick, it forms part of the web of mockery and deceit that finally crushes him.

Finally Quixote stops him and they ride on to a nearby inn, which to Quixote definitely looks like an **inn** and not a castle; ever since he was defeated by the mysterious knight in Barcelona, "his judgment on all things was sounder." One paining in his room shows the rape of Helen, and another shows Dido and Aeneas. Quixote looks at them and wishes he'd lived in the same age as they did, so that he could save them. Sancho predicts that soon inns will have paintings of *their* adventures on their walls.

We have traced the transformation of Quixote's perspective by fits and starts. Now, the narrator writes clearly that his mind has changed. What does it mean that his judgment is "sounder"? He sees inns, not castles – he looks out into the world, instead of into his imagination. So his sound judgment is a loss as much as a gain: a loss of perspective and of identity.

PART 2, CHAPTER 72

The following day, Quixote and Sancho overhear a servant address a guest at the **inn** with the name Don Tarfe – a name Quixote remembers seeing in the false second volume of his history. Quixote asks the new guest about the history, and the guest claims that Quixote is a good friend of his, and that he has recently spent time with Quixote and Sancho in Saragossa. But when the two friends correct his mistake, Don Tarfe claims that the wrong version of Don Quixote, "Don Quixote the Bad," is the work of evil **enchanters**, and that the man in front of him is "Don Quixote the Good."

The episode with Don Tarfe further blurs the line between fictional and worldly reality. Don Tarfe doesn't say, "I lied, I have never known any Don Quixote and Sancho Panza"; he says "I have known the wrong Quixote and Panza." Both fictional and real people can have reputations in the world, can exist in certain ways in the communal imagination. Now, Quixote exists alongside Avellaneda's Quixote.

The village mayor stops by the inn, and Quixote convinces him to notarize Don Tarfe's statement that he, Don Quixote, is not the man described in *The Second Part of Don Quixote de la Mancha*, written by a person named Avellaneda from Tordesillas. In the evening the three men take to the road. Don Quixote tells Don Tarfe about his recent adventures and then they part ways. Later that night, Sancho lashes nearby trees until he finally completes his punishment. Quixote is overjoyed, and in the morning he imagines that every woman walking down the road is Dulcinea – until he looks at her closely. Finally they see their own village in the distance.

Quixote is reaching out to the outside world for confirmation of his goodness and trueness – to the authority figures that have been mocked so often throughout the novel. These figures have always insulted and disparaged him, and he has always held fast to his inner certainty about the world and about his vocation. Now, he has lost faith in himself.

PART 2, CHAPTER 73

When the two friends enter the village, they overhear one little boy say to another: "That's something that's never ever going to happen." Quixote thinks this incident is a bad omen, if one applies the phrase to his hopes about Dulcinea. A hare running from dogs and hunters gives Quixote the same impression, though Sancho says it could mean that Dulcinea has escaped from evil **enchanters**. The two boys tell Sancho that they were arguing about a cricket cage; Sancho buys the cage and gives it to Don Quixote, telling him all his omens have been reversed – and anyway, he says, Quixote was saying earlier that omens are not real.

Quixote's tentative interpretations of the "omens" are very sad. When he hears children saying something will not happen, he hears emblems of innocence and fantasy telling him to reject innocence and fantasy. When he sees dogs chasing a hare, he sees himself hounded by a group greater in strength and in number. Quixote's decline not the transition from idealism to realism: his imagination moves as freely as ever.

They run into the priest and the student Carrasco at the outskirts, and the boys follow them into the village, mocking them all the way. They walk to Quixote's house, where they meet the niece, the housekeeper, Teresa, and Sanchica. Quixote tells the priest and the housekeeper about his defeat and his plan that they all become shepherds during his sabbatical from knight-errantry. The priest is especially interested in the shepherdesses they will meet. The niece and housekeeper scold Quixote for his impractical plan; he's too old and infirm, they say, to lead such a life.

Like many epic tales, including The Odyssey *and* The Aeneid, *this one ends with the hero's return to his birthplace. But the hero is mocked and deprecated, instead of celebrated. And if old epic tales describe the hero becoming most fully himself, this tale describes the hero's loss of himself. It can be read as a cautionary tale about the difficulties of individualism.*

PART 2, CHAPTER 74

Soon after Quixote comes home, he contracts a fever. His friends try to cheer him up, but to no avail. The doctor judges that the cause of his illness is depression. Quixote sleeps a great deal for a few days. He wakes up with a start one day and declares that he has regained his sanity, which was occluded by his "detestable books of chivalry." He thinks that he is about to die, and he does not want to be remembered as a madman. He calls in the priest and his other friends to make his last confession.

Why does the last part of Quixote's transformation take place while he is asleep? Sleep is the place of dreams, of fantasies like the Cave of Montesinos. So perhaps his long sleep is his final farewell to his fantasies and his intricate inner life. Or maybe his sleep is his final yielding to Sancho's healthy world of food and wine.

The three friends come in. Quixote tells them that he is not Don Quixote de la Mancha anymore – he is Alonso Quixano, and he has earned the nickname "the Good." He tells them that he now hates all the famous knights errant, and admits that their histories have done him great harm. The friends assume that he has gone mad in some new way, and remind him that Dulcinea has finally been **disenchanted**, but he only calls for a confessor. His apparent sanity makes his friends believe that he is truly dying.

We have spoken here of Quixote's "sanity" as a loss of self. But there are many ways to interpret this mysterious ending. Some might see it as heroic, a had-won triumph over a set of delusions. A reader's interpretation of the ending will depend on her opinion of fantasy and introversion.

The priest takes his confession and announces his imminent death, and everyone starts crying. Quixote leaves part of his money to Sancho and apologizes to him for involving him in his madness. Sancho begs his master not to die, since dying for no reason is true madness. He reminds Quixote about the beautiful Dulcinea and takes the blame for all Quixote's defeats. But Quixote pays no attention. He leaves his property to his niece and leaves the rest of his money to his housekeeper for back wages. He says that his niece must only marry a man who has never heard of chivalry books, or else she will forfeit her inheritance. He loses consciousness, and three days later he dies.

Yet, whatever we might think of sanity, Quixote dies of it. Sanity, then, is either a malignant presence, a corroder of imagination, or a fatal absence, a gap where personhood was. Quixote's death is symbolic: it is the death of the fictional knight Don Quixote, dreamt up by Alonso Quixano. And it is Quixano's own disenchantment, final and irreversible. The real death in the novel allows us to grieve fully for Quixote's imagination, to feel the gravity of its loss from the world.

This concludes the history of Don Quixote de la Mancha. Cide Hamete says that no one else may describe Don Quixote, because "for me alone was Don Quixote born, and I for him." The real Quixote lies in his grave. Cide Hamete is happy to have written a book that makes its readers hate absurd and untrue chivalry books, which pale in comparison to the true history of Don Quixote.

The author writes about his creation with great tenderness, and identifies with it very closely. Perhaps Alonso Quixano, a character at the barest edges of the novel, is Cervantes himself, who dreamt up Don Quixote and released him into the world as his own shadow.

HOW TO CITE

To cite this LitChart:

MLA

Tsykynovska, Helen. "*Don Quixote*." *LitCharts*. LitCharts LLC, 3 Mar 2014. Web. 21 Apr 2020.

CHICAGO MANUAL

Tsykynovska, Helen. "*Don Quixote*." LitCharts LLC, March 3, 2014. Retrieved April 21, 2020. https://www.litcharts.com/lit/don-quixote.

To cite any of the quotes from *Don Quixote* covered in the Quotes section of this LitChart:

MLA

Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quixote. Penguin Classics. 2003.

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Cervantes, Miguel de. Don Quixote. New York: Penguin Classics. 2003.