

DON QUIXOTE¹

by Miguel Cervantes (1547-1616), Excerpt from Chapters 1-8



Don Belianis of Greece

To Don Quixote of La Mancha

With slashing, striking, cutting, in word and deed,
I was the greatest knight of chivalry,
The strongest that the world did ever see;
Thousands from the oppressor's wrong I freed;
In fame-rewarded knights I took the lead;
In love I proved my truth and loyalty;
The hugest giant was a dwarf to me;
Always to knighthood's laws I would give heed.
My mastery controlled well my emotions,
And even kept my Fate within its hold,
Grasped by the scalp, and forced to serve my will.
Yet—though my greatness like the mighty oceans
Vastly stretches—great Don Quixote, still
I envy your achievements in my soul.

CHAPTER 1: The Character and Pursuits of the Famous Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha

In a village of La Mancha, the name of which I have no desire to call to mind, there lived not long ago one of those gentlemen who keep a lance in the lance-rack, an ancient shield, a skinny old horse, and a greyhound for hunting. A stew of rather more beef than mutton, a salad on most nights, scraps on Saturdays, lentils on Fridays, and a pigeon as something special on Sundays, consumed three-quarters of his income. The rest of it went to a coat of fine cloth and velvet pants and shoes to match for holidays, while on weekdays he made a brave-looking figure in his best homespun cloth. He had in his house a housekeeper past forty, a niece under twenty, and a lad for the field and marketplace, who used to saddle the old horse for him and wielded the pruning knife.

The age of this gentleman of ours was bordering on fifty. He was of strong health, with little flesh on his bones and a face that was lean and gaunt. He was noted for his early rising and being very fond of the hunt. They will try to tell you that his surname was Quixada or Quesada (for here there is some difference of opinion among the authors who write on the subject), but according to the most likely conjectures it seems that he was called Quexana. But all this means very little so far as our story is concerned, provided that in the telling of it we do not depart one bit from the truth.

You must know, then, that the above-named gentleman whenever he was at leisure (which was most of the year) was in the habit of reading books of chivalry with such pleasure and devotion that

¹ Don: a term meaning gentleman or nobleman. A direct translation would be “Lord Quixote” or “Sir Quixote”

he almost entirely neglected the life of a hunter, and even the management of his property. And to such a degree did his eagerness and infatuation go that he sold many acres of tillable land to buy books of chivalry to read, and brought home as many of them as he could get.

Of all those he read there were none he liked so well as those composed by the famous Feliciano de Silva, whose lucid style and complicated conceits were as precious to him as pearls, particularly when he read of courtships and duels, where he often found passages like “the reason for the unreasonableness with which my reasoning is afflicted so weakens my reasoning that with good reason I complain of your beauty” or “the high heavens of your divinity is divinely fortified with the stars and makes you worthy of that worthiness that your greatness is worth.” Over conceits of this sort the poor gentleman used to lie awake striving to understand them and figure out a meaning that Aristotle himself could not have understood had he come to life again for that special purpose. He felt uneasy about the wounds that Don Belianis took, because it seemed to him that, no matter how great were the surgeons who had cured him, he must have had his face and body covered all over with marks and scars. Nevertheless, he was grateful to the author for ending his book with the promise of more interminable adventure to come. Many times he was tempted to take up his pen and literally finish the tale himself, which no doubt he would have done and made a successful piece of writing of it too, had not greater and more absorbing thoughts prevented him.



He had many discussions with the local priest of his village (an educated man, and a graduate of Siguenza) as to which had been the better knight, Palmerin of England or Amadis of Gaul; but Mr. Nicholas, the village barber, used to say that neither of them could compare to the Knight of Apollo, and that if there was any that *could* compare with him it was Don Galaor, the brother of Amadis of Gaul, because Galaor was ready for anything, and was no whiny knight, nor was he whimpering like his brother, while in matters of valor he was not a bit behind him. In short, he became so absorbed in his books that he spent his nights from sunset to sunrise, and his days from dawn to dark, poring over them; and with little sleep and much reading his brains got so dry that he lost his wits. His imagination grew full of what he used to read about in his books: enchantments, quarrels, battles, challenges, wounds, courtships, loves, agonies, and all sorts of impossible nonsense. It so possessed his mind that the whole fabric of imagination and fiction he read of became so true to him that no history in the world had more reality in it.

He used to say the Cid Ruy Diaz was a very good knight, but that he was not to be compared with the Knight of the Burning Sword who had with one backward stroke cut in half two fierce and monstrous giants. He thought more of Bernardo del Carpio because at Roncesvalles he slew Roland in spite of enchantments, making use of the same stratagem that Hercules used when he strangled Antaeus, the son of Earth, in his arms. He approved highly of the giant Morgante, because, although he belonged to the race of giants who were always arrogant and poorly mannered, he alone was friendly and well-mannered. But above all he admired Rinaldo of Montalban, especially when he saw him riding forth from his castle and robbing everyone he met, and when beyond the seas he stole that image of Muhammad which, as his history says, was entirely of gold. To have a chance at give a few kicks to that traitor Ganelon he would have given his housekeeper—and thrown his niece into the

bargain too.

In short, his wits quite gone now, he had arrived at a stranger notion than any madman in this world had arrived at: he imagined that it was right and necessary, as well as proper for his own honor and for service to his country, that he should make himself into a knight-errant, roaming the world in full armor and on horseback in quest of adventures, and putting into practice himself all that he had read of as being the usual practices of knights-errant: righting every kind of wrong, and exposing himself to peril and danger for which he would have eternal renown and fame. For his valor, the poor man saw himself crowned Emperor of Trebizond, at least. So, led away by the intense enjoyment he found in these pleasant thoughts, he set himself immediately to put his scheme into action.

The first thing he did was to clean up some armor that had belonged to his great-grandfather, and had been lying there for ages forgotten in a corner, eaten by rust, and covered with mold. He scrubbed and polished it as best he could, but he perceived one major defect in it: it had no closed headpiece, nothing but a simple visorless helmet. This deficiency, however, was soon met with ingenuity, for he constructed a kind of half-helmet of cardboard which, fitted on to the rest, looked like a whole helmet. It is true that when, in order to see if it was strong and fit to stand a cut, he drew his sword and gave it a couple of slashes, the results were disappointing. The first slash undid in an instant what had taken him a week to do. The ease with which he had knocked it to pieces disconcerted him somewhat, and to guard against that danger he set to work again, fixing bars of iron on the inside until he was satisfied with its strength. Then, not caring to try any more experiments with it, he adopted it as a helmet of the most perfect construction.

He next proceeded to inspect his old horse, which, with more cracks in its hoof than crumbs from a cake and more blemishes than Gonela's steed that "was so much skin and bones," surpassed in his eyes the Bucephalus of Alexander or the Babieca of El Cid. Four days were spent in thinking of a name to give him, because (as he told himself) it was not right that a horse belonging to a knight so famous, and one with such merits as his own, should be without some distinctive name. He strove to adapt it so as to indicate what he had been before belonging to a knight-errant, and what he was now; for it was only reasonable that, since his master took a new identity, he should also take a new name, and that it should be a distinguished and full-sounding one, befitting the new profession and calling he was about to follow. And so, after having composed, crossed out, rejected, added to, unwritten, and rewritten a multitude of names out of his memory and imagination, he decided upon calling him Rocinante², a name he felt was lofty, sonorous, and relevant to his situation as an old horse who had now become the first and foremost of all the old horses in the world.

Having found a name for his horse so much to his taste, he was anxious to get one for himself, and he spent eight days more pondering over this point, till at last he made up his mind to call himself "Don Quixote," which, as has been already stated, led the authors of this true history to infer that his real name must have been beyond a doubt Quixada, and not Quesada as others have said. Recollecting that the valiant Amadis was not content to call himself simply Amadis and nothing more, but added the name of his country to make it famous, calling himself Amadis of Gaul, he too, like a good knight, resolved to add on the name of his place of origin, and to style himself Don Quixote of La Mancha. He considered this an accurate description of his country and lineage and a way of honoring them with his surname.

So then, his armor being furbished, his half-helmet turned into a full helmet, and his old horse and himself given names, he came to the conclusion that nothing more was needed now but to look out for a lady to pledge his love to, for a knight-errant without a lady to serve was like a tree without leaves or fruit, or a body without a soul.

"If," he said to himself, "for my sins, or by my good fortune, I come across some giant around here, a common occurrence with knights-errant, and slay him in hand-to-hand combat, or cut him in

² Rocinante: probably derived from the Spanish word rocin meaning old horse or hack

two at the waist, or, in short vanquish and subdue him, would it not be good to have someone I may send him to as a present, that he may come in and fall on his knees before my sweet lady, and in a humble, submissive voice say, ‘I am the giant Caraculiambro, lord of the island of Malindrania, vanquished in single combat by the never-sufficiently-praised knight Don Quixote of La Mancha, who has commanded me to present myself before your Grace, that your Highness do with me as you please?’”

Oh, how our good gentleman enjoyed the delivery of this speech, especially when he had thought of someone to call his Lady! There was, so the story goes, in a village near his own a very good-looking farm girl with whom he had been at one time enamored, though, so far as is known, she never knew it nor gave a thought to the matter. Her name was Aldonza Lorenzo, and upon her he thought it proper to confer the title of Lady of My Thoughts. After some search for a name which should not be out of harmony with her own, and should suggest and indicate that of a princess and great lady, he decided upon calling her Dulcinea³ del Toboso—she being of El Toboso—a name, he felt was musical, uncommon, and significant, like all those he had already bestowed upon himself and his belongings.

³ Dulcinea: probably derived from the Latin word dulce meaning sweet.

CHAPTER II. The First Adventure of the Ingenious Don Quixote



Once these preliminary matters were settled, he did not want to put off any longer the beginning of his plan, and felt urged to do so by the thought of what the world was losing if he delayed: the wrongs he needed to right, the grievances to redress, the injustices to fix, the abuses to stop, and the duties to fulfill. So, without giving notice of his intention to anyone, and without anybody seeing him, one morning before dawn (which was one of the hottest of the month of July) he put on his suit of armor, mounted Rocinante with his patched-up helmet on, grabbed his shield, took his lance, and by the back door of the yard rode forth upon the plain with the greatest contentment and satisfaction at seeing with what ease he had made a beginning with his grand quest.

But not long after he found himself upon the open plain, a terrible thought struck him, one that was almost enough to make him abandon the enterprise at the very outset. It occurred to him that he had not been dubbed a knight, and that according to the laws of chivalry he neither could nor should engage in combat against any knight; and that even if he had been a novice knight, he should wear white armor, without a symbol on the shield until he had earned one in battle. These reflections made him waver in his purpose, but his madness being stronger than any reasoning, he made up his mind to have himself dubbed a knight by the first chance he came across, following the example of others in the same case, as he had read in books. As for white armor, he decided that at the first opportunity, he would scrub his armor until it was whiter than an ermine; and so comforting himself he journeyed onward, taking the path that his horse chose, for in this he believed lay the essence of adventures.

Our new-fledged adventurer thus set out and paced along, talking to himself and saying, "Who knows perhaps in times to come, when the history of my famous deeds are made known and the sage who writes it gets to the part about my ride in the early morning, he will do so like this: 'Barely had the rosy Apollo⁴ spread over the face of the broad spacious earth the golden threads of his bright hair, barely had the little birds of painted plumage attuned their notes to hail with sweet and mellifluous harmony of the coming of the rosy Dawn⁵, who was deserting the soft couch of her jealous spouse and appearing to mortals at the gates and balconies of the horizon of La Mancha, when the renowned knight Don Quixote, leaving his lazy lands behind, mounted his celebrated steed Rocinante and began to traverse the ancient and famous Campo de Montiel,'" which in fact he was actually traversing at that moment. "What happy age, and happy times," he continued, "in which shall be made known my deeds of fame, worthy to be molded in brass, carved in marble, illustrated

⁴ Apollo: Ancient Greek and Roman god of the Sun, music, poetry, healing, and archery.

⁵ Dawn: An ancient goddess of the morning.

in pictures, as a memorial forever. And you, O sage magician, whoever you are, to whom it shall fall to be the chronicler of this wondrous history, forget not, I beg you, my good Rocinante, the constant companion of my ways and wanderings.”

Then he broke out again, as if he were love-sick in earnest, “O Princess Dulcinea, lady of this captive heart, a grievous wrong you have done me to drive me forth with scorn, and with inexorable stubbornness banish me from the presence of your beauty. O lady, please hold in remembrance this heart, your vassal⁶.”

So he went on stringing together these and other absurdities, all in the style his books had taught him, imitating their language as well as he could; and all the while he rode so slowly and the sun mounted so rapidly and with such fervor that it was enough to melt any brains he had left. Nearly all day he travelled without anything remarkable happening to him, which worried him, for he was anxious to encounter someone at once upon whom to try the might of his strong arm.

Some writers say the first adventure he met with was that of Puerto Lapice, others say it was that of the windmills, but what I have ascertained and what I have found written in the annals of La Mancha, is that he was on the road all day, and towards nightfall his old horse and he found themselves dead tired and hungry when, looking all around to see if he could discover any castle or shepherd’s hut where he might rest and refresh himself, he perceived not far off the road an inn, which was as welcome as a star guiding him through the gates, if not the palaces, of his redemption. Quickening his pace, he reached it just as night was setting in.

At the door were standing two young women of the town, girls of poor reputation, on their way to Seville with some carriers who had chanced to halt that night at the inn. Since whatever happened to our adventurer he imagined happening in the same way as what he had read of, the moment he saw the inn he pictured it to himself as a castle with its four turrets and pinnacles of shining silver, not forgetting the drawbridge and moat and all the details usually belonging to castles of the sort. To this inn, which to him seemed a castle, he advanced, and at a short distance from it he stopped Rocinante, hoping that some dwarf would appear at the wall and with the sound of a trumpet give notice that a knight was approaching the castle. But seeing that they were slow about it and that Rocinante was in a hurry to reach the stable, he went to the inn door, and perceived the two smiling damsels who were standing there, and who seemed to him to be two fair⁷ maidens or lovely ladies leisurely chatting at a castle gate.

At this moment it so happened that a swineherd who was going through the field collecting a drove of pigs gave a blast of his horn to bring them together, and right away it seemed to Don Quixote to be what he was awaiting, the signal of some dwarf announcing his arrival. So with prodigious satisfaction he rode up to the inn and to the ladies, who, seeing a man of this sort approaching in full armor and with lance and shield, were turning in distress into the inn, when Don Quixote, guessing their fear by their flight and raising his cardboard visor, displayed his dry dusty face and with courteous bearing and gentle voice addressed them, “Your ladyships need not flee or fear any rudeness, for such conduct toward anyone, much less to highborn maidens as your appearance proclaims you to be, belongs not to the order of knighthood which I profess.”

The girls were looking at him and straining their eyes to make out the features which the clumsy visor obscured, but when they heard themselves called maidens, a thing so much out of their line, they could not restrain their laughter, which made Don Quixote a bit annoyed, and say, “Modesty suits the fair, and moreover laughter that has little cause is great silliness. This, however, I say not to pain or anger you, for my desire is none other than to serve you.”

The incomprehensible language and the unpromising looks of our knight only increased the

⁶ Vassal: in feudalism, someone pledged to the service of a lord or lady in exchange for their favor and often land.

⁷ Fair: beautiful, good, light-skinned.

ladies' laughter, and that increased his irritation, and matters might have gone farther if at that moment the property owner had not come out, who, being a very fat man was a very peaceful one too. Seeing this grotesque figure clad in armor that did not match at all in his saddle, bridle, lance, shield, or armor, he joined the damsels in their amusement. But, in truth, standing in awe of such a complicated warrior, he thought it best to speak to him respectfully, so he said, "Sir Knight, if your worship wants rest, there is plenty of everything here except for a bed as they are all currently occupied."

Don Quixote, observing the respectful bearing of the lord of the castle (for so the innkeeper and inn seemed in his eyes), answered, "Sir Nobleman, for me anything will suffice, for

'Armor is my only clothes
and battle is my sleep.'"

The host liked that he called him a nobleman though he was in fact not from this area and was as crafty a businessman as Cacus⁸ and as full of tricks as a young boy. "In that case," he said,

"On hard cold rock feel free to doze,
guard watch is yours to keep.'

If so, you may dismount and safely have any quantity of sleeplessness under this roof for twelve months, let alone a single night." While saying this, he held up the stirrup for Don Quixote, who got down with great difficulty and exertion (for he had not had a break all day), and then asked the host to take great care of his horse, as he was the best bit of flesh that ever ate bread in this world.

The owner eyed him over but did not find him as good, not even half as good, as Don Quixote said. Putting him up in the stable, he returned to see what might be wanted by his guest, whom the damsels, now less distressed, were relieving of his armor. They had taken off his breastplate and backpiece, but they neither knew nor saw how to open his throat piece or remove his helmet, for he had fastened it with green ribbons, which, as there was no way to untie the knots, required to be cut. This, however, he would not by any means agree to, so he remained all the evening with his helmet on, the most comical and oddest figure that can be imagined. While they were removing his armor and taking of the baggage as ladies of high degree belonging to the castle, he said to them with great enthusiasm:

"Oh never did there live a knight
So served by damsels' hands,
As Don Quixote at that site,
Arriving from his lands;
With maidens waiting on himself,
Princesses on his horse—

—or Rocinante, for that, ladies, is my horse's name, and Don Quixote of La Mancha is my own; for though I had no intention of declaring myself until my achievements in your service and honor had made me known, the necessity of adapting that old ballad of Lancelot to the present occasion has given you the knowledge of my name altogether prematurely. A time, however, will come for your ladyships to command and me to obey, and then the might of my arm will show my desire to serve you."

The girls, who were not used to hearing language of this sort, had nothing to say in reply. They

⁸ Cacus: A thief from ancient mythology known for stealing some of Hercules' cattle.

only asked him if he wanted anything to eat. “I would gladly eat a bit of something,” said Don Quixote, “for I feel it is the right timing for my body to digest.” The day happened to be a Friday, and in the whole inn there was nothing but some pieces of the fish they call “troutlet;” so they asked him if he thought he could eat troutlet, for there was no other fish to give him.

“If there be troutlets enough,” said Don Quixote, “they will be the same thing as a trout; for it is all one to me whether I am given eight reals in small change or a piece of eight.⁹ Moreover, it may be that these troutlets are like veal, which is better than beef, or kid, which is better than goat. But whatever it be let it come quickly, for the burden and pressure of arms cannot be borne without support to the inside.”

They laid a table for him at the door of the inn for more air, and the host brought him a portion of badly soaked and worse cooked stockfish, and a piece of bread as black and moldy as his own armor. A laughable sight it was to see him eating, for having his helmet on and the visor up, he could not with his own hands put anything into his mouth unless someone else placed it there, and this service one of the woman provided for him. But to give him anything to drink was impossible, or would have been had not the owner hollowed out a reed, and putting one end in his mouth poured the wine into him through the other. All of this he bore with patience rather than cut through the ribbons of his helmet.



While this was going on there came up to the inn a sow-gelder¹⁰, who, as he approached, sounded his reed pipe four or five times. This completely convinced Don Quixote that he was in some famous castle, and that they were regaling him with music, and that the stockfish was trout, the bread was the whitest, the servant girls were ladies, and the owner was the lord of the castle. Consequently he held that his adventurous ride had achieved some purpose. But still it distressed him to think he had not been dubbed a knight, for it was plain to him he could not lawfully engage in any adventure without receiving the order of knighthood.

⁹ reals... piece of eight: eight reals equals one piece of eight

¹⁰ sowgelder: one who castrates cows

CHAPTER III. Don Quixote Has Himself Dubbed a Knight

Harassed by this reflection, he quickly finished his scanty supper, and called the owner, with whom he shut himself into the stable. He fell on his knees before him, saying, "From this spot I rise not, valiant sir, until your courtesy grants me the favor I seek, one that will earn you praise and benefit the human race."

The owner, seeing his guest at his feet and hearing a speech of this kind, stood staring at him in bewilderment, not knowing what to do or say, and asking him to rise, but all uselessly until he had agreed to grant the favor demanded of him.

"I expected for no less, my lord, from your High Magnificence," replied Don Quixote, "and I have to tell you that the favor I have asked for and your generosity accepted was that you shall dub me a knight tomorrow morning, and that tonight I shall keep watch over my armor in the chapel of your castle. Then tomorrow, as I have said, will be accomplished what I have so much desired, enabling me lawfully to roam through all the four quarters of the world seeking adventures on behalf of those in distress, as is the duty of chivalry and of knights-errant like myself, whose ambition is directed to such deeds."

The owner, who, as has been mentioned was something of a joker, and had already some suspicion of his guest's lack of wits, was quite convinced of it on hearing talk of this kind from him. To have a bit of fun for the night he decided to play along. So he told him he was quite right in pursuing the purpose he had in view, and that such a motive was natural and proper in knights as distinguished as he seemed and his gallant bearing showed him to be; and that he himself in his younger days had followed the same honorable calling, roaming in quest of adventures in various parts of the world, among others the Curing-grounds of Malaga, the Isles of Riaran, the Precinct of Seville, the Little Market of Segovia, the Olivera of Valencia, the Rondilla of Granada, the Strand of San Lucar, the Colt of Cordova, the Taverns of Toledo, and a variety of other places, where he had proved the nimbleness of his feet and the lightness of his fingers, doing many wrongs, cheating many widows, ruining maids and swindling minors, and, in short, bringing himself under the notice of almost every court of justice in Spain until at last he had retired to this castle of his, where he was living upon his property and upon that of others; and where he received all knights-errant of whatever rank or condition they might be, all for the great love he bore them and that they might share their wealth with him in return for his benevolence.

He told him, moreover, that in this castle of his there was no chapel in which he could watch his armor, as it had been pulled down in order to be rebuilt; but that in a case of necessity it might be watched anywhere. He might watch it that night in a courtyard of the castle, and in the morning, God willing, the requisite ceremonies might be performed so as to have him dubbed a knight, and so thoroughly dubbed that nobody could be more so.

He asked if he had any money with him, to which Don Quixote replied that he had not a cent, as in the histories of knights-errant he had never read of any of them carrying any. On this point the owner told him he was mistaken; for, though not recorded in the histories, because in the author's opinion there was no need to mention anything so obvious and necessary as money and clean shirts,



it was not to be supposed therefore that they did not carry them, and he might regard it as certain and established that all knights-errant (about whom there were so many complete and accurate books) carried well-supplied purses in case of emergency, and likewise carried shirts and a little box of ointment to cure the wounds they received. For in those plains and deserts where they engaged in combat and came out wounded, it was not always that there was someone to cure them, unless indeed they had some sage magician as a friend to heal them at once by fetching through the air upon a cloud some damsel or dwarf with a vial of water of such virtue that by tasting one drop of it they were cured of their aches and wounds in an instant and left as sound as if they had not received any damage whatsoever.

But in case this should not occur, the knights of old took care to see that their squires were provided with money and other requisite items, such as lint and ointments for healing purposes. When it happened that knights had no squires (which was rarely and seldom the case) they themselves carried everything in cunning saddle-bags that were hardly seen on the horse, as if it were something else of more importance, because, unless for some special reason, carrying saddle-bags was not very favorable look among knights-errant. He therefore advised him (and, as as he was soon to be his godson,¹¹ he might even command him) never from that time forth to travel without money and the usual requirements, and he would find the advantage of them when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised to follow his advice carefully, and it was arranged immediately that he should watch his armor in a large yard at one side of the inn. So, collecting it all together, Don Quixote placed it on a trough that stood by the side of a well, and bracing his shield on his arm he grasped his lance and began with a stately air to march up and down in front of the trough, and as he began his march night began to fall.

The owner told all the people who were in the inn about the madness of his guest, the watching of the armor, and the dubbing ceremony he thought up. Full of wonder at so strange a form of madness, they flocked to see it from a distance, and observed with what composure he sometimes paced up and down, or sometimes, leaning on his lance, gazed on his armor without taking his eyes off it for long periods. And as the night closed in with a light from the moon so brilliant that it might compete with him that lent it, everything the novice knight did was plainly seen by all.

Meanwhile one of the carriers who was in the inn wanted to get water for his mules, and it was necessary to remove Don Quixote's armor as it lay on the trough. He seeing the other approach hailed him in a loud voice, "O you, whoever you are, rash knight who comes to lay hands on the armor of the most valorous errant that ever wore a sword, be careful what you do. Touch it not unless you wish to lay down your life as the penalty for your rashness."

The carrier gave no thought to these words (and he would have done better to give them thought if he had been thoughtful of his health), but seizing it by the straps flung the armor some distance from him. Seeing this, Don Quixote raised his eyes to heaven, and fixing his thoughts apparently upon his lady Dulcinea, exclaimed, "Aid me, my lady, in this the first encounter that presents itself to this body which serves you. Let not your favor and protection fail me in this first danger." With these words and others to the same purpose, dropping his shield he lifted his lance with both hands and with it delivered such a blow to the carrier's head that he lay on the ground, so that if he had received another like it there would have been no need for a doctor to treat him. This done, Don Quixote picked up his armor and returned to his guard duty with the same serenity as before.

¹¹ godson: apparently the process of being dubbed a knight includes making Don Quixote his godson and the owner his godfather.

Shortly after this, another carrier, not knowing what had happened (for the first carrier still lay unconscious), came with the same purpose of giving water to his mules, and was proceeding to remove the armor in order to clear the trough, when Don Quixote, without uttering a word or calling for help from anyone, once more dropped his shield and once more lifted his lance, without actually breaking the second carrier's head into pieces but instead breaking his lance in four places. The noise caused all the people of the inn to run to the spot, including the owner.

Seeing this, Don Quixote braced his shield on his arm, and with his hand on his sword exclaimed, "O Lady of Beauty, strength and support of my faint heart, it is time for you to turn the eyes of your greatness on your captive knight on the brink of so mighty an adventure."

By this he felt himself so inspired that he would not have flinched if all the carriers in the world had attacked him. The comrades of the wounded men, seeing what was happening from a distance, showered stones on Don Quixote, who protected himself as best he could with his shield, not daring to flee from the trough and leave his armor unprotected.

The owner shouted to them to leave him alone, for he had already told them that he was mad, and as a madman he would not be accountable even if he killed them all.

Still louder shouted Don Quixote, calling them knaves and traitors, and the lord of the castle, who allowed knights-errant to be treated in this fashion, a villain and a low-born knight whom, had he received the order of knighthood, he would require to pay for his treachery.

"But of you," he cried, "low and vile scum, I resist. Fling, strike, come on, do all you can against me, you shall see what the reward for your mistake and insolence will be."

This he uttered with so much spirit and boldness that he filled his attackers with a terrible fear, and as much for this reason as at the persuasion of the owner they stopped stoning him. He allowed them to carry off the wounded, and with the same calmness and composure as before resumed the watch over his armor.

This terrorizing of his guests was not much to the liking of the owner, so he determined to cut matters short and confer upon him at once the unlucky order of knighthood before any further misadventure could occur. So, going up to him, he apologized for the rudeness which, without his knowledge, had been offered to him by these low people, who had been well punished for their audacity. As he had already told him, he said, there was no chapel in the castle, nor was it needed for what remained to be done, for, as he understood the ceremony of the order, the whole point of being dubbed a knight lay in the person doing the dubbing and in the slap on the shoulder, and that could be administered in the middle of a field, and that he had now done all that was needed as to watching the armor, for all requirements were satisfied after it was guarded for only two hours, while he had been doing it for more than four hours.

Don Quixote believed it all, and told him he stood there ready to obey him, and to finish it with as much speed as possible; for, if he were again attacked, and felt himself to be dubbed a knight, he would not, he thought, leave a soul alive in the castle, except those the lord had requested to be spared.

Thus warned and frightened, the lord quickly brought out a book in which he used to record the straw and barley he served out to the carriers, and, with a lad carrying a candlestick and the two damsels already mentioned, he returned to where Don Quixote stood, and told him to kneel down.



Then, reading from his account book as if he were repeating some devout prayer, in the middle of his delivery he raised his hand and gave him a sturdy slap on the neck. Then, with his own sword, a sharp slap on the shoulder, all the while muttering between his teeth as if he were saying his prayers.

Having done this, he directed one of the ladies to attach his sword, which she did with great composure and seriousness. Not a little effort was required to prevent a burst of laughter at each stage of the ceremony; but what they had already seen of the novice knight's abilities kept their laughter under control. After fitting him with the sword the worthy lady said to him, "May God make your worship a very fortunate knight, and grant you success in battle."

Don Quixote asked her name in order that he might from that time forward know to whom he was indebted for the favor he had received, as he meant to confer upon her some portion of the honor he acquired by the might of his arm.

She answered with great humility that she was called La Tolosa, and that she was the daughter of a cobbler of Toledo who lived in the stalls of Sanchobienaya, and that wherever she might be she would serve and esteem him as her lord. Don Quixote said in reply that she would do him a favor if from now on she assumed the title of "Lady" and called herself Lady Tolosa. She promised she would, and then the other buckled on his spur, and with her followed almost the same conversation as with the lady of the sword. He asked her name, and she said it was La Molinera, and that she was the daughter of a respectable miller of Antequera. Don Quixote likewise requested that she would adopt the title "Lady" and call herself Lady Molinera, offering his further services and favors.

Having thus, with hot speed, brought to a conclusion these never-till-now-seen ceremonies, Don Quixote was anxious until he saw himself on horseback riding forth in quest of adventures. Putting the saddle on Rocinante he at once mounted and embraced his host, giving thanks for his kindness in knighting him. He addressed him in language so extraordinary that it is impossible to convey an idea of it or report it. The owner, to get him out of the inn, replied with no less rhetoric though with shorter words, and without asking him to pay the bill, let him go with a "Godspeed!"

CHAPTER IV. What Happened to Our Knight When He Left the Inn



Day was dawning when Don Quixote left the inn, so happy, so cheerful, so exhilarated at finding himself now dubbed a knight that his joy was likely to burst his horse straps. However, recalling the advice of his host as to what he should carry with himself, especially referring to money and shirts, he determined to go home and provide himself with everything, and also with a squire, for he figured he could secure a farm-laborer, a neighbor of his, a poor man with a family, but very well qualified for the position of squire to a knight. With this purpose he turned his horse's head towards his village, and Rocinante, thus reminded of his old home, stepped out so briskly that he hardly seemed to tread the earth.

He had not gone far when out of a thicket on his right there seemed to come feeble cries as of someone in distress, and the instant he heard them he exclaimed, "Thanks to heaven for the favor given to me that so soon I am offered an opportunity to fulfill the obligation I have undertaken, and gather the fruit of my ambition. These cries, no doubt, come from some man or woman in need of help, and wanting my aid and protection."

He turned Rocinante around in the direction from where the cries seemed to come. He had gone only a few paces into the woods when he saw a mare tied to an oak tree. Tied to another and stripped from the waist upwards, a youth of about fifteen years of age, from whom the cries came. Nor were they without cause, for a strong-looking farmer was flogging him with a belt and following up every blow with scoldings and commands, repeating, "Your mouth shut and your eyes open!" while the youth answered, "I won't do it again, my master. By God's passion I won't do it again, and I'll take more care of the flock the next time."

Seeing what was going on, Don Quixote said in an angry voice, "Discourteous knight, it ill becomes you to attack one who cannot defend himself. Mount your steed and take your lance" (for there was a lance leaning against the oak to which the mare was tied), "and I will make you know that you are behaving as a coward."

The farmer, seeing before him this figure in full armor brandishing a lance over his head, gave himself up for dead, and answered meekly, "Sir Knight, this youth that I am punishing is my servant, employed by me to watch a flock of sheep that I have near here, and he is so careless that I lose one every day, and when I punish him for his carelessness and foolishness he says I do it out of stinginess, to escape paying him the wages I owe him. Before God, and on my soul, he lies."

"Sounds like lies to me, lowly fool!" said Don Quixote. "By the sun that shines on us I have a mind to run you through with this lance. Pay him at once without another word. If not, by the God that rules us I will make an end of you, and annihilate you on the spot. Release him instantly."

The farmer hung his head, and without a word untied his servant, of whom Don Quixote asked how much his master owed him.

He replied, nine months at seven reals a month. Don Quixote added it up, found that it came to sixty-three reals, and told the farmer to pay it immediately, if he did not want to die.

The trembling fool replied that by his life and by the oath he had sworn (though he had not sworn any) it was not so much; for there were to be taken into account and deducted three pairs of shoes he had given him, and a real for two blood-lettings when he was sick.¹²

"All that is very well," said Don Quixote; "but let the shoes and the blood-lettings stand as a tradeoff for the blows you have given him without any cause. For if he spoiled the leather of the shoes you paid for, you have damaged that of his body, and if the barber took blood from him when he was sick, you have drawn it when he was healthy. So on that score he owes you nothing."

"The difficulty is, Sir Knight, that I have no money here. Let Andres come home with me, and I will pay him all, real by real."

"I go with *him*!" said the youth. "Nay, God forbid! No sir, not for the world. For once alone with me, he would flay me like a Saint Bartholomew."¹³

"He will do nothing of the kind," said Don Quixote. "I have only to command, and he will obey me. As he has sworn to me by the order of knighthood which he has received, I leave him free, and I guarantee the payment."

"Consider what you are saying, sir," said the youth. "This master of mine is not a knight, nor has he received any order of knighthood; for he is Juan the Rich and Cunning of Quintanar."

"That matters little," replied Don Quixote. "There may be cunning knights; after all, 'Every man is the son of his own works.'"

"That is true," said Andres, "but this master of mine—of what works is he the son, when he refuses me the wages of my sweat and labor?"

"I do not refuse, brother Andres," said the farmer. "Be good enough to come along with me, and I swear by all the orders of knighthood there are in the world to pay you as I have agreed, real by real, and perfumed."

"From the perfumery I excuse you," said Don Quixote. "Give it to him in reals, and I shall be satisfied. And see to it that you do as you have sworn; if not, by the same oath I swear to come back and hunt you down and punish you. I shall find you though you should lie lower than a lizard. And if you desire to know who lays this command upon you, that you be more firmly bound to obey it, know that I am the valorous Don Quixote of La Mancha, the undoer of wrongs and injustices. And so, God be with you, and keep in mind what you have promised and sworn under those penalties that have been already declared to you."

So saying, he gave Rocinante the spur and was soon out of reach.

The farmer followed him with his eyes, and when he saw that he had cleared the woods and was no longer in sight, he turned to his worker-boy Andres, and said, "Come here, my son, I want to pay



¹² Blood-letting: it was a common practice for doctors to treat people by removing blood from their bodies.

¹³ Saint Bartholomew: one of Jesus's twelve disciples who was martyred by flaying (stripping off the skin)

you what I owe you, as that undoer of wrongs has commanded me.”

“My oath on it,” said Andres, “your worship will be well advised to obey the command of that good knight—may he live a thousand years—for, as he is a valiant and just judge, I swear, if you do not pay me, he will come back and do as he said.”

“My oath on it, too,” said the farmer; “but as I have a strong affection for you, I want to add to the debt in order to add to the payment.” And seizing him by the arm, he tied him up again, and gave him such a flogging that he wished he were dead.

“Now, Master Andres,” said the farmer, “call on the undoer of wrongs. You will find he won’t undo that, though I am not sure that I have quite done with you, for I have a good mind to flay you alive.” At last he untied him, and gave him permission to go look for his judge in order to put the sentence pronounced into execution.

Andres went off rather upset, swearing he would go to look for the valiant Don Quixote of La Mancha and tell him exactly what had happened, and that all would have to be repaid to him sevenfold. Yet once he finished saying all that, he went off weeping, while his master stood there laughing.

Thus did the valiant Don Quixote right that wrong, and, thoroughly satisfied with what had taken place and considering it a very happy and noble beginning with his knighthood, he took the road towards his village in perfect self-content, saying in a low voice, “Well may you this day call yourself fortunate above all on earth, O Dulcinea del Toboso, fairest of the fair, since it has fallen to you to hold in your service to your full will and pleasure a knight so renowned as is and will be Don Quixote of La Mancha, who, as all the world knows, yesterday received the order of knighthood, and has today righted the greatest wrong and grievance that ever injustice conceived and cruelty perpetrated: who has today plucked the rod from the hand of that ruthless oppressor so wantonly lashing that tender child.”

He now came to a road branching in four directions, and immediately he was reminded of those cross-roads where knights-errant used to stop to consider which road they should take. In imitation of them he halted for a while, and after having deeply considered it, he gave Rocinante control, submitting his own will to that of his horse, who followed out his first intention, which was to make straight for his own stable.

After he had gone about two miles Don Quixote perceived a large party of people, who, as afterwards appeared, were some Toledo traders, on their way to buy silk at Murcia. There were six of them coming along under their sunshades, with four servants mounted, and three carriers on foot. Shortly after Don Quixote saw them the idea possessed him that this must be some new adventure. And to help him to imitate as far as he could those passages he had read of in his books, here seemed to come one made on purpose, which he resolved to attempt. So with a lofty bearing and determination he fixed himself firmly in his stirrups, got his lance ready, put his shield in front of his chest, and planting himself in the middle of the road, stood waiting the approach of these knights-errant, for such he now considered and held them to be.

When they had come near enough to see and hear, he exclaimed with a haughty gesture, “All the world must stop, unless all the world confess that in all the world there is no maiden fairer than the Empress of La Mancha, the peerless Dulcinea del Toboso.”

The traders halted at the sound of these words and the sight of the strange figure that uttered them, and from both figure and words at once guessed the madness of their owner. They wished, however, to learn quietly what was the object of this confession that was demanded of them, and one of them, who was rather fond of a joke and was very sharp-witted, said to him, “Sir Knight, we do not know who this good lady is that you speak of. Show her to us, for, if she be of such beauty as you suggest, with all our hearts and without any pressure we will confess the truth that is on your part required of us.”

“If I were to show her to you,” replied Don Quixote, “what merit would you have in confessing

a truth so obvious? The essential point is that without seeing her you must believe, confess, affirm, swear, and defend it. Or else you have to do battle with me, arrogant scum that you are. And come on then, one by one as the order of knighthood requires, or all together as is the custom and vile usage of your breed. Here do I await you relying on the justice of the cause I maintain.”

“Sir Knight,” replied the trader, “I entreat your worship in the name of this present company of princes—to save us from forcing our consciences to give a confession of a thing we have never seen or heard of, and one moreover so much against the Empresses and Queens of the Alcarria and Estremadura—your worship will show us some portrait of this lady, though it be no bigger than a grain of wheat. In this way we shall be satisfied and easy to command, and you will be content and pleased. Nay, I believe we are already so far agreed with you that even though her portrait should show her blind in one eye and weeping vermilion and sulfur from the other, we would nevertheless, to gratify your worship, say all in her favor that you desire.”

“She weeps nothing of the kind, vile scum,” said Don Quixote, burning with rage, “nothing of the kind, I say, only rich perfume. Nor is she one-eyed or hunchbacked, but straighter than a Guadarrama spindle¹⁴. But you must pay for the blasphemy you have uttered against beauty like that of my lady.”

And so saying, he charged with levelled lance against the one who had spoken, with such fury and fierceness that, if luck had not determined that Rocinante should stumble midway and come down, it would have gone badly for the rash trader. Down went Rocinante, and over went his master, rolling along the ground for some distance; and when he tried to rise he was unable, so encumbered was he with lance, shield, spurs, helmet, and the weight of his old armor. All the while he was struggling to get up he kept saying, “Don’t run away, cowards! Stay, for not by my fault, but my horse’s, am I stuck here.”

One of the carriers there, who could not have had much good nature in him, hearing the poor prostrate man blustering in this style, was unable to refrain from giving him a bash on his ribs. Coming up to him he seized his lance, and having broken it in pieces, with one of the pieces he began so to thrash our Don Quixote so that, in spite of his armor, he pounded him like grinding a measure of wheat.

His masters called out not to be so hard on him and to leave him alone, but the carrier’s blood was boiling, and he did not care to drop the game until he had vented the rest of his wrath. Gathering up the remaining fragments of the lance he finished with throwing them on the unhappy victim, who all through the storm of sticks that rained on him never ceased threatening heaven and earth against the outlaws, for such is how they seemed to him.

At last the carrier was tired, and the traders continued their journey, having now something to talk about. When he found himself alone, he made another effort to rise; but if he was unable when whole and healthy, how was he to rise after having been thrashed and nearly knocked to pieces? And yet he felt he was fortunate, as it seemed to him that this was a regular mishap for knight-errants, and entirely, he considered, the fault of his horse. Still because his body was so battered, rising was beyond his power.



¹⁴ Guadarrama spindle: a particular mountain peak.

CHAPTER V. Our Knight's Mishap Continued

Finding that in fact he could not move, he thought of his usual remedy, which was to think of some passage in his books. His madness brought to his mind Baldwin and the Marquis of Mantua, when Carloto left him wounded on the mountainside, a story known by heart by the children, not forgotten by the young men, and lauded and even believed by the old folk—yet for all that not a bit truer than the miracles of Muhammad. This seemed to him to fit exactly the situation in which he found himself, so, making a show of severe suffering, he began to roll on the ground and with feeble breath repeat the very words which the wounded knight of the wood is said to have uttered:

Where are you at my lady fair
For me you do not care
It must be that you're unaware
Of sorrow that I bear.

He went on with the ballad as far as the lines:

O noble Marquis of Mantua,
My Uncle and liege lord!

As chance would have it, when he had got to this line there happened to come by a peasant from his own village, a neighbor of his, who had taken a load of wheat to the mill. Seeing a man stretched there, he came up to him and asked him who he was and what was the matter with him that he complained so sorrowfully.

Don Quixote was firmly persuaded that this was the Marquis of Mantua, his uncle, so the only answer he made was to go on with his ballad, in which he told the tale of his misfortune, and of the loves of the Emperor's son and his wife all exactly as the ballad sings it.

The peasant stood amazed at hearing such nonsense, and relieving him of the visor, already battered to pieces by blows, he wiped his face, which was covered with dust. As soon as he had done so he recognized him and said, "Señor Quixada" (for so he appears to have been called when he was in his senses and had not yet changed from a quiet country gentleman into a knight-errant), "who has brought your worship to this pass?"

But to all questions the other only went on with his ballad.

Seeing this, the good man removed as well as he could his breastplate and backpiece to see if he had any wounds, but he could perceive no blood nor any mark whatsoever. He then managed to raise him from the ground, and with no small amount of difficulty hoisted him upon his donkey, which seemed to him to be the easiest mount for him. Collecting his things, even the splinters of the lance, he tied them on Rocinante. Leading him by the bridle and the donkey by the halter, he took the road for the village, feeling very sad to hear what absurd matters Don Quixote was talking about...

CHAPTER VII. The Second Adventure of Our Worthy Knight

[Don Quixote is returned home, relieving the distress of his worried household. The local barber and priest decide Don Quixote's books must be burned, although they do keep a select few, including one by Miguel Cervantes himself.]



That night the housekeeper burned to ashes all the books that were in the yard and in the whole house. Some must have been consumed that deserved preservation in everlasting archives, but their fate and the laziness of the examiner did not permit it, and so in them was verified the proverb that the innocent suffer for the guilty.

One of the remedies which the local priest and the barber immediately applied to their friend's disorder was to wall up and plaster the room where the books had been, so that when he got up he should not find them (possibly once the cause was removed the effect would cease); they might say that a magician had carried them off, room and all. This was done at full speed.

Two days later Don Quixote got up, and the first thing he did was to go and look for his books, and not finding the room where he had left it, he wandered from side to side looking for it. He came to the place where the door used to be, and tried it with his hands. He turned and twisted his eyes in every direction without saying a word; but after a good while he asked his housekeeper where was the room that held his books.

The housekeeper, who had been already well instructed in what she was to answer, said, "What room or whatever else is it that your worship is looking for? There are neither room nor books in this house now, for the devil himself has carried all away."

"It was not the devil," said the niece, "but a magician who came on a cloud one night after the day your worship left. Dismounting from a dragon that he rode, he entered the room and what he did there I know not, but after a little while he flew off, flying through the roof, and left the house full of smoke. When we went to see what he had done we saw neither books nor a room; but we remember very well, the housekeeper and I, that on leaving, the old villain said in a loud voice that, for a private grudge he owed the owner of the books and the room, he had done mischief in the house that would be discovered eventually. He said too that his name was the Sorcerer Muñaton."

"He must have said Friston," said Don Quixote.

"I don't know whether he called himself Friston or Friton," said the housekeeper, "I only know that his name ended with 'ton.'"

"So it does," said Don Quixote, "and he is a powerful magician, a great enemy of mine, who has a grudge against me because he knows by his magic arts and books that inevitably I am to engage in single combat with a knight whom he befriends and that I am to defeat him. He will be unable to prevent it; and for this reason he endeavors to interfere with me as much as he can; but I promise him it will be hard for him to oppose or avoid what is decreed by Heaven."

"Who doubts that?" said the niece. "But, uncle, why get mixed up in these quarrels? Would it not be better to remain at peace in your own house instead of roaming the world looking for better bread than ever came of wheat, never reflecting that many go for wool and come back shorn?"

"Oh, niece of mine," replied Don Quixote, "how much astray is your thinking. Before they

shear me I shall have plucked away and stripped off the beards of all who dare to touch only the tip of a hair of mine.”

The two were unwilling to make any further answer, as they saw that his anger was kindling.

In short, he remained at home fifteen days very quietly without showing any signs of a desire to enter into his former delusions. During this time he held lively discussions with his two gossips, the priest and the barber, on the point he maintained, that knights-errant were what the world needed most, and that in himself was to be accomplished the revival of knight-errantry. The priest sometimes disagreed him and sometimes agreed with him, for if he had not observed this precaution he would have been unable to bring him to reason.

Meanwhile Don Quixote worked upon a farm laborer, a neighbor of his, an honest fellow (if indeed that title can be given to a man who is poor), but with very little wit in his head. In a word, he talked with him so much and with such persuasion and promises that the poor fool made up his mind to ride forth with him and serve him as a squire. Don Quixote, among other things, told him he ought to be ready to go with him happily because at any moment an adventure might occur that might win an island in the twinkling of an eye and leave him governor of it. On these and similar promises Sancho Panza (for so the laborer was called) left wife and children, and took employment as a squire to his neighbor.

Don Quixote next set about getting some money. Selling one thing and pawning another, and making a bad bargain in every case, he got together a fair sum. He provided himself with a shield, which he begged to borrow from a friend, and, restoring his battered helmet as best he could, he notified his squire Sancho of the day and hour he meant to set out, so he could prepare whatever necessities he might want. Above all, he charged him to take saddlebags with him. The other said he would, and that he meant to take also a very good donkey he had, as he was not much used to traveling by foot.

About the donkey, Don Quixote hesitated a little, trying to call to mind any knight-errant taking with him a squire mounted on a donkey, but no instance occurred to his memory. Despite that, however, he determined to take him, intending to furnish him with a more honorable mount when a chance of it presented itself: by confiscating the horse from the first discourteous knight he encountered. He provided himself with shirts and such other things as he could, according to the advice the host had given him. Once everything was prepared, without saying goodbye, Sancho Panza to his wife and children, nor Don Quixote to his housekeeper and niece, they rode forth unseen by anybody from the village one night, and made such good progress that by daylight they felt themselves safe from discovery, even if there was a search.

Sancho rode on his donkey like a patriarch with his saddlebags and wineskin, longing to see himself soon governor of the island his master had promised him. Don Quixote decided upon taking the same route and road he had taken on his first journey, over the Campo de Montiel, which he traveled with less discomfort than on the last occasion, for, as it was early morning and the rays of the sun fell on them obliquely, the heat did not distress them.

Now Sancho Panza said to his master, “Your worship will take care, Sir Knight-errant, not to forget about the island you have promised me, for no matter how big it may be I will be able to govern it.”

Don Quixote replied, "You must know, my friend Sancho Panza, that it was a practice very much in vogue with the knights-errant of old to make their squires governors of the islands or kingdoms they won, and I am determined that there shall be no failure on my part in so generous a custom. On the contrary, I mean to improve upon it, for they sometimes, and perhaps most frequently, waited until their squires were old. Then when they had had enough of service and hard days and worse nights, they gave them some title or other, of count, or at the most marquis, of some valley or province more or less. But if you live and I live, it may well be that before six days are over, I may have won some kingdom that has others dependent upon it, which will be just the thing to enable you to be crowned king of one of them. Nor do you need to think of this as something extraordinary, for things and opportunities come to such knights in ways so unprecedented and unexpected that I might easily give you even more than I promise."

"In that case," said Sancho Panza, "if I should become a king by one of those miracles your worship speaks of, even Juana Gutierrez, my old woman, would come to be queen and my children little royalty."

"Well, who doubts it?" said Don Quixote.

"I doubt it," replied Sancho Panza, "because for my part I am persuaded that though God should shower down kingdoms upon earth, not one of them would fit the head of Maria Gutierrez. Let me tell you, sir, she is not worth two cents for a queen. Countess will fit her better, and that only with God's help."

"Leave it to God, Sancho," returned Don Quixote, "for he will give her what suits her best. But do not undervalue yourself so much as to come to be content with anything less than being governor of a province."

"I will not, sir," answered Sancho, "especially as I have a man of such character for a master in your worship, who will know how to give me all that will be suitable for me and that I can bear."



CHAPTER VIII. The Terrible and Unimaginable Adventure of the Windmills

At this point they came in sight of thirty or forty windmills on the plain, and as soon as Don Quixote saw them he said to his squire, "Fortune is arranging matters for us better than we could have shaped our desires ourselves, for look there, my friend Sancho Panza. Thirty or more monstrous giants present themselves, all of whom I mean to engage in battle and slay, and with whose spoils we shall begin to make our fortunes; for this is righteous warfare. It is in good service to God to sweep so evil a race from off the face of the earth."

"What giants?" said Sancho Panza.

"Those you see there," answered his master, "with the long arms, and some have them nearly two leagues long."

"Look, your worship," said Sancho, "what we see there are not giants but windmills, and what seem to be their arms are the sails that the wind turns to make the millstone go."

"It is easy to see," replied Don Quixote, "that you are not used to this business of adventures. Those are giants and if you are afraid, go away and pray while I engage them in fierce and unequal combat."

So saying, he gave the spur to his steed Rocinante, heedless of the cries his squire Sancho sent after him, warning him that most certainly they were windmills and not giants he was going to attack. He, however, was so positive they were giants that he neither heard the cries of Sancho, nor perceived what they were, but shouted, "Do not run, cowards and vile beings, for a single knight attacks you."

A slight breeze at this moment sprang up, and the great sails began to move. Seeing this Don Quixote exclaimed, "Though you flourish more arms than the giant Briareus¹⁵, you will have to deal with me."

So saying, and commending himself with all his heart to his lady Dulcinea, imploring her to support him in such a peril, with lance in rest and covered by his shield, he charged at Rocinante's fullest gallop and fell upon the first mill that stood in front of him. As he drove his lance point into the sail the wind whirled it round with such force that it splintered the lance to pieces, sweeping with it horse and rider, who went rolling over on the plain, in a sorry condition. Sancho hurried to his assistance as fast as his donkey could go, and when he came up found him unable to move from what had happened to him and Rocinante.

"God help us!" said Sancho, "did I not warn your worship to be careful, for they are only windmills? No one could have mistaken them except someone who had mills like this turning in his head."

"Hush, my friend Sancho," replied Don Quixote, "the fortunes of war more than anything else are subject to frequent changes. Moreover I think truly that the same wizard Friston who carried off my study and books, has turned these giants into mills in order to rob me of the glory of vanquishing them, such is the hatred he has for me. But in the end his wicked arts can do little against my good sword."

"God's will be done," said Sancho Panza, helping him to get up again on Rocinante, whose shoulder was half out. Discussing their adventure, they followed the road to Puerto Lapice, where, said Don Quixote, they could not fail to find adventures in abundance and variety, as it was a popular main road. In the end, he was much saddened at the loss of his lance, and saying so to his squire, he added, "I remember having read how a Spanish knight, named Diego Perez de Vargas, having broken his sword in battle, tore from an oak a huge branch, and with it did such things that

¹⁵ Briareus: in Greek mythology a 100-armed giant.

day and pounded so many Moors¹⁶, that he got the surname of Machuca¹⁷, and he and his descendants from that day forth were called Vargas y Machuca. I mention this because from the first oak I see I mean to tear off such a branch, large and strong like that, with which I am determined to do such deeds that you may deem yourself very fortunate in being found worthy to come and see them, and be an eyewitness to things that will be difficult to believe.”

“God’s will be done,” said Sancho, “I believe it all as your worship says it; but straighten yourself a little, for you seem all on one side, maybe from the shaking of the fall.”

“That is the truth,” said Don Quixote, “and if I make no complaint of the pain it is because knights-errant are not permitted to complain of any wound, even though their bowels may be coming out through it.”

“If so,” said Sancho, “I have nothing to say; but God knows I would rather your worship complained when anything ailed you. For my part, I confess I must complain however small the ache may be, unless this rule about not complaining extends to the squires of knights-errant also.”

Don Quixote could not help laughing at his squire’s simplicity, and he assured him he might complain whenever and however he chose, just as he liked, for he had never read of anything to the contrary in the order of knighthood.

Sancho told him to remember it was dinnertime, to which his master answered that he wanted nothing himself just then, but that *he* might eat when he felt like it. With this permission Sancho settled himself as comfortably as he could on his beast, and taking out of the saddlebags what he had stowed away in them, he trotted along behind his master munching contentedly, and from time to time taking a swig of the wineskin with such relish that the most experienced wine drinker in Malaga might have envied him. While he went on in this way, gulping down draught after draught, he never gave a thought to any of the promises his master had made him, nor did he rate it as hardship but rather as recreational activity to go in quest of adventures, no matter how dangerous they might be.

Finally they spent the night beneath some trees, from one of which Don Quixote plucked a dry branch that he fashioned into a lance, and fixed on it the head he had removed from the broken one. All that night Don Quixote lay awake thinking of his lady Dulcinea, in order to conform to what he had read in his books: Many nights in the forests and deserts knights used to lie sleepless supported by the memory of their ladies. Not so for Sancho Panza, for having his stomach full of something stronger than chicory water,¹⁸ he slept uninterrupted throughout the night, and, if his master had not called him, neither the rays of the sun beating on his face nor all the cheery notes of the birds welcoming the approach of day would have had power to awaken him. After getting up he tried the wineskin and found it somewhat less full than the night before, which grieved his heart because they did not seem to be on their way to remedy that deficiency any time soon. Don Quixote did not care to break his fast, for, as has been already said, he restricted himself to savoring memories for nourishment.

They returned to the road they had set out with, leading to Puerto Lapice, and at three in the afternoon they came in sight of it. “Here, brother Sancho Panza,” said Don Quixote when he saw it, “we may plunge our hands up to the elbows in what they call adventures. But observe, even should you see me in the greatest danger in the world, you must not put a hand to your sword in my defense, unless indeed you perceive that those who attack me are scum or lowlives; for in that case you may very properly aid me. But if they be knights it is on no account permitted or allowed by the laws of knighthood for you to help me until you have been dubbed a knight.”

“Most certainly, sir,” replied Sancho, “your worship shall be fully obeyed in this matter; all the more so as I am peaceful and no friend to mixing in conflicts and fights. It is true that in terms of

¹⁶ Moors: Muslims from Morocco

¹⁷ Machuca: “The Smasher.”

¹⁸ Chicory water: a coffee-like drink

defending myself I shall not care much about those laws, for laws human and divine allow each one to defend himself against any sort of attacker.”

“That I grant,” said Don Quixote, “but in this matter of aiding me against knights you must put a restraint upon your natural impulses.”

“I will do so, I promise you,” answered Sancho, “and will keep this rule as carefully as the Sabbath day.”

While they were talking there appeared on the road two monks of the order of St. Benedict, mounted on two dromedaries, not much shorter than the two mules they rode on. They wore travelers’ spectacles and carried sunshades, and behind them came a coach attended by four or five people on horseback and two carriers on foot with mules. In the coach there was, as afterwards appeared, a Biscay lady on her way to Seville, where her husband was about to board a ship bound for the Indies with an appointment of high honor. The monks, though going the same road, were not in her company; but the moment Don Quixote perceived them he said to his squire, “Either I am mistaken, or this is going to be the most famous adventure that has ever been seen, for those figures in black we see there must be magicians who are carrying off some stolen princess in that coach. With all my might I must undo this wrong.”

“This will be worse than the windmills,” said Sancho. “Look, sir, those are friars of St. Benedict, and the coach plainly belongs to some travelers. I’m warning you: be careful and don’t let the devil mislead you.”

“I have told you already, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “that on the subject of adventures you know little. What I say is the truth, as you shall now see.”

So saying, he advanced and posted himself in the middle of the road along which the monks were coming, and as soon as he thought they had come near enough to hear what he said, he cried aloud, “Devilish and unnatural beings, release instantly the highborn princesses whom you are carrying off by force in this coach, or else prepare to meet a speedy death as the just punishment of your evil deeds...”



About the Author

Miguel de Cervantes was a Spanish writer, poet, and soldier who was born in 1547 and died in 1616, a period that spanned the height and decline of Spain's Golden Age. Throughout his life Cervantes shared the ideals of Spain's glory at a time when the nation was perhaps the strongest Catholic force in Europe, which was torn by conflicts between Catholic Christians loyal to the Pope in Rome and Protestant Christians who felt they were reforming and purifying Christian degeneration. Meanwhile, from the south advances were being made by an aggressive Turkish power, the Ottoman Empire, which was Muslim-ruled.



Cervantes joined the army and participated in the famous battle of Lepanto in 1571 where a coalition of Catholic nations defeated the Turks. Sick below decks, Cervantes insisted on joining the battle. He fought bravely, receiving two shots in his chest and a wound that rendered his left hand useless the rest of his life. This injured hand earned him high honors from the coalition leader Don Juan of Austria. Cervantes continued to serve in the Spanish military. Returning to Spain, his ship was captured by pirates and he was sold as a slave in Algiers, in north Africa.

While enslaved Cervantes schemed again and again, not only for his own escape, but for the liberation of numerous fellow slaves. Each time he failed, he declared he alone, and not his countrymen, was to blame, knowing full well the atrocities reserved for punishing escaped Christians. The bloodthirsty Algerian ruler Hassan Pacha, however, was impressed by the audacity of the maimed Spaniard and always spared him. After five years enslaved, his ransom was paid and he was released.

In 1580, Cervantes returned to Spain without any means of survival. Don Juan was dead and hated by the current King of Spain, so Cervantes could not hope for any favors through his recommendations. He wrote a number of unsuccessful plays and eventually took on a government job that required him to collect food from locals for the Spanish navy—a difficult job if the poor locals could not pay and he did not want to report them to the authorities. He was twice imprisoned for owing money to the treasury from a shortage in his accounts. Some think he started writing *Don Quixote* while in a Seville prison. Completed in 1604, *Don Quixote* was an immediate bestseller and has continued to be so this day.

Although few people in the English-speaking world have read *Don Quixote* in its original Spanish, it nevertheless has had its influence on the English language, giving us expressions such as “the pot calling the kettle black,” “a wild-geese chase,” and “the sky’s the limit.” Also, the English word “quixotic” originated from the name of the title character. According to dictionary.com, quixotic means “Caught up in the romance of noble deeds and the pursuit of unreachable goals; idealistic without regard to practicality.”