

LA MANCHA!

A full-length comedy by
Hayley Lawson-Smith

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

DON QUIXOTE, his real name is Alonso Quixano. He has read so many books about knighthood and chivalry, and finds his own life so boring by comparison, that he has decided to become a knight-errant. N.B: Whenever anyone says his name, there is an opportunity to put extra emphasis on the *Quixote*.

DULCINEA, her real name is Aldonza Lorenzo. Don Quixote is in love with her, and every quest he undertakes, he undertakes in her name. She is rather unimpressed by this, as there is more to her than any beauty she might possess, and strives to prove herself to the townspeople.

SANCHO, obsessed with food. A bit naïve and easily distracted, but a good and faithful man.

ANTONIA, Don Quixote's niece. Loves fiestas, but does not like people gossiping about her.

HOUSEKEEPER, can't stand anything that makes housework or trouble for her.

MARCELLA, a very rich woman, daughter of Don Freston. More clever than her father realises.

DON FRESTON, Marcella's father. A bit slow on the uptake, but well-meaning.

DON FERNANDO, a very rich young man, who thinks quite a lot of himself.

INNKEEPER, a hard-working business man who does not like confrontation.

ZORAIDA, innkeeper's daughter. Giggly and fun-loving.

LUCINDA, innkeeper's daughter. Giggly and fun-loving.

CURATE, likes to be in charge, and thinks he knows what's best for the townspeople.

BARBER, eager to improve his situation in life.

NARRATOR. Could possibly be played by the actor who plays Freston. Could also have some of the Villagers' lines, if need be, particularly if the actor is not also playing Freston.

FISHMONGER

ALEX, tourist. English accent. Clothes much more modern. Taking part in a television program for tourists.

ANNA, tourist. English accent. Clothes much more modern. Taking part in a television program for tourists.

REAL ESTATE AGENT, English accent. Clothes much more modern. The host of the television program for tourists.

SCHOOLBOY

SCHOOLGIRL

TEACHER

MILLER

BEGGAR

COBBLER

BREWER

STONEMASON

BLACKSMITH

ARMOURER

FALCONER

TAILOR

CARPENTER

PLOWMAN

BUTCHER

GOLDSMITH

GROCER

DRAPER

FURRIER

BAKER

WEAVER

FARMER

VILLAGERS. While some of these roles have been written with specific intent, there are others described for characterisation purposes only; the producing company should feel free to create their own characters as they see fit. Where the script simply says VILLAGER the director should cast as necessary.

WINDMILLS

LIONS, Possibly for a younger cast, as guest roles.

BOSS LION

PRODUCTION NOTES

Where vague pop-culture references are made, (e.g. online streaming, online reviews, etc.), the producing company should feel free to insert a current, more specific reference.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

La Mancha! premiered at Track Youth Theatre, Melbourne, Australia.

ACT I

(A sleepy village in La Mancha, Spain. The play very loosely takes place in the 17th century. Two buildings: an Inn and the house of Don Quixote. Between the two buildings is the town square and marketplace, while behind them is a field where windmills are visible. These three locales are where the action of our play takes place. In the dark, the NARRATOR, an old man or woman wearing a cowl and carrying a staff enters.)

NARRATOR: You may depend upon my word, that I wish this story were as ingenious, sprightly, and accomplished as you could desire. This is the history—or at least a little slice of it—of the renowned Don Quixote of La Mancha, the bravest man and most valiant knight that has been known in these parts for many years...or at least, that is what he believed...

(The sun rises, and VILLAGERS [MARCELLA, DON FRESTON, DULCINEA, BAKER, FISHMONGER, AGENT, ALEX, ANNA, BARBER, FALCONER, CURATE, ZORAIDA, LUCINDA, SCHOOLBOY, SCHOOLGIRL, TEACHER, MILLER, BLACKSMITH, FURRIER, INNKEEPER, STONEMASON, CARPENTER, WEAVER, DRAPER, PLOWMAN, GROCER, TAILOR] enter the stage to do their daily chores in the marketplace. Store owners sell their wares, townspeople haggle, children laugh, parents chide, etc.)

This is a certain little village in La Mancha! Which we shall not name...

(Don Freston and Marcella walk forward.)

And this is our landlord, the gentle, good and fair Don Freston and his lovely daughter Marcella. He, of course, is the richest man in our village, but we don't hold that against him.

DON FRESTON: Marcella, my daughter. Why do you look so miserable? You're living in one of the most beautiful lands in

all the world. Haven't you ever read your local travel guide? The olives are plump, the gazpacho is cold, and there's a game of football on every day.

MARCELLA: Father, there has to be more to life than olives, football and cold soup.

DULCINEA: Churros! Churros! Hot and sweet churros for sale!

DON FRESTON: What about doughnuts?

MARCELLA: Oh, you don't understand.

(Marcella and Don Freston exit. The Narrator takes a churro.)

NARRATOR: And this is the doughnut lady, who makes and sells fresh, hot doughnuts with chocolate sauce every day. The doughnut lady is very popular, as you can imagine!

DULCINEA: *(Snatching the churro back:)* They're called churros! And I have a name, you know. It's Aldonza!

(The Narrator exits. The marketplace grows louder with the calls of the various stall-holders. Dulcinea goes from stall to stall, selling churros. The FARMER enters, looking exhausted.)

My friend, what happened to you?

FARMER: A doughnut!

(Dulcinea hands him a churro.)

I have just seen the strangest sight in my field; a man riding a skinny old horse carrying a lance. When I told him that he was trespassing, he bopped me on the head and called me a villain!

DULCINEA: No!

FARMER: He did! And when I asked him what he did it for, he said for the love of the beautiful Dulcinea. Who on earth is Dulcinea?

DULCINEA: I have no idea. But if a man went around bopping people on the head and saying he was doing it for the love of *me*, I don't think I would thank him. Did you leave him in the field? I'll talk to him and make him see reason –

FARMER: That's very sweet of you, girl, but you know only one thing and you know it very well; your place is not to talk to mad men in fields!

DULCINEA: And what is this one thing and one thing only you think I know?

FARMER: Churros! Doughnuts. And mine is lacking chocolate. Off you go now and fetch me some.

DULCINEA: (*To the audience:*) I will fetch him his chocolate sauce, but only because I charge top price for hipster food.

(Dulcinea exits.)

BAKER: It's a joy to live in our beautiful province of La Mancha!

FISHMONGER: Indeed! Never was there a town more peaceful.

AGENT: (*To the audience:*) As we walk around the rolling, picturesque hills of La Mancha, it's easy to see why so many tourists are packing their things and making the move to historic, romantic Spain.

ALEX: Any place 'round here sell sausage rolls?

ANNA: Where can I buy a postcard?

BARBER: No one could doubt that La Mancha is the finest holiday destination in all of Spain!

FALCONER: We work hard to raise and feed our families, and all neighbours are friends.

CURATE: We are blessed to live such undisturbed, uneventful lives.

ZORAIDA: Yes, nothing ever happens.

LUCINDA: It's awfully dull.

(DON QUIXOTE, riding a hobbyhorse, comes charging through the marketplace, lance and shield aloft, giving a battle cry. The Villagers scatter.)

DON QUIXOTE: Oh, happy age! Oh, fortunate times! Decreed to usher into the world my famous achievements!

SCHOOLBOY: Look, the circus has come to town!

DON QUIXOTE: Insolent knave! I challenge thee to a duel!

TEACHER: He's only a little boy!

DON QUIXOTE: It only has to be a little duel.

SCHOOLGIRL: What's wrong with him?

BAKER: Heatstroke.

MILLER: Dehydration.

BLACKSMITH: Clearly a case of overexcitement!

FURRIER: No, no, he obviously has a fever which has gone to his brain and boiled it!

ANNA: It's this European climate.

ALEX: Have you got the sunscreen?

DON QUIXOTE: A fever! A fever—yes, that is what this is! For I have taken up the arms and shield of a knight-errant and must forge my quests, or else I die!

INNKEEPER: Oh, now I recognise him! This is no knight, but Mr. Alonso Quixano, a calm and simple man.

DON QUIXOTE: Simple! Who dares to spread such evil rumours? Come, let the brigands near me! I shall see to them with my lance!

STONEMASON: Who is Lance?

DON QUIXOTE: My lance! I am a knight!

ALEX & ANNA: (*Taking photos:*) Oooh!

ZORAIDA: A knight!

LUCINDA: A knight-errant!

ZORAIDA: What's the difference?

LUCINDA: It means he wanders about all over the place. Doing errands.

ZORAIDA: Well, it's about time something exciting happened.

DON QUIXOTE: Beautiful ladies, I vow to protect and serve you!

INNKEEPER: I tell you that is no knight! That is Mr. Alonso Quixano, who lives in the house yonder and leads a quiet life.

(Don Quixote lets out another battle cry.)

Mr Quixano!

DON QUIXOTE: I answer only to the name of Don Quixote, as befitting my life as knight-errant.

INNKEEPER: Don Quixote then, if you insist, what is it you are fighting for, good sir?

CARPENTER: What's caused him to lose his head, you mean?

DON QUIXOTE: My head? No, no, not my head. But my heart!

WEAVER: His heart?

DON QUIXOTE: Yes! I am a knight for passion! For love!

DRAPER: Who on earth are you in love with?

(Dulcinea enters. Don Quixote stares at her with love. The Villagers fall quiet, staring at Don Quixote staring at Dulcinea. She walks to the Farmer, gives everyone a puzzled look, hands the Farmer his chocolate sauce, and exits, once more giving everyone a puzzled look.)

DON QUIXOTE: 'Tis her! The beautiful, incomparable Dulcinea!

WEAVER: What did he call her?

PLOWMAN: He called her Dulcinea! When her name is not Dulcinea at all, but Aldonza Lorenzo.

DON QUIXOTE: She is Dulcinea! Dulcinea Del Toboso, and there is no fairer princess in these lands!

GROCER: *(Laughing:)* Princess! If she's a princess, then this pumpkin is the Queen of Sheba!

(Don Quixote lets out another battle cry and charges at the Grocer. Alex and Anna take photos.)

DON QUIXOTE: How dare you speak of the Lady Dulcinea so, vagabond! I swear by her very name that before this day is out, I will have taught you some manners!

TAILOR: Watch out, he's off the rails!

GROCER: He's squishing my squash!

INNKEEPER: Mr Quixano – Don Quixote! Stay calm!

DON QUIXOTE: Defend yourself, coward!

GROCER: Alright then!

(The Grocer pelts Don Quixote with fruit and vegetables. The other Villagers do the same. Don Quixote is overpowered by the food and collapses. SANCHO enters and runs to his side.)

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SANCHO: What is the meaning of this? Enough! Are you animals? How dare you! What excuse could there possibly be for such a waste of food?

(Sancho takes a piece of food from Don Quixote's armour and pops it in his mouth. The Villagers slowly disperse.)

LUCINDA: What on earth could make a man think he was a knight?

ZORAIDA: A knight-errant.

INNKEEPER: My daughters, haven't you heard about Mr Quixano's extensive library?

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: No.

INNKEEPER: He has such a large library that he loses himself in books every day. They take him on many adventures and expand his imagination, so that all sorts of dreams and fantasies seem true. It is for this very reason that I have never had a library and never intend to have one. I think, perhaps, you two are safer that way. Ignorance is bliss, and I would rather you be very blissful.

(The Innkeeper, Lucina and Zoraida exit. Sancho helps Don Quixote to his feet.)

SANCHO: Dear Mr Quixano—

DON QUIXOTE: My poor horse. My old Rozinante, he has failed me and thrown me from his back.

SANCHO: Kind of looked like you fell.

DON QUIXOTE: You have seen, my friend, those villains who—like the cowards they are—have pelted me with sharp rocks.

SANCHO: Apples, actually.

DON QUIXOTE: Sharp rocks and stones!

SANCHO: No, definitely apples. Red Delicious and Granny Smith.

DON QUIXOTE: That they would do this to Don Quixote.

SANCHO: Who's he when he's at home?

DON QUIXOTE: I am that same man!

SANCHO: You are? And here I was, your neighbour for these past many years and all this time thinking your name was Mr Alonso Quixano. And now I hear your name is Don Quixote, and by the looks of your clothes, even stained with apple sauce, you are a knight as well! Huh. They say you learn something new every day.

DON QUIXOTE: Sancho, my old neighbour!

SANCHO: At last he recognises me.

DON QUIXOTE: Looking at your face, my friend, a thought occurs to me.

SANCHO: Yes, I have often been told people think many things when looking at my face.

DON QUIXOTE: What is a knight without a squire?

SANCHO: What indeed?

DON QUIXOTE: Dear Sancho, you are a good, honest fellow.

SANCHO: Honest?

DON QUIXOTE: Well, poor anyway.

SANCHO: Yes, I'm certainly that.

DON QUIXOTE: And poor people are quite often honest.

SANCHO: Too honest to make themselves rich, yes, this is true.

DON QUIXOTE: Neighbour Sancho, I am on a noble quest and in need of a squire to come on great adventures with me!

SANCHO: Adventures?

DON QUIXOTE: To fight injustice and to do battle with villains.

SANCHO: Some of my finest friends are villains.

DON QUIXOTE: To fight for what is right, risking life and limb.

SANCHO: I've grown quite attached to my limbs. Dear Don Quixote, I have a brood at home of at least seven children...

DON QUIXOTE: At least?

SANCHO: I don't know; I lose count. But they need their father. And I've become accustomed to being there for them; sitting on the couch, eating on the couch, lying on the couch, but always on the couch for them. I have made a profession of being lazy and, if I dare say so myself, outshine all men at laziness.

DON QUIXOTE: You are a noble couch potato! But, squire Sancho, how would you like to have your own island?

SANCHO: My own island?

DON QUIXOTE: Yes, it is the habit of knights to give their squires islands once all their adventuring is through. And with your own island, there would be room aplenty for every single one of your children, so much room that you would never hear them and have peace and quiet all the rest of your days.

SANCHO: Peace and quiet...and food?

DON QUIXOTE: All the food a man could eat, and all the food he shouldn't!

SANCHO: And is it really the habit of knights to give their squires islands?

DON QUIXOTE: Sancho, you are not a well-read man. But I am. And every knight of which I have read always gives his squire an island. There are a great many islands lying around, you know. I shall choose a very large one for you!

SANCHO: An island with trees and shade and beautiful water to swim in?

DON QUIXOTE: Yes!

SANCHO: An island where a meal comes ready-made, but without beasts to make a meal of me?

DON QUIXOTE: No beasts at all! Only the prettiest birds, and silvery fish!

SANCHO: Hmm, yes, I am rather timid 'round beasts, but do like drumsticks and chowder. So my Lord, I shall be your squire!

DON QUIXOTE: It is settled! And now my squire, come close, for I shall tell you of my glorious quest!

SANCHO: Glorious quest? Is it not simply adventure?

DON QUIXOTE: Adventures are never simple, dear Sancho. A simple adventure is fools' gold, but it is true gold I seek! Yes! My quest is for the Golden Helmet of Mambrino!

SANCHO: Is your tin helmet not fashionable enough, my Lord?

DON QUIXOTE: This is about more than looking good, Sancho! Although, it couldn't hurt to look one's best for the lovely Lady Dulcinea. You see, Sancho, Mambrino's helmet of pure gold makes its wearer invincible.

SANCHO: But why would you not want to be seen?

DON QUIXOTE: Invincible, Sancho! Not invisible! While I wear the helmet, we may undertake adventures without fear of injury or, more exciting still, death!

SANCHO: Of course! A worthy quest indeed, to seek out the helmet! But, my Lord, won't this Mr. Mambrino want to keep his helmet? It seems to go against the nature of fighting injustice to steal another man's possessions.

DON QUIXOTE: Alas! You are quite right. 'Twould be an unhappy day, were I to become a thief!

(They pause, sadly.)

SANCHO: But...suppose we were only to...*borrow* the golden helmet, my Lord?

(Beat.)

DON QUIXOTE: My dear Sancho! You are wise beyond your looks!

SANCHO: Thank you, my Lord!

DON QUIXOTE: Alright then Sancho, we venture forth to borrow the Golden Helmet of Mambrino! And I must be knighted!

SANCHO: Aren't you a knight already?

DON QUIXOTE: You're a good man, Sancho, but you are ignorant. I might wear the garments of a knight, and speak like a knight, perhaps I have the heart and soul of a knight, but I am yet to be knighted. We must find another knight to knight me! A brave, decent man whose adventuring days are over.

SANCHO: Where are we going to find a man like that?

DON QUIXOTE: Yonder! In that castle!

(Don Quixote rides his hobbyhorse into the inn.)

SANCHO: A decent man? In a pub? Is it possible? Well, perhaps a decent meal...wait for Sancho, master!

(Sancho turns to go inside the inn but is interrupted by Marcella, who enters followed by DON FERNANDO. As they rush onto the stage, they push Sancho between them. Marcella turns her back on Don Fernando throughout the following argument:)

DON FERNANDO: Marcella, if you would please listen to me!

MARCELLA: I have listened to you, Don Fernando, and I do not like what I have heard.

DON FERNANDO: Here – won't you listen again?

MARCELLA: No, because you won't say anything worth listening to.

DON FERNANDO: Marcella!

SANCHO: What is this? A lover's quarrel?

MARCELLA: I have told him and told him that I am not interested. I have never been interested, and I never will be interested.

SANCHO: Interesting.

(The Curate and the Barber exit the inn and watch the goings on.)

DON FERNANDO: Your father is very worried about you.

MARCELLA: Ha!

DON FERNANDO: *(Holding out a box of chocolates:)* Marcella, I have something to give you.

MARCELLA: Give it to this man for all I care!

SANCHO: Yes, give it to this man!

(Sancho takes the chocolates.)

CURATE: Now now, children. What is the meaning of this?

DON FERNANDO: She simply won't see reason.

SANCHO: *(Eating chocolate:)* If you have more gifts, I'll see reason for her.

BARBER: This is why I never married.

MARCELLA: Married? Unlikely. Did you know that I am rich?

SANCHO: So you can buy chocolate without anyone's help!

MARCELLA: My father, Don Freston, is a very rich man indeed. And I, being his daughter, am a very rich woman. Before he knew that I was rich, Don Fernando didn't even know my name. But now, he follows me everywhere, day and night, and refuses to see that I don't care about money, or presents, or beautiful clothes, or fine food –

SANCHO: She really is unreasonable!

MARCELLA: All I want is to be left alone.

DON FERNANDO: But I'm rich as well! Surely it only makes sense that I should be the one to share your wealth, because I too know what a burden it can be.

MARCELLA: Ugh!

(A wailing is heard from Don Quixote's house. A window opens, and the HOUSEKEEPER sticks her head outside.)

HOUSEKEEPER: Be quiet out there! Don't you know that Señorita Antonia is much distressed? Why can't you take your love triangle somewhere else?

SANCHO: This is not a triangle! This is more like a tennis match.

(The wailing is heard once more. Zoraida and Lucinda enter from the inn.)

DON FERNANDO: What a noise!

HOUSEKEEPER: You'd make a noise like that too if you were as upset as Señorita Antonia.

MARCELLA: Why is she so upset?

ZORAIDA: I would be upset if I was related to a knight.

LUCINDA: And now he's inside, trying to convince our father to officially knight him.

ZORAIDA: He thinks our father is a king!

LUCINDA: At least that would make us princesses.

ZORAIDA: Yes, and then maybe Mr. Quixano would swear allegiance to our names, that brave knight.

LUCINDA: Bravest knight-*errant* in all the land.

ZORAIDA: The most daring!

LUCINDA: The virtuous!

ZORAIDA & LUCINDA: Don Quixote of La Mancha!

(They laugh and exit back into the inn.)

HOUSEKEEPER: It's that silly old uncle of hers! Playing dress-up to his heart's content; never mind that the whole village is talking about him.

(The wailing is heard once more.)

And when they're talking about him, they're talking about her, and Señorita Antonia does not like to be talked about unless the people doing the talking are only saying very nice things.

(The wailing is heard once more.)

And it's not so nice to hear people say your uncle is a madman who has turned into a knight. A knight! And all for the love of books! As if I didn't have enough troubles, what with the dusting and the mopping, now I have to polish suits of armour as well! Aren't you the Curate?

CURATE: Why yes I am, madam!

HOUSEKEEPER: Then get yourself in here and help a poor old woman.

BARBER: I should come too! You might need medical assistance.

HOUSEKEEPER: Aren't you a barber?

BARBER: Yes, madam. But you see, this is the year 1605, and a man can be both a barber and a doctor. I am very good at cutting hair, and limbs can't be much different; I'm happy to give everything the chop!

(The Housekeeper pulls her head back inside the building. The Barber and the Curate exit into Don Quixote's house.)

DON FERNANDO: *(Holding out a bunch of flowers to Marcella:)* Marcella, please let me give you these as a token of my love.

MARCELLA: Where did you get them?

DON FERNANDO: From that flower stall over there.

MARCELLA: You stole them!

DON FERNANDO: Oh my love, don't you know: when you can afford everything, you get it all for free!

MARCELLA: *(Exiting:)* Ugh!

DON FERNANDO: *(Exiting:)* Marcella! Marcella!

SANCHO: Won't they feel silly when they realise Don Quixote truly *is* a knight-errant! Now, to find my master and discuss the finer details of my dinner.

(Sancho exits into the inn. We now see the Housekeeper, the Curate, the Barber and ANTONIA inside Don Quixote's library. Antonia is still sobbing.)

CURATE: There, there, dear child. We'll soon have this mess sorted, you'll see.

BARBER: Yes, your uncle is sure to grow tired of this game. How long can a grown man play make-believe?

ANTONIA: All the best families in the village are holding celebrations and fiestas, but who would invite me when my uncle might come along and smash the piñata?

CURATE: But that is what you are meant to do with a piñata.

ANTONIA: Not with a lance!

HOUSEKEEPER: You can forget fiestas. Stay home and siesta.

ANTONIA: It's all the fault of these books! Honestly, you open them, and all of a sudden you're completely taken away from yourself, transported somewhere else. It's not healthy.

BARBER: The books you say? Which ones?

ANTONIA: Take your pick! He's read all of them.

HOUSEKEEPER: Oh yes, and I've dusted all of them. These books are the bane of my existence.

CURATE: What have we here? *Beowulf*.

ANTONIA: That's the one that started it all.

CURATE: Then this should be the first to burn!

BARBER: To burn?

CURATE: Yes, for the crime this book has committed against the mind of Mr. Quixano and the social life of Señorita Antonia, there is but one punishment: to cleanse this literature in the flames!

BARBER: Seem like a bit of overkill, doesn't it?

HOUSEKEEPER: *(To the audience:)* Dirty old dust collectors. *(To the Barber:)* It is the right thing to do for Señorita Antonia.

ANTONIA: Then take this one next, please padre.

CURATE: *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.*

ANTONIA: Yes, this is the one which caused him to believe there were dragons in the garden.

BARBER: Dragons in the garden!

ANTONIA: When I looked, they were only quails. But I thought maybe it was a new breed of quail I didn't recognise, so I didn't tell anyone. I have only myself to blame!

CURATE: A wicked book indeed to inspire such dreams. Housekeeper, take the lot into the garden and light a fire.

(The Housekeeper begins loading her arms with books. So does the Barber.)

BARBER: Wait! Let me keep these books, padre.

CURATE: A man would bring poison into his own house?

BARBER: At least let me study them. Perhaps there's nothing in them, and you would not want to burn the innocent.

CURATE: I suppose I wouldn't.

HOUSEKEEPER: These ones are pure evil, padre.

CURATE: How do you know?

HOUSEKEEPER: They're the dustiest of all.

CURATE: Out into the yard, and let the flames purge their evil!

ANTONIA: I'll get the marshmallows! Looks like I'll be having a fiesta after all! Come everyone! The whole village is invited to the bonfire!

(Antonia exits. Dulcinea enters. The Curate, the Barber and the Housekeeper bring the books outside.)

DULCINEA: *(To the audience:)* Everyone in this village loves my churros. I'm not complaining. It's a good honest living. But they're all so in love with my churros that they barely give me a second glance. And there's so much more to me than churros.

(Antonia enters with the marshmallows.)

ANTONIA: I have the marshmallows! Oh, it's the doughnut girl. Can we cook doughnuts on the fire, do you think?

DULCINEA: Fire? What fire?

CURATE: My child, you are about to bear witness to the cleansing of Mr Quixano's library.

DULCINEA: Come again?

BARBER: He's going to burn the books.

DULCINEA: No! Someone call the police!

BARBER: He's the curate; he is the police.

DULCINEA: *(To the audience:)* No one ever expects the Spanish Inquisition. *(To the Curate:)* Why are you doing such a thing?

HOUSEKEEPER: You might say reading is good for the soul, but with thousands of words come thousands of dust bunnies, and they're not as cute as they sound.

ANTONIA: But it isn't because of the dust! It is because of my poor uncle and his poor mind. The words in those books have itched their way into his head until he believes them to be true. My poor, poor uncle.

DULCINEA: Yes, and your poor, poor social life, I imagine. Isn't it always easier to hide what embarrasses us rather than

embrace it? *(To the Barber:)* And you're going to stand around and let them get away with this?

BARBER: I'm going to stand around and read. I've saved some of the books from the fire at least.

DULCINEA: So, we have three arsonists and one thief. Not on my watch! I don't know Mr. Quixano, but I'll be damned before I see books treated this way.

(Dulcinea takes her wooden spoon from her belt and points it like a sword at the group.)

DULCINEA: Have at thee!

ANTONIA: Oh no! She's been reading books too!

DULCINEA: Yes, I do read, but this is only common sense! Now, are you going to put those books back where they belong, or am I going to have to do it for you?

(The Housekeeper, the Curate, the Barber and Antonia flee back inside the house with the books. Sancho applauds Dulcinea's actions.)

SANCHO: Oh well done, Princess, well done!

DULCINEA: Princess? Are you talking to me?

SANCHO: Yes, the beautiful, lovely and apparently fearless Princess Dulcinea!

DULCINEA: My name is not Dulcinea.

SANCHO: Excuse me, Princess, but my master says it is, and so it must be.

DULCINEA: And who is your master when he's at home?

SANCHO: When he's at home, they call him Mr. Alonso Quixano.

DULCINEA: The owner of this house?

SANCHO: Yes, and the owner of that library. So you can see, Princess, he has read many, many books, and so he must be very smart, and so I believe what he says.

DULCINEA: I see. And what else does he say about me?

SANCHO: He says that you're the reason he is going on a quest.

DULCINEA: A quest?

SANCHO: Yes! To find the Golden Helmet of Mambrino.

DULCINEA: I'm the reason for him wanting to find a helmet?

SANCHO: A *golden* helmet!

DULCINEA: But why?

SCHOOLGIRL: He says your beauty outshines all others.

SCHOOLBOY: That poets cannot do justice to you.

TEACHER: Your hair is like gold.

MILLER: Your eyes are like two suns.

BEGGAR: Your cheeks are like roses.

COBBLER: Your lips are like coral.

BREWER: Your teeth are like pearls.

STONEMASON: Your skin is like snow.

DULCINEA: Okay, this is making me feel really awkward.

BLACKSMITH: You feel awkward? You're not the one who had to listen to him for two hours!

DULCINEA: Did he say anything about my personality or my brains?

ARMOURER: What's that got to do with anything?

GROCER: It's because of you that he blighted my potatoes!

FALCONER: It's as though he doesn't know that you're the girl who makes the doughnuts.

FURRIER: Princesses don't make doughnuts.

DULCINEA: They're called churros! Right – that's it. I'm going to do something about this.

CARPENTER: Make more doughnuts?

PLOWMAN: Don't forget the chocolate sauce!

DULCINEA: He wants me to be a princess? I'll show him just how much of a princess I can be!

(Dulcinea exits.)

SANCHO: All this talk of doughnuts...and chocolate sauce...but where are the doughnuts? Where is the chocolate sauce? Oh, why do these villagers torture me so! Well, a man is not a camel, as they say, because camels don't eat doughnuts or chocolate sauce. And, as I am a man and not a camel, I shall undertake my own quest of finding such nourishment!

(Sancho exits. Don Fernando enters, accompanied by the BUTCHER, GOLDSMITH, Weaver and Draper. Marcella enters from the other side of the stage, accompanied by Zoraida, Lucinda, Baker, and the Tailor.)

MARCELLA: I think I've figured out a way to make Don Fernando leave me alone.

ZORAIDA: It's about time, too! We've missed you at all of our fiestas.

DON FERNANDO: I have to think of a way to get Marcella to pay attention to me.

BUTCHER: Or you could always learn to take a hint!

GOLDSMITH: And get yourself another hobby.

DON FERNANDO: But Marcella is the only love for me!

WEAVER: What you mean is that her father's money is the only love for you.

DRAPER: Her money and her property.

DON FERNANDO: That's just a coincidence.

LUCINDA: So what are you going to do, Marcella?

ZORAIDA: Nothing else seems to have worked.

MARCELLA: I have thought long and hard, and I think I've come up with a very cunning plan. I have decided to become a shepherdess!

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: A shepherdess!

ZORAIDA: Oh, Marcella no! Think of the clothes! Think of sleeping outside all the time in the dirt!

LUCINDA: I don't think I've been to one fiesta where I've met a shepherdess!

MARCELLA: It really can't be that bad. The clothes are comfortable. The fresh air is good for my health. And honestly, with the way people behave these days, I'd really rather surround myself with sheep.

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: *Sheep?*

MARCELLA: Will you help me?

TAILOR: I can help you with your clothes. We'll get you out of these uncomfortable silks and satins, and into something more practical!

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: *Practical?*

BAKER: As for food, there'll be no more quails eggs and fancy cakes. I'll make sure you've got plenty of wholesome brown rolls.

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: *Brown rolls?*

DON FERNANDO: There she is! The love of my life.

MARCELLA: If this doesn't get rid of that annoying, ridiculous Don Fernando, I don't know what will.

DRAPER: Oh yeah, she really seems to adore you.

DON FERNANDO: Marcella! My darling!

MARCELLA: Don't you call me your darling.

DON FERNANDO: But sweetheart—

MARCELLA: What did I just say?

DON FERNANDO: Sweetheart is very different to darling.

MARCELLA: Semantics!

DON FERNANDO: Semantics to you too, my love.

MARCELLA: No, semantics. The branch of linguistics and logic concerned with meaning. The two main areas are *logical semantics*, concerned with matters such as sense, reference, presupposition and implication, and *lexical semantics*, concerned with the analysis of word meanings and relations between them.

(Pause.)

I don't want you giving me compliments.

DON FERNANDO: Oh.

MARCELLA: Anyway, you can't anymore. I'm no longer a rich woman.

DON FERNANDO: You still look like a rich woman.

MARCELLA: That's all going to change. I'm becoming a shepherdess!

DON FERNANDO: A shepherdess! How could you do this to my heart!

MARCELLA: Sorry, not sorry. I feel that sheep are my true calling.

(The sounds of baa-ing from offstage.)

And that will be them calling me now. Goodbye, Don Fernando.

DON FERNANDO: But—but...well then fine! I'm going to become a shepherdess too!

MARCELLA: What?

DON FERNANDO: Yes, I also hear the sheep calling me!

(The sounds of crickets from offstage.)

Oh my dear, sweet, Marcella. We can be shepherdesses together!

MARCELLA: You're ridiculous!

DON FERNANDO: Thank you.

MARCELLA: It's an insult!

DON FERNANDO: Semantics!

(Marcella, Don Fernando, Antonia and the Villagers exit, leaving Lucinda and Zoraida.)

LUCINDA: Can you believe how absurdly everyone is acting today?

ZORAIDA: I hope it isn't catching.

LUCINDA: But if everyone is absurd, and we are not, then doesn't that make us absurd?

ZORAIDA: You're giving me a headache.

(The two tourists, Anna and Alex, and the Real Estate Agent enter.)

Here come some customers to our father's inn.

LUCINDA: I suppose we'd better get to work.

AGENT: *(To the audience:)* There are many charming villages and places to eat all over Spain. I've brought husband and wife team, Anna and Alex to this rustic town for them to sample some of the delicacies that Spain has to offer. Namely, tapas.

(Zoraida and Lucinda bring bread, cheese and wine to the table outside the inn where the Agent, Anna and Alex have seated themselves.)

ANNA: Do you have a Chardonnay, please?

ALEX: Wouldn't mind a pint myself.

AGENT: *(To the audience:)* Of course, the traditional drink of picturesque Spain is the fruity and refreshing sangria.

ZORAIDA: Um, we have wine.

LUCINDA: Sangria won't be tasted until the first World's Fair in New York. That's a few hundred years away.

ZORAIDA: And New York hasn't been invented yet.

ALEX: What's this muck? I thought we were going to get little plates of food.

ANNA: Yes, that's what it said in the brochure.

LUCINDA: Little plates of food?

(Don Quixote and Sancho enter.)

AGENT: Tapas was originally created for King Alfonso the Tenth when, according to legend, he was too ill to eat regular meals and could only face teeny, tiny portions.

ZORAIDA: I don't see any kings around here, so...

ANNA: All I know is, this does not look like what was in the brochure!

ALEX: Where's your manager? I'm not paying for this rubbish!

DON QUIXOTE: *(To Sancho:)* Those maidens are in danger from three villains of the foulest breed.

SANCHO: Looks like a couple of angry customers to me.

DON QUIXOTE: I will deal with the scoundrels!

SANCHO: Yes master, of course. But their numbers make three, and we are only two men! Well, one and a half men, anyway.

DON QUIXOTE: Stand back, Sancho! This is a job for knights! Be still, you ruffians of the highest order! I do this in the name of the Lady Dulcinea!

(Don Quixote takes a rope and proceeds to tie up the Agent, Alex and Anna. Drawn by the noise, the Villagers Villagers [Fishmonger, Miller, Teacher, Furrier, Cobbler, Schoolboy, Schoolgirl, Armourer] enter to see what all the fuss is about.)

LUCINDA: We can say goodbye to getting a tip!

ZORAIDA: Forget about tips; we'll be lucky if we don't get fired!

LUCINDA & ZORAIDA: We hate hospitality!

(Lucinda and Zoraida, calling for their father, exit.)

VILLAGER: What a strange way to deal with tourists.

VILLAGER: Has the Innkeeper hired new security?

VILLAGER: Maybe they sent their meals back to the kitchen?

VILLAGER: Maybe they asked for a refund?

(The Innkeeper enters.)

INNKEEPER: What is this?! I have never seen such terrible customer service. I insist you stop at once, Don Quixote, my Lord!

DON QUIXOTE: Yes, I have gone above and beyond my duty. But to save your daughters from the tricks of these scoundrels, I would do it again. No need to thank me!

SANCHO: (*Eating the bread and cheese:*) Ruffians such as these don't deserve a hearty meal!

INNKEEPER: My Lord, I humbly beg you, please, take your acts of heroism somewhere else!

DON QUIXOTE: I will undertake your orders, good sir, just as soon as you have knighted me. I go now to your chapel, that I might keep vigil.

INNKEEPER: That's not a chapel!

DON QUIXOTE: Small building, pointed roof, star on the door. If it is not a chapel, what is it?

INNKEEPER: An outhouse!

DON QUIXOTE: Oh, and what does one keep there?

INNKEEPER: Nothing one should talk about! Um, the chapel is being renovated. But don't worry about that now. If I knight you, will you go?

DON QUIXOTE: I will you do as you bid, my Lord!

INNKEEPER: Very well then.

(The Innkeeper takes Don Quixote's old, battered sword. Don Quixote kneels. The Innkeeper taps him on each shoulder with the sword.)

There we go – that ought to do it.

DON QUIXOTE: And my name, my Lord? It is customary for a knight-errant to receive a new title for his name.

INNKEEPER: How many names does one man need?

SANCHO: It doesn't have to be a fancy name. Just something to describe my master's heroic deeds.

VILLAGER: Call him Sir Dunderhead!

VILLAGER: Sir Bull In A China Shop!

VILLAGER: Sir Blunderbuss!

VILLAGER: Sir Accident Waiting To Happen!

SANCHO: Something his mother would be proud to write about in Christmas cards.

INNKEEPER: Oh, very well then, I dub you...

(The Innkeeper looks around and spies the Agent, Alex and Anna still tied up. Tapping Don Quixote on the shoulders once more:)

I dub you, the Knight of the Woeful Countenance! I think that's appropriate. Now please, good sir, won't you go?

(Don Quixote stands and wipes away a tear.)

DON QUIXOTE: Come, Sancho. Onwards to glory!

(Don Quixote exits.)

SANCHO: Onwards to dessert!

(Sancho exits.)

INNKEEPER: Onwards to some peace and quiet. Oh, what a day.

(The Innkeeper and the Villagers [Fishmonger, Miller, Teacher, Furrier, Cobbler, Schoolboy, Schoolgirl, Armourer] exit, leaving the group of three still tied up. Dulcinea enters. She is now dressed as a sort of warrior, with her wooden spoon as a sword and a serving tray as a shield.)

DULCINEA: *(To the audience:)* No more being called a princess for me, thank you very much! This town can go without its churros for a day.

(The group of three make muffled cries for help.)

What on earth has happened to you lot?

(Dulcinea unties the three.)

ANNA: Oh, there was a horrible man! He called us scoundrels and interrupted our lunch.

ALEX: And he said he was doing it for someone called Dulcinea.

ANNA: So much for living the life of a fancy ex-pat!

ALEX: Just wait till I get home. I am going to write the most critical online reviews!

AGENT: The traditional Spanish churro is just one of the many tasty treats you can find during your travels through sunny Spain.

DULCINEA: Be careful, or I'll tie you up again.

(The Agent, Anna and Alex exit.)

Tourists annoy me as much as the next person, but tying them up is a bit extreme. I'm going to find this Mr Quixano and give him a piece of my mind.

(Dulcinea exits. Don Freston enters, accompanied by the Curate and the Barber.)

DON FRESTON: Oh, woe is me! Woe is me! My beautiful, kind daughter Marcella is missing. Who have I now to laugh with over dinner, to talk with? Who have I now to call me a silly old goat? Well, I don't suppose I'll miss that very much. We get sick of our children's temper tantrums, of their messy rooms and the wet towels on the bathroom floor. We think we

want our birds to leave the nest, but when they do, we find it very empty. Who have I now to keep me company? Only my many, many piles of gold, and gold is not a very good conversationalist.

CURATE: We have news for you, Don Freston. Most sad news indeed.

BARBER: Yes, terrifying, tragic news I'm afraid.

DON FRESTON: Oh no! My poor Marcella! What has become of her?

CURATE: She has left to take up the garb of a shepherdess.

BARBER: And to spend her days alone in the fields!

DON FRESTON: What? Is that all? A shepherdess, you say? Well, it's about time the girl got herself a trade. And all this time, I've been worried she's run away to elope with that dope Don Fernando. But a trade? This is very good news indeed! I shall go and congratulate her on her newfound career.

(Don Freston exits. Antonia and the Housekeeper enter.)

HOUSEKEEPER: Well, your uncle's library is empty at last. And I've replaced those dirty books with a few honest magazines. No harm ever came from a gossip magazine.

ANTONIA: Yes, but what am I to tell him? I doubt he'd like to read about the Top Ten True Confessions of a Celebrity Nanny.

(Don Quixote and Sancho enter.)

Oh no! Here he is.

HOUSEKEEPER: Don't panic, Señorita. You just trust in your old housekeeper. *(Wails:)* My Lord! Oh my Lord, terrible news!

DON QUIXOTE: What is this? Ladies in distress? How may I avenge you?

HOUSEKEEPER: Oh, it's awful, my Lord, awful! Your library, it has been spirited away!

DON QUIXOTE: Spirited away? What black magic is this?

CURATE: Yes, black magic is the right word! It was a wizard!

DON QUIXOTE: A wizard?

BARBER: Yes, a wizard! Using the darkest of magics, he cast a spell to steal your books.

HOUSEKEEPER: Thinking, no doubt, that without your books, you would not be able to achieve your quest!

DON QUIXOTE: Scoundrel! What was his name?

HOUSEKEEPER: Er... I'm afraid he didn't stay long enough for introductions.

DON QUIXOTE: What does he look like?

HOUSEKEEPER: Um...

(The Curate and the Barber, thinking fast, describe the appearance of Don Freston; this will depend on costuming and the performer. For example, they tell Don Quixote the color of his clothes, his hair, his shoes, etc.)

DON QUIXOTE: Come, faithful Sancho! We will find this barbarian and give him back what was rightfully ours!

SANCHO: Yes, master. Although, because I cannot read, I will content myself with enjoying the pictures.

DON QUIXOTE: You cannot read? Is this more black magic?

SANCHO: Yes, black magic. And nothing to do with me always skipping English at school.

DON QUIXOTE: You mean Spanish.

SANCHO: That too. But I pride myself on never skipping lunch.

(Don Quixote and Sancho exit.)

ANTONIA: He's still living in his dream world! And now we've encouraged it.

CURATE: Ah yes, but I do believe I have a plan to cure your uncle of his ills.

HOUSEKEEPER: If it's a way to restore this household to a more civilised state, then please enlighten us!

CURATE: We force Mr. Quixano to return to reality.

BARBER: But reality is so boring.

HOUSEKEEPER: Reality may be boring, but at least it's clean.

ANTONIA: What do you suggest?

CURATE: We give your uncle something to face that he has never faced before. Come along, I shall tell you all about it.

(Lights down. End of Act I.)

ACT II

(The fields. Windmills turn in the breeze. The Narrator enters and talks to the audience.)

NARRATOR: Ah, we have stepped away from the hustle and bustle of the village! What finer way to show you the sights of our beautiful La Mancha than to journey into the glorious fields! On our farms, where we grow our delicious fruits and vegetables, life is peaceful, and nothing out of the ordinary ever happens...

(Don Quixote enters on his hobbyhorse, and Sancho enters riding on a mop.)

Oh, dios mio! Looks like I spoke too soon!

(The Narrator exits.)

DON QUIXOTE: Sancho, I have never seen a squire ride on such an animal before.

SANCHO: It is all I could find at the last minute, my Lord.

DON QUIXOTE: Well, it's a noble ass.

SANCHO: Thank you, I put it down to my ten square meals a day.

DON QUIXOTE: Yes, a beautiful and brave steed indeed.

SANCHO: Oh, you mean my... *(Looking at the mop:)* donkey? I find it's also very good at cleaning floors. My Lord, why are we riding through the fields?

DON QUIXOTE: This is the way that evil wizard went, after magicking away my books. I feel it in my bones!

SANCHO: All I feel in my bones is a great deal of pain.

DON QUIXOTE: Your great pain for our great quest is a sacrifice I am willing to make.

SANCHO: Thank you, my Lord!

(Don Quixote spies the WINDMILLS. There can be as many Windmills as desired, with lines assigned as best fits the production.)

WINDMILL: What on earth does this man think he's doing?

WINDMILL: I have no idea, but after a lifetime of sitting in this field, I know I'm up for some entertainment.

DON QUIXOTE: But what is this? Dragons!

SANCHO: Dragons? Where?

DON QUIXOTE: Dragons tramping away in our beautiful fields! Dragons, up to mischief!

SANCHO: Those aren't dragons. Just wind-powered machines to draw water. They're very green and good for the environment, my Lord.

DON QUIXOTE: I tell you, they are dragons!

SANCHO: And I humbly beg you to look again, my Lord!

(Pause. Don Quixote looks again at the windmills.)

WINDMILL: What did he call us?

WINDMILL: He called us dragons! Do we look like dragons?

DON QUIXOTE: I owe you an apology, Sancho. I do believe you are right. They are not dragons.

SANCHO: Thank you, my Lord.

DON QUIXOTE: They are giants!

SANCHO: Giants?

WINDMILL: Giants? Do we look like giants?

WINDMILL: I guess we look like Spanish giants.

WINDMILL: Alright then, we'll be giants.

WINDMILL: It will make a nice change from being windmills for a while.

DON QUIXOTE: Have you ever seen such monsters?

SANCHO: I'd be lying if I said I had.

DON QUIXOTE: I must fight them!

SANCHO: Must you?

DON QUIXOTE: I must do battle with them!

SANCHO: Can't we do battle with supper?

DON QUIXOTE: For honour, for glory, and for the love of the Lady Dulcinea!

SANCHO: For the love of common sense, wait Master!

DON QUIXOTE: Foul giants! I battle you in the name of the Lady Dulcinea!

WINDMILL: Come any closer, Don Quixote, and we'll squash you like a bug with our giant feet!

WINDMILL: And smash you like a mosquito, with our giant hands!

DON QUIXOTE: Let us see if your bravery is as big as your talk, wretched giants!

SANCHO: Master, master, who are you talking to?

WINDMILL: Try to fight us, Don Quixote, and we'll roast you alive in that tin can you're wearing.

WINDMILL: We'll eat your horse in one bite and use you as a toothpick!

DON QUIXOTE: You'll soon regret those words, evil villains!

SANCHO: What words? Master please, there is no one here but the windmills!

WINDMILL: But of course your squire would say that, Don Quixote!

WINDMILL: He hasn't read as many books as you.

WINDMILL: So he can't possibly be as clever as you.

WINDMILL: And see that we are truly terrible giants.

DON QUIXOTE: Terrible giants you are, indeed!

SANCHO: Haven't we played in the fields long enough, master? It must be time for a nice tortilla with chorizo sausage.

WINDMILL: What a flavoursome treat your squire would make, Don Quixote!

WINDMILL: Yes, bring him closer so that we may taste him!

DON QUIXOTE: Never! Stand back, Sancho—this fight is between me and the giants!

(Don Quixote attacks the windmills. He is knocked down. Sancho helps him to his feet.)

I have been...defeated.

SANCHO: Don't feel badly, my Lord. Perhaps books can't teach you everything.

DON QUIXOTE: They are windmills.

SANCHO: Yes master. I'm sorry about that.

DON QUIXOTE: That wizard fiend has magicked the giants into windmills!

SANCHO: Oh boy.

DON QUIXOTE: It proves to me that we are on the right track. Come Sancho, onwards to find that scoundrel wizard, and to defeat him in the name of the Lady Dulcinea! And then, perhaps, I will have earned the Golden Helmet of Mambrino.

(Don Quixote exits.)

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SANCHO: And I will have earned a decent supper. Oh, a squire's life is not an easy one.

(Sancho exits. Don Freston, the Curate, the Barber and the Villagers [Fishmonger, Miller, Schoolgirl, Schoolboy, Teacher, Cobbler, Blacksmith, Brewer, Armourer, Falconer, Stonemason, Beggar, Carpenter, Plowman, Furrier] enter. Many of the Villagers are covered in bandages, or using crutches. They address their complaints to Don Freston:)

FISHMONGER: Today, I was unpacking swordfish at the market! Don Quixote saw me and thought I was challenging him to a duel. He smacked me 'round the head with my own haddock!

MILLER: That's nothing. He saw the baker with a breadstick and thought it was a lance. So he picked up another breadstick and poked him hard in the stomach.

SCHOOLGIRL & SCHOOLBOY: Don Quixote stole our books!

SCHOOLBOY: He took my *Complete Works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra*.

SCHOOLGIRL: How am I supposed to read *The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time*?

TEACHER: My students were *ahead* of their time before Don Quixote came along!

COBBLER: He confiscated all my shoes.

BLACKSMITH: And took all the horseshoes!

BREWER: He accused me of making potions.

ARMOURER: He thought I was forging weapons for the enemy.

FALCONER: And that I was an enemy spy.

STONEMASON: I didn't even know we had enemies!

BEGGAR: Well actually, he was very nice to me and put a few pieces of gold in my hat.

CARPENTER: See? It's gone beyond a joke.

PLOWMAN: I don't feel safe in my own field!

FURRIER: Something has to be done to bring Alonso Quixano back to his senses!

DON FRESTON: Calm down! Everybody please, calm down. I can see that you have many woes. Never has there been such excitement in our little town in La Mancha! But I don't know what you want me to do about it.

TEACHER: You're the richest man around.

DON FRESTON: So?

SCHOOLBOY: You're supposed to have all the answers.

DON FRESTON: Money doesn't necessarily make one clever. I have no sense, but all the dollars.

SCHOOLGIRL: Don't you mean pesetas?

DON FRESTON: Bless you. I can understand your concern, my friends, but maybe we should just let this adventure run its course. How long can adventures take, anyway, before the adventurer wants to come home for a nice cup of tea?

BARBER: Neighbours! Your worries are soon to be eased. The curate has come up with a crafty plan to bring Mr. Quixano back to reality. (*Aside:*) I just hope that nothing goes wrong.

CURATE: Come with me, and I shall tell you all about it.

(All exit. Marcella enters. She is now dressed in the garb of a shepherdess. Dulcinea enters from the other side of the stage, still dressed in her warrior outfit.)

MARCELLA: I have been a shepherdess for less than a day, and already I feel better for it.

DULCINEA: It's only been a day, and already I've rescued a library of books from being burned and three tourists from being tied up, and all because some man whose imagination has run away with him thinks that he loves me.

MARCELLA: Love makes people do silly things, doesn't it?

(Beat.)

Oh, I love your outfit!

DULCINEA: I love yours too!

MARCELLA: A change is as good as a holiday, isn't it? Why the new look?

DULCINEA: Oh, there's this completely harmless though mildly annoying man running around on a quest for a golden helmet, tying tourists up and attacking windmills and saying he does it for my honour. So, you know, the usual. And you?

MARCELLA: Haven't you ever just wanted to get away from all the hassles?

DON FERNANDO: *(Off:)* Marcella!

DULCINEA: Who's that?

MARCELLA: All the hassles.

(Don Fernando enters, dressed as a shepherd. He drags Don Freston along with him.)

DON FERNANDO: See! See, Don Freston? See what your daughter is doing?

DON FRESTON: What is my daughter doing, Don Fernando?

DON FERNANDO: Can't you see how she is dressed?

DON FRESTON: Yes, fashion these days is very strange.

DON FERNANDO: It isn't the fashion, Don Freston!

DON FRESTON: And what are you, the fashion police?

DON FERNANDO: No, no, no. Can't you see? Your daughter has become a shepherdess.

DON FRESTON: Yes, I know.

DON FERNANDO: You know?

DON FRESTON: Yes, she's seeking out a career. I'm very proud of her.

DON FERNANDO: A career? As a shepherdess. Don Freston, she's pulling the wool over your eyes.

DON FRESTON: Why shouldn't I be proud of my daughter?

DON FERNANDO: Don't you understand? She's only doing it to get away from me.

DON FRESTON: I can't imagine why.

DON FERNANDO: Oh, she doesn't really want to. She's only playing hard to get, in this guise as a shepherdess. But I swear, by hook or by crook, she'll realise how much she loves me!

DON FRESTON: Yes, I can see what a loveable man you are.

DON FERNANDO: I'm as gentle as a lamb. Women flock to me.

DON FRESTON: Enough with the sheep puns! I can't baa it!

DON FERNANDO: Don Freston, can't you make your daughter see reason? I am rich and you are rich, you are a Don and I am a Don. It only makes sense that I marry your daughter.

DON FRESTON: You? Marry my daughter?

DON FERNANDO: Yes!

DON FRESTON: Oh, the misery of it!

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DON FERNANDO: I'd be a good husband, Don Freston.

DON FRESTON: Maybe, but I'd have to be your father-in-law!

(Dulcinea steps in between Don Fernando and Marcella, holding out her wooden spoon.)

DULCINEA: What do you want with this woman?

DON FERNANDO: Nothing but her undying love!

DULCINEA: You don't want much, do you?

DON FERNANDO: I have been so very patient, and this is how she treats me! Running away from her father's home to become a shepherdess, of all things!

MARCELLA: At least when I speak, the sheep listen! Don't you have better things to do?

DON FERNANDO: But look, Marcella! I am a shepherd now, too!

MARCELLA: A shepherd!

DON FERNANDO: Well, I'm an apprentice, anyway.

DULCINEA: Aren't you that rich guy who's always stealing flowers from the florist?

DON FERNANDO: You recognise me!

DULCINEA: And you've decided to become a shepherd?

DON FERNANDO: Until she sees reason, I vow to follow Marcella everywhere she goes.

DULCINEA: I see...well, you'll be needing a sword then.

DON FERNANDO: A sword?

DULCINEA: Yes, and a shield.

DON FERNANDO: Whatever for?

DULCINEA: To fight in the wars! That's what shepherds do. Don't they, Marcella?

MARCELLA: Oh yes, of course!

DULCINEA: It's a particularly nasty war, this one. People's limbs getting chopped off all over the place, lots of blood and guts. But you look brave and fit. And you're willing to do anything for Marcella, aren't you?

DON FERNANDO: Um, yes—yes, I should say so...

MARCELLA: I can see the army marching now, yelling out their battle cries, their trumpets sounding!

DULCINEA: Yes. Can you hear the drums, Fernando?

MARCELLA: Off you go, and be the bravest shepherd you can be!

DON FERNANDO: Oh...oh yes. Jolly good. Yes, um. Be back in a tick. Er...just got to say goodbye to the loved ones. Won't be long.

(Don Fernando exits.)

DULCINEA: That's sorted him out, anyway.

DON FRESTON: Marcella, look at you!

MARCELLA: Now Father, before you start getting all worried, let me tell you that I'm perfectly safe.

DON FRESTON: As long as you don't miss all the luxuries of modern conveniences.

MARCELLA: Make things too simple.

DON FRESTON: The home-cooked meals?

MARCELLA: Far too rich for the system.

DON FRESTON: The fiestas?

MARCELLA: I haven't the energy.

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DON FRESTON: Me?

MARCELLA: Oh, Father. Of course I miss you. But I can always visit.

DON FRESTON: You can?

MARCELLA: Of course! I'm only a couple of paddocks away.

DON FRESTON: My daughter, I am so very proud of you.

MARCELLA: You are?

DON FRESTON: Absolutely!

MARCELLA: That's a relief! I'm very happy as a shepherdess, making my own living and being independent. I thought you might be worried and try to make me come home.

DON FRESTON: Make you come home! Of course I will miss you my daughter, but what kind of father would I be if I didn't make some sacrifices and let you have your own way occasionally?

MARCELLA: Thank you, Father.

DON FRESTON: Although I will miss you. My poor heart. My poor, poor heart.

MARCELLA: Oh, poor Father!

DON FRESTON: It may hurt for a while, but I'll survive. Now, I'm going home to turn your old room into a man cave. Though it will hurt to do it.

(Don Freston exits.)

MARCELLA: I think he's going to be alright.

(The sounds of screaming can be heard offstage. The Villagers [Innkeeper, Zoraida, Lucinda, Curate, Barber, Alex, Anna, Agent, Fishmonger, Baker, Schoolgirl, Schoolboy, Teacher, Miller, Beggar, Cobbler, Brewer, Stonemason, Blacksmith,

Armourer, Falconer, Tailor, Carpenter, Plowman, Butcher, Goldsmith, Grocer, Draper, Furrier, Weaver, Farmer] enter.)

What on earth is going on?

FARMER: Lions! There are lions running free!

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