

# Don Quixote

MIGUEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA

ABBRIDGED AND EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY  
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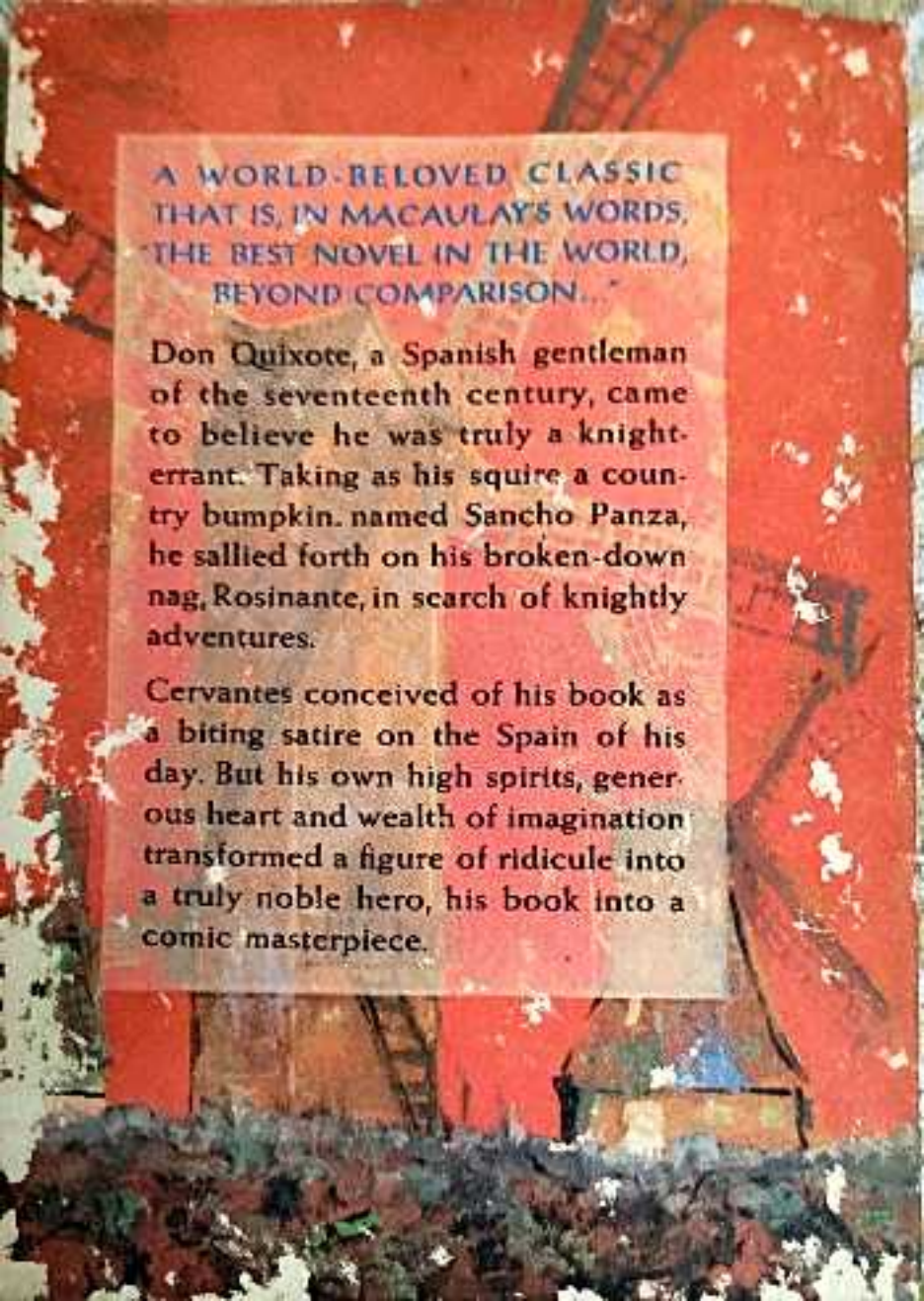
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## INTRODUCTION

Don Quixote and Sancho Panza the gaunt knight of La Mancha and his greedy, potbellied squire are riding still, down through the centuries, secure in their immortality. The one, on his lean nag, still tilts at windmills and defies enchanters, while the other, astride his beloved burro, dreams of gold and becoming a governor. They make us laugh, and they sadden us, as they win only drubbings and torments from a world that is indifferent, uncomprehending, or cruel. Like Ulysses, Don Juan, and Faust, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza are among the few mythic creations of literature, reaching into the depths of consciousness, incarnating universal truths of the human situation.

*Don Quixote* was not the work of a young man, but of one skilled in life's bitter trials. Sensitive and thoughtful, Cervantes had come to see himself and the world with objectivity and wisdom. Suffering, he had learned to smile. A hero, an adventurer, a disappointed dreamer himself, Cervantes infused his soul into the skin of a burlesque knight-errant, yet far surpassed himself, reflecting the crisis of Spain in her decadence, the crisis of Renaissance humanism, and the spiritual anarchy of modern man.

Miguel de Cervantes was born on September 29, 1547. The son of a traveling surgeon, he followed his family from city to city, absorbing the flavor of the Spanish provinces, penetrating the Spanish soul as it existed in all types and classes of men and women, from the most honored to the most despised. All this became part of him, and he was later to breathe it into his book, alive and undimmed. The feeling of the country, the sensations of movement and space



A WORLD-RELOVED CLASSIC  
THAT IS, IN MACAULAY'S WORDS,  
THE BEST NOVEL IN THE WORLD,  
BEYOND COMPARISON...

Don Quixote, a Spanish gentleman of the seventeenth century, came to believe he was truly a knight-errant. Taking as his squire a country bumpkin, named Sancho Panza, he sallied forth on his broken-down nag, Rosinante, in search of knightly adventures.

Cervantes conceived of his book as a biting satire on the Spain of his day. But his own high spirits, generous heart and wealth of imagination transformed a figure of ridicule into a truly noble hero, his book into a comic masterpiece.