

Discussion Questions for *The Last Crusader*

1. Describe the characters of Don Luiz Quixada and Doña Magdalena. What is their marriage like? What is their faith like? How do they treat Jerome?
2. What your impression of European relations, marriages, etc. at this time?
3. What is life like at court for young Don Juan? Why do you think his name was changed?
4. What is the relationship like between Carlos, Juan, and Alexander?
5. Is the miracle where Carlos is healed through the intercession of Fray Diego fictional? Why do you think the author included this story?
6. What happens when Don Juan escapes to go fight in Malta? Why do you think so many were inspired to fight with him? Were you surprised by the King's reaction?
7. Describe the characters of Ruy Gomez and his wife Ana. How do they contrast with Don Luiz and Doña Magdalena?
8. Why were Ruy and Ana interested in flattering Don Juan? What temptations were present for Don Juan at the Gomez house?
9. What happens between Don Juan and Maria de Mendoza?
10. Why does Don Juan feel sorrier for Carlos dying than for the Queen dying?
11. Throughout the story, Don Juan has many disappointments—not being recognized as a prince, losing Maria, etc. How does he handle this? What does this say about disappointments and accepting God's will?
12. What happens during Don Juan's retreat with Fray Juan de Calahorra? Did you find Fray Juan de Calahorra's advice to Don Juan satisfying? Is there anything else you would have said to Don Juan?
13. What happens during the first war Don Juan leads against the Moriscos?
14. What happens at the Battle of Lepanto? Why was this battle so important? After his glorious victory, how does Don Juan feel? Does it change how he views his previous disappointments and difficulties in accepting God's will?
15. This is a historical novel—did you do any research to see how much of the story was factual versus how much was artistic license by the author? What did you learn?

