

## Chapter II

### *Regarding what befell Don Quixote with some goatherds*

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He was welcomed cheerfully by the goatherds, and Sancho, having done his best to tend to Rocinante and his donkey, followed the aroma coming from certain pieces of dried goat meat that were bubbling over the fire in a pot, and though he wished at that very moment to test if they were ready to be transferred from the pot to his stomach, he did not, because the goatherds removed them from the fire, spread some sheepskins on the ground, quickly prepared their rustic table, and with displays of goodwill invited them both to share what they had. The six of them, which was the number in their flock, sat down around the skins, having first with artless ceremony asked Don Quixote to sit on a small wooden trough that they turned upside down and set out for him. Don Quixote sat down, and Sancho remained standing to serve him and fill his cup, which was made of horn. His master saw him standing and said:

“So that you may see, Sancho, the virtue contained in knight errantry, and how those who practice any portion of it always tend to be honored and esteemed in the world, I want you to sit here at my side and in the company of these good people, and be the same as I, who am your natural lord and master; eat from my plate and drink where I drink, for one may say of knight errantry what is said of love: it makes all things equal.”

“You’re too kind!” said Sancho. “But I can tell your grace that as long as I have something good to eat, I’ll eat it just as well or better standing and all alone as sitting at the height of an emperor. Besides, if truth be told, what I eat, even if it’s bread and onion, tastes much better to me in my corner without fancy or respectful manners, than a turkey would at other tables where I have to chew slowly, not drink too much, wipe my mouth a lot, not sneeze or cough if I feel like it, or do other things that come with solitude and freedom. And so, Señor, these honors that your grace wants to grant me for being a servant and follower of knight errantry, which I am, being your grace’s squire, you should turn into other things that will be of greater comfort and benefit to me; these, though I am grateful for them, I renounce now and forever.”

“Despite all that, you will sit down, for God exalts the man who humbles himself.”

And seizing him by the arm, he obliged Sancho to sit next to him.

The goatherds did not understand their nonsensical talk about squires and knights errant, and they simply ate and were silent and looked at their guests, who, with a good deal of grace and eagerness, devoured pieces of goat meat as big as their fists. When the meat course was over, the goatherds spread out on the unshorn sheepskins a great quantity of dried acorns, along with half a cheese that was harder than mortar. In all this time the horn was not idle, for it made the rounds so often-sometimes full, sometimes empty, like the bucket at a well-that one of the two wineskins in evidence was emptied with no difficulty. After Don Quixote had satisfied his stomach, he picked up a handful of acorns, and, regarding them attentively, he began to speak these words:

“Fortunate the age and fortunate the times called golden by the ancients, and not because gold, which in this our age of iron is so highly esteemed, could be found then with no effort, but because those who lived in that time did not know the two words thine and mine. In that blessed age all things were owned in common; no one, for his daily sustenance, needed to do more than lift his hand and pluck it from the sturdy oaks that so liberally invited him to share their sweet and flavorsome fruit. The clear fountains and rushing rivers offered delicious, transparent waters in magnificent abundance. In the fissures of rocks and the hollows of trees diligent and clever bees established their colonies, freely offering to any hand the fertile harvest of their sweet labor.

Noble cork trees, moved only by their own courtesy, shed the wide, light bark with which houses, supported on rough posts, were covered as a protection, but only against the rain that fell from heaven. In that time all was peace, friendship, and harmony; the heavy curve of the plowshare had not yet dared to open or violate the merciful womb of our first mother, for she, without being forced, offered up, everywhere across her broad and fertile bosom, whatever would satisfy, sustain, and delight the children who then possessed her. In that time simple and beautiful shepherdesses could wander from valley to valley and hill to hill, their hair hanging loose or in braids, wearing only the clothes needed to modestly cover that which modesty demands, and has always demanded, be covered, and their adornments were not those used now, enveloping the

one who wears them in the purple dyes of Tyre, and silk martyred in countless ways, but a few green burdock leaves and ivy vines entwined, and in these they perhaps looked as grand and elegant as our ladies of the court do now in the rare and strange designs which idle curiosity has taught them. In that time amorous concepts were recited from the soul simply and directly, in the same way and manner that the soul conceived them, without looking for artificial and devious words to enclose them. There was no fraud, deceit, or malice mixed in with honesty and truth. Justice stood on her own ground, and favor or interest did not dare disturb or offend her as they so often do now, defaming, confusing, and persecuting her. Arbitrary opinions formed outside the law had not yet found a place in the mind of the judge, for there was nothing to judge, and no one to be judged. Maidens in their modesty wandered, as I have said, wherever they wished, alone and mistresses of themselves, without fear that another's boldness or lascivious intent would dishonor them, and if they fell it was through their own desire and will.

But now, in these our detestable times, no maiden is safe, even if she is hidden and enclosed in another labyrinth like the one in Crete; because even there, through chinks in the wall, or carried by the air itself, with the zealousness of accursed solicitation the amorous pestilence finds its way in and, despite all their seclusion, maidens are brought to ruin. It was for their protection, as time passed and wickedness spread, that the order of knights errant was instituted: to defend maidens, protect widows, and come to the aid of orphans and those in need. This is the order to which I belong, my brother goatherds, and I thank you for the kindness and hospitality you have shown to me and my squire. For, although by natural law all men are obliged to favor knights errant, still, because I know that without knowing this obligation you welcomed me and treated me so generously, I wish, with all my goodwill, to thank you for yours."<sup>1</sup>

This long harangue – which could very easily have been omitted – was declaimed by our knight because the acorns served to him brought to mind the Golden Age, and with it the desire to make that foolish speech to the goatherds, who, stupefied and perplexed, listened without saying a word. Sancho too was silent, and ate acorns, and made frequent trips to the second wineskin, which had been hung from a cork tree to cool the wine.

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1. Don Quixote's soliloquy incorporates all the elements traditionally associated with the classical idea of the Golden Age.

Don Quixote spent more time speaking than it took to finish supper, but when it was concluded, one of the goatherds said:

"So that your grace, Señor Knight, can say even more truly that we welcomed you with a ready goodwill, we want to give you joy and pleasure by having a friend of ours sing for you; he'll be here very soon; he's a smart lad, and very much in love, and above all, he knows how to read and write and is so good a musician on the rebec<sup>2</sup> that you couldn't ask for anything better."

No sooner had the goatherd said this than the sound of the rebec reached their ears, and a short while later the one playing it appeared, a good-looking boy no more than twenty-two years of age. His friends asked if he had eaten, and when he answered that he had, the one who had made the offer said:

"That means, Antonio, that you could do us the favor of singing a little, and this gentleman, our guest, can see that in the woods and forests we also have somebody who knows about music. We told him about your talents and we want you to show them and prove we told the truth, and so I ask you please to sit down and sing the ballad about your love that your uncle the vicar composed for you, the one the people in the village liked so much."

"I'd be happy to," the boy replied.

And without having to be asked a second time, he sat on the trunk of a fallen oak and, after tuning his rebec, with great charm he soon began to sing these words:

ANTONIO

I know, Olalla, that you adore me  
though you haven't told me so,  
not even with your eyes,  
in the silent language of love.

Since I know that you are clever,  
that you love me I do claim;  
for love was ne'er unrequited  
if it has been proclaimed.

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2. A precursor of the violin, mentioned frequently in pastoral novels.

It is true that once or twice  
Olalla, you've made it known  
that your soul is made of bronze  
and your white bosom of stone.

But hiding behind your reproaches  
and your virtuous rebukes  
hope may reveal a glimpse of  
the hemmed edge of her cloak.

My faith is firm and steadfast,  
its eager response ne'er wanes  
because not called, ne'er waxes  
because it has been chosen.

If love is courtesy, then  
yours lets me conclude  
that the outcome of my hopes  
will be just as I assume.

And if service plays a part  
in making a bosom kind,  
then those that I have rendered  
will help to sway your mind.

For if you think about it,  
more than once have I worn  
the same clothes on a Monday  
that honored Sunday morn.

For love and finery  
always walk hand in hand,  
and in your eyes I wish  
always to seem gallant.

Speak not of my dances for you,  
the songs that I bestow  
so late into the night  
and before the rooster's crow.

Speak not of my praises of you,  
that I tell to all the world;  
though they have earned for me  
the displeasure of many a girl.

I was singing your praises,  
and Teresa del Berrocal said:

"He thinks he adores an angel,  
and he loves a monkey instead.

Thanks to all her trinkets,  
her dyes and wigs and falls,  
the god of Love is deceived  
by beauty that is false."

I said she lied; she grew angry;  
her cousin came to her aid  
and challenged me; you know  
what he and I did and said.

I love no one but you, yet  
I don't court you sinfully;  
though I beseech and woo you  
there's more virtue in my plea.

Mother Church has chains  
whose links are made of silk;  
I will join you there  
if you bend your neck to the yoke.

If not, I make this vow  
by the blessed saintly choir  
not to leave these mountains  
except as a Capuchin friar.

Here the goatherd ended his song, and although Don Quixote asked him to sing something else, Sancho Panza did not concur because he was readier for sleep than for hearing songs. And so he said to his master:

"Your grace ought to decide now where you're going to spend the night; the work these good men do all day doesn't allow them to spend their nights singing."

"I understand you very well, Sancho," Don Quixote responded. "It is clear to me that your visits to the wineskin ask to be repaid with sleep rather than music."

"It tasted good to all of us, thanks be to God," replied Sancho.

"I do not deny that," Don Quixote responded. "But you can settle down wherever you like, for those of my profession prefer standing vigil to sleeping. Even so, Sancho, it would be good if you tended this ear again, for it is hurting more than is necessary."

Sancho did as he was ordered, and when one of the goatherds saw the wound, he told him not to worry, for he would give him a remedy that would heal it right away. And after picking some rosemary leaves, which grew there in abundance, he chewed them and mixed them with a little salt, and applied them to Don Quixote's ear and bandaged it carefully, assuring him that no other medicine was needed, which was the truth.