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Family Plays

Don Quixote of la Mancha



Don Quixote of la Mancha

Drama/Comedy. Adapted by Arthur Fauquez from Cervantes. Translation from French by Margaret Leona. Introduction by Orlin Corey. Cast: 8m., 2w., with option to add extras. This dramatization is a moving drama, highlighted with humor, tracing the adventures and mishaps that befell the romantic hidalgo who tried to reform the world through chivalry. To the least child in the audience, this play says very simply and amusingly “It is possible for a man to believe in a thing he cannot prove, and be laughed to scorn, and lose every battle, and die of despair—and still to be right.” Humor, insight, compassion and knowledge of the world underlie this dramatization of the great Cervantes’ classic. Its truth has special pertinence in the world we have fashioned for our young people. *Four sets with entr’actes. Spanish costumes of the 16th century. Approximate running time: 2 hours. Code: DB7.*

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Don Quixote of la Mancha

Don Quixote of la Mancha

By

ARTHUR FAUQUEZ

Translated from the French by

MARGARET LEONA

Based on the Epic of Cerventes

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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Characters

DON QUIXOTE

THE HOUSEKEEPER

NICOLAS, a barber

CARRASCO, a scholar

INNKEEPER

MARITORNE

SANCHO

THE ARCHER OF ST. HERMANDAD

GINES, a galley-slave (later, Master Pedro)

GALLEY-SLAVES

SHEPHERDS

A YOUNG BOY

*ROSSINANTE, Don Quixote's horse

*GRISON, Sancho's donkey

*Optional

Scenes

ACT ONE

- Scene 1. Don Quixote's Bedroom
- Scene 2. In Front of the Curtain
- Scene 3. The Courtyard of the Inn

ACT TWO

- Scene 4. In the Countryside
- Scene 5. On the Mountain
- Scene 6. Another Place on the Mountain
- Scene 7. On the Mountain (same as Scene 5.)
- Scene 8. The Courtyard of the Inn

ACT THREE

- Scene 9. Don Quixote's Bedroom
- Scene 10. The Courtyard of the Inn
- Scene 11. In Front of the Curtain
- Scene 12. A Wooded Place
- Scene 13. In Front of the Curtain
- Scene 14. Don Quixote's Bedroom

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Don Quixote must never, at any moment, appear ridiculous. He believes intensely in his mission, and is in reality far less crazy than one imagines. He is not a comic character. Even when he sprawls in front of everyone, he must remain dignified. Through the laughter his downfall provokes, one must feel the bitterness he suffers to find himself in such a pass. Some of his speeches are treated in an alexandrine or octosyllabic rhythm. Here one must feel that Don Quixote does not speak in the usual manner, and that his way of expressing himself is strongly influenced by the style of the books he has been reading.

Sancho, too, is neither a comic nor a ridiculous character. No one should force the tune, no one overplay his character. These are human beings, whom we find on the stage.

For music, I suggest Ravel, de Falla, Debussy, Turina, any of the great Spanish musicians. Perhaps Lalo. Or an original composition, provided always it is in the Spanish classical style.

ARTHUR FAUQUEZ

Maleves Sainte Marie

October, 1966

THE TRANSLATION

The delights and difficulties of translating this enchanting play from the French, were manifold. Arthur Fauquez uses language in a telling poetic rhythm. Many times in Don Quixote's own speeches, he has come close to the original Spanish of Cervantes, whilst avoiding the archaic expressions of the original. It is always graceful and easy on the ear.

French words are sonorous, and double syllables add to beauty of tongue. But where words of numerous syllables are charming in French, these must be translated into short and harder terms for English speech. Some of the fineness of the French script may be lost. I have tried to be as faithful as I could, and still keep the language lively for actors. The alexandrine and octosyllabic speeches were especially difficult.

With the full agreement of the author, I have tried to convey a variation of speech in the pastoral characters, to give a country flavour without specifying any particular locality—a speech that all English-speaking players can use.

Details of translation have been carefully worked over with Arthur Fauquez and his charming wife Elizabeth. My thanks are also due to Mme. Olga Cieflinska, who checked the whole translation with me, and to Tom Sellars, who first read it.

MARGARET LEONA

London

October, 1966

Don Quixote of la Mancha

ACT ONE

(Three beats on the gong. Music. Light on the curtain).

VOICE (Off). "In a village of la Mancha, somewhere in the very heart of ardent Spain, there lived an hidalgo, thin of face, and even thinner pursed."

(On these last words the curtain opens).

SCENE 1—DON QUIXOTE'S BEDROOM

(A table, a high-backed armchair, well-stocked bookshelves, A cheval mirror, Don Quixote's arms, one guesses a four-poster bed. A door leads to other parts of the house. A window opens onto the courtyard. A roof-top may be seen through the window.

Don Quixote is seated at his table, badly lit by a single candle placed in the lowest branch of a five-branched candelabra. He is lost in reading a romantic story of Chivalry, which is placed beside his plate of eggs and bacon. He holds his fork in his right hand, but does not eat.

Soft music. In the distance the ringing sound of glorious trumpets. Off).

"When the Giant, standing so arrogant, saw him fearlessly draw near, he said insolently, 'I am amazed, little man, to see you approach death with so much confidence. And so saying, he brandished with fury the heavy iron hammer which commonly served him as weapon. Then, full of valour, standing up in his silver stirrups like a fighting-cock, Amadis raised his shining sword high, and cried—

(Suddenly Don Quixote springs up, brandishing his fork, and holding the book in his left hand).

DON QUIXOTE *(In a thunderous voice)*. "'Caraculiambro, O fabulous loathsome-headed Giant, this time I'll put an end to your foul deeds, and I'll—

(Unable to decipher what follows in the text, he brings the book nearer the candle and goes on, almost without a break).

—"and I'll slit you through the middle of your body—

(With a back stroke of his right hand, he flings plate and all to the floor, but unaware of what he has done, he takes up his position again, and goes on without looking at the book).

—"Through the middle of your body!"

HOUSEKEEPER (*Enters holding up a candelabra with five lighted candles in it*). Sir—what's going on?

DON QUIXOTE (*Automatically taking advantage of this new light, goes on with his reading*). "Your dark soul shall descend to Hell, and your fearful head, severed from your shoulders, shall bear witness to my high courage!"

HOUSEKEEPER (*Putting the candelabra down*). Calm yourself.

DON QUIXOTE (*Looks into her eyes without seeing her and murmurs*). Caraculiambro—

HOUSEKEEPER. I am your housekeeper.

DON QUIXOTE. Dona Belisa . . . after all she might be . . . Don Quixote's housekeeper . . .

(*Exultantly*).

Don Quixote of la Mancha, last of Knights-errant. He, who will rid Spain of the detestable race of evil Giants . . . Have with you Caraculiambro . . .

HOUSEKEEPER (*Gently makes him lower his arm*). . . . Mind what you're doing.

DON QUIXOTE. What am I doing?

HOUSEKEEPER. You've spoilt your eggs and bacon.

DON QUIXOTE. What does an omelette matter to the life of a hero? What does eating matter, when glory is the hunger of our heart? Doesn't this book say, Amadis of Gaul alone in the loneliness of a lone mountain, armed from head to heel, from heel to head, standing proudly with invincible lance, watched for four days and four nights, without food, for love of his lady?

HOUSEKEEPER. These stories are confusing your brain.

DON QUIXOTE. Without food do you hear?

HOUSEKEEPER. I hear. But you are ruining your health.

DON QUIXOTE. Four days and four nights . . .

HOUSEKEEPER (*Shrugging her shoulders and pointing to the mirror*). Look what a sight you are.

DON QUIXOTE. O shining face of Prince Galaor . . .

HOUSEKEEPER. You're as thin as a rake.

DON QUIXOTE. O marvellous image of paladin Roderigo.

HOUSEKEEPER. Look at your clothes. They are rags and tatters.

DON QUIXOTE. O peerless beauty of Amadis of Gaul.

HOUSEKEEPER (*Kneeling and picking up the plate*). One day this nonsense will be the death of you, if it hasn't driven you out of your mind already.

DON QUIXOTE. Nonsense, you call these deeds of courage and daring, these glorious achievements?

HOUSEKEEPER. Do you think it's glorious to fling your omelette on the floor?

DON QUIXOTE. Madam, that accident was only due to my blazing valour.

HOUSEKEEPER. And is it equally due to your blazing valour that your walls are decorated with the hop-pole?

DON QUIXOTE. My battle-lance.

HOUSEKEEPER. The saucepan lid?

DON QUIXOTE. My shield of brass.

HOUSEKEEPER. And the preserving pan?

DON QUIXOTE. My breast-plate. Zounds, Dona Belisa, your lack of respect for a Knight-at-arms . . .

HOUSEKEEPER. Put that book down and be reasonable. Nicolas is downstairs, waiting to shave you.

DON QUIXOTE. I'm glad to hear it. He's a sensible man. I'll put the argument to him, and I'm sure he will agree with me.

HOUSEKEEPER (*As she goes out carrying the plate etc.*). That would surprise me!

DON QUIXOTE (*Alone*). O woman of little faith. How different are you from the simplicity and noble wisdom gracing ladies of old. Come in Master Barber.

NICOLAS (*Enters*). And how is your Honour?

(He puts his things on the table).

DON QUIXOTE. My honour would be doing well, Nicolas, if it were not being constantly challenged by my block-headed housekeeper . . .

NICOLAS. She was just telling me . . .

DON QUIXOTE. Don't give an ear to that demon of slander, judge for yourself, I beg you, why we are at loggerheads. Do you know this?

(He takes his place in the armchair and Nicolas knots a towel round his neck).

NICOLAS. By Heaven, a fine book. The binding alone is worth a crown at least.

DON QUIXOTE. Do you know what it's about? The most thrilling story in the world. The stupendous adventures of the invincible and valorous knight, Amadis of Gaul. Listen to a little of this. "The reason for the unreason that my reason gives you, so weakens my reason, that I have reason to pity myself for your beauty." What do you think of that?

NICOLAS. I can't say I really understood it.

DON QUIXOTE. But it's so clear, so enlightened. 'The reason for the unreason . . . that my reason gives you . . . so weakens my reason . . . that I have reason to pity myself for your beauty . . .'
What do you say to that?

NICOLAS. That it's a pity such a lovely binding, and it is lovely, covers so much twaddle.

DON QUIXOTE. What do you say?

NICOLAS. It's stuff and nonsense.

DON QUIXOTE. What have you said?

NICOLAS. Tripe. One can't understand a word . . .

DON QUIXOTE. What have you dared say?

NICOLAS. These romances are stupid. Don't you think so?

DON QUIXOTE. Take back those words without delay.

NICOLAS. But . . .

DON QUIXOTE. Take them back, I say, and quickly . . .

NICOLAS. Don't you agree with me?

DON QUIXOTE. Take back those words or I'll stuff them down your throat with my sword.

NICOLAS. I did not mean to offend you.

DON QUIXOTE. Amadis of Gaul, the most generous hero the world has ever known. And you dare to call this twaddle, stuff and nonsense, and tripe. Thunder and lightning!

NICOLAS. Calm yourself, sir. I'm going to shave you.

DON QUIXOTE. I give you ten seconds.

NICOLAS. I'll fetch some water for shaving.

(He goes out).

DON QUIXOTE. Tripe. Will no one understand the wealth hidden in these superb adventures? Do I alone recognise their meaning? Poor old devil of a barber . . . what a sad world we live in.

(Amongst the barber's materials his eye falls on the shaving-bowl).

Ye heavens! What catches my eye? By what strange chance amongst the bits and pieces belonging to this doer of beards . . . ? The Helmet of King Mambrino, no mistake . . . that's it. So described in my romances. Bright as the sun.

(He puts it on his head and struts in front of the mirror).

. . . The magic helmet making one invulnerable.

NICOLAS *(Returns, carrying a jug of hot water which he places on the table. He comes to Don Quixote, touches his arm, and points to shaving-bowl on his head).*

. . . Allow me . . .

DON QUIXOTE. It is Mambrino's helmet.

NICOLAS. Ah—pardon . . . it belongs to me.

DON QUIXOTE. Fashioned of purest gold.

NICOLAS. Sir, it is brass.

DON QUIXOTE. Rogue, coarse crafty churl, full of impertinence. Don't you recognise the marvellous headpiece?

NICOLAS. Well at a pinch, yes, it could be a headpiece—But please give it to me, so that I can make my lather.

DON QUIXOTE. Have you fallen so low, O Master Nicolas, that you have lost respect for this priceless thing? Do you know where it came from?

NICOLAS. I bought it on Thursday in the market at Salamanca.

DON QUIXOTE. In the market at Salamanca . . . what a bitter mockery . . . amongst the potatoes, the eggs, the tomatoes.

NICOLAS. The water is getting cold.

DON QUIXOTE. It shall never be said, that with soap for my beard, I should ever defile the miraculous helmet of the greatest nobleman of Islam.

NICOLAS. One more time, if you want me to shave you, give me back my bowl.

DON QUIXOTE. Never.

NICOLAS. But I must shave you.

DON QUIXOTE. To the devil with my beard. It does very well at the end of my chin. Let it stay there.

NICOLAS. In that case, sir, I see no point in remaining. Give it me.

DON QUIXOTE *(Unhooks his sword)*. By my faith, as a Knight-errant, I will not permit further ridicule of King Mambrino's helmet. I'll buy it from you, villain. How much?

NICOLAS. I need it.

DON QUIXOTE. How much, I say?

NICOLAS. Er—since you insist—three crowns.

DON QUIXOTE. It is worth a thousand, but as you say, you don't deserve more than three. Be paid by my housekeeper. Take away your tools, and don't enter my presence till you are ready to eat humble-pie and bow the knee. Then only shall you shave me.

NICOLAS (*Gathering his things together*). . . . My towel . . . I am going, Sir, but let me tell you, you're a bit touched in the head. The days of chivalry are long past.

DON QUIXOTE. I will renew them.

NICOLAS. Hang up your sword. You'll do yourself an injury. Good-night.

(He goes out).

DON QUIXOTE. Go, Master Nicolas, and don't bother your head about my fate. By the grace of Mambrino's helmet from now on I am invulnerable.

(He gives himself a terrific whack with his sword on his helmet and sits suddenly in his chair.

Very soft music of mounted horses).

HOUSEKEEPER (*Enters*). Sir . . . Now what have you done? Are you hurt?

(She puts the sword back on the wall).

DON QUIXOTE. I am invulnerable.

HOUSEKEEPER. You'd better go to bed.

(She puts her hand out for the bowl).

Give it to me.

DON QUIXOTE. Destiny has charged me to guard it. Have you paid Master Nicolas three crowns?

HOUSEKEEPER (*Putting the book in the book-case*). I have. But I must say it's too big a price for an ordinary brass basin.

DON QUIXOTE. It's Mambrino's helmet. Bright as the sun. Fashioned of gold, the purest gold of the Atlas Mountains.

HOUSEKEEPER. Go to bed quickly, and don't talk any more nonsense, and before you sleep remember tomorrow you will have to sell your horse.

DON QUIXOTE. Rossinante? But you don't know what you're saying. Has one ever heard of Paladin selling his charger? None of these books tell of such ingratitude.

HOUSEKEEPER. It's the only way to pay my wages. Goodnight.

(She goes out carrying the candelabra. Lights fade. Only the one candle of Don Quixote remains).

DON QUIXOTE. Rossinante, companion of my glory? Rather sell my bed, the chair, the table, or the house. Rossinante, never!

(He takes a book, installs himself in the chair, and reads. Soft music. Reading).

"For the glory of the world, and the love of his lady, Prince Galaor donned his armour, took up his arms, mounted his charger, and sallied forth to seek his fortune."

(Dreamily).

For the glory of Spain, and the love of my lady Dulcinea, O Dulcinea of Toboso, fairest of the fair—

(He goes and stands in front of the mirror).

Knight Don Quixote of la Mancha, the Spanish world awaits your deeds of valour. What are you doing here in your chamber? Are you not the last of the Knights-errant? Isn't your mission to travel the world? To purge the mountains of the brigands that infest it? To subdue all enchanterers and giants? Don Quixote . . . Don Quixote of la Mancha, the time has come for you to seize your sword and go your way.

(Briskly he makes up his mind, and puts on his armour, takes up his lance, his sword, his shield, and shaving-basin helmet).

Go, fair Knight. Play your part. Do not deprive the world of your famous deeds. Go down to the stable, saddle your charger and sally forth to fortune.

(Music.

After a last look in the mirror Don Quixote grasps his candle and is about to exit but is so cluttered in his armour that his lance collides with the door-post, and he drops his shield in the confusion. He hides quickly, and blows out the candle.

A pause. The door opens slowly and the Housekeeper appears holding her candelabra high).

HOUSEKEEPER. Sir . . .

(Pokes head through).

DON QUIXOTE *(Hiding)*. . . I'm in bed. What more do you want?

HOUSEKEEPER. Did you hear?

DON QUIXOTE. It's coming from below. In the stable. It's Rossinante.

HOUSEKEEPER. It was the sound of clanging-irons.

DON QUIXOTE. I told you, it's Rossinante. Go back to bed.

HOUSEKEEPER. Don't forget you must sell him tomorrow. Goodnight.

DON QUIXOTE. To bed Madame, to bed and let me sleep.

HOUSEKEEPER. You owe me six months' wages. Sleep well.

(She goes out and closes the door . . . It is dark. Only the window lights the scene. There is moonlight outside).

DON QUIXOTE. Sleep well.

(Muffled music of martial march. Don Quixote opens the window. Silhouette on the clear night).

O gentle moon . . . that watches o'er the world . . . behold your dauntless hero whom fortune awaits . . . Light my road, protect my deeds, lead me to triumph, and crown my glory. The door is too narrow. There lies the window . . . The way to adventure.

(He passes his lance through the window, straddles the ledge, and quickly climbs out, disappearing with renewed clatter.

Music).

VOICE (Off). . . . The way to adventure.

(Neighing).

THE CURTAIN CLOSES.

SCENE 2. IN FRONT OF THE CURTAIN.

(Full light on the curtain.

Enter Nicolas and Carrasco).

NICOLAS. He puts it on his head, he struts about, he waves his arms, and then starts to shout something about a marvellous helmet that makes him invulnerable.

CARRASCO. It was a jest.

NICOLAS. No. I wanted to take it back to prepare my lather. He refused. He got angry. He seized his sword. He was in such a state I had to sell it to him to keep him quiet.

CARRASCO. How much?

NICOLAS. Three crowns.

CARRASCO. It wasn't worth two.

NICOLAS. Frankly, no. It only cost me a crown in the Salamanca market. But if it lends magic to Don Quixote, it could well be worth three.

CARRASCO. Frankly Master Nicolas, you are a rogue.

HOUSEKEEPER (*Enters, in tears*). Good day, Senor Carrasco. He has gone. I thought the horse was stamping in the stable, but it was Don Quixote.

CARRASCO. Let's understand each other Dona Belisa. I suppose Don Quixote wasn't stamping about the stable?

HOUSEKEEPER. No, but he has left . . . he's gone . . . God knows where and his hop-pole and his sword and the preserving pan . . . and the horse too. This morning, everything had disappeared.

NICOLAS. My shaving bowl?

HOUSEKEEPER. Likewise. He was to sell the horse today to pay me my wages, and now he's gone as well. Ah, what will become of me if you don't help me?

CARRASCO. Just a minute, Dona Belisa. Is it absence of the animal or Master that's worrying you?

HOUSEKEEPER. Both. Don Quixote's health isn't so good he can afford to go careering over the countryside in the boiling sun harnessed as he is.

CARRASCO. He'll come back, don't worry.

HOUSEKEEPER. Sick, battered, covered with sores and vermin . . . God knows in what state. He's bound to have broken the back of his scruffy old nag. It will be no use for selling, and once again I'll have to wait for my wages.

CARRASCO. Still he has some money.

HOUSEKEEPER. Don't you believe it. We live on a shoe-string. He spends the little money he has in buying rusty arms and rubbishy romances of chivalry. Those confounded books are driving him mad.

CARRASCO. They're nothing but a lot of nonsense.

NICOLAS. I was nearly run-through for saying less than that.

HOUSEKEEPER. All his troubles spring from them—if we don't take away those wicked works, Don Quixote will go out of his mind.

CARRASCO. From what you say, he's not far from it.

HOUSEKEEPER. That's what frightens me Senor Carrasco. I beg you both, will you help me?

NICOLAS. You know, I'd do anything for you.

CARRASCO. What do you want us to do?

HOUSEKEEPER. Help me burn these cursed books and bring my Master and Rossinante home safely. I know how fond you are of him. Save him, I pray you, before it's too late.

NICOLAS. We'll do it.

(To Carrasco).

Won't we?

CARRASCO. Of course. We'll share our labour. Nicolas will help you burn the romances. I will go and look for him.

NICOLAS. You'll find him easily. Capped with my shaving bowl. He can't go around unnoticed.

HOUSEKEEPER. Bring him back, Senor-Scholar, and see he forgets Knight-errantry, and all the Dulcineas in the world.

CARRASCO. He'll come back, Madame. Count on it.

NICOLAS. Do you really think we should burn . . . ?

HOUSEKEEPER. It's our only hope. Come . . .

(They go out.)

Flame light on the curtain. Sound of burning fire).

CARRASCO (*Dramatically*). "Into flames of war go Galaor and Tirant, Amadis of Gaul and his son Esplandian, The Knight of Platir, and Lisuart of Greece, Florizel of Nicea, and a thousand paladins——"

VOICE (*Off*). While Don Quixote rode out, Knight of la Mancha, Astride his spiney Rossinante.

From dawn to dusk, without halt nor respite,
Overcome with the heat, and choked with dust,
They rode straight ahead, as destiny beckoned.
A little way yonder, beyond the next road-bend,
Seeming so close, yet they never drew near.

(The curtain begins to open slowly. Carrasco leaves the scene).

Slowly the sun sank on the horizon, when an Inn appeared in front of their eyes, and our Knight whose head had baked the whole day beneath his large, scorching brass bowl, saw a fortress flanked with six turrets, with its drawbridge, its moats and walls. Then suddenly, as the hills turned blue in the evening light, echoed three times the deep call of a horn.

THE CURTAIN HAS OPENED.

SCENE 3. THE COURTYARD OF THE INN.

(A large doorway, or gate, gives on to the countryside. In the middle of the yard, a water-trough for animals. On the left, the Inn).

(Maritorne, her back turned, standing in the gateway, blows three times feebly into a trumpet).

INNKEEPER (*Coming through the doorway*). Blow harder if ye wants pigs to hear thee.

MARITORNE. Blow thyself, since thee be so clever.