

DON QUIXOTE

screenplay freely adapted from

the novel of Cervantes

by Nicholas Meyer

A TURMAN/FOSTER COMPANY
STEVEN-CHARLES JAFFE/NICHOLAS MEYER
PRODUCTION

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Paramount Pictures
5555 Melrose
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BLACK SCREEN:

OVER we hear a slow, ominous creaking. TITLE:

Between the Dark Ages,
with its chivalry and superstition,
and the Renaissance,
with its science and printing press...

a man was stuck.

TITLE:

The Ingenious Gentleman
DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA

The CREAKING sound CONTINUES under MAIN TITLES

FADE OUT

What was that creaking? Never you mind.

Suddenly it's brilliant DAY

1 EXT. LA MANCHA PLAINS

Dusty. Flat. Hot enough to bake your brains if you're not wearing a hat.

A MERCHANT CARAVAN makes rapid progress down the road.

CARAVAN LEADER
(remember this face)
Out of the way there. OUT OF THE
WAY!

He waves his horse whip at someone. The heaving animals and the merchandise obscure our view as they press on

to REVEAL

a painfully thin, BEARDED GENTLEMAN of advancing years. He carries a cane and a wrapped parcel. And they've just about mown him over.

He's not wearing a hat.

His name is ALONSO QUIJANA. He is a country squire of 50 in the year 1605 in the La Mancha district of Spain. At that time and place fifty years seems somewhat older.

ANOTHER HORSE almost hits him as he regains his balance.

WIDE ANGLE

The Caravan goes by in a cloud of DUST, leaving the solitary pedestrian looking after it, frowning, then resuming his march in the opposite direction, towards a town.

2 EXT. CLOSER TO TOWN - DAY

The old man passes a farm. A BURLY PEASANT and HIS WIFE are screaming. Remember the face of the peasant.

WIFE
GET OUT, YOU LAZY GOODFORNOTHING
SON OF A WHORE!

PEASANT
DON'T CALL ME THE SON OF A WHORE
BECAUSE WE'RE NOT RELATED. I HAVE
THE MISERY TO BE MARRIED TO YOU!
AS THE POT SAID TO THE KETTLE...

WIFE
ENOUGH! I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN
TO YOUR ENDLESS SAYINGS!

And she slams the door, leaving the peasant staring unhappily into space.

The old man reacts to all of this, shaking his head. What kind of world is this, anyway? He moves on.

3 EXT. TOWN HIGH STREET - DAY

A BUNCH OF KIDS runs by, almost knocking the old duffer over again. They pay no attention, yelling and screaming their games. They are out to snip the braids off a LITTLE GIRL.

Q
Here -- what are you doing?

He tries to help the little girl, but she shrugs him off abruptly. She likes being chased and runs laughing off as the old-timer resumes his tentative way.

4 EXT. Q'S HOUSE - DAY

The elderly Gent approaches the house with his parcel. A girl of 19 rushes out to get him.

ANTONIA
(not a lot of warmth)
Uncle, where have you been? You
know you're not supposed to be
out on your own. Juanita! He's
got out again!

Q
But my dear, I only --

ANTONIA
Not now, uncle, dear, we're all busy. We've still got a field to plow before sunset. Now what's this? Oh, heavens, he's bought more books.

The door, 60ish HOUSEKEEPER comes out.

HOUSEKEEPER
Senor Quiana, you promised...

They are trying to hustle him inside.

Q
I only went to pick up my books -- and they almost ran me over.

HOUSEKEEPER
(not really listening)
Who almost ran you over?

Q
First it was a merchant caravan, and then a group of young hooligans.

ANTONIA
It serves you right for getting in the way. No one has time for an old man to be blocking the street and wasting all his precious pension on these stupid books! (She tries to take the parcel but he holds them.) All right, all right, for heaven's sake go inside and read them where you can't get into trouble. Honestly...

HOUSEKEEPER
Senor Quiana, you mustn't go outside alone...

They jabber at him like harpies as they maneuver him inside.

CU Q'S face. He's about had it with this lot.

Q
(mild)
What happened to courtesy? Why is everyone always in such a hurry?

These questions aren't answered.

5 INT. Q'S HOUSE - EVENING

FIRELIGHT FLICKERS. CU a knife opening the parcel. Q's HANDS pick up a book and survey it, the fingers lovingly stroking the leather binding as we read the title which now fills the screen: EL CID

After a moment, the CAMERA continues its stately prowl of the semi-darkened room and its countless volumes...

KING ARTHUR & HIS KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

THE SONG OF ROLAND

THE ADVENTURES OF AMADIS OF GAUL

SON OF AMADIS

GALAHAD STRIKES BACK

and more and more books about knights and chivalry...

The CAMERA drifts gracefully above the flickering fireplace. Atop the mantel is an ancient suit of armor, or part of one...

A breastplate, a steel gauntlet, a helmet with forbidding slit-visor, a huge, two-handed sword, an impressive shield, a Viking horn trumpet, etc...

All covered with dust and cobwebs...

Gradually we become aware of something else; Q muttering, almost a rapid incantation...

Q
"...and drew his sword, Defiance, exclaiming thus, 'Have at thee, false knight! I shall no more brook these defilements of my lady Iseult!' Whereupon they fell to forthwith, their blades clashing...!"

Now the CAMERA REVEALS Q. He is half out of his chair with excitement, poring intently over an enormous volume on his desk next to a large candle.

Q
"...and so saying he fetched a mighty blow at King Mark, forsooth such as would have split a lessor warrior in twain! Yet right royally did the King answer in his own defense, countering the blow with Imperial interest!..."

He speaks increasingly excited - less like muttering and more like shouting. It isn't clear, whether he's really reading the text, has memorized it - or is simply making it up.

And oddly, we can HEAR the CLASH of swords, the jingle of harness and armor, the neighing of contending warhorses...

Q (Cont'd)

"...Now Tristram warded off the counterthrust with his shield 'Cormorant,' and seized his mace and chain from whence it perched on stout Barbary's saddle bow - AND SWUNG IT!!!"

By this time the old duffer is whirling the imaginary mace around his head as he dances, panting, around the room. The SOUNDS OF BATTLE are tremendous.

ANGLE ON THE OPEN BOOK: THE CAMERA DIVES SLOWLY TOWARDS THE PAGE TILL THE WORDS BLUR INTO

The CARAVAN LEADER'S FACE, FROZEN WITH TERROR as

a SHINING KNIGHT gallops up, wearing the mantlepiece armour, all refurbished and... lances the Caravan Leader into the dust!!!

ANGLE ON Q in his study

smiling with seraphic satisfaction. How sweet it would be. He grabs the sword and runs through a chair with it!

Q (Cont'd)

"With all the fury and might of his knighthood, knowing his cause to be just and his strength as the strength of ten, because his heart was pure!"

And on in that vein as the battle and Q's running "color" commentary CONTINUES:

The CAMERA, in an effort to escape the din, drops silently through the floorboards into the room beneath.

6 INT. Q'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Three terrified FIGURES huddle together, staring up at the ceiling: Q's niece Antonia, his Housekeeper, and a STABLEBOY (a slack-jawed 16).

They can HEAR the SOUNDS OF STEEL CLASHING, too.

STABLEBOY
(dully)
He's at it again. You shouldn't
have let him get out.

A CRASH! overhead. They wince. Antonia's hand involuntarily
goes to her mouth.

HOUSEKEEPER
Perhaps it won't be so bad this
time.

STABLEBOY
Nah, he's getting worse.

ANTONIA
Don't say that!

Another CRASH! More cries from above as Q fights with
himself, screaming challenges and hurling oaths in both
directions.

ANTONIA (Cont'd)
Sweet Jesus, what are we to do?

HOUSEKEEPER
Send for Padre Perez.

Another CRASH!

STABLEBOY
(hastily)
I'll go...

ANTONIA
(overlapping)
I'll go...

HOUSEKEEPER
I'll not be left in the house with
him...

Another CRASH!

They all go.

7 EXT. Q'S HOUSE - NIGHT

By a bit of moon we can glimpse the exterior of Q's provincial
home, set in a small village.

In a candle back-lit window upstairs, the old fool, in
silhouette, is dancing around and yelling.

Beneath, the two women and the Stableboy hurriedly make their
escape into the little street. One of them carries a lantern.
Chickens scuttle out of the way.

8 INT. PADRE PEREZ' VESTRY - NIGHT

A hand pours a glass of sherry and hands it carefully across a populated chessboard. The Priest, PADRE PEREZ, smiles at his guest. Perez is over 40, rotund but not obese, intelligent, and good hearted, but not especially educated.

PADRE PEREZ

Here, Sanson, to dull your wits.

His guest lifts the glass and toasts - a bright-eyed youth of 24, who wears thick spectacles and an infectious smile.

SANSON

You're wasting good sherry if you think my wits will dull so easily, Reverend Father.

PADRE PEREZ

You haven't sampled it yet.

(Pause. They study.)

It's my recollection, Sanson, that I used to beat you regularly before you left for University - and without "assistance." Is this what you studied at Salamanca?

SANSON

No, Reverend Father. At Salamanca they taught me to hold my liquor.

Perez starts to chuckle, when there's a pounding at the door. Startled, he rises and admits Antonia, the Housekeeper and the Stableboy.

PADRE PEREZ

Antonia, my dear!

ANTONIA

Oh, Padre Perez, you must come at once!

PADRE PEREZ

Your Uncle...?

HOUSEKEEPER

He's on the rampage.

Sanson and Perez react to this.

SANSON

What sort of rampage, senora?

Antonia pulls up short.

ANTONIA

I do not believe I have the honor of the Senor's acquaintance. Forgive me father; I didn't mean to interrupt...

PADRE PEREZ

Antonia, my dear, you must remember Sanson Carasco. He's just returned from the University, but he knows your uncle very well and has always been fond of him.

SANSON

Before you were born, Senora, and I was but an orphan, he was a virtual father to me. What has happened?

ANTONIA

(reluctant)

He's -- talking to himself.

STABLEBOY

Fighting with himself, she means.

She glares at him for his lack of tact.

ANTONIA

He does... attack the furniture.

They react.

PADRE PEREZ

Perhaps we'd best look in on him.

ANTONIA

Oh, thank you, father.

And they start out.

9 INT. Q'S ROOM - NIGHT

Now utterly quiet. Q's "rampage" has ended, not without some damage in the form of overturned chairs, etc.

Now he stands motionless, staring at something.

ANGLE Q'S POV

the armor mounted over the mantelpiece.

In almost a trance, Q moves toward it, reaching...

10 INT. Q'S STABLE - NIGHT

Backlit by the moon and carrying a lantern, a strange figure stumbles in, clanking uncertainly. It's Q. He's managed, somehow, to get himself into the old armor, which makes walking difficult, to say nothing of seeing through that slit-eyed visor. The big sword drags on the ground like a steel peacock's tail - off duty.

Q holds the lantern up, REVEALING

A sorry, sway-backed, skinny old NAG in his stall. Startled by the light, the nag turns to eye Q mournfully - then does a "take" at the strange figure.

Q stares back, somewhat enigmatically from behind his visor. When he speaks, his VOICE has a slight echo.

Q
"Lightning." I dub thee "Lightning."

Pause as he considers this. The horse doesn't move.

Q (Cont'd)
No, not "Lightning." "Durance
Vile." Ho, "Durance Vile!" Uh,
no. Too... too vile. "Achilles?"
Uh uh.

He lifts the visor and holds the lantern aloft, surveying the beast, which switches its tail slightly, looks back again.

Q (Cont'd)
Something - flowery. With bounce.
Ah. "Rosinante." That's it,
"Rosinante"!

Greatly pleased with himself, he slams down the visor and spins off in the general direction of an ancient saddle, hanging from the opposite wall.

Unfortunately, he steps on the business end of a rake, the pole of which snaps up and goes BONG on his helmet, practically knocking him unconscious! He is felled to his steel-capped knees, reeling and almost setting fire to the place by dropping the lamp, but he manages to retain hold of it.

Slowly, Q staggers upright. He sways near the saddle, muttering faintly, "Rosinante," within the confines of his helmet, grabs the horse and leads him out of the stable.

11 INT. Q'S ROOM - DAY

A knock on the door. No answer. Cautiously Perez opens the door and peeps in.

PADRE PEREZ

It's empty.

Antonia, Sanson and the Housekeeper enter behind Perez.

PADRE PEREZ (Cont'd)

Where can he have gone?

Pause.

HOUSEKEEPER

Look!

She points.

The armor from over the fireplace mantel is gone, outlined in dust where it used to be.

12 EXT. DAWN

a HUGE ORANGE SUN coming up, illumining

ECU Q's face

with orange yellow light as he surveys all, his visor open.

Q

The world, Rosinante.

Feebly, he claps his spurs into the aged animal's flanks and "Rosinante" and his Master shuffle forth into the GREAT PLAIN of La Mancha, CAMERA CRANING UP AND WIDENING to the biggest vista on earth.

Q sets off into history. He looks increasingly small.

Q'S VOICE

(fading)

Humankind crawling with sin,
corruption and vice, Rosinante,
while at the same time longing
for a hero to set matters aright
and revive the Golden Age, waiting
to sing our praises, to chronicle
our deeds... there are a thousand
wrongs to right... we have much
to do...

We can barely HEAR.

13 INT. Q'S ROOM - DAY

The Housekeeper is righting the furniture. Antonia, wringing her hands, stands at the window, her face tear-stained.

PADRE PEREZ
I'm sure he'll turn up -- how far
can he have gone?

The Stableboy enters.

STABLEBOY
(as if to answer)
He took Old Dobbin.

Antonia spins around as the Housekeeper straightens up,
both alarmed.

ANTONIA
Oh, no!

HOUSEKEEPER
So much for the plow.

ANTONIA
I think I may faint...

Sanson pours her some sherry.

SANSON
Senora. (She drinks, sits.) You
say he talks to himself. What
does he say?

ANTONIA
I can never understand. It's all
out of these wretched books...
Oh, we must go and look for him.

HOUSEKEEPER
(agrees)
He may do himself an injury.

PADRE PEREZ
But surely, it's no more than a
form of sleepwalking.

STABLEBOY
Sleepfighting, you mean...

PADRE PEREZ
In that case, should we alert the
village? Tell them to keep an
eye out for him?

ANTONIA
No, please. We'll be a
laughingstock.

PADRE PEREZ
But my child, what are the
alternatives? Simply wait?

SANSON

I agree with Padre Perez, Senora. Sleepwalking or not, your uncle will return, surely. He's a charming and courteous old gentleman. He'll bring harm to no one and none will come to him.

14 EXT. LA MANCHA PLAINS - SUNSET

With a blood red sun behind him, the charming old gentleman in full armor comes towards us, the only figure in the landscape - a fearsome image worthy of Kurasaawa, only slightly, well, screwed up.

15 EXT. LA MANCHA - SUNSET, FEATURING

a lone INN.

16 EXT. INN YARD

A scene of desultory bustle. A SHAKY HORNBLAST is HEARD. The INNKEEPER, rolling a barrel, stops and looks up.

INNKEEPER

The pig butcher's here.

His stout WIFE waddles towards the Inn gates and opens them.

ANGLE ON HER FACE

reacting.

HER POV

There, against the setting sun, a knight in armor, the horn at his lips. He closes his visor.

The Innkeeper sees it, too. Straightens up. The knight shambles forward; his lance looks suspiciously like a rake.

Q

Are you the Lord of this castle?

INNKEEPER

Am I which?

Q

The Lord of the castle.

INNKEEPER

Who are you?

Fractional hesitation.

Q
I am - Don Quixote de la Mancha.

The horse and rider enter the yard.

Q (Cont'd)
Knight errant of the realm, defender
of the weak, righter of wrongs,
slayer of giants and dragons,
protector of women and champion
of those in need.

Q's voice, albeit from within the helmet, is strong and resonant. A small crowd has gathered within the yard, wondering.

WIFE
You want a room? We're full up.

Q
I crave a boon.

INNKEEPER
A bone? I don't think we have
any bones today, because --

Q
(slight irritation?)
A boon. A favor. I seek the honor
of a formal knighthood at your
hands, sire, that my status may
be officially consecrated before
I sally forth upon my destiny.
I ask your leave to spend the night
praying in your chapel over mine
armor in preparation for the
ceremony.

A WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN of middle years draws forward amongst
the crowd and watches the proceedings with bemused interest.

INNKEEPER
(amused)
Well - (he looks about) - we don't
have a chapel.

Q
Not have?

INNKEEPER
(humoring him)
It's being repaired. If you'd
care to watch over your armor here
in the yard, however, I'd be happy
to perform the, uh, operation,
in the morning.

Hesitation.

Q
 Very well. (louder) In the meantime, if there are any in need of succor or assistance, they are assured of the might of my good right arm and the valor of trusty Rosinante on their behalf. You fair virginal damsels, may I perchance succor you?

The TWO "DAMSELS" can scarcely conceal their amusement. They're probably professional succorers, themselves.

At the Innkeeper's direction, Q is helped from his horse. He sways like the Tin Woodman in need of oil. And sounds it.

INNKEEPER

It looks as though things here are pretty much under control, Sir Knight. In the meantime, can we offer you a bit of supper before you start your...?

Q

Vigil. My vigil. In fact, fair sir, you need not. The laws of chivalry dictate abstinence on such occasions. Forsooth, I thank you for your courtesy.

INNKEEPER

Forsooth. But you must have something.

WIFE

Why? He can't pay. Can you?

Q

(lofty)

Knights do not carry money, noble lady. Their needs are met by conquest.

WIFE

I told you.

INNKEEPER

Hush. Seat yourself, Sir Knight. Your valorous steed shall be seen to and you yourself will not refuse a little barley broth. Your vigil can formally, uh, commence when darkness falls.

Q
Again I thank you.

At the Innkeeper's signal, Rosinante is led to the stables and Q seated at a table where soup is brought to him.

The Well-Dressed Gentleman is much absorbed by all this.

INNKEEPER
May I take your helmet?

Q
Thank you, no.

INNKEEPER
But your soup...

Q
A knight must be ever prepared
to do battle.

He takes the soup and spoons it in the general direction of his mouth through the partially opened visor. He misses a couple of times (to vast amusement), but finally manages to get the spoon in and out of that difficult hole.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN
Sir Knight, wouldst answer a
question?

Startled, Q spins around, the soup spoon protruding through the visor, waving through the air like an old turn signal.

Q
Mmffghth?

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN
It is my understanding that every
knight must have a true ladylove
who is the object of his chaste
devotion and to whom he dedicates
his every conquest. Am I correct
in this assumption?

Q stares at him, motionless but seems to imply assent.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN
Then might I be so bold as to inquire
the identity of your lady?

Taken off guard, Q rises awkwardly to his feet, his effort knocking the bench backwards.

He walks off, facing the last of the sunset through the open inn yard gate. We can only guess at the thoughts going on inside his helmet.

CU: Q turns and removes the helmet. His face is serious, almost beautiful in the fading light.

Q

(with dignity)

The lady of my captive heart is
Dulcinea Del Toboso, and I swear
before God and man she is the most
beautiful creature that ever drew
breath. To her and to her alone
I swear my undying and unswerving
love and to her will I dedicate
my every deed so long as blood
flows in my veins.

SEVERAL ANGLES

people reacting; some smile, some shake their heads. The Well-Dressed Gentleman is quietly impressed. He writes Dulcinea's name on a piece of paper, atop which he has already written "Don Quixote." Now he plucks the sleeve of a PEASANT next to him.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN

Is there such a place as El --?

PEASANT

Toboso? It's the next village
over. Blink and you'll miss it,
there's only five people in the
place, counting the pigs.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN

What about someone named Dulcinea,
fair and beautiful?

The Peasant rolls his eyes: You must be kidding.

The Well-Dressed Gentleman resumes his contemplation of Q, who is now divesting himself of his armor for his vigil.

17 INT. Q'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sanson peers over the tops of his glasses, a large book from Q's desk in his hands. The others sit, exhausted from waiting.

PADRE PEREZ

It's these books.

ANTONIA

What?

SANSON

It looks as though instead of reading
about knights, he's taken it into
his head to become one.

PADRE PEREZ

But that's absurd. There are no knights.

SANSON

There were.

PADRE PEREZ

(looks at his book)

But not the kind he dreams of.

(He glances at the title.)

"Lancelot of the Lake" indeed.

(And snorts).

SANSON

Nevertheless. Reading all these romances has turned his brain to meal.

HOUSEKEEPER

So I warned him. Senor Quijana, I said, reading's a curse that God inflicts on those he wishes to punish. But he paid no attention. He was too far gone by then.

PADRE PEREZ

You did well to try. My friends, Dr. Carasco is right. Literacy has destroyed Senor Quijana's wits. We must take drastic measures.

18 EXT. Q'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A bonfire made of books. Perez exits the house with another armful and heaves them onto the roaring blaze. We glimpse a few titles as they smolder into nothingness: THE ILIAD, THE DIVINE COMEDY, THE DEATH OF ARTHUR, THE ANEID... you name them.

Sanson watches, uncomfortable with the whole procedure. Padre Perez looks across the fire at him.

PADRE PEREZ

You don't approve?

SANSON

(shrugs)

I can't help thinking how hard it is to write a book and how easy it is to burn one.

The stableboy comes out and heaves another armload, proving his point. Sanson winces.

SANSON (cont'd)

It doesn't take any talent to build a fire.

PADRE PEREZ

I tell you this will make all the difference when he returns!

SANSON

Let us hope so. (Closer) Otherwise all we've done is burn a lot of books.

PADRE PEREZ

(vaguely daunted)

You said you expected him to come back.

SANSON

I did. Now I'm not so sure.

PADRE PEREZ

Why? What do you think he's doing?

SANSON

(studies the fire, smiles gently)

Reforming the world. Senora, I've changed my mind - I will go seek your uncle.

ANTONIA

But Senor -

PADRE PEREZ

There's no need. If he hasn't returned by dawn I plan to set out myself, Sanson.

SANSON

And if he will not come with you?
(Gestures to the fire)
You will compel him?

Padre Perez hesitates, looking from him to Antonia.

SANSON (cont'd)

Very well. You search in your way, Padre. I will search in mine.

He steps out of the firelight into the darkness. Perez shakes his head.

PADRE PEREZ

I worry about that boy. He's got a literacy problem himself.

19 EXT. INN YARD - NIGHT

His armor piled in the empty horse trough, Q is walking up and down, holding "vigil," the rake in his hand.

Activity is mostly indoors now. People have gone to bed except for a party of MULETEERS.

One hard-bitten MULETEER exits the inn, carrying a bucket and heading for the horse trough.

Q
Hold, varlet, lest thy touch profane
the consecration of mine armor!
I challenge thee to mortal combat!

The MULETEER doesn't even realize he's being addressed; certainly doesn't understand a word.

He starts tossing Q's armor out of the trough like the junk it is.

WHAP! Q slugs him on the back of the neck with the rake handle and he goes down, unconscious!

Pleased with himself, Q replaces and goes back to marching up and down, humming a self-satisfied air under his breath.

ANGLE ON THE FIRST FLOOR BALCONY

The Well-Dressed Gentleman has seen the whole thing. He shakes his head with amusement, then reacts: another Muleteer is heading for the trough.

The First Muleteer now sits up, rubbing the back of his neck and looking about, confused.

FIRST MULETEER
What happened?

Q
(to the 2nd Muleteer)
O bold knight, durst not lay hands
on the arms of the most valiant
warrior since Achilles!

Again he's ignored as the 2nd Muleteer makes to remove the scrap metal mysteriously clogging the trough.

WHUMP! Again Q's rake fells the unsuspecting Muleteer, but the First has recovered enough to see.

1ST MULETEER
Hey! What the hell do you think
you're doing, old man?

Q rounds on him with the rake.

Q
Durst trifle with Don Quixote de la Mancha?

He starts to chase the man, swinging the rake.

1ST MULETEER

Help! HELP!

Now people come running as the Well-Dressed Gentleman watches from above. The Muleteers start stoning at Q, who is trying to draw his big two handed sword from its sheath.

Q

A thousand to one? So much the better! Not King Arthur at the seige of Troy was so well pleased by the odds. Once more into the breach! And burn the topless towers of Ilium!!

He manages to extract the sword but in waving it over his head it proves too heavy for him and plunges backwards and impales itself into the earth. Q is unable to extract it.

The Muleteers with their stones are closing in as the Well-Dressed Gentleman watches. It looks bad.

Then the Innkeeper comes rushing out.

INNKEEPER

Here, what's going on? Stop!
Stop I tell you!

1ST MULETEER

What's going on? This madman clubbed me when I came out for water!

2ND MULETEER

Aye and he did the same to me!

Q

Thou didst attempt the profanation of mine arms.

1ST MULETEER

(contradicting)
He didn't touch him - not one arm!

INNKEEPER

All right, all right. (To Q) We'll have no more profanity, but you can't stay here any longer.

Q

I seek only my promised boon, sirrah - the dubbing and spurs of my knighthood at your grace's hands.

INNKEEPER

Very well. It's close enough to dawn and you've prayed up a storm. Are you ready? Let's get on with it. I run a respectable, uh, castle. Let's have some light. Kneel, Sir Knight, this won't take long. Now where the, uh --

(He sees it stuck in the ground.)

Right.

As the "damsels" show up with torches, the Innkeeper manages to extract the big sword from the earth.

The Innkeeper's Wife joins the Well-Dressed Gentleman on the balcony and watches, muttering.

WIFE

Silly old fool.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN

Yonder knight?

WIFE

My husband. When trouble shows its face, he invites it to dine.

WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN

With what purpose?

WIFE

(shrugs)

Nothing ever happens here.

INNKEEPER

Don Quagmire, I --

Q

Quixote. Don Quixote de la Mancha.

INNKEEPER

I beg your pardon. Don Quixote de la Mancha, in view of your incredible valor and prowess, your numerous feats of, uh, feats -- too long to mention here -- I hereby proclaim you to be a knight of that name! I dub you...

And rather harder than probably needed - it may be the weight - he slams the sword down on Q's shoulders.

INNKEEPER (Cont'd)

Arise, Don Quotient, and be on your knightly way!

CU Q: overcome with emotion.

Q
I thank your Grace and vow to lay
all my knightly deeds at the feet
of the incomparable Lady Dulcinea.

The Innkeeper hurriedly helps him into his breastplate and helmet.

INNKEEPER

You do that.

ANGLE ON THE WELL DRESSED GENTLEMAN, watching.

ANGLE from the balcony looking down.

They've brought Rosinante to Q with much fanfare. Quite a crowd now and they are hailing him as he struggles with assistance to regain the saddle. Someone has run ahead to open the gates; the pre-dawn scene lit by torchlight.

Q starts on his way.

WIFE

(shakes her head)

What a fandango.

20 EXT. LA MANCHA PLAIN - DAY

Hot. Especially if you're wearing armor. Q trudges along, looking for action. Suddenly, he spies something and stands in his stirrups.

ANGLE HIS POV

A SQUADRON OF KNIGHTS AND SQUIRES, dressed a la the 12th Century, with plumes, armor, lances, the works.

Q

Aha!

Q urges Rosinante to the center of the road, waving his rake.

Q

Let everyone confess there's not
a more beauteous damsel in all
the world than the Empress of la
Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del
Toboso!

CLOSER ANGLE ON THE GROUP

No knights here, just an ordinary Merchant Caravan,
understandably astonished. Q's vision is not exactly 20/20.

CARAVAN LEADER

(We've met him!)

Sir Knight, we know not who this lady is. Show her to us and if she is as beautiful as you say, then we will willingly swear as much.

Q

Thinkst thou I am stupid? If I must needs show her to you, what merit would there be in confessing a truth so self-evident? It is WITHOUT SEEING HER that you must avow it.

CARAVAN LEADER

(dry)

That's asking a lot. Suppose she turns out to be blind in one eye and has a mustache?

Q

(apoplectic)

Blind in one eye...! Mustache!
Then die one, die all where you stand!

With a flourish, he charges them. But poor Rosinante, taken by surprise at the order to move, trips, and Q goes over his head onto the ground, ending up on his back. In his heavy armor, he can't flip himself over and lies there like a turtle on its shell, his legs kicking helplessly.

Q (Cont'd)

O villains, thrice dyed in the wool, right me and do combat like men and flee not like hyenas!
(etc.)

He lies there mouthing off like Donald Duck in a rage.

The Caravan Leader shrugs with a slight smile and the group moves around and down the road. This is no joke. The old man will bake to death.

For added insult, one of the men picks up Q's pathetic rake-lance and snaps it in two.

Now Q lies there cooking in the heat of the day...

CAMERA DRIFTS AWAY AND OVER THE PLAIN TO WHERE

A heavy-set, jowly individual with a stubble of black beard is riding on a grey mule.

This sturdy PEASANT is singing a song to himself, something to the effect of being in no hurry to go home (and no wonder, from the way his wife was screaming at him)...

when he sees Q's curious figure lying in the road.

PEASANT
Hullo, what's this?
(to CAMERA)
--as Adam said when he discovered
one of his ribs was missing.

He moves closer, reacting with recognition and alarm.

PEASANT (Cont'd)
Senor Quijana!

He rushes over. Q has stopped ranting. His lips are parched.

Q
Sancho Panza!

SANCHO
Just so, your Grace. Lucky I
happened by. But what are you
doing so far from home?

He helps the old man sit up, unscrewing his leathern "bota" to give him some liquid. Finding it difficult to get it into the helmet, he unceremoniously rips the thing off.

Q
My helmet!...

SANCHO
Better drink up, Senor Quijana;
you know they're all out looking
for you...

Q
I am not Senor Quijana.

SANCHO
(startled)
You're not?

Q shakes his head.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Go on, who are you, then?

Q
I am that dauntless knight of world
renown, Don Quixote.

SANCHO
Donkey who?

Q
DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA.

SANCHO
(dubious)
Don Quixote.

Q
De La Mancha. That's right.

SANCHO
Well, you must admit you look like
Senor Quijana.

Q
Looks are deceiving, Sancho. There
are enchanters and sorcerers in
the world. They specialize in
changing the appearance of things.
I know who I am and who I may be
if I choose.

SANCHO
I see.
(He's beginning to catch on.)
Then I take it that's not Old Dobbin,
eating loco weed over there.

Q
No.

SANCHO
(echoes)
No. Who is it, then?

Q
That is the most valiant warhorse
since Bucephelus. He is Rosinante,
the trusty steed of Don Quixote.

SANCHO
Rosinante. Well, if he's so trusty,
what's he doin' over there eating
and you flat on your back cooking
like an egg?

Q
Unfortunately, he misstepped as
I was in the act of charging a
caravanserai of miserable knaves
who refused to acknowledge the
peerless perfection of my Lady
Dulcinea Del Toboso.

SANCHO

Refused to --

(elbow in Q's ribs)

-- Oh, I didn't know you had a lady. You're a cunning bit of business, Senor -- I mean, uh, donkey Hote.

Q

Will you help me to my steed?

SANCHO

(helps)

Are you heading home, your Grace? They're all in a lather to find you.

They reach the horse and Q prepares to mount up.

Q

(dubious, looks around)

Verily?

SANCHO

Very verily. I passed the Padre on my way this morning. He said it was all that reading had driven you round the bend.

Q lands in the saddle. Sancho has automatically helped him into it. It's the sort of instinctive physical relationship they're always going to have.

Q

Did he indeed?

(pause)

Well, Sancho, as it happens, I am not going to Senor Quijana's home, because, as I've explained, I am not Senor Quijana.

SANCHO

Right, you did say that.

They are walking towards Sancho's grey mule now.

Q

I am off in search of glory and adventure.

SANCHO

Glory and adventure. It has a certain ring to it.

He mounts his mule.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Well... (He prepares to say goodbye)

Q

Of course, if you like the idea, you're welcome to come along.

SANCHO

Come along? With you?

Q

As my squire.

SANCHO

What's a Squire?

Q

Squire, well, every knight has a squire. They're sort of like assistants.

SANCHO

What do they assist?

Q

The knight, of course. They assist in his adventures, forsooth.

SANCHO

Sort of look after him, you mean.

Q

More or less.

SANCHO

Uh huh. And for this they get paid...?

Q

Well, no...

SANCHO

No?

Q

Not a salary. Marry, that would be so menial, and against the laws of chivalry.

SANCHO

Well, what does the law say about how the squire's expected to feed himself? My food's real important to me, as the man said when they asked him if he had any last words before he was hanged.

Q
Squires share in the spoils of conquest.

SANCHO
I won't eat anything rotten.

Q
And the likelihood is, Sancho, that in my service the kind of booty you're likely to see will make any mere salary (he can barely say the word) - seem like so much - chicken fodder.

SANCHO
(impressed)
Chicken fodder. Do tell.

Q
Why, yes. I shouldn't be at all surprised, Sancho, that in the way of our adventures you shouldn't be given an island to govern.

SANCHO
(stops dead)
An island? ME?

Q
Oh yes. That's a very common way in which knights reward their squires.

SANCHO
(dreamy)
An island.

Q
Happens all the time.

SANCHO
An island.

Q
Most of your basic islands are governed by squires.

SANCHO
I think I'd like that.

Q
Well, then. Do you want to let your missus know you're off?

SANCHO
No need. I'll drop her a line.

Q
The children?

SANCHO
(complacent)
Once I get my island, I'll send
for the whole lot. They'll be
so proud they won't know what to
do with themselves.

Q
It's all settled then.

SANCHO
Verily. Which way are we headed?

Q
Take your pick. Adventure is around
every corner. The world is what
you make of it, Sancho. Always
remember.

SANCHO
What I make of it. I like that.
I think I'm going to like squiring.

Q
You've no idea, Sancho. It will
change your life. On y soit qui
mal y pense.

SANCHO
Which means?

Q
A rolling stone gathers no moss.

And they pass out of view.

CAMERA CRANES DOWN TO A BUSH, REVEALING

Sanson, who has been listening who knows how long. Wow. This
is going to be harder than he thought! He wipes his glasses.

21 EXT. LA MANCHA PLAIN - LATER

The sun still up. CAMERA ARMS DOWN TO REVEAL

Q and Sancho in the distance, riding towards us.

Q
There are many Enchanters, Sancho,
but all answer to only one, their
Master, the great Freston.

SANCHO

Freston. Seems like I heard of him.

Q

He is a great enemy of mine and bears a grudge against me for a terrible combat we fought, wherein he changed his form -from a lion to a giant to a dragon to a mouse - but I pursued him throughout his changes and hacked off his tail before he escaped. Thereafter his favorite trick is to change the shape of things with the object of confusing me.

SANCHO

That must make it difficult.

Q

(shrugs)

Now and again. My problem at present is to obtain another lance. The great Sir Lancelot, when deprived of his spear, charged a tree with such force that he tore off an overhanging limb and hacked it clean to supplant his weapon. Hence his name.

SANCHO

How do you mean?

Q

Lance-a-lot. AHA!

SANCHO

What?

Q points and Sancho follows the gesture - as do we.

Ahead of them, a large tree with an overhanging bow stretched across the road, a winding river next to it.

Q

Perfect.

He gathers the reins.

SANCHO

Just a minute, Master; are you sure this is such a good --

But Q urges Rosinante into a feeble gallop and charges the tree as Sancho watches. We stay with Sancho, HEAR Rosinante's hoofbeats and then a kind of SPLAT as Sancho winces.

He rides forward and we follow, REVEALING

Q hanging from the branch and Rosinante grazing nearby.

Sancho rides up.

SANCHO

Sir Lancelot must've chosen a smaller branch.

Q

Get me down.

Sancho wonders how to do this.

22 LATER BY THE RIVER BANK

Beneath the tree, Sancho sweats profusely using his knife to hack off twigs from Q's new (and VERY corkscrewed) lance as Q supervises from the shade.

Q

Seest thou cleave close to the shaft, good Sancho, lest a bulge deform its perfect balance.

SANCHO

(breathless)

Right, Master.

Q goes to the river to get some water - and sees a FACE reflected in the current: it is SANSON, hanging from another outstretched branch.

Q

Who comes here? Angels or demons?

Sanson Carasco drops down from the tree. The whole scene looks a little like something out of Robin Hood.

SANSON

Have I the honor of addressing, uh, Don Quixote de la Mancha?

Q

(pleased)

Is it - Sanson Carasco?

SANSON

You know me, my lord?

Q

But of course. Thou art back from the university, I see.

SANSON

Yes, I'm a doctor now.

SANCHO
A doctor?

SANSON
Of letters.

SANCHO
Letters? Do they get sick?

SANSON
It may be that letters cause sickness
in others. But how is it you know
me, Sir Knight? Have we ever met?

Q
Forsooth. Did I not read you bedtime
stories when thou wert a swaddling
babe?

SANSON
(careful)
Forgive me, but those tales were
read by a country gentleman, Alonso
Quiana by name.

Oops. Q frowns.

SANCHO
(like he's watching tennis)
Your turn, master.

Q
Obviously we are confusing one
another with other people.

SANSON
(stubborn)
But sir - you've recognized me
correctly. Will you not return
with me now to your home? There
are people who are much concerned
for your safety.

Q
My safety or my sanity?

Touche!

SANCHO
Ah ha! Good one, master.

Q
 And you? Where do your interests lie, doctor? Are you ready to open me up for the anatomy class? Do you wish to see in which organ chivalry lies? Or where generosity is located?

SANSON
 (upset; wounded)
 Sir, you have been more than a father to me. Such notions of chivalry or generosity as I have were learned at your knee. Please let me help you now.

Q
 (moved but firm)
 You have mistaken me. I am no country squire, but a knight in search of glory.

SANCHO
 That reminds me, master. This glory we're after - where is it? We've been on the road for hours and we haven't found one bit of glory.

SOMEONE IS HEARD SCREAMING FOR "MERCY!" All react.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 What's that?

Q
 (animated)
 That's glory, Sancho! To horse!

He clanks awkwardly towards Rosinante.

SANSON
 (helpless)
 But... wait...!

But they pay the poor Sanson no heed. Sighing, he follows.

23 OVER A SLIGHT HILL

a FARMER is whaling the tar out of a SHEPHERD BOY, tied to a tree. The boy, understandably, is screaming his head off.

Q rides up, visor down, brandishing his corkscrew lance, followed by Sancho on the mule.

Q
 Hold, discourteous knight! It
 ill becomes thee to strike one
 who is powerless. Unhand the lad
 and mount thy steed to take arms
 against a foe worthy of thy steel.

During this exchange, Sanson steals closer to watch. He
 is increasingly dismayed.

FARMER
 See here - whoever you are -this
 layabout is supposed to herd my
 sheep but he keeps losing them.
 And when I punish him for his
 neglect, he calls me miser and
 says I do it in order not to pay
 his wages.

Q
 Thou liest, base lout! Untie him
 lest I lose patience and cut off
 thy head, Sirrah.

The farmer considers his options and mildly unties the boy.

Q (cont'd)
 How much doth thy Master owe thee?

BOY
 Back pay for seven months, Sir
 - 63 reales.

Q
 Pay him at once.

FARMER
 I don't carry that kind of money
 with me, your Lordship. You come
 along home, Andras, and I swear
 you will get all you deserve.

BOY
 (panicked)
 Me go home with him? Never in
 the world! Once out of your sight,
 he'll flay me alive sir!

Q
 Nonsense. It is sufficient that
 I command. Out of respect, he
 will obey.

Sancho wonders at this.

FARMER

Just so, your Lordship. I swear
by all the laws of knighthood in
this world.

He makes a move to leave.

Q

One thing more. When you have
paid the lad you will journey to
El Toboso and there prostrate thyself
at the feet of my Lady Dulcinea,
for 'tis thanks to her peerless
perfection you owe your life and
to her you will confess as much.

Shaking his head unhappily, Sanson disappears from his hiding
place.

FARMER

The lady Dulcinea. I'll remember.
Come, brother Andras.

With his arm draped "casually" over the boy's shoulder,
'they start off. Sancho squints in disbelief. Q moves on
and he follows.

Q

Hail and farewell. Come squire
Sancho.

SANCHO

That was really something, Master.

Q

Knighthood, Sancho. There can
be no nobler calling than righting
wrongs and aiding the oppressed.

SANCHO

Do I get my island now?

Q

What?

In the BG we can HEAR Andras' SCREAMS resume. Q doesn't
compute this, but Sancho, looking back, understands.

SANCHO

Uh, never mind. Your Grace, may
I ask another question?

Q

Question away, Sancho.

SANCHO

This lady Dulcinea.

Q
The Queen of my heart and conscience
of my sword, Esperanza.

SANCHO
Do I understand you to say she's
from El Toboso?

Q
I believe her castle is hard by.

SANCHO
Hard by.

Q
I believe.

SANCHO
(carefully)
Thing of it is, Master, I know
just about everyone in El Toboso.

Q
Yes.

SANCHO
And it can't be more than 20 people.

Q
What is thy point, friend Sancho?

SANCHO
Well, it's just that I don't know
any Dulcinea del Toboso.

Q
No more do I.

SANCHO
You don't know her, either?

Q
I worship her from afar.

SANCHO
How far? What I mean is, have
you ever even laid eyes on her?

Q
I've laid the eye of my mind upon
her, which is all the same.

SANCHO
It's just not the kind of laying
I'm used to. Wouldn't you like
to kiss her, even once?

Q
Heaven forfend! Knightly love
is at all times chaste.

SANCHO
Then it can't be nightly.

Q
But soft, what men are those?

Sancho looks, and so do we. In the near distance TWO GUARDS are marching a chain gang of TEN PRISONERS. Even from this distance, they seem a scruffy, unpleasant-looking lot.

SANCHO
(shades his eyes)
Uh oh. Those are convicts, your
Grace.

Q
(straining to see)
Convicts?

SANCHO
On their way to serve time as galley
slaves. We'd best steer clear,
Master, they are desperate men
and not to be trifled with.

Q
Thine eyes deceive thee, Sancho:
these are no common ruffians, but
Christian hostages held captive
by the impious Moor.

SANCHO
Christian --? Now listen to me,
Master --

Too late. Q is charging like a MADMAN! The two guards behold this apparition and head for the hills, leaving Q in control of the worst-looking pack since Eli Wallach's in THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN. They are still in chains, however.

Breathless on his mule, Sancho rides up.

Q
(exhaulted, dismounts)
Did you see, Sancho? Did you see
how they fled like sheep before
my charge?

SANCHO
 (dismounts)
 Master, listen to me. There have
 been no Moors in Spain for over
 a hundred years! These men are
criminals!

Pause. Q surveys the men, who watch him warily.

Q
 (finally)
 I see. The work of mine enemy.

SANCHO
 Freston, the Enchanter?

Q
 Just so. I told you his favorite
 trick of changing objects to deceive
 me.

He goes up to the first prisoner.

Q (Cont'd)
 Why are you thus enslaved?

1ST PRISONER
 For love.

Q
 Is love now considered a crime?

1ST PRISONER
 (laughs)
 Love of other people's gold is
 generally so regarded.

Q laughs at his wit and moves on.

Q
 And you?

2ND PRISONER
 I am a musician.

Q's eyebrows shoot up.

SANCHO
 He means "Singer," not musician,
 Master. He is a professional
 informer, one who betrays his
 confederates.

Q nods, "Ah," and moves on.

3RD PRISONER
 Pimp.

Q
(surprised)

If that is your only crime, my good man, it would seem foolish to send you to the galleys, for a pimp is a noble calling and one essential to a well-run state. Indeed, if we but had more qualified pimps, a great many evils might be averted.

The man looks at him agape. As do the rest. Who is this guy? But Q has moved on to a HUGE FELLOW wrapped in his own chains.

Q
What is your name?

GINES
Gines de Pasamonte.

Q
Why do they chain you apart from the rest?

GINES
I am guilty of more crimes and so regarded as more dangerous.

Q
You speak well.

GINES
I am a writer.

Q
(impressed)
A writer?

GINES
In addition to my other talents. I have written my autobiography.

Q
Is it finished?

GINES
(dry)
I hope not.

Q
(realizes it was a dumb question)
My friends, it appears to me that you are all being punished far in excess of your crimes.

PRISONERS AD LIB
HEAR, HEAR!

Q
Therefore, as part of my knightly
calling --

SANCHO
Master, no --!

Q
(already at work)
I hearby enfranchise you all.

He undoes their chains, to their confusion and delight. They stretch and dance about, looking anxiously around.

Q (Cont'd)
I ask only in return that you journey
to El Toboso and there prostrate
yourselves at the feet of my lady
Dulcinea and to her give thanks
for your liberty.

They look amongst each other. Gines moves forward.

GINES
Ask us to say a few Hail Marys
on the run, but don't ask us to
walk back to civilization in a
group and be taken prisoner again.
You think we're stupid?

Q
You will do as I say; it is my
knightly command to which you owe
fealty --

Gines pushes him slightly and, unable to bend in that silly armor, he goes over backwards on the ground.

GINES
(mild)
Time's wasting.

SANCHO
Hey!

He starts forward in Q's defense, but catches a rock on his chest. Q sits up and is also met by a hail of stones as the Prisoners laugh, and take pot shots.

One runs over to Q and pulls off his helmet and TWO OTHERS dance on it. A few more well-placed stones and the Prisoners take off, leaving Q and Sancho to their bruises.

SANCHO

Master, are you all right?

Q groans.

SANCHO

You should see yourself. They'll have to give you a new title - Knight of the Mournful Countenance.

Q groans some more.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Didn't I warn you? Didn't I say those are dangerous men? They've broken every bone in my body.

Q

(with difficulty)

Wounds received in battle confer honor.

SANCHO

Then I should be Pope. And they've taken everything.

Q just manages to touch his crushed helmet.

Q

My helmet...

They sit in silence, suffering, contemplating.

SANCHO

I'll never get my island now.

Q

(his last breath)

What? Why, Sancho, this is the best thing that could've happened to us.

Sancho looks at him long and hard, trying to sit up, black and blue, his eyes watery with pain.

SANCHO

(finally)

Your Grace, I know which shoe has the hole in it. We're in serious trouble. We've aided the escape of criminals. We must flee - and we can barely move.

Q
 (tries to get up)
 To flee or not to flee is not the question, Sancho. We must find shelter and food before nightfall. There must be a castle hard by.

SANCHO
 (rolls his eyes)
 Hard by again.

Q
 Ahhh. Sancho, I think it would be best if you would simply sling me over noble Rosinante.

SANCHO
 I'll try, Master.

With grunting effort, he manages to get Q over poor Rosinante like a pack saddle, the air exhaling from Q's body with an OMMPH! as he flops across.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 You all right?

He rides ahead, leading Rosinante by the reins. Q talks virtually upside down.

Q
 (gasping)
 I will be, once I can mix a draft of the Magic Elixir of Sir Gwain.

SANCHO
 What's that?

Q
 An enchanted potion, Sancho, given to the Knight by the Wise Urganda. One quaff and all wounds are healed.

SANCHO
 One -- quaff?

Q
 One big quaff.

SANCHO
 And you know the recipe for this wondrous potion?

Q
 The formula is engraved in my heart.
 If ever I should be cut in two,
 Sancho, as often happens in combat,
 you have only to whip up a batch
 of Urganda's elixir and place it
 between my two halves like a mortar
 to make me whole again.

Sancho, impressed, looks back to where Q dangles.

SANCHO
 Is it expensive?

Q
 (bouncing awkwardly)
 Just.. common... everyday...
 items... such... as... are...
 frequently... found in... any...
 kitchen. Ahh...

SANCHO
 (facing forward again)
 Good lord, Master, if it's as easy
 as that, why are we wasting our
 time being knights? Why don't
 we go into business and sell the
 stuff?

Q
 Hark!

He tries to straighten up.

SANCHO
 "Hark"?

Q
 Is this a castle that I see before
 me?

SANCHO
 (looking around)
 Castle? Is it hard by?

He sees it: an undistinguished building.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Nah, your Grace, that's an inn
 -- and without two reales to rub
 together we'd better steer clear.

Q strains upwards and looks sideways.

ANGLE HIS POV

The picture is on its side, but it's a castle! With turrets and banners flying.

Q
'Tis a castle, I tell you, with moat and keep. We shall invoke the hospitality of the Lord there and prepare our elixir.

Sancho looks again, squinting.

It's an inn and no two ways about it.

SANCHO
It's an inn, your Grace.

Q
A CASTLE, I tell you. Canst thou not see its bold banners flapping in the breeze.

(Its laundry.)

E pluribus unam, Sancho.

SANCHO
(automatic)
Which means?

Q
(faint)
He who laughs last, laughs best.

SANCHO
Still looks like an inn to me.

Q
(fading)
...castle...

And they head for whatever it is.

24 EXT. THE SIGN OF THE FALLEN MOOR INN, YARD - DUSK

Sancho arrives, leading the stricken Q, still prostrate on Rosinante, to the astonishment of all. The LANDLORD and his solicitous WIFE rush forward to help, all in a lather over Q's predicament.

LANDLORD
Great heavens! What's happened?

WIFE
The poor man! We must get him to bed. Maritornes!

Q views the place upside down.

ANGLE HIS POV

It's the courtyard of a castle, all right.

In response to the call, MARITORNES, a slatternly girl of 18 with an inviting, exposed bust runs to help them get Q off Rosinante.

SANCHO

The very cheapest you have, landlord.

Q rightside up between them, looks around.

HIS POV

Still the castle, replete with knights and damsels, all welcoming him with excitement and concern.

Sancho looks at the same scene:

A rustic inn with folks standing around gaping stupidly.

Q

(looks at Maritornes, supporting one shoulder)

Grammercy mistress; for this relief, much thanks.

It doesn't mean a thing to her. She's not one for words, let alone Q's rantings.

25 INT. HAYLOFT ABOVE THE STABLE - EVENING

Q is helped onto a rude camped over the straw. There's another for Sancho nearby. A BIG WOODEN POST in the middle holds up the roof and is featured.

SANCHO

Easy - yes, that's it.

LANDLORD

I'm sorry, it's all I've got at the moment.

Q feebly plucks at his sleeve.

Q

My lord, if thou hast but a little salt, rosemary, wine, oil and milk, and something in which to blend them, I can soon concoct a sovereign remedy 'twill cure all mine ailments and those of my squire.

LANDLORD

Salt, milk, wine, oil and rosemary?
I'll have Maritornes bring them
to you, good sir.

With a gasp of thanks, Q sinks back in a faint. The Landlord leaves his wife to help Q out of his odd clothes.

WIFE

Good heavens, this man's terribly
bruised.

SANCHO

Yeah, well, uh, he had a bad fall.

WIFE

Did he bounce?

SANCHO

I beg your pardon?

WIFE

I ask if he bounced when he fell,
because there's bruises all over
him.

SANCHO

Yeah, well, now that you mention
it, I think he did bounce a coupla
times.

He's now removing his own shirt, revealing similar bruises.

The wife reacts.

WIFE

What? Did you fall, too?

SANCHO

Me? No, it's just that seeing
my Master take that fall, my body
- almost in sympathy as you might
say - came all over bruised like
his.

(He grins hopefully)

Can't explain it.

WIFE

I believe that. And just who is
your Master?

SANCHO

(proudly)

He is none other than the world
famous Don Coyote de la Mancha.

WIFE

Don Chianti? Never heard of him.

SANCHO

He's a real Don, all right. He's been drubbed.

WIFE

Well, that makes more sense. I knew it wasn't any fall.

At this point, A HUGE MULETEER with one fierce eye appears abruptly from behind a load of hay. Sancho and the wife jump.

WIFE

(Cont'd)

Ah, Pedro, I didn't know you were still up here. You scared me. Pedro sleeps at the back of the loft when this cot's full. You won't mind sharing the loft, Pedro? It's only for a night or two.

Pedro mumbles something at once incomprehensible and terrifying and brushes past them, headed for the steps. He doesn't use words, either.

WIFE (Cont'd)

(Sotto Voce)

Be careful. He's a handful.

SANCHO

He looks more like a horseful.

ANGLE ON THE STEPS BELOW

Maritornes ascending with Q's ingredients as Pedro descends.

He grabs her hair roughly, puts his other hand on her lavish breast and squeezes it, tipping her backwards and kissing her roughly.

PEDRO

(barely articulate)

Tonight?

MARITORNES

(husky)

Si.

Abruptly he lets go and continues downstairs.

26 INT. HAYLOFT - LATER

Q sitting up, is carefully mixing the ingredients by lantern light as Sancho watches, transfixed.

Q
...and a pinch of rosemary, not
too much...

SANCHO
(memorizing for future use)
Not too much...

Q
And finally, the oil...

SANCHO
The oil... ah, yes.

Q now revolves the concoction in the pitcher provided.

Q
Now we let it stand...

SANCHO
Let it stand...

He takes a peek.

ANGLE SANCHO'S POV

It looks revolting.

SANCHO
And this will do the trick, will
it?

Q now pours it into two large glasses.

Q
In an instant, Sancho, all your
previous pain will be forgotten.

Q hands him a beaker.

Q (Cont'd)
Sleep will come quickly. Best
put out the light.

SANCHO
Right.

He blows it out; they are plunged into darkness.

Q'S VOICE
Ready?

SANCHO'S VOICE
I can hardly wait, Master.

Q'S VOICE

Then I drink thy very good health,
Sancho.

SANCHO'S VOICE

And I yours, Master.

There's a pause and we HEAR QUAFFING SOUNDS.

Q'S VOICE

(finally)

Didst thou drink the whole thing?

SANCHO'S VOICE

Yes, I --.

But that's as far as he gets. SUDDENLY WE HEAR a succession of the most violent RETCHING SOUNDS EVER RECORDED, and then FARTS the size of Mr. Everest. These awful NOISES, coupled with GROANS and MOANS from both men CONTINUE INTERMINABLY; followed by an eerie stillness.

SANCHO'S VOICE

(feeble)

Are you sure you got the proportions
right?

Another interminable pause.

Q'S VOICE

(barely audible)

I. Feel. Like. A. Different.
Man.

SANCHO'S VOICE

You were right: I've completely
forgotten all my previous pain.

Q'S VOICE

Amo, amas, amat.

SANCHO'S VOICE

(reluctant)

Which means?

Q'S VOICE

Never put off til tomorrow what
you can do today.

SANCHO'S VOICE

In that case...

The SOUND of Sancho retching up everything harder than ever.
Silence.

27 EXT. INN - NIGHT

The moon. A few windows lit but most are dark.

28 INT. INN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wiping her hands, Maritornes slips out to keep her rendezvous. She pats her hair, tugs her astonishing cleavage a bit lower and takes a candle as she moves across the yard.

She's heading for the loft...

29 INT. LOFT STEPS - NIGHT

Maritornes and her candle reach the top of the steps. A door separates her from the loft. She takes a breath, collecting herself for what's to come, and blows out the candle.

30 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

Moonlight through the loft door barely illumines, which may be fortunate for us in view of what has gone on there...

But bad for Maritornes, who can't see a thing. She passes Sancho, who's out like a light, after his "exertions," and heads for Q, who's sleeping restlessly.

To Maritornes, it's Pedro, writhing in anticipation.

Maritornes slips into Q's bed, her hungry mouth and hands -in typical peasant fashion - reaching for everything at once.

Q
Who's there? YOUR LADYSHIP! At
this hour... 'tis not... seemly
for you to... visit my... private...
apartments...

But Maritornes, caught up in the grip of her own needs, isn't taking any of this in.

Q (Cont'd)
I see; thou art too overwhelmed
by thy love to...

She takes his hand and squeezes it down on her breast the way we saw Pedro do, earlier. She likes it rough, this girl. Another SOUND as Q's mouth is forced down upon it, then his gasp for air...

Q (Cont'd)

And thou mays't not touch me there!
 Listen to me, LISTEN TO ME, MY
 LADY! Alas, I would fain, fain
 succumb to your great love but
 alas my heart belongs to my lady
 Dulcinea and to her I have sworn
 eternal chaste devotion, alas,
 no matter how sorely... sorely
 tempted I may be by your
 greatpassioncan'twejustbefriends?

He has been speaking faster and faster.

Maritornes finally gets it and pulls back abruptly.

MARITORNES

(husky rage)

Yecchh! Where is Pedro?

Q

Now, dear lady, come to your senses
 and let us try to talk calmly of
 your insatiable love for me. You
 must close your, uh, heart to my
 affections and resign yourself
 to a nunnery, there to live out
 a single, blameless life, to atone
 with remorse while you live for
 your shame...

MARITORNES

Let go, you fool!

Q

(holds her)

Ah, shrink not in anger from one
 whom virtue alone prevents-

And while they are there wrestling with each other, we

CUT TO:

31 EXT. INN YARD - NIGHT

Pedro, holding a lantern, heading for the stairs!

BACK TO THE LOFT

Q

I know hell hath no fury like a
 woman scorned, but hear me...

MARITORNES

ARE YOU CRAZY??? He'll KILL me!!!

Q
 (still holding her)
 Kill you? Do you mean to say you
 are a captive princess in this
 castle? Fool that I am - nay do
 not fly; I will defend thee --

More wrestling throughout.

MARITORNES
 And he'll kill you, too!!!

Q
 I see now: yours was the face that
 launched a thousand ships...

Maybe not. Pedro enters, sees what he thinks he sees and
 drops the lantern, which goes out as he throws himself atop Q
 and Maritornes. Something starts to CREAK and BUCKLE.

A great deal of SCREAMING, YELLING, YELPING and THUDDING,
 BURPS, FARTS and GURGLES - plus CREAKS and BUCKLES of
something large.

We glimpse Maritornes being thrown over into Sancho's bed,
 where, believing himself attacked, Sancho starts punching her.

SANCHO
 Master!

Q
 The castle is besieged, Sancho!
 The Moors have returned to Spain!

MARITORNES
 HELP!!!!

Q
 SANTIAGOoooooooo!!!!

Pedro swings something around to hit Q with and knocks the
 principal support from the roof, which collapses onto the
 loft, causing by its weight, the loft to collapse onto...

And we HEAR A LOT OF NEIGHING as we .

CUT TO:

32 EXT. INN YARD - DAWN

ANGLE FEATURING

the collapsed wing of the stable, then drifting to where

Q and Sancho sit on their mounts. If you thought they looked
 bad before, that was nothing compared to what's left now.

Long pause. Q surveys the wreckage. He has one black eye. So does Rosinante, who was underneath, remember.

Q
It seems this is an inn.

ANGLE ON

The Landlord and his Wife, looking up at them.

LANDLORD
(icy)
It used to be a respectable one.

Behind them a group of MULETEERS watch. Pedro is in their midst, his arm in a sling, leaning on a crutch. Maritornes head is completely swathed in bloody bandages.

Q
Then I regret to say I have been laboring under a delusion.

LANDLORD
Oh, really.

Q
Yes, I was convinced this was a castle, and a pretty good one.

He eyes Sancho meaningfully.

SANCHO
(between his teeth)
The Enchanter?

Q nods sagely, closing his eyes.

LANDLORD
(sighs)
Look, just pay what you owe and we'll forget the whole thing.

Q
(mystified)
Pay? My good man, a knight never pays for anything, certainly not lodgings. These are always offered freely in exchange for the hardships he undergoes...

LANDLORD
You want to talk about hardships? What about that?

He gestures to the rubble.

Q
 (with an airy wave)
 I regret I cannot make any exceptions
 for fear of setting a precedent.
 Faretheewell! Sancho!

He spurs Rosinante and they are out the gate, but Sancho isn't
 as lucky. The landlord grabs the mule's bridle.

SANCHO
 Master --!

LANDLORD
 I am waiting.

SANCHO
 You heard what his lordship said.
 You want me to set a precedent?

LANDLORD
 (grim)
 I'll tell you what I want.

Sancho looks over at the muleteers, who are moving towards
 him, ominously unfolding a huge blanket.

SANCHO
 (eyes widening)
 What's more I couldn't, even if
 I wanted to!!

33 EXT. INN - DAY

Q rides away, pleased with himself. HEARS SHOUTS.

SANCHO'S VOICE
 HELP!!!!!!

He turns and looks.

ANGLE Q'S POV

Over the Inn wall, Sancho can be seen, flying through the air,
 then disappearing below, only to rise again, thanks to the
 human trampoline Q cannot see on the other side of the wall.

ANGLE ON Q

Q
 Bewitched! Sancho!

He races back on Rosinante, but they close the Inn gate before
 he can get there.

SANCHO
 (appears again)
 Master...!

Q
Be brave! Villains! Cowards!

Sancho disappears, SCREAMING. Q frantically tries to climb Rosinante's back to scale the wall, but Rosinante moves off, leaving Q dangling helplessly from the ledge as Sancho rises again, flaying at empty air.

AN ABRUPT CUT:

34 AND WE ARE ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Long, LONG silence. Sancho looks even worse, black eye, torn clothes...

SANCHO
(finally)
Those weren't Moors.

Q
Yes, they were.

SANCHO
No, they weren't.

Q
Were.

SANCHO
Weren't! Look, your worship, Moors don't have names like Paco and Pedro and Pepe and, oh, what's the use. There aren't any Moors in Spain anymore, that's the point. Your Grace is rowing with only one oar.

Q
Sancho...

SANCHO
The lights are on, but nobody's home!

Q
Sancho.

SANCHO
You're not playing with a full deck!

Q
SANCHO!

SANCHO
There's no money in the bank account!

SANCHO!!!

Q

SANCHO

What.

Q

If that's the way you feel, why are you still in my service?

Long pause.

SANCHO

That is an excellent question. *

Pause as he thinks.

35 EXT. BLACKSMITH - DAY

Sancho grunts, shoeing Rosinante. As usual Q doesn't work. *

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Well, I can't just leave. You'd be dead in twenty minutes. Christ, you were practically finished when I found you. *

Q

True. I owe you my life.

SANCHO

Then again, I can't believe things won't get better. Besides, there must be something to all this knighthood stuff - otherwise how could you know so much about it?

Q

A worthy point. And always remember, Sancho, my information comes from books, and printing never lies.

SANCHO

(moving right along)

Then again, it's never dull.

He gives a faint laugh at his own understatement.

Q

Knighthood never is.

36 EXT. WELL - DAY

Sancho fills their "Botas" up with water. Q sits. *

SANCHO

And - well, finally, I can't get that island out of my head. I know I could be a good governor.

Q

(studies him affectionately)
I know that too, Sancho.

SANCHO

(breaks the mood)

Yeah, well you got a funny way of showing it. I mean you never once take my advice.

Q

I don't?

SANCHO

Not once.

Q

What is your advice now?

SANCHO

You really want to know?

Q

I am asking directly.

SANCHO

You Grace, we've got to lay low for a while.

Q

Lay low?

SANCHO

Stay out of sight. Our reputation's all over the place. We've helped prisoners escape, torn down part of an inn and didn't pay, you're always telling everyone about Lady Dulcinea - we're too easy for people to trail!

This scores a point with Q, who has reason to worry.

Q

Very well, I shall take thy advice, Sancho.

SANCHO

(can't believe it)

You will? Oh, Master, that's wonderful. Where will we hide?

*

Q
 Hide? We shall not debase ourselves
 by hiding. We shall make a strategic
 withdrawal.

SANCHO
 (brightening)
 A withdrawal. I see. Brilliant,
 Master. And where will we withdraw?

Q
 (thinks)
 To the Sierra Morena mountains.

SANCHO
 Head for the hills! That's a
 wonderful idea, your Grace. I've
 never even seen a mountain.

Q
 You'll love mountains, Sancho.
 Their quiet, tranquil majesty,
 their serene vistas...

SANCHO
 I could use some serenity.

Q
 But who comes here?

Sancho looks.

SANCHO
 You mean that traveling barber?

A PLUMP FELLOW on a mule.

Q
 Why call him a barber?

SANCHO
 'Cause he's wearing the tools of
 his trade, your worship. See that
 thing on his head? That's a shaving
 basin. I wager he's got it up
 there to protect his head from
 the sun...

Q shades his eyes and look outs, quivering like a pointer.

Q
 Can it be?

SANCHO
 What?

Q
Or do my eyes deceive me?

SANCHO
(worried)
WHAT.

Q
You observe but you do not see,
Sancho. That is no mere shaving
basin.

SANCHO
(a sense of foreboding)
It isn't?

He's mounting Rosinante.

Q
(breathless)
That is nothing more or less than
the Golden Helmet of Mambrino!

SANCHO
Golden Helmet of --

Q
-- whose magical properties guard
its wearer against all harm!

SANCHO
There's really no point in my saying
anything, is there?

Q's eyes flash.

37 ON THE ROAD - LATER

Mountains in the distance. Q wears the shaving basin.

SANCHO
I'd just like to point out that
that magical golden helmet or
whatever it is, didn't go very
far towards protecting that poor
barber when you frightened him
out of his wits.

Q
Elementary, my dear Sancho: the
Golden Helmet of Mambrino only
works successfully when worn by
the pure in heart.

SANCHO
The pure in heart. Your Grace,
will you explain something to me?

Q
Anything, Sancho, my son.

SANCHO
This Shoveltree you're always talking
about --

Q
Chivalry, Sancho, not shoveltree.

SANCHO
Chivaltree, then. What does it
mean? In plain language.

Q
(thinks)
It means helping people.

SANCHO
What kind of help?

Q
Oh, slaying a giant, liberating
a castle, confronting a dragon.

SANCHO
I've never even seen a dragon.

Q
(neutral)
They come in all shapes and sizes.

SANCHO
And that's all?

Q
And asking nothing in return.

SANCHO
Why not?

Q
Because the reward is in the helping
- human beings are supposed to
help each other.

SANCHO
But they never do.

Q
Well, that's where knights are
different.

SANCHO

Men rob and cheat and kill, and every one is out for himself. That's normal. What you're doing is crazy.

Q

Oh God, let me not be sane.

SANCHO

You haven't a thing to worry about.

Q

I cannot comprehend your mood, squire Sancho. I am still following your advice. There are the mountains.

He points.

Q (Cont'd)

Arma rerumque cano.

SANCHO

Which means?

Q

Getting there is half the fun.

Sancho puffs air out of his cheeks as they ride on towards the enormous mountains.

A MAJESTIC DISSOLVE TO:

38 EXT. MOUNTAINS - TWILIGHT

Q and Sancho pursue their tortuous way, Sancho looking about, anxious. BIG CLOUDS, angry-looking, dramatic crags.

SEVERAL ANGLES

as they huff and puff, even though mounted. Sancho's mule suddenly slips, almost falls. Sancho gasps, pulls up.

Q

Art thou hale, Sancho?

SANCHO

Am I --? Yeah, I'm hale.

(He looks about.)

It's not quite as serene as I expected. Are you sure you know what you're doing, your Grace?

(He hears himself, mutters.)

Silly question.

Q
What sayest thou?

Sancho starts to answer, then gasps as he sees --

On a distant crag, a strange HALF-ANIMAL, HALF-HUMAN FIGURE, leaping from rock to rock, almost like a goat.

SANCHO
(pale)
What was that??

By the time Q turns, whatever it was has disappeared.

Q
I see nothing. Beware imagination, Sancho.

SANCHO
You should know. Master, maybe we should wait for daylight. This place is creepy.

No answer. Sancho looks around. Q is gone.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Your Grace? ... Master?!

Terrified now, Sancho dismounts, practically falling off the mule, and starts running.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Master, where are you?? AHH!!

He has tripped over something and lands on the ground.

ANGLE SANCHO'S POV

A pair of old saddlebags. They've been there ages.

Sancho gingerly examines them, opening one.

It is filled with gold coins. And a notebook.

Sancho's eyes bulge.

SANCHO
MASTER!

Q
(right beside him)
Yes?

Sancho leaps into the air with a yell.

Q (Cont'd)
Easy lad; what ails thee?

SANCHO
(recovering)
Where were you?

Q
Scouting the lay of the land.

SANCHO
The lay of the land?

Q
The lay of the land, I say.

Sancho turns, sees the CAMERA.

SANCHO
(to CAMERA)
You think I should touch it? Nah,
I'm not gonna touch it.
(He returns to his scene.)
Your Grace, look!

Q
I believe the time has come for
us to proceed on foot, Sancho.

SANCHO
Why walk when we can be carried,
Master?

Q
Eh?

SANCHO
(showing him)
Look - gold! We can pay our way
from now on!

Q
(dubious)
I doubt thy new-found purse will
amend thy fortunes in this place.

SANCHO
But if we ever get out of here
- alive that is -

He lifts the bags of coins over his shoulder and starts after
Q, who travels upwards on foot, leading Rosinante.

A FEARSOME NOISE gets LOUDER as they near it.

Q
(holds up his hand)
What's that?

They listen.

Q (Cont'd)
The labored breathing of a dragon,
or I am much mistaken.

SANCHO
A dragon?

Q grimly and slowly draws the enormous two-handed sword,
adjusting the shaving basin on his head. He moves cautiously
forward; Sancho has no choice but to follow. The NOISE
is TERRIFIC - the EARTH SHAKES.

SANCHO
A dragon. In labor, no less.
Perhaps this isn't the best time
to disturb her.

Q
Eh? SPEAK UP!

SANCHO
I SAY PERHAPS THIS --

But Q has already poked through some trees, THE NOISE is
DEAFENING.

He then turns back, looking slightly embarrassed.

SANCHO
Has she had any babies yet?

Q
(ironic)
No fear of that. I'd say our friend
has been at work again.

SANCHO
The Enchanter?

Q shrugs, nods, pulls aside the trees and Sancho sees
A GIANT WATERFALL.

Sancho reacts, amazed, relieved.

SANCHO
Is that all!

They step into the clearing, admiring the magnificent falls.

SANCHO
And you thought it was a dragon!

He laughs and laughs and laughs. Q is discomfited.

Q
I've already explained the reason
for my mistake.

SANCHO
A drag - on...

He can BARELY GET IT OUT FOR LAUGHING. Then suddenly FREEZES:

They are facing a GROUP OF MEN at a campfire. Q is also startled, but recovers first.

Q
God give you good evening, sirs.

No reaction. They just stare. Sancho cautiously tries to conceal the gold filled saddlebags.

Q (Cont'd)
My squire and I seek to find shelter
for the night amid these noble
pinnacles. We mean harm to none.

1ST GOATHERD
(finally)
We are simple goatherds. You are
welcome to share our food and fire.

Q
We do so right thankfully.

They lead their horses forward. The men seem primitive but benign. Everything about Q puzzles them. One offers him a plate with some food on it. He sits.

Q (cont'd)
Our thanks again. Sit, squire Sancho, for tho' the laws of chivalry state that squires must eat below the salt and sit not in the presence of their lords, yet in the tale of Orlando Furioso, who himself came into the mountains to lose his wits and be a madman, it is related that in the field such distinctions fall into reputable disuse and squires may partake of victuals at the same time and place as their Masters. Thus do I take it for a precedent in this instance. Sit, I say.

ANGLE ON THE GOATHERDS

agape at this torrent of folderol. Sancho sees their reaction, is self-conscious.

SANCHO
That's all right, Master, I'll stand.

He gestures at the falls, chuckling.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
We thought this was a dragon.

No reaction. Sancho shrugs, takes some food, brightens.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Umm. They do say hunger makes the best sauce.

1ST GOATHERD
(finally)
There IS a madman in these mountains.

Sancho reacts at once. He saw him.

Q
Indeed? And where does he --

SUDDENLY, WITH A HOWL, THE CREATURE LEAPS INTO THEIR MIDST!!
The goatherds flee, yelling, abandoning their fire and food.

Q remains calm, doesn't move; Sancho, terrified, can't.

Q
Sancho, do you see what I see?

SANCHO
I never know.

The Creature's hair and beard are straggly, unkempt. He wears skins; advances on the fire watching them with wild eyes.

Q gets to his feet, walks slowly up to the man and embraces him. He doesn't move.

Q
They tell me I am mad. Wilt thou sup with us?

The creature stares at Q, at Sancho, at the food, his eyes roving wildly in their sockets. Is he going to kill them?

CREATURE
(finally)
Your civil offer I accept with infinite gratitude, stipulating only that I do not deprive either of you of your own nourishment.

Sancho's jaw drops. Q, cool, proffers a plate with food.

Q
 No fear of that. I am a knight-errant, habituated to do without. Sit, and if you feel inclined, share your sad story with me and my squire, before whom you may speak as freely as myself.

The man hesitates, then takes the plate and sits by the fire.

CREATURE
 Very well. You shall hear my tale but I must warn you in advance, I cannot always control my actions. Sometimes I am lucid, as you see me now; at others (he shrugs) and this above all --

Q
 To thine own self be true?

CREATURE
 (glares)
 Above all, I cannot bear to be interrupted.

Sancho squints. What kind of madman is this?

SANCHO
 (reluctant)
 I take it these are your saddlebags.

The man stares at him.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Sorry.

CREATURE
 (finally)
 My purse and my poetry. Keep them, for they are of no use to me.

Sancho is relieved. The Creature turns to Q.

As he speaks, the CAMERA moves in VERY CLOSE, then gets vaseline around the lens, as we go into a very old fashioned FLASHBACK, silent and undercranked. Maybe the film is tinted or desaturated.

CREATURE (VOICEOVER)
 My name is Cardenio. I come from a noble but not wealthy family and since childhood I have loved the daughter of our neighbor, a maid called Luscinda, as virtuous as she was beautiful.

FLASHBACK. First we see an INFANT CARDENIO toddling after an INFANT LUSCINDA. He runs after and tackles her. They are in a lyrical garden somewhere.

Then we see CARDENIO, a handsome youth, with the lovely LUSCINDA, running toward each other in SLOW MOTION, like the Clairrol ad.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

She loved me and we were to be married.

Cardenio and Luscinda have almost met from their run, when an OLDER MAN (Cardenio's father) steps out of a middle class house and waves excitedly to Cardenio, who reluctantly goes over. The older man holds a letter. They talk animatedly (undercranked?), acting out Cardenio's description.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

But before that day, I was offered a position at the court of Duke Ricardo. Eager for my advancement, my father urged me to accept the post and delay my wedding, which to please him, I did.

ANGLE on Cardenio looking longingly at Luscinda.

ANGLE on Luscinda smiling, longing, flirting with Cardenio. She's a bit of business, although clearly he hasn't figured that out yet.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

Luscinda swore to wait for me. She was much devoted to books of chivalry and an oath was sacred to her.

Out of FLASHBACK, ANGLE on Q listening. He's impressed with her.

Back to FLASHBACK. DUKE RICARDO'S PALACE - NIGHT

NOBLEMEN laughing and drinking and falling down in drunken excess. A spoof of debauchery.

Cardenio, now fashionably dressed, helps a YOUNG NOBLEMAN (Don Fernando) to stagger out of the throne room. He's so plastered he can't stand. Also he's crying to beat the band.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

At the Duke's court I fell into favor with his son, Don Fernando, who was himself recovering from an unhappy love affair with a beautiful peasant girl, by name, Dorotea.

IN HIS ROOMS

Young Don Fernando stares at a cameo portrait of Dorotea and bursts into tears all over again. Tries to stab himself with a handkerchief as a concerned Cardenio wonders if this is what life is all about in the big city. He points out the window talking animatedly.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

To distract him I brought him
to our village...

BACK AT CARDENIO'S VILLAGE.

Cardenio is introducing Don Fernando to Luscinda. He's taken Fernando's mind off his troubles all right. She smiles and curtsies. Cardenio thinks all this is great.

CREATURE/CARDENIO (VOICEOVER)

...and there he met and fell in
love with my beloved, the fair
Luscinda.

Q (VOICEOVER)

But surely, as the fair
Luscinda doted on books of
chivalry...

ALL THE FLASHBACK CHARACTERS TURN AND LOOK, startled by the sound of Q's voice.

BACK to our story. ANGLE featuring Q.

Q (cont'd)

...her oath must have been as
sacred as --

CREATURE/CARDENIO

YOU INTERRUPTED!

And he leaps for Q's throat! Sancho in a flash tries to pull him off. The three wrestle by the fire and Cardenio suddenly pulls away and runs screaming into the impenetrable wild.

CREATURE/CARDENIO

DON FERNANDO -- REVENGE!!!!

He's gone. Q sits - recovering.

SANCHO

I wanted to hear what happened.

↑
*

Q

(melancholy)

That I can tell you plainly enough:
 the maid Luscinda fell in love
 with Don Fernando, and, on the
 very day she was to have wed young
 Cardenio, married Don Fernando
 instead, whereupon Cardenio lost
 his wits and came to these mountains
 to do penance for his vanished
 love.

SANCHO

(amazed)

Are you sure?

Q

As if I had been there.

(pause)

Come, Sancho, it is time to sleep.

SANCHO

Yeah - you don't suppose he'll
 come back? Once you've got the
 tiger by the tail, it isn't wise
 to let go.

But Q has already settled back and is staring at the stars.

Q

Strange, the ways of the human
 heart.

Sancho looks at him, then at the gleaming stars.

SANCHO

(softly, frustrated)

You've done it again.

Q'S VOICE

Hmm?

SANCHO

Gone sane on me.

He looks over at Q. He's asleep already.

SANCHO

(curls up)

Strange, indeed.

SLOW FADE ON BOTH

AND FADE IN TO REVEAL

39 THE SAME SCENE BY DAYLIGHT

Sancho wakes, realizes where he is, looks for Q.

Q stands by the waterfall, motionless in contemplation.

Sancho approaches from behind.

SANCHO

Morning, your Grace. (no answer)
We've still got some embers and
some food. Shall I heat us up
some breakfast?

Q

I've been thinking.

SANCHO

You don't want to strain yourself.

Q

I shall stay in these mountains
and go mad.

SANCHO

Are you crazy? Sorry, let me put
that another way. What for?

Q

The great Orlando Furioso, when
he lost his love, came into the
mountains to be mad. He dashed
his brains out against the trunks
of trees and ate cold ashes.

SANCHO

(mild)

I bet he ate the ashes first.
Besides, your love isn't lost,
Master. She's in El Toboso, you
said.

Q

(unhearing)

And young Cardenio did the same.

SANCHO

And look at him! One interruption
and --

Q

I can do no less. 'Tis a part
of my knightly mission of courtly
love.

SANCHO

Well, I'm not sticking around for that.

Q

I do not intend that you should. I wish you to leave me here.

SANCHO

Leave you - while you bash your head against tree trunks? You'd be dead before sunset.

Q

Sancho, as my squire I command you to obey me.

SANCHO

Why, what have I got out of it so far?

(He looks at the mountains.)

I'm about as far from my island as I can get.

Q

If that's all you're here for you've revealed yourself as a greedy, power-lusting lout. All you care about is your next meal.

SANCHO

Food is real!

Q

(firm)

There's all kinds of dinner.

SANCHO

(exasperated; plaintive)

But WHY do you want to bash trees and like that? Lady Dulcinea won't even know.

Q

Yes, she will.

SANCHO

She will? How?

Q

Because I am sending you to tell her. (Sancho's speechless) I've written her a letter in young Cardenio's notebook. Read it. What's the matter?

SANCHO
I can't read, your Grace.

Q
Can't read a word?

SANCHO
Not a word.

Q
(sad)
Then thou wilt ever be a slave.
(Brightens.)
However, it makes no matter. I
charge thee deliver to the Lady
Dulcinea my epistle.

SANCHO
Your what!!??

Q
(patient)
My letter, Sancho. Deliver her
my letter. And bring me her reply.

SANCHO
You wish to be buried with it when
I locate your remains?

Q
Do as I say, Sancho. In this letter
I tell of the wild acts of madness
I am committing here in her name.
You can personally confirm these
deeds.

SANCHO
Without seeing any of the wild
acts, myself?

Q looks at him.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Me and my big mouth.

Q
Thou hast a point, Sancho.

SANCHO
Does that mean I gotta watch while
you split your head open?

Q
(thinks)
Perhaps a single act of insanity
will do.

SANCHO

Yeah, just give me the general idea.

Q paces, thinking, then abruptly comes out from behind a tree, making a terrible face.

SANCHO

(unexcited)

Good... good... very good...

Frustrated by his inability to get a rise out of Sancho, Q moons him from behind the tree.

Sancho stands abruptly.

SANCHO

Right. I've seen enough.

40 WIDER ANGLE - LATER

Sancho on the mule, rides down the mountain. Above him, Cardenio appears in his "creature" mode. We follow him a bit and see Q, from his vantage point, taking off his armor. Preparing to tree-bash, no doubt. From Cardenio's viewpoint, he looks utterly defenseless...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

41 EXT. THE GOOD OLD FALLEN MOOR INN - DAY

Clearly time has passed. Sancho, on the mule, tired, approaches the inn warily and then recognizes it as the site of his "human trampoline."

SANCHO

Oh, no. Once bitten, twice shy.

He starts to turn away when

VOICE

Sancho!

He reacts. WHIP PAN TO

Where Padre Perez on his mule, accompanied by the slack-jawed Stableboy, are approaching the inn from a different direction.

SANCHO

(kicks his mule)

It never rains but what it pours.
Move!

There's a mule chase between Sancho, Padre Perez and the Stableboy. The mules run awkwardly, people keep falling off, getting on, etc. It's like a parody of a chase on horseback, especially since Padre Perez is so big. On the horizon, hippity-hopping, Sancho on his mule looks a runner caught off base between Perez and the Stableboy.

Finally Sancho is cornered.

PADRE PEREZ
(breathless)
All right, where is he?

SANCHO
I have no idea what you're talking about, father.

PADRE PEREZ
(stern)
Don't play games with me, Sancho, on peril of your soul. There've been too many witnesses to his chain of disasters. Where have you left him?

SANCHO
(plaintive)
He's promised me an island.

PADRE PEREZ
I promise you a thrashing.

SANCHO
(sighs)
He's in the mountains. He sent me with a pistol for his Lady Dulcinea. (He realizes) Of course, there isn't any Lady Dulcinea. You see, he started pulling down his pants and --

PADRE PEREZ
THAT WILL DO.
(He thinks)
We must find a way to lure him back.
(An idea)
He needs a damsel to rescue!

He stares hard at the Stableboy.

STABLEBOY
How come you're looking at me?

42 LATER - ON THE ROAD AGAIN

We start on the Stableboy, now incongruously disguised as a girl, straw sticking out from her "bonnet," etc. in a very makeshift fashion. Ditto her "dress."

STABLEBOY
I feel ridiculous.

PADRE PEREZ
Be quiet.

STABLEBOY
He'll never believe I'm a girl.

SANCHO
You'd be surprised what he believes.

PADRE PEREZ
Well of course, he's mad.

SANCHO
(short)
I didn't say that. I said you'd be surprised what he believes.

STABLEBOY
Why don't we just grab him?

SANCHO
(looks sharply at Perez)
You're not going to lay a finger on him.

PADRE PEREZ
(hasty)
Of course not. We aren't Senor Quijana's enemies. We want him home for his own good.

Sancho frowns: he'll be the judge of whether they're enemies or not. The mountains loom ahead.

43 EXT. CLEARING IN THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Sancho et al arrive, the Stableboy wide-eyed at the mountains. To Sancho the place is familiar.

SANCHO
From here it's best to go on foot.

PADRE PEREZ
You go. Bring him to us. I'll rehearse the tale this dunce must tell.

They dismount.

44 LATER

Sancho pokes his face over a ridge and looks down towards the waterfall camp.

Q is there, all right, looking pale and even thinner without his shirt. He can't have been eating that much. On the other hand, there IS a fire. Rosinante, grazing, looks none the worse for wear.

Sancho, relieved to find Q alive, clambers down.

SANCHO

Master!

Q

Sancho - back so soon! Did thou use magic to speed thy journey?

He extends his hand to be kissed.

SANCHO

(starts to kiss it)

Well, yes, I --

He SCREAMS as Cardenio leaps into their midst.

Q

Be not afraid. He has been seeing to my meager wants.

Sure enough, Cardenio has landed with a bunch of sticks with which he fuels the fire. He looks and growls slightly.

Q

He remains harmless but refuses to speak.

CARDENIO

Mmmffgh.

SANCHO

Aha. Interesting. Master --

Q

Well, keep me not in suspense, Sancho. How fares my lady Dulcinea?

Sancho reacts. He'd forgotten about this part.

SANCHO

Well, your Grace, you know I revere her as I would a relic. Not that she is one. I mean merely that she is holy --

Q
Task me not, good squire, but tell me. Where did she receive you, in her bower? Was she stringing pearls together or embroidering with golden thread?

SANCHO
Your Grace, I hate to change the subject, but on my way back there I encountered Padre Perez and, uh, a fair damsel in distress.

Q
(alert)
A damsel in distress?

45 EXT. THE FIRST CLEARING - DAY

Q, Sancho and Cardenio (still ape-like), listen intently. The Stableboy, in a dubious falsetto, tries to tell his story.

STABLEBOY
I am the Princess Micro-nesia.

PADRE PEREZ
(annoyed)
Micomicona.

STABLEBOY
Right. And my father's kingdom is threatened by an ogre --

PADRE PEREZ
A giant.

Q
(concerned)
A giant?

STABLEBOY
Uh huh. His name is - (he frowns)

PADRE PEREZ
Pandolfo. You told me Pandolfo.

STABLEBOY
That's it, and he -- stop that!

This to Cardenio who has been sniffing him suspiciously. Cardenio retreats with a snarl.

Q
Go on, fair mistress, I am all attention.

STABLEBOY
Anyway, this Ogre --

Q
Giant --

PADRE PEREZ
Pandolfo --

STABLEBOY
Right, has been eating up all the men of the kingdom. My father believes only the great Don Quixote de la Mancha can defeat him in combat and so has sent me to find him and implore his aid. It's that way.

He speaks rapidly, having got to the part he remembered.

Q
Dreadful tale.

SANCHO
You can say that again.

Perez shoots him a look.

Q
We leave at once to rescue the Princess' kingdom. A knight cannot refuse those in need. 'Tis the saddest tale I ever heard.

PADRE PEREZ
I cannot imagine a sadder.

VOICE
(as if responding to the challenge)
Ah, woe is me! Will this wild spot serve as the hidden grave for one whom life is an intolerable burden?

All react, including Cardenio, and turn to look over the back of the ridge they've been sitting on.

ANGLE THEIR POV

Bathing his naked feet in a stream is a YOUTH, weeping.

ANGLE ON THEIR REACTIONS

They look like a group out of THE WIZARD OF OZ.

The Youth, meanwhile, removes his cap, revealing a flowing head of beautiful russet hair and a gorgeous face. It's a girl in boy's clothing! Cardenio reacts with a surprised snarl causing the maid to look up. She's terrified.

GIRL

But who comes now? Are these my executioners?

She stands, prepared to run. Quite a figure.

SANCHO

Forget about Dulcinea, Master.
Marry this one.

Q

(slams Sancho's ribs)
For shame, Sancho!

SANCHO

It was just an idea.

PADRE PEREZ

(reveals his curate's garb)
Nay, fear not, mistress, for we'll
not harm thee.

WIPE TO:

46 LATER - THE SAME

The GIRL stands before them. Time for her story.

GIRL

Since you gentlemen have seen through
my disguise, I shall tell you all.
I came to this place to go mad
and to die.

SANCHO

You, too? These mountains must
be jammed.

Q

Hush.

GIRL

I come from a poor but honorable
peasant family. We live in
Andalusia, not far from Duke
Ricardo's court.

Cardenio sticks his fist in his mouth.

GIRL

It was my misfortune to capture
the affections of the Duke's eldest
son, Don Fernando --

CARDENIO

MMMFMMUGHGH!

GIRL

I did my maidenly best to protect
my virtue, but the importunate
Duke's son was ceaseless in his
attentions and not to be denied.

More frantic mumbles, he starts chewing on Sancho's shirt.

Q

Go on.

GIRL

But when he had robbed me of my
most precious possession, instead
of keeping his promise to make
me his wife, Don Fernando went
off in the company of his friend
Cardenio...

Cardenio is beside himself, the others pay no attention.

GIRL

...and to his village, where he
met, fell in love with and married
Cardenio's own betrothed, one
Luscinda.

CARDENIO

AHHHHHH!!!

GIRL

(still missing it)
And left me to my shame. Unable
to face my parents or the world,
I came here to die.

Q

Then you are --?

GIRL

My name is Dorotea.

Cardenio screams and falls into a faint. She reacts.

Q

And that is none other than the
selfsame Cardenio.

DOROTEA

Ahh!!

She faints.

WIPE TO:

47 EXT. ON THE ROAD AGAIN - DAY

All are mounted, moving again, save Cardenio and Dorotea, who walk behind with eyes only for each other. The mountains now recede in the BG.

SANCHO

That's what I call a good deed.

Q

...Of course we still must rescue the Princess Micronesia.

PADRE PEREZ

(automatically)

Micromicon. Of course.

They ride by, allowing us to HEAR

CARDENIO

...and I will gladly lay my life at your feet in compensation for your ghastly ordeal, devoting every effort to secure your happiness. Who except in fiction, would dare to have arranged such an encounter?

DOROTEA

(looks fondly)

Perhaps you'd let me trim your hair...

48 EXT. THE FALLEN MOOR INN - NIGHTFALL

Again the inn!

SANCHO

(seeing it)

I'm not going in there.

Q

Be at ease, Sancho, for lightning strikes not twice in the same place.

Sancho is dubious.

49 INT. INN MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

The little party enters, bustling with their clothes and property.

Suddenly across the room, a MAN cries out - THE BARBER!

BARBER
My shaving basin!

SANCHO
Uh oh --

Another man, this one in UNIFORM, sees Q.

UNIFORMED MAN
My galley slaves!

He's one of the guards Q chased away when he freed the convicts.

A FROZEN MOMENT, BROKEN BY

LANDLORD
My Inn!

SANCHO
Three strikes and we're out! Run,
your Grace!

And all hell breaks loose. Wild pandemonium as Sancho tries to help Q escape as the Barber and the Uniformed GUARD and his MEN, plus the Landlord and his Wife, come at them from all directions. Padre Perez tries to stem the tide, the Stableboy's wig is ripped off, causing him to scream, "My hair!" etc.

Q is astonished by the loss of it, still more so by the boy's fisticuffs. It's getting pretty crazy when we

ABRUPTLY CUT TO:

50 EXT. INN - DAY

Arms around each other and tears flowing down their cheeks, a cleaned-up Cardenio and Dorotea wave a choked up farewell to Someone O.S. Suspiciously, Rosinante and the mule are next to them. The animals don't look happy, either.

Q waves back. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL

Q is in a wooden cage, on a tumbrel cart, under arrest, surrounded by an armed guard.

At a signal, the entire cavalcade moves off, Sancho walking glumly alongside Q, while Padre Perez urges his mule forward to bring him next to the COLUMN'S COMMANDER.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

51 THE SAME, ON THE ROAD - LATER

PADRE PEREZ

But I paid for the shaving basin,
and the damage to the Inn! Surely
you can make an exception...

COMMANDER

No exceptions can be made for aiding
the escape of criminals.

PADRE PEREZ

But he doesn't understand...

and so forth. We drift back to the cage wherein Q rides
calmly.

SANCHO

(desperate)

You still maintain this is a
triumphal carriage?

Q

I do.

SANCHO

Then how do you explain these bars,
this armed guard, Master? I know
what I see.

Q

'Tis the work of the Enchanter
that makes all seem thus.

SANCHO

Him again. What about Mambrini's
Golden Helmet? It didn't do you
a lick of good.

Q

Perhaps my heart was not pure enough.

SANCHO

Your Grace, I know where the toast
is buttered. You must deal with
reality.

Q

It is a mistake to act only on
appearances. Does the sun really
set at night, or does the earth
spin away from it? Reality can
also be what we feel.

Sancho looks around anxiously, it is hard for him to take this
in at the moment. He licks his lips; how to get through
to him?

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Master, do you have to act upon
 a call of nature?

Q
 (brought slightly to earth)
 Since you mention it, Sancho.

SANCHO
 Number one or number two?

Q
 As it happens, number two.

SANCHO
 (explodes)
 WELL, WHOEVER HEARD OF HAVING TO
 TAKE A SHIT IN THE MIDDLE OF BEING
 ENCHANTED!!!???

Q is stunned. He hadn't thought of this. He now realizes
 Sancho has been telling the truth. *

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Do you still carry any of the wise
 Urganda's sovereign remedy?

Q
 I do but I assure you I have no
 need of it.

SANCHO
 Give it to me, your Grace. *

WIDE ANGLE

The column. Sancho runs from the cage to the Commander
 at its head, yelling.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Hold on! Hold on! Commander!

CLOSER

Sancho reaches the Commander, next to Padre Perez on his
 horse.

COMMANDER
 What is it?

SANCHO
 (breathless)
 My Master... a call of nature...

The man reacts.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

(desperate)

He's been behaving himself ever since you stuck him in that thing... it's been hours!

COMMANDER

Very well, take him off. Under Guard, mind.

SANCHO

Right. Better have your men far upwind, Captain. He's an old man and when he lets go it won't be for the faint-hearted.

The Commander makes a face.

52 EXT. THE SIDE OF THE ROAD - LATER

Stillness. The entire column camped, waiting. Flies buzz.

53 A CLUMP OF BUSHES TO THE REAR

Sancho stands next to the GUARD. He talks to the bush.

SANCHO

Everything all right, Master?

Q'S VOICE

Leave me be, I say.

SANCHO

(smiles at the guard)

Just asking.

(Sotto Voce)

Old folks -- so testy.

The GUARD, a HUGE, POCK-MARKED VETERAN, who hasn't seen a shower in forty years, says nothing. Studies that bush.

Sancho frowns. This is going to be tough.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

That a boil on your neck? Whew, it must chafe against the collar of your cuirass.

The Guard stares at him.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

(hasty)

No offense. It's just that I happen to be carrying a remedy for boils -- and just about everything else, as a matter of fact.

He produces Q's flask.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Heat stroke, baldness, clap,
vapors...

In the middle of his catalogue, not taking his eyes off Q's bush, the Guard simply snatches the flask from him and wolfs it down. Sancho's eyes pop open. The Guard tosses away the empty flask.

SANCHO
(breathless)
That should do it...

For a moment, nothing. Then, a strange, puzzled expression comes over the Guard's face; his eyes start to bulge...

54 WIDE ANGLE

The column, as before. SUDDENLY IS HEARD a succession of FARTS, BELCHES and RETCHING. Men react by ducking their heads...

55 AT THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN

The Stableboy faints. The Commander covers his nose with a handkerchief. Padre Perez mutters a Hail Mary.

56 BACK AT THE BUSH

The Guard is doubled over with intestinal pain, helpless. Sancho rages at the bush.

SANCHO
Hurry, your Grace. You can finish
later!

Q emerges, tightening his belt. He sniffs, regards the Guard.

Q
What ails the varlet?

SANCHO
He sampled Urganda's special remedy
for boils; come along, Master!

Sancho plucks him by the sleeve and leads him over a ridge and out of frame.

Q'S VOICE
The Elixir! It cannot have been
fresh.

SANCHO'S VOICE
You'd never know it.

57 WIDE ANGLE

The column, still paralyzed by the stench and sounds.

58 EXT. INN COURTYARD

Maritornes crosses to the stables with feed for Rosinante and Sancho's mule.

She reacts to something.

ANGLE HER POV

The two stalls are empty!

59 EXT. PICTURESQUE RIDGE - SUNSET

Over the ridge appear Q and Sancho, mounted in full-regalia, with shaving basin, proper lance, etc. Ta-Dah! Back in the saddle again.

SANCHO

I knew that stuff was good for something.

Q

Mens corpor in corpore sano, Sancho.

SANCHO

Which means?

Q

The best is yet to come!

And they ride triumphantly into the sunset.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

60 EXT. PLAIN - DAY

Hot and dusty. The sound of Cicadas. A lone, covered carriage makes its way along the road. It flies the ROYAL COAT OF ARMS on its pennants.

CLOSER

The DRIVER is sleepily eating lunch when he looks up.

A bare-headed knight in armor is seated on horseback.

The driver blinks. Boy, that sun plays tricks.

Q

Stand and give the word.

DRIVER

Sweet margarine..

Q
That's not the word. Who goes there?

DRIVER
You see this standard? This carriage and its contents are the property of his most Catholic majesty, and not to be interfered with.

As if to punctuate this, we hear a terrific ROAR within.
Q reacts, comes forward a bit.

Q
What are the contents?

Another ROAR and a GIANT PAW rips through the tarpaulin!

DRIVER
I bear a caged lion, a gift for the King from the Governor of Oran.

Q, up close, stares at the giant claw - the driver chuckles.

DRIVER (Cont'd)
Beware, sir, he'll eat you as soon as look at you.

Q says nothing, wheels Rosinante about, and rides over the near ridge. The Driver shakes his head - loonies out here.

61 EXT. Q'S CAMP - DAY

Sancho is eating breakfast - some sort of cereal - using Q's shaving basin/helmet as the bowl.

Q thunders up on Rosinante, still looking over his shoulder at the ridge, very excited.

Q
Quick, my helmet!

SANCHO
Your -?

Q
(still looking back to where he left the carriage)
Hurry, I say!

Sancho hands it to him and he claps it on his head, where the cereal streams down. It takes him a second to realize.

Q
Are my brains melting?

SANCHO
(dry)
Impossible.

Q tastes it.

Q
This is cereal!

SANCHO
Don't look at me. Must be the
Enchanter.

Q does look at him - hard. Sancho bats his lashes.

Q
Another time and I would chastise
thee, squire Sancho. As it happens,
I am in danger of missing my greatest
adventure yet!

And wearing the helmet, he takes off over the ridge again.
Sancho is puzzled.

SANCHO
His greatest adventure?

Curious, he starts after on foot.

62 BACK AT THE ROAD

The cart moves slowly and Q comes galloping back for it.

Q
Halt!

DRIVER
You again, wearing your breakfast.

Q
Pull off yon tarpaulin and open
the cage!

DRIVER
Are you mad?

Q
Do as I say, for I will do battle
with your beast!

He jabs effectively with his lance at the driver, who shirks
and under its point, he reluctantly pulls off the tarp.
There's a Lion in there, all right. And he's huge, blinking
at the daylight.

ANGLE ON SANCHO

reacting from atop the ridge.

SANCHO
Sweet Jesus.

DRIVER
I beg you, no more! He'll kill
us both!

Q
If you have no stomach for glory,
depart! I will myself open the
cage.

Sancho starts running.

SANCHO
WAAIIIIITTTTT!!!! MASTER --

DRIVER
You know this idiot?

Sancho instantly switches gears.

SANCHO
Who, me?

Q
Open, I say!

DRIVER
At least let me unhitch the team,
so they don't get eaten as well.

Q and the Lion are staring at each other.

Q
(planning his strategy)
I think I will do combat on foot,
lest the beast frighten my steed.

And he dismounts.

Q (Cont'd)
Sancho, take trusty Rosinante.

SANCHO
(takes the reins)
Master, can we talk for a minute?

Q
(adjusting his armor, gauntlets,
etc.)
You need have no fear, my son.
I wear the golden helmet of Mambrino.

SANCHO

Can I get under it, too?

Q

Withdraw, squire Sancho, that the King of Beasts and I shall have no interruption.

Sancho starts to object, but sees the driver moving off with his mules, and changes his mind.

SANCHO

It's been nice knowing you, your Grace.

Q

Cowards die many times before their death, the valiant only taste of death but once.

SANCHO

I don't even want a taste.

Q

Should I die, commend me to my Lady Dulcinea.

As he moves towards the door of the cage, Sancho and Rosinante scramble over the ridge next to the driver.

Q approaches the cage, nerves himself, draws his sword, then throws open the door.

The Lion looks at him.

Q looks at the Lion.

The Lion yawns.

Q

I defy thee, beast!

The Lion thinks about this, blinks, rolls over. Goes to sleep.

Q walks up to the Lion.

Sancho closes his eyes, and prays.

The Lion doesn't move. Q turns around like a matador and presents the Lion his exposed neck and head.

The Lion is bored.

Q

(calls to Sancho)
You see, he refused my challenge!

SANCHO
(eager)
So he did! Close the door, Master.

Q
You agree I gave him his chance?

SANCHO
Yes, yes, yes! Close the door!

Q
And he fears to confront me?

SANCHO
CLOSE THE GODDAMN DOOR!

Q considers, closes it. Sancho looks at the driver, and faints.

ABRUPT CUT TO:

63 EXT. EL TOBOSO - NIGHT

A really small, white-washed burg. You can still go there and it hasn't changed.

Q and Sancho quietly lead their mounts through the empty streets. Q's armor clanks but that's it.

SANCHO
Are you sure this is such a good idea, Master?

Q
What sayest thou, Sancho?

SANCHO
Those men are still searching for us, your Grace. We should be trying to put some distance between us. This is only El Toboso.

Q
Only! Is not El Toboso the home of my lady? Wouldst have me take no leave of she who holds my captive heart? Knowest thou not how I have longed for this moment, Sancho? Take me to her.

SANCHO
Me?

Q
Of course thou.

SANCHO
I've never met her.

Q
What? Didst thou not here deliver
my letter unto her?

SANCHO
(snaps his fingers)
Uh, right. That's right.

Q
Well, then. Escort me to her palace.

SANCHO
(frowns)
Her palace.

This is gonna be tricky. He looks around. El Toboso is,
as always, no help.

Unless you count the sow and her litter sleeping in the middle
of the street, refusing to budge for them.

ANGLE ON Sancho
looking anxious.

Q
Well? Which way lie her turrets?

SANCHO
Her turrets.

He shakes his head.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Uh, I think it's this way.

He hasn't got a clue. Then suddenly it comes to him. He
stops short, causing Q to bump into him.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
Your Grace!

Q
Eh?

SANCHO
Your Grace, we're making a big
mistake.

Q
What meanest thou?

SANCHO

(vamping)

I meanest - well, it's the middle of the night. She's probably getting her beauty rest. You wanna wake her up? She might be frightened out of her wits...

Q

But --

SANCHO

And don't forget, you're a hunted knight. You don't want to lead them right to Lady Dul, do you? She might get into big trouble.

Q

Hmm.

SANCHO

Listen to me, Master. Let's get you bedded down in the field outside the town - the sort of thing you do so well - and in the morning, I'll bring her to you!

Q looks at him.

Q

A good plan, Sancho!

SANCHO

(retrieved)

Thanks, Master.

Q

Let's withdraw quietly now.

SANCHO

Quietly. Good.

They retrace their steps...

but forget about the pig lying in the road, over whom they trip in a cacophony of crashing armour and FURIOUS OINKING AND GRUNTING as we

WIPE TO:

64 EXT. FIELD - DAY

Q and Sancho have passed the night. Now Q waves to Sancho as he heads towards town.

Q

Fail me not, faithful squire.

SANCHO

Fear not, Master. I'll bring her to you!

He turns from Q to face the CAMERA in CU.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Anyone got any bright ideas?

He stumps along unhappily, abruptly sits by the roadside. In the BG, 3 PEASANT GIRLS on mules head for work in the fields.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

What a mess. Let's face it, if I don't bring him lady Dul I might as well give up on my island.

He sees the CAMERA.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

I know. You think there isn't going to be any island and Sancho is a fool for keeping company with a crazy man. But what about the gold we found in the mountains? Of course, I had to send it back to the little woman. The point is, he didn't see it as gold, he saw --

Sancho snaps his fingers.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Wait a minute! This man thinks inns are castles and waterfalls are dragons!

He looks at the peasant girls over in the field. Color them... earthy.

BACK TO WHERE Q

paces restlessly, waiting for word. Sancho comes running back, out of breath and exhilarated.

SANCHO

Your Grace, she comes!

Q is overwhelmed. He grasps Sancho intensely.

Q

Verily?

SANCHO

Absolutely verily. You can't miss her; she's on a white horse.

Q
(overlapping)
Caparisoned in red leather...

SANCHO
That's the one; attended by two
handmaidens...

Q
Mounted on grey palfreys...

SANCHO
Whatever. They're gorgeous,
gorgeous...

Q
Lead me to her!

He hobbles forth unsteadily on his armored legs, clutching Sancho for support, as they head in the direction of the girls.

65 EXT. THE FIELD - DAY

In the distance the girls work the plow, one sitting on a mule as the others pull on the ground. The furrow they're working will bring them to Q and Sancho.

Q looks around, puzzled.

Q
Where is she?

SANCHO
What are you talking about? There!
All in gold!

Q
(frowning)
I see only three plowmaids.

SANCHO
Three --? You must be joking.
They're princesses!

Q squints, dumbfounded as the girls get nearer.

Q
(grim)
It's Freston.

SANCHO
The Enchanter?

Q
(nods)
He's cursed me again.

SANCHO
That's a shame. This is terrible.

Q
(pitiful)
Describe her to me.

SANCHO
Well, she's - she's everything
you ever said she was, Master.
And more. Her beauty outshines
the sun.

No idle remark. The sun is indeed BEHIND the GIRL as she
draws nearer. Q sinks to his knees with a giant sigh,
squinting into the boiling orb.

Q
Ah, cursed Freston, thus to have
enchanted my lady Dulcinea from
my sight alone. Thou seest her,
Sancho?

SANCHO
Oh, I seest, all right.

The plow comes athwart Q, who flings himself before it,
blinking madly into the glowing sun.

Q
O, beauteous Dulcinea, let me but
prostrate myself before thee and
swear my eternal fealty.

ANGLE HIS POV

She's backlit - but we glimpse the REAL DULCINEA, a
beautifully dressed medieval princess. The Horse looks good,
too.

FIRST PLOWGIRL'S VOICE
What's wrong with him?

SANCHO
He just wants to be friends.

Q blinking like mad, sun-tears streaming down his cheeks.

Q
I almost see thee, lady..!

AGAIN HIS POV: the princess!

PLOWGIRL
Friends?

SANCHO

Give him a chance.

The sun or the girl changes position and suddenly she's the plowmaid again. Q's tears are from the sun, or...?

Q

Ah, be not ashamed that in my sight
they visage is coarse and plain.
I understand too well the spell
cast upon thee.

1ST PLOWGIRL

Here - who's he calling plain?

She starts to dig in her heels.

SANCHO

It'll only take a minute. Hang
on.

1ST PLOWGIRL

The hell I will!

She makes to kick but is so vigorous she slides off the mule to the earth. In an instant Q is at her side.

Q

My lady! Allow me to --

1ST PLOWGIRL

(frightened)

Get away from me, old man!

She frees herself aggressively and scrambles back on the mule. The other girls mount and they take off, leaving Q on his knees in the muddy furrow. From the distance, LAUGHTER.

Q

How pitiful.

ANGLE ON SANCHO

looking at Q, thinking the same thing.

Q (Cont'd)

He even put raw garlic on her breath.

SANCHO

That's adding insult to injury.
But cheer up, Master, at least
you got to see her, even if she
was enchanted. And you know what
they say: you can't make an omlette
without stealing eggs.

66 ON THE ROAD AGAIN - Q is in a brown study.

Q
Breaking eggs.

SANCHO
Huh?

Q
Breaking eggs. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, not stealing them. Where do you get such nonsense? *

SANCHO
I can't help it, your Grace, as the scorpion said when he stung the frog that was carrying him across the stream - it's my nature.

A distant CREAKING is heard, like the one during our opening credits. It gets nearer as they ride, though they are only looking at each other.

Q
There is a difference, friend Sancho, between an explanation and an excuse.

SANCHO
(hasty)
Believe me, your Grace, I wasn't explaining; I was excusing. Your grace has the infinite advantage of education. I look at a thing and see it at face value. I know no better. Why, until I entered your service, Master, I didn't even suspect there was a difference between appearance and reality.

Q is looking past him oddly.

Q
(coldly)
But now you know.

SANCHO
Oh, certainly. Show me a plowmaid and I'll show you a princess - what is it?

Q has reined in, stares fixedly. The CREAKING is LOUDER.

Q
(finally)
Him.

Sancho is afraid to look in the same direction.

SANCHO

You mean --?

Q nods. Sancho is frozen with terror.

Q

Hear him? He's calling to me.
Challenging me in that squeaky
voice of his. He who cast a spell
and denied me the sight of my
beauteous lady.

He's quietly enraged and has arranged his lance, shield
and reins for combat.

SANCHO

(doesn't dare say it)

The Ench?

He turns slowly to look.

ANGLE THEIR POV

It's a windmill, the blades CREAKING in the wind.

Q

See him hurling down gauntlet after
gauntlet, calling me slave and
mocking my credo?

A DISTANT ANGLE OF

Q and Sancho across from the windmill as Q readies his charge.

CAMERA PANS SLIGHTLY TO REVEAL

A BEAUTIFUL NOBLEWOMAN

astride a magnificent horse, a falcon on her arm. She's
dressed straight out of Velazquez, and right now, she's
smiling with happy disbelief. She leans over to a similarly
dressed MAN next to her and says something. He gallops
off.

BACK TO SANCHO AND Q.

Sancho licks his lips.

SANCHO

Master, I could be wrong, but I
think that's a --

Q

SANTIAGO!!!

He charges.

SANCHO

-- windmill.

Q hurtles towards the windmill. SEVERAL ANGLES of imminent impact, each more terrifying than the last.

ANGLE ON THE NOBLEWOMAN

watching from her vantage point, shielding her eyes from the sun.

Q hurls himself at the tower of the windmill, but a turning blade interposes and he impales it with his lance.

The blade keeps rising and as Q does not relinquish the lance, he is pulled out of Rosinante's saddle and rises with it.

CLOSER ON THE WINDMILL

Q climbs up his lance and clutches at the blade, stabbing furiously at it as he whirls around - like Ahab striking insanely at Moby Dick, while caught in his own harpoon line.

Q

I challenge thee, vile spirit!
I believe in belief! I have faith
in faith! Do thy worst upon my
body, upon my soul thou shalt never
prevail!

The windmill does its best.

Q (Cont'd)

I believe in justice and mercy
for all: I believe in the goodness
of men and women...!

But he can hold on no longer and drops off on a low pass. The windmill keeps on turning as Sancho races up.

SANCHO

Master?

He helps the dazed Q sit up, mercifully unhurt. Together they stare up at the thing.

SANCHO

I told you.

Q

A windmill.

(shrugs with a feeble attempt
at being philosophical)

Well, you've got to give him credit.

SANCHO

The Ench?

Q

He dreams up the oddest shapes.

They are suddenly aware they are surrounded. Looking up, they see they are circled by a gay cavalcade of HORSEMEN and WOMEN, gorgeously appareled, with banners flapping in the breeze.

Q and Sancho don't know what to make of this.

SANCHO

Are you the owners? He didn't do any damage.

DUCHESS

Have we the inestimable honor of addressing none other than that formidable knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, also known as the Knight of the Mournful Countenance?

DUKE

And his no less noteworthy squire, Sancho Panza?

Sancho is stunned. He helps Q up.

Q

(bows awkwardly)

I am that knight of whom you speak.

SANCHO

Are we under arrest?

DUKE

I am the Duke of Barataria and these are my domains to which my wife, the Duchess, and I welcome you both with honor. Will you stop with us?

SANCHO

We just did.

DUCHESS

(explains)

Will you accept our hospitality? We have already sent word and preparations are underway, worthy, we hope, of your visit.

Q is slowly trying to put all this together.

Q
We accept right willingly. May
I ask --

DUKE
Yes?

Q
How it is that we are known to
your worships?

DUCHESS
(laughs)
Good Sir Knight, like all of Spain,
we have read the book!

Q reacts. An abrupt

CUT TO:

ALL on HORSEBACK, thundering across the plain, banners flying.
Q holds on to old Rosinante for dear life.

Q
Book? What book?

DUCHESS
"THE INGENIOUS GENTLEMAN, DON QUIXOTE
DE LA MANCHA." All the world knows
of your adventures on behalf of
the most peerless beauty in all
Spain, Dulcinea del Toboso.

SANCHO
You're not so bad yourself, Miss.

Q
Be still. Who could have written
such a book?

67 FLASHBACK TO THE FIRST INN WHERE

The WELL-DRESSED GENTLEMAN writes Dulcinea's name beneath that
of Q. So!

68 EXT. DUKE'S CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

Q and Sancho's tumultuous entry to cheering throngs and
crowds, trumpets and flowers. The Duke has spared no expense.
Sancho is dazzled, so is Q. This is the world of knighthood
he talks about, apparently come to life!

Hundreds of people, drums beating, lots of pageantry, etc.

SANCHO
I didn't realize the book was this
good.

Neither did Q.

DUCHESS

Will there be a sequel?

SANCHO

Nah, sequels are never as much fun as the original...

Q

Sancho!

SANCHO

Of course there are exceptions...

Now they have reached the steps and they dismount, assisted by SERVANTS, all APPROPRIATELY garbed.

As Q mounts the steps, an elderly LADY approaches him.

LADY

I lay my heart at your feet, Sir Knight.

Q

Alas, your ladyship, my heart is pledged to another.

With a shriek, she faints dead away! Q frowns, leaves her to the other LADIES who tend her as he continues up the stairs.

69 INT. THE GREAT HALL - LATER

A FEAST for all. Q and Sancho together, Sancho stuffing himself. Q eats more gingerly as the Duke, Duchess and other carefully garbed GUESTS do likewise, but all watch Q.

SANCHO

(surreptitious)

Do you think he got our characters right?

Q

Who?

SANCHO

In that book. I don't want to be made a monkey by some writer who can't write.

A SERVANT places a large fingerbowl and soap for Q's use.

Q

That is a point which ought to be considered. We don't want to appear foolish.

He starts washing his beard in the bowl, to the hilarity of the on-lookers.

The DUKE silences all with a cough as Q looks up, perplexed.

Then the Duke himself proceeds to wash his beard in like manner, so as to reassure Q, who now has plenty of suds going.

Out of his sight, the Duke makes a SIGNAL and a MESSENGER streaks in, all out of breath.

MESSENGER

Is the noble knight Don Quixote
de la Mancha in presence here?
There come maidens seeking a boon.

Q looks up.

The Messenger stands aside, allowing for the impressive shuffling entry of thirty identically dressed MAIDENS, all of whose faces are covered with VEILS. The whole thing is right out of a Fellini movie. Give the Duke credit. As a practical joker he doesn't mess around.

DUCHESS

'Tis passing wondrous, Sir Knight.
Not an hour have you been with
us but already word is out and
there come those seeking your
assistance.

ANGLE ON Q

passing wondrous all right. He still can't figure it.

One of the veiled MAIDS stands forth.

MAID

(an uneasy falsetto)
Is the Knight Immaculatissimus
Don Quixote de La Mancha and his
Squirrissimus Sancho Panza here?

Q looks at Sancho, a bit bewildered. Sancho steps forward.

SANCHO

Don Quixotemus and Sancho Panzamus
are hereinmus and readymus to be
of serviceimuss to you.

MAID

Oh, great Sancho Panzimus, cans't
thou plead our case before that
great champion of causes all but
lost, he who --

SANCHO

All right, I said we'd help. What's wrong?

The Duke, Duchess and their crowd are enjoying every minute.

MAID

Verily, we are all duennas from the kingdom of Candaya, in charge of the keeping of the Princess Infanta Antonomasia.

SANCHO

All of you duennas for one little Infanta?

MAID

Alas, all of us were not enough. We were distracted by the wiles of Don Clavijo, and by his poetry.

SANCHO

His poetry?

MAID

(nods)

And now, alas, the Princess Antonomasia has been compromised for all to see.

SANCHO

You mean the Infanta's going to have another Infanta?

A stifled sob from all the veiled duennas.

SANCHO

(to Q)

What a world. It's the same all over, isn't it, your Grace? A little poetry goes a long way.

MAID

Thou hast not heard the worst, dread sire. The Princess married Don Clavijo, who was beneath her.

SANCHO

He was beneath her?

Sancho hesitates, thinking about it.

SANCHO (Cont'd)

Nah, go on.

MAID
And three days later we buried
her mother, Queen Dona Maguncia.

SANCHO
Was she dead?

MAID
Of course. We only bury dead people
in our country. She died of grief.

SANCHO
This is so sad.

MAID
The saddest is yet to come, for
now arrived the Queen's cousin,
a terrible Enchanter named --

Q
(suddenly)
Freston?

MAID
The same. Enraged at the fate
of the Queen and our dereliction
of responsibility, he laid a curse
on all us duennas, Behold!

They whip off their veils. ALL HAVE BEARDS!!

Q and Sancho are astonished. The simplest explanation never
occurs to either. Sancho inspects one or two up close.

SANCHO
This is awful. And I bet none
of you poor girls has enough to
buy a shave.

MAID
Too true, squire Sanchisimus.
We will not assume our normal state
until the Knight of the Mournful
Countenance meets the great Freston
in single combat.

Q
(realizing he's part of the
story)
Knight of the - that's me!

He looks around. All are looking at him. This is pretty
terrifying stuff but Q walks over to the bearded Maid.

Q (cont'd)
I am your champion.

MAID
Praise the Lord!

She starts to faint, but Sancho catches her.

SANCHO
Easy. Say, you're pretty hefty
for a duenna.

Q
How do I reach your country, that
I may do battle for your cause?

MAID
(reviving)
Tis five thousand leagues from
here.

Q
Five thousand leagues?

MAID
But shorter if you fly.

Q and SANCHO
Fly?

She claps her hands. Ominous music as the great doors to the hall swing open. To the stupefaction of Q and Sancho, there is a great wooden horse, borne upon the shoulders of many colorfully dressed men, who now bring it into the great hall.

The Duke and his wife are enjoying all of this, as are his courtiers. Their enjoyment is not malicious.

Q and Sancho are awed as the horse draws over them, enormous.

MAID
Behold the magic flying horse,
Clavileno the Swift, sent by the
Enchanter himself to bring you
to him.

Sancho sidles up to Q.

SANCHO
You want my advice? Let 'em keep
their beards.

MAID
He seats two.

SANCHO
Oh, no. I'm not doing any flying.

DUKE
Sancho Panza.

SANCHO

Sir?

DUKE

Sancho, I would fain have thee accompany thy Master on his mission of mercy.

SANCHO

You don't understand, your worship, I've been on these missions --

DUKE

(smoothly)

And as a reward for your courage when you return --

SANCHO

If I return.

DUKE

-- I promise you an island to govern.

Everything stops.

SANCHO

An island? My island?

DUKE

Yours.

Q steps forward.

Q

He'd make a rare governor, your worship.

DUKE

(kindly)

We think so, too. Well, squire Sancho?

CU Sancho: this one's a toughie.

70 TIME CUT AND

Sancho and Q are flying, BLINDFOLDED, as the wind and clouds whip past them on the horse! Sancho holds on for dear life.

SANCHO

(re: blindfold)

There's always a catch.

Q
Remember, Sancho, touch not thy
blindfold lest, at our great height,
thou shouldst become dizzy and
fall to thy death!

SANCHO
This is another fine mess you've
got us into.

A yellow light crosses them.

Q
Feel the warmth? We must e'en
be near the sun itself!

SANCHO
(to himself)
E'en? E'en?

THE CAMERA NOW PULLS BACK

shattering the illusion. The horse has not moved, but the Duke's MEN, working with many bellows, much smoke and torches passing close to Q and Sancho are creating all the effects of flight.

The Duke and his guests are enchanted.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
HOW MUCH FURTHER CAN IT BE, MASTER?

Q
I KNOW NOT. BE BRAVE, SANCHO MY
SON!

The Duke signals his Chief Steward, whose MEN now pick up the horse and carry it, Q and Sancho out the doors.

SANCHO
We must be hitting severe turbulence!

71 EXT. DUKE'S CASTLE COURTYARD - DAY

The horse is carried out and set down, followed by the Duke and Duchess and their guests. Rosinante and Sancho's mule are tethered nearby.

Q
We seem to have stopped.

SANCHO
I don't feel any wind.

They lift their blindfolds and see
the Duke and his guests, applauding.

Q and Sancho descend the horse with assistance, confused.

Q
Your Grace? How came you hither?

DUKE
It is you, brave knight, who have gone and returned again!

Q and Sancho look about in wonderment, meeting friendly smiles. They realize they are back at the Duke's.

DUKE
(puzzled)
Your daring ride has caused the great Freston to remit their punishment. Behold!

He gestures. All the MAIDS simultaneously step out of their women's clothing, revealing themselves to be, of course, BEARDED MEN.

Q is stupefied, ditto Sancho.

SANCHO
(to the camera)
What an original solution.

Q
I still don't understand...

DUKE
(kindly)
The act of your great courage in mounting this fearful steed and flying through the clouds was enough to satisfy the great Freston.

VOICE
IT WAS NOT!

The Duke reacts, startled. All turn to the courtyard gate.

There sits a KNIGHT IN BLACK ARMOUR on a black horse with black trappings. The Duke frowns, puzzled, as Q turns.

Q
Are you then Freston, the Great Enchanter?

BLACK KNIGHT
I am.

Q
Undisguised at last! Thou coward that didst transform my lady Dulcinea from her true shape.

BLACK KNIGHT

Thy lady's true shape is like a
mellon, her skin pockmarked like
the moon and her eyes are crossed.
Do you deny all this?

Q

(trembling with rage)
With my life.

BLACK KNIGHT

So be it.

CU DUKE AND DUCHESS

DUKE

Did you hire him?

Unable to look away from the terrifying knight, the Duchess
shakes her head NO vehemently.

DUKE (Cont'd)

I don't like this. He'll be hurt.

Q

What is your challenge?

BLACK KNIGHT

Single combat. If I lose, my life
shall pay the penalty of the forfeit.

Q

Agreed.

He starts towards Rosinante.

BLACK KNIGHT

One moment. There is always the
possibility, Sir Knight, that you
will lose.

Q hesitates; he knows somehow this fight isn't like all
the rest.

Q

And if I do?

BLACK KNIGHT

I must have your knightly promise
to return to the house of Senor
Quijana, there to stay for one
year, desisting in the practice
of knight errantry.

So that's it. Long pause.

Q
I swear it.

And he mounts up.

CU DUKE AND DUCHESS

DUCHESS
(frantic)
You must stop this!

DUKE
(ad libbing)
Sir Knight, will you, uh, hold
for a parley?

BLACK KNIGHT
Does Don Quixote ask me to hold?

ANGLE ON Q

frightened. Sancho runs up and grabs the reins.

SANCHO
Hold, your Grace! You know what
they say: whether the stone hits
the pitcher or the pitcher hits
the stone, it's gonna be bad for
the pitcher.

Q looks at him sadly, then over at the Black Knight.

Q
(loudly)
I do not ask you to hold.

BLACK KNIGHT
Then let the combat begin!

Q pulls the reins out of helpless Sancho's grasp.

The horses have squared off across the courtyard, enough space
for a run. People scramble out of the way.

CU SANCHO, mortally afraid.

CU THE DUKE AND DUCHESS - The last thing they intended.

Q
(quavering)
May God defend the right!

And they charge. SEVERAL VERY FAST ANGLES AND WHAM!

Q goes flying, unhorsed easily and lying prone on the ground.
A GASP from ALL. Sancho is frozen. Rosinante limps.

The BLACK KNIGHT RIDES OVER TO Q

BLACK KNIGHT
Art thou vanquished, Sir Knight?

Long pause. Is Q dead? He's pale with shock. This is his first and only real fight.

Q
(finally)
Thou art the victor. Yet with my last breath do I maintain the Lady Dulcinea to be the most beautiful who ever lived. Now drive home thy lance, for dishonor is mine and I deserve not to see the sunset.

BLACK KNIGHT
(gently)
Never think it, Sir Knight. Honor is all yours and I freely maintain that the lady Dulcinea is the most beautiful, the most perfect maiden that ever drew breath.

Q's eyes widen in surprise.

The Black Knight pauses, almost a sob.

BLACK KNIGHT (Cont'd)
Rather I charge you to maintain your knightly vow and to return to Senor Quijana's home as you swore.

Q
(pale and very feeble)
I will keep my vow.

In response, the Black Knight rears his horse and races out the courtyard gate as everyone closes in on the stricken Q.

Except the Duke, who, seizing another horse, gallops after the Black Knight.

SEVERAL ANGLES

The Black Knight is unaware that he is being pursued.

When he judges he is far enough away, he stops under a tree and dismounts, pulling off his helmet.

As he does so, the Duke rides up at a gallop and dismounts in time to see the helmet coming off, REVEALING

The bespectacled SANSON CARRASCO!

DUKE

Who are you?

SANSON

(sweating and out of breath)
I am Doctor Sanson Carrasco. I
come from Senor Quijana's village
and I am a friend of his.

DUKE

Friend?

SANSON

You don't understand. They were
going to bring him back in a cage,
like an animal. I found a way
to bring him back of his own accord.
In a year, surely-

DUKE

In a year! Have you any idea what
you've accomplished? Any idea
at all? May God forgive you for
the wrong you have done the world
by seeking to deprive it of its
most charming madman. He harmed
no one and brought joy to thousands.
Bring him to his senses and he
will have no reason to live! Destroy
him and you destroy his noble squire
and turn to ashes the happiness
they conferred on all they met.

The Duke is crying and now Sanson is, too.

SANSON

I acted out of love, thinking all
for the best... forgive me.

He's only a kid. The Duke grabs him and clasps him hard.

DUKE

I forgive you.

(pause)

I cannot speak for the world.

He holds him.

72 EXT. HORIZON - DUSK.

Rosinante limps along, Q's armor piled on it's back. Q
himself sits on Sancho's mule as Sancho leads him along.

SANCHO
 (finally)
 Look, your Grace, is that a castle
 hard by?

Q takes forever to look.

Q
 That's an Inn, Sancho.

SANCHO
 (alarmed)
 Really? I could swear it's a castle.

Q
 (firm)
 It's an Inn.

They move on.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

73 EXT. Q'S VILLAGE - DAY

A view from the single chicken-cluttered street, favoring the road which approaches the town.

Coming up that road are Q and Sancho, positioned as before.

They pass a farmhouse at the edge of the town. Out of the second story window, a LARGE WOMAN appears excitedly.

LARGE WOMAN
 SANCHO!!!

Sancho and Q (more slowly) turn and look.

LARGE WOMAN (Cont'd)
 Sancho, you lazy devil-taken son
 of a pig! You run off and leave
 me and the children and never say
 nothing! What kind of a father
 are you? What kind of husband
 for your little Teresa...

SANCHO
 But my angle, my sweet honeybee.
 Look. I bring you gold. We are
 rich!

LARGE WOMAN
 (not missing a beat)
 Sancho, I love you! You're da
 best. And you know, we thought
 (more)

LARGE WOMAN (Cont'd)
 we never gonna see you no more.
 How much gold you got? Never mind.
 Oh, Sancho, my little love, my
 brave stallion.

Sancho is embarrassed by this flood of intimacy. She runs on in a kind of Chico Marx Italian accent.

LARGE WOMAN (cont'd)
 Sancho, Wait. I come to you.
 My hero. You really got gold?
 Oh, Sancho...

And her head disappears from the window.

SANCHO
 Well, looks like we're home. *

Q nods.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 Better go inside.

Q understands.

SANCHO (Cont'd)
 I'll come visit. Soon.

Q
 (slides off the mule)
 Goodbye, Sancho my son.

They shake hands.

Sancho breaks away abruptly and heads for his doorway where his TWO CHILDREN and WIFE fling themselves upon him and draw him within.

Q watches a moment, then turns to resume his journey home.

ANGLE Q'S POV

The whole town stands before him, motionless. Padre Perez, Stableboy, Housekeeper, Antonia, and more we've never met.

In BG, the NOISE of Sancho's happy reunion continues.

Q hesitates, then moves forward, leading Rosinante.

Silence as they pass wondering faces in the street.

CU SANSON watching in pain, as Q passes.

74 INT. Q'S STABLE - DAY

Q leads the horse to his stall. People watch from the doorway. Not a lot of privacy. He flings off the junk armor.

Q pats the horse, then hugs it fiercely around the neck.

Q
(muffled)
Rosinante.

75 EXT. Q'S HOUSE - DAY

The Housekeeper, the Stableboy, Antonia, etc. She's filled with anxiety as he approaches.

ANTONIA
Uncle...?

Q
(pats her head)
Antonia, my dear. Did I cause
you worry? I'm sorry.

He kisses her forehead.

Q (Cont'd)
I'll be good. Don't fret.

He goes inside. They don't know quite what to do.

76 INT. Q'S LIBRARY - DAY

Now empty. Q stands there, looking around, confused.

Padre Perez enters quietly and comes up behind him. The others stand watching in the doorway.

PADRE PEREZ
I'm sorry, Senor Quiana. We had
to burn them.

Q
Burn?

PADRE PEREZ
For your own good.

Q's eyes close.

Q
(finally)
I think I'll lie down now.

He shuffles out of the room.

Then a sudden FALLING CRASH. They react.

77 EXT. SANCHO'S FIELD - DAY

Sancho is sowing a crop, strewing seeds by hand. Suddenly he stops, just stares off into space.

78 INT. Q'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Padre Perez is hearing Q's confession.

Q
(feebly)

I hearby renounce all my former
madness. (pause) My life was
a complete failure, Padre, just
one long grotesque... joke.

Perez doesn't quite deny this but he pats his hand and goes on
in Latin.

79 EXT. SANCHO'S BARN - DAY

Sancho works at repairing the plow. The damn thing won't
cooperate. Sancho strains, sweat pouring off him.

80 INT. Q'S HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS - DAY

Padre Perez addresses Antonia, the Housekeeper, the Stableboy,
Sanson.

PADRE PEREZ

It won't be long now, Senora.
He's fading fast and very soon
God will take him to his bosom.

She gives a little snuffle. Sanson stares at the floor.

81 INT. SANCHO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sancho at dinner with his kids. Life is returning to the
ordinary humdrum that it was before Sancho left. Teresa slops
a huge portion of something onto a plate before him. Sancho
doesn't react.

TERESA

You and that crazy man running
all over the place like two idiots.

Sancho stares at the food.

TERESA (Cont'd)

You feel proud of yourself?

Sancho looks up, mild.

SANCHO

I sent you the gold we found.

TERESA

Like idiots. You made a fool of yourself. Why aren't you eating?

Sancho looks at her, looks at his plate, rises.

SANCHO

There's all kinds of dinner.

He throws down his napkin.

82 INT. Q'S ROOM - NIGHT

Starting on the armor back over the mantel. If you look closely there's a few new dents.

Then pull back to REVEAL

Q on his deathbed. Padre Perez is there and a NOTARY has written down the old man's will.

Antonia comes in. Q sees her, sort of.

ANTONIA

You have a visitor, Uncle.

She reveals Sancho, holding a parcel, looking shy.

PADRE PEREZ

(rises)

We'll be just outside. 5 minutes, Sancho.

They all withdraw. Sancho looks closely around and approaches the bed. Are Q's eyes open or closed? Does he recognize his old friend?

SANCHO

I don't think they really want me here.

Q

(finally)

They think you're a bad influence.

They can't help sharing a chuckle at that idea.

SANCHO

Don Quixote, I --

Q

My name is Alonso Quijana.

Sancho reacts.

Q (Cont'd)
Freston has laid his final curse
on me.

SANCHO
The Ench? What's the curse?

Q
(taps his head)
Sanity.

Sancho tries to conceal his reaction. He's dismayed. Pause.

Q (cont'd)
Pray you, undo this button.

He gestures, feebly. Sancho leans over and undoes it.

Q
(very close)
You never got your island.

SANCHO
(eyes filled)
You were my island. I was just
too ignorant to know it.

He licks his lips, poor desperate man.

SANCHO (CONT'D)
As a matter of fact, I wanted to
talk to you about that. You remember
how you told me that printed things
have to be true?

Q looks at him.

SANCHO (cont'd)
Well, look your Grace! Here's
the book they wrote about us.
Doctor Carrasco read it to me.
Do you know what? There's lots
of things wrong with it. For one
thing it says my wife's name is
Juanita. It's Teresa.

Q
(thinks)
A printer's mistake...

SANCHO
But there's more. There's many
adventures in this book that we
haven't even had!

Q
Adventures we haven't had?

SANCHO

We go to Camacho's wedding and meet the talking ape and visit Barcelona with the highwayman Captain Roque and then sail with the viceroy and fight pirates and you go into the cave of Montesinos by yourself and then - wait till you hear this - I really get my island!

Q

You do?

SANCHO

(urgent)

That's what it says in the book. And you know what? I'm a good governor. I do what you taught me. I really help people. I don't just (he gulps self-consciously) eat. I practice cavalry.

Q

(faint)

Chivalry.

SANCHO

Right. The thing of it is, your grace, how can this book be true if we don't go and do these things?

Q

(thinks about this)

How is Rosinante?

SANCHO

(fast)

His leg's all better.

Q

(thinks)

Semper Avarus eget.

SANCHO

Which means?

Q

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

SANCHO

(looks around carefully)

Well said. Now here's my plan.

And he starts to whisper. Q's smile broadens as THE CAMERA PULLS BACK

AND BACK AND BACK AND BACK AS WE

SLOWLY DISSOLVE TO:

83 EXT. LA MANCHA - SUNRISE

In a slightly surreal form, there but not there, Q, Rosinante, Sancho, the grey mule, the lance, the shaving basin - all the usual suspects - head into the blinding sunlight

of a new day. MUSIC SOARS.

FINIS

AFTERWORD

Adapting a novel for the screen is a form of translation, and Miguel de Cervantes, (through the medium of his alter ego, Don Quixote), had some pessimistic things to say about translation. According to Quixote, reading a translation is like viewing a Flemish tapestry with the wrong side out. The figures are there, to be sure, but hopelessly obscured by all the dangling threads that cloud the composition.

As the translator of no less a novel than the Quixote itself, I can no more ignore these words than I can fail to be daunted by them. On the other hand, Cervantes/Quixote does go on to say that some translations are so good you would never know you were reading a work not originally conceived and executed in that (other) language.

In adapting Don Quixote for the screen, that second observation became my goal. I wanted a Don Quixote as if it had been written originally for the screen and was therefore accessible to those who had never heard of the book, let alone read it.

From this important decision many choices follow logically, though perhaps equally many will inevitably disturb purists who want simply to see as much of the book replicated as literally and literarily as possible (in Spanish?), always assuming these same devotees would tolerate any form of a film derived from Cervantes' masterpiece.

Adapting any novel for the screen is almost always a process which involves condensation and elimination. When the novel is one thousand pages long, there can be little question that as much as 85 percent of the text will vanish. Novels can be a thousand pages or even more. They can while away time over an enormous period, weeks, months, years even. Films must run only two hours, give or take.

In addition, novels do not necessarily follow dramaturgical conventions, whereas films and plays must. A novel can be written in the first or third person, it can be epistolary, divided into chapters, include massive subplots. Like the

Quixote itself, it can be a sprawling, rambling, discursive, repetitive and unrevised or unedited panorama of this and that. The dramatist is offered no such opportunities for lack of discipline. His audience will not tolerate on the stage or the screen the same looseness they readily accept on the printed page. His task, then, in adapting such a novel, must be to give a pleasing theatrical shape and dramatic build to those elements of the novel he succeeds in including.

Finally, it may be observed, translation is always (and again inevitably) a collaboration between the original author and the sensibility and limitations of his translator. Such a collaboration involves not only the consciousness and artistry of two entirely different human beings, one attempting to understand and "do justice" to the work of the other, but it frequently involves two different worlds and socio-historical levels of awareness.

When the Quixote is translated by Smollet for example, it is not merely rendered into English, but into eighteenth century English, to be read by eighteenth century Englishmen, whose views and knowledge are by no means identical to those of Cervantes' seventeenth century Spanish readers.

Similarly, when Quixote is adapted for the screen by Meyer, he is also adapted by a late twentieth century American, working for the late twentieth century American film audience, who are not always aware of, let alone share, Cervantes' world view. In the tale of Cardenio, for example, Cervantes uncritically accepts Don Fernando's betrayal of Dorotea, as well as Dorotea's perverse desire to get him back. To today's audience, Don Fernando's behavior would seem chauvinistic to put it mildly and deserving of retribution. Dorotea's desires strike us as equally inexplicable. To take a larger instance, the century before Cervantes wrote, the Moors had been expelled from Spain after 800 years of occupation, a fact inescapably known to all. Most Americans don't know who the Moors were, or where Spain is, let alone that the former occupied the later. As to what such an occupation might signify for Americans, that's a thought not

worth finishing.

In short, the late 20th Century American film translator of the Quixote has had to make free and easy choices (always the hardest when dealing with a masterpiece), in order to decant Quixote from its original old bottle into a new (smaller) and differently shaped one. It is almost wrong to call the results "Don Quixote." Perhaps "Don Q" comes closer to the mark as hinting of the irreverent shortening involved.

Maybe not. Maybe this is the form of translation that Cervantes theorized about, one which makes little reference to the original, but rather (for better or worse) attempts to pass itself off as something created especially for the language in which it now appears. (Enthusiasts are referred to Borges' stunning and hilarious essay on the subject, "Pierre Menard and Don Quixote".)

It is hoped that devotees of Cervantes will bear these caveats in mind when contemplating the present film version.

NM