

This story is brought to you by Ririro.com for free. Our mission is to give all children in the world free access to a variety of stories. The stories can be read, downloaded and printed online and cover a wide range of topics, including animals, fantasy, science, history, diverse cultures and much more.

Support our mission by sharing our website. We wish you a lot of fun reading!



# Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

Ririro

## Don Quixote: Adventures At The Inn (17/19)

Later in the day the innkeeper, who was standing at the door, cried out: "Here is a fine troop of guests coming. If they stop here, we may sing and rejoice."

"Who are they?" asked Cardenio.

"Four men on horseback," answered the innkeeper, "with lances and targets, and all with black masks on their faces. With them comes a woman dressed in white, on a side-saddle, and her face also masked, and two lackeys that run with them on foot."

"Are they near?" asked the curate.

"So near," replied the innkeeper, "that they are now arriving." Hearing this, Dorothea veiled her face, and Cardenio went into Don Quixote's room; and they had hardly time to do this when the whole party, of whom the innkeeper had spoken, entered the inn. The four who were on horseback were of comely and gallant bearing, and, having dismounted, went to help down the lady on the side-saddle; and one of them, taking her in his arms, placed her upon a chair that stood at the door of the room into which Cardenio had entered. All this while neither she nor they took off their masks, or said a word, only the lady, as she sank into the chair, breathed a deep sigh, and let fall her arms as one who

was sick and faint. The lackeys led away the horses to the stable.

The curate, seeing and noting all this, and curious to know who they were that came to the inn in such strange attire and keeping so close a silence, went after one of the lackeys, and asked of him what he wanted to learn.

"Faith, sir, I cannot tell you who these are, but they seem to be persons of good quality, especially he who went to help the lady dismount. The rest obey him in all things."

"And the lady—who is she?" asked the curate.

"I cannot tell you that neither," replied the lackey, "for I have not once seen her face during all the journey, though I have often heard her groan and utter deep sighs."

"And have you heard the name of any of them?" asked the curate.

"Not I, indeed," replied the man; "they travel in silence, and nothing is heard but the sighs and sobs of the poor lady, and it is our firm belief that, wherever she is going, she is going against her."

"May be it is so," said the curate, and he returned to the inn.

Dorothea, who heard the disguised lady sigh so mournfully, moved by pity, drew near to her and asked: "What ails you, good madam, for I offer you my service and good-will, and would help you as much as lies in my power?"

To this the unhappy lady made no reply; and though Dorothea again spoke kindly to her, yet she sat silent and spoke not a word.

At length the masked gentleman came across and said to Dorothea: "Lady, do not trouble yourself to offer anything to that woman; she is of a most ungrateful nature, and not wont to return any courtesy."

"I have never spoken," said the silent lady, "since I am too unhappy to do so, and am almost drowned in my misfortunes."

Cardenio overheard these words very clearly and distinctly, for he was close to her who uttered them, the door of Don Quixote's room being the only thing that separated them, and he cried aloud: "What is this I hear? What voice is this that hath touched mine ear?"

The lady, moved with a sudden passion, turned her head at these cries, and as she could not see who uttered them, she rose to her feet and would have entered the room, but the gentleman stopped her and would not let her move a step.

This sudden movement loosened the mask, which fell from her face, discovering her marvellous beauty.

But her countenance was wan and pale, and she turned her eyes from place to place as one distracted, which caused Dorothea and the rest to behold her with a vast pity.

The gentleman held her fast by the shoulders, and was so busied that he could not hold up his own mask, which fell from his face, and, as it did so, Dorothea

looked up and discovered that it was her lover, Don Fernando.

Scarce had she known him than, breathing out a long and most pitiful "Alas!" from the bottom of her heart, she fell backward in a swoon. And if the barber had not been by good chance at hand, she would have fallen on the ground with all the weight of her body.

The curate removed the veil from her face, and cast water thereon, and Don Fernando, as soon as he looked upon her, turned as pale as death. Cardenio, who had heard the moan which Dorothea uttered, as she fell fainting on the floor, came out of the room, and saw Don Fernando holding his beloved Lucinda.

All of them held their peace and beheld one another; Dorothea looking on Don Fernando, Don Fernando on Cardenio, Cardenio on Lucinda, and Lucinda on Cardenio, all stood dumb and amazed, as folk that knew not what had befallen them.

Lucinda was the first to break the silence. "Leave me, Don Fernando," she cried, "for the sake of what is due to yourself. Let me cleave to the wall whose ivy I am, to his support from whom neither your threats nor your promises could part me."

By this time Dorothea had come to herself, and seeing that Don Fernando did not release Lucinda, she arose, and casting herself at his feet, shed a flood of crystal tears as she thus addressed him: "If the sun of Lucinda's beauty hath not blinded thine eyes, know that she who is kneeling at thy feet is the hapless and miserable Dorothea. I am that lowly country girl to

whom thou didst promise marriage. Know, my dear lord, that the matchless love I bear thee may make amends for the beauty and nobility of her for whom thou dost abandon me. Thou canst not be the beautiful Lucinda's, because thou art mine; nor she thine, for she belongs to Cardenio. And all this being so, as in truth it is, and seeing that thou art as good as thou art noble, wherefore put off making me once more happy again? Do not vex the declining years of my parents, who have ever been loyal vassals to thine. For remember, whether thou wilt or no, thou must ever remain my promised husband."

These and many other reasons did the grieved Dorothea use, with so much feeling and so many tears, that all who were present, even those who had come with Don Fernando, could not help from giving her their sympathy.

As for Don Fernando, he stood gazing fixedly at Dorothea for some time, and at last, overwhelmed with remorse and admiration, he took her to his arms, saying: "Thou hast vanquished, O beautiful Dorothea. Thou hast vanquished!"

At the same moment, Cardenio, who had stood close to Don Fernando, started forward to catch the fainting Lucinda, who threw both her arms



around his neck, crying: "Thou, and thou only, art my lord and master."

Thus were the true lovers all united, and the good curate, the barber, and even Sancho Panza joined in their tears, delighted that so much joy had taken the place of so much misery. As for Sancho, he excused himself afterwards for his tears, saying he wept only because he saw that Dorothea was not the Queen of Micomicona as he had imagined, from whom he hoped to have received such mighty gifts and favours.

Each in turn told his or her story, and Don Fernando gave an account of all that had befallen him in the city, after he had found the scroll that Lucinda had written in which she declared her love for Cardenio.

And it appeared that, the day after the interruption of the wedding, Lucinda had secretly departed from her father's house, and had fled no one knew whither; but within a few months Don Fernando had learned that she was in a certain convent, intending to remain there all the days of her life, if she could not pass them with Cardenio. As soon as he had learned that, choosing three gentlemen to aid him, he went to the place where she was. One day he surprised her walking with one of the nuns in the cloisters, and carried her off without giving her a chance to resist. From there they brought her to a certain village, where they disguised themselves, and so rode on until they came to the inn. But Lucinda, after she was in his power, did nothing but weep and sigh without speaking a word.

Thus in silence and tears had they reached this inn, which to him and all of them would always remain the most beautiful place in the world, since it had seen the end of so many troubles, and brought him back to his own true love.