

# BOOKDAY

Miguel de CERVANTES died on April 23rd 1616. He was the greatest Spanish writer of all times, and his book “Don Quijote de la Mancha” is famous worldwide.

Every year, on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, we celebrate “BOOKDAY” with different activities that highlight the importance of reading. Here are some of them:

1. In many public buildings special reading sessions are organized: people come and read aloud chapters of famous Spanish books; well known politicians, writers, artists, as well as unknown citizens take turns to do it. It is always on the news that day ( newspapers, radio and TV ).
2. All bookshops in Spain have very special prices that day to encourage people to buy at least one book.
3. All schools organize cultural activities centered on books.
4. In Catalonia they have an old tradition and they call that day “día del libro y la rosa” (day of the book and the rose): all women get a rose and all men get a book from a friend or relative.

We had a big celebration at school this year, and our minister of education and our mayor came to visit.

We had a big exhibition of GAUDI’s work with beautiful pictures of his buildings, among them the “Sagrada Familia” church in Barcelona.

The language departments – Spanish, English, French, German and Latin – put up big and colourful posters with pictures and information about the main writers in each language.

There was an exhibition of old text books from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and an old classroom equipped with all kinds of teaching materials.

The school theatre group performed a little play, and the school choir gave a concert.

The winners of the different competitions received their awards:

- for best short story,
- for best poem,
- for best bookmark,
- for best poster.

Pupils and teachers could buy books at very reasonable price in a stall.

It was a change from the daily routine at school and although many teachers and pupils had to work hard we all enjoyed it.

The students of 2ºA (Torrelavega)



## DOWN BY THE RIVER PIER

It was the end of March. There was a soft atmosphere and the sun rays were glowing on the water of the river. Noah opened the gate and started walking up to the house. He could not believe his eyes: it was far more beautiful than he remembered it.

It was his family house, his own house, but after his parents' death he had no longer wanted to know anything about it, and the house had been abandoned. He had a new life in a big town now.

A long time, about six years, had passed since the day of the accident and now memories were not so painful as at the beginning: his memories, his house, his past were the only things that linked him to his parents, to his origins and, maybe, to his real identity. Noah had understood it two months ago when he had received an offer from a big building company. He had decided then that nothing was so important as that house, his house near the river.

Now Noah was there, in front of his house. It was not a dream, what he was seeing was real, real like the big old oak near the gate where he had seen Allie for the first time.

When Noah had left his house and, with it, also his past, he had gone away from Allie too. He would never meet her again, never ever, he had thought.

The sun had sunk now and for Noah the moment had come. He had to find his old self again, and begin a new life. He opened the door.

That a evening, some hours after, about twenty kilometres far, Allie was alone, sitting on the rocking chair of the portico, her bright-blue eyes gazing at the sky. She was worried. She wondered if her decision had been the right one. About one month ago Paul had asked her to marry him and she had accepted. After all, Paul was a good person, he loved her and he would take care of her. She had waited and hoped a lot, but now she was sure that Noah had definitively gone out of her life.

It was a pleasant evening of April and Noah decided to go out for a walk. He saw a lot of things that reminded him of his childhood. Suddenly he thought of the little pier where Allie and him used to

go and where they had sworn that they would have done everything in their power to protect their love. But that was a long time ago!

He went to the pier; he saw the shape of a woman in the distance. She was sitting on the edge of the pier with the face turned towards the water of the river. Like Allie used to do! he thought. Oh you fool! She will be miles away now. Slowly she turned her face. Allie. Allie, my God! For a long time they continued to look at each other in silence.

She had imagined that meeting hundred of times but now she couldn't find the words.

Memories of the time spent with him came back to her mind.

Looking at him, she noticed that Noah hadn't changed a lot: he had still a good look with his very dark brown hair and his deep green eyes.

She breathed in deeply and smiled. "Noah, I'm so happy to see you again!"

"I... I am happy too..." he stammered out "Is it really you, isn't it?"

She was far more beautiful than he remembered. He threw his arms round her. So tender, and so real! It was as if the reality of that hug had made the pain of their long separation disappear. Allie's eyes filled with tears when they moved off from the long hug, and Noah was still staring at her.

"Everything ok?" he asked.

"Sorry, I shouldn't cry..."

"You...you don't have to be sorry. I can't believe that you are here, with me."

They spent a wonderful evening together; Noah told her about his job, about his change and his desire to come back to his origins. Allie listened to him and when Noah asked her about her life she started to talk but she didn't say a word about Paul and their engagement. That moment was too beautiful!

The morning after, Noah thought it was a dream: Allie had been with him the evening before.

He wanted to listen to her voice again, he wanted to be sure that she hadn't been a dream and so he decided to call her.

"Hi, Allie, how are you?"

"Noah...Why have you called me?"

"Sorry, I didn't want to trouble you... I wanted to listen to your voice again. I wanted you to know that I was... very fine last..."

"Noah, please. Forget last night. It was just a mistake. I'm going to get married. Don't look for me any more!"

Noah was so surprised that for a long time he stayed with the receiver in the hand without knowing what to do. He was sure just about one thing: he had lost Allie again.

Some days passed. He couldn't stop thinking of her, of the way she was now and of the way he had abandoned her a long time ago. He wanted to talk to her again, though perhaps for the last time.

Allie was preparing the wedding list but her mind was somewhere else. How could she forgive him? And how could he forgive her now? Would he ever forgive her?

The telephone was ringing.

"726 983. Hello! ... Yes, it's me! What's the matter? What...? Yes, I had... I had seen him again. But why... Oh, no! Is it... Where? Oh my God! It is serious? I'm...I'm coming. Coming!"

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It was a pleasant evening of August. He would go out for a walk. He went to the pier and saw the shape of a woman in the distance. She was sitting on the edge of the pier with the face turned towards the water of the river. It was a pleasant evening. The woman turned her face. Allie. Allie, his wife.

*Elsa Esposito*