

Chapter 13

In which the tale of the shepherdess Marcela is concluded, and other events are related

But no sooner had day begun to appear on the balconies of the east than five of the six goatherds got up and went to wake Don Quixote and tell him that if he was still of a mind to go to see the famous burial of Grisóstomo, they would accompany him. Don Quixote, who desired nothing else, got up and ordered Sancho to saddle and prepare the mounts immediately, which he did very promptly, and just as promptly they all set out. And they had gone less than a quarter of a league when, at an intersection with another path, they saw coming toward them approximately six shepherds, dressed in black sheepskin jackets, their heads crowned with wreaths of cypress and bitter oleander. Each carried a heavy staff of holly in his hand. With them rode two gentlemen on horseback, very well equipped for traveling and accompanied by three servants on foot. As the two groups drew close they exchanged courteous greetings, asked where the other was going, discovered they were all heading for the burial site, and so began to travel together.

One of the men on horseback, speaking to his companion, said:

“It seems to me, Señor Vivaldo, that we must consider our lingering to see this extraordinary funeral as time well spent, for it most certainly will be extraordinary, according to the strange tales these shepherds have told us not only about the dead shepherd, but about the murderous shepherdess.”

“I think so, too,” responded Vivaldo. “And I would have been willing to linger not merely one day but four in order to see it.”

Don Quixote asked what they had heard about Marcela and Grisóstomo. The traveler replied that early that morning they had encountered the shepherds and, seeing them in such mournful dress, had asked the reason for their going about in that manner, and one of them had recounted the strange behavior and beauty of a shepherdess named Marcela, and the love so many suitors had for her, and the death of Grisóstomo, to whose burial they were going. In short, he related everything that Pedro had told Don Quixote.

This conversation ended and another began when the traveler called Vivaldo asked Don Quixote the reason for his going about armed in that manner when the land was so peaceful. To which Don Quixote replied:

“The exercise of my profession does not allow or permit me to go about in any other manner. Tranquility, luxury, and repose were invented for pampered courtiers, but travail, tribulation, and arms were invented and created only for those whom the world calls knights errant, and I, although unworthy, am the least of that number.”

As soon as they heard this, they considered him mad, and to learn more and see what sort of madness this was, Vivaldo asked him the meaning of knights errant.

“Have your graces not read,” responded Don Quixote, “the annals and histories of England, in which are recounted the famous deeds of King Arthur, whom, in our Castilian ballads, we continuously call King Artús? According to an ancient and widespread tradition throughout the kingdom of Great Britain, this king did not die but, through the art of enchantment, was turned into a crow and in time will return to rule and recover his kingdom and scepter; for this reason, it can be demonstrated that no Englishman has ever killed a crow from that time to this. Well, it was in the days of this good king that the famous chivalric order of the Knights of the Round Table was instituted, and, in these same chronicles, in the minutest detail, there is also a recounting of the love between Sir Lancelot of the Lake and Queen Guinevere, their intermediary and confidante being the highly honored Duenna Quintanona, and here was born that well-known ballad, so praised in our Spain:

Never was a knight
so well served by ladies
as was Lancelot when
he from Brittany came;

followed by the sweet and gentle tale of his feats of love and of valor. Since that time, from one generation to the next, the order of chivalry has extended and spread through many different parts of the world, and among its members, famous and known for their great deeds, were the valiant Amadís of Gaul and all his sons and grandsons unto the fifth generation, and the valorous Felixmarte of Hyrcania, and the never-

sufficiently-praised Tirant lo Blanc, and in our own time we have almost seen and communicated with and heard the invincible and valiant knight Don Belianís of Greece. This, then, gentlemen, is what it means to be a knight errant, and the order of chivalry is just as I have said, and in it, as I have also said, I, though a sinner, have taken my vows, professing exactly what was professed by the knights I have mentioned. And therefore I wander these solitary and desolate places in search of adventures, determined to bring my arm and my person to the most dangerous that fortune may offer, in defense of the weak and helpless.”

These words fully persuaded the travelers that Don Quixote had lost his reason, and they realized the nature of the madness that controlled him and felt the same astonishment that was felt by all who came to know it. Vivaldo, who was a very clever person with a merry disposition, wanted to give Don Quixote the opportunity to go on with his nonsense and entertain them for the short distance that remained before they reached the burial site. And so he said:

“It seems to me, Señor Knight Errant, that your grace has taken a vow to follow one of the most austere professions in the world; in my opinion, not even Carthusian friars have one so austere.”

“Theirs may be as austere,” responded our Don Quixote, “but I have some doubt that it is just as necessary in the world. Because, if truth be told, the soldier, when he carries out his captain’s orders, does no less than the captain who issues the orders. I mean to say that the religious, in absolute peace and tranquility, ask heaven for the well-being of the world, but we soldiers and knights effect what they ask, defending the world with the valor of our good right arms and the sharp edge of our swords, not protected by a roof but under the open sky, subject to the unbearable rays of the sun in summer and the icy blasts of winter. In this way we are ministers of God on earth, the arms by which His justice is put into effect on earth. And since the deeds of war and all things concerned with and related to war cannot be effected except with toil, perspiration, and travail, it follows that those whose profession it is undoubtedly face greater difficulties than those who in tranquil peace and repose pray to God to favor those who cannot help themselves. I do not mean to say, nor has it even passed through my mind, that the state of a knight errant is as virtuous as that of a cloistered religious; I wish only to suggest, given what I must suffer, that it is undoubtedly more toilsome and more difficult, more subject to hunger and thirst, more destitute, straitened, and

impoverished, for there can be no doubt that knights errant in the past endured many misfortunes in the course of their lives. And if some rose to be emperors through the valor of their mighty right arms, by my faith, it cost them dearly in the quantities of blood and sweat they shed, and if those who rose to such great heights had not had enchanters and wise men to help them, they would have been thwarted in their desires and deceived in their hopes.”

“I am of the same opinion,” replied the traveler, “but there is one thing, among many others, concerning knights errant that seems objectionable to me, and it is that when they find themselves about to embark on a great and perilous adventure, in which there is a manifest danger that they will lose their lives, never at the moment of undertaking it do they think of commending themselves to God, as every Christian is obliged to do at times of danger; instead, they commend themselves to their ladies with as much zeal and devotion as if those ladies were their God, and to me this seems to have a somewhat heathenish smell.”

“Señor,” responded Don Quixote, “under no circumstances can they do any less, and the knight errant who did otherwise would fall into disrepute, for it is tradition and custom in knight errantry that the knight errant who is about to embark on some great feat of arms and has his lady before him must gently and lovingly turn his eyes toward her as if asking her to favor and protect him in the fearful battle he is undertaking; even if no one is there to hear him, he is obliged to murmur a few words under his breath in which, with all his heart, he commends himself to her; we have countless examples of this in the histories. But one should not assume, therefore, that they fail to commend themselves to God, for they have the time and place to do that in the course of combat.”

“Even so,” replied the traveler, “I still have a misgiving, and it is that I have often read that words are exchanged between two knights errant, and one word leads to another, their anger rises, they turn their horses and ride off a good distance to the far ends of the field, and then, without further ado, they ride at full tilt toward each other, and in the middle of the charge they commend themselves to their ladies, and what usually happens after their encounter is that one falls from his horse, run through by his opponent’s lance, and the same thing happens to the other as well, for unless he holds on to his horse’s mane, he cannot help but fall to the ground, too. And I don’t know how the one who is dead had time to commend himself to God in the course of so swift a combat. It would be

better if the words he used during the charge to commend himself to his lady had been used instead to do what he ought to have done and was obliged to do as a Christian. Furthermore, I don't believe that all the knights errant have ladies to whom they can commend themselves because not all of them are in love."

"That cannot be," responded Don Quixote. "I mean, there cannot be a knight errant without a lady, because it is as fitting and natural for them to be in love as for the sky to have stars, and, just as certainly, you have never seen a history in which you find a knight errant without a love, for if he had none, he would not be deemed a legitimate knight but a bastard who entered the fortress of chivalry not through the door but over the walls, like a robber and a thief."

"Even so," said the traveler, "it seems to me that if I remember correctly, I have read that Don Galaor, brother of the valorous Amadís of Gaul, never had a specific lady to whom he could commend himself, and despite this he was not held in any less esteem, and was a very valiant and famous knight."

To which our Don Quixote responded:

"Señor, one swallow does not a summer make. Furthermore, I happen to know that this knight was secretly very much in love, even though his courting all the lovely ladies he found attractive was a natural inclination that he could not resist. However, it is clearly demonstrated that there was one lady whom he had made mistress of his will, and to her he commended himself very frequently and very secretly, because he prided himself on being a secretive knight."

"Well then, if it is essential that every knight errant has to be in love," said the traveler, "we most certainly can suppose that your grace is as well, since you are a member of the profession. And unless your grace prides himself on being as secretive as Don Galaor, I most earnestly implore you, in the name of all this company and on my own behalf, to tell us the name, the kingdom, the condition, and the beauty of your lady; for she would think herself fortunate if all the world knew she was loved and served by the sort of knight your grace appears to be."

Whereupon Don Quixote heaved a great sigh and said:

"I cannot declare whether my sweet enemy would be pleased or not if the world were to know that I serve her; I can only state, responding to what you so courteously ask, that her name is Dulcinea, her kingdom, Toboso, which is in La Mancha, her condition must be that of princess, at

the very least, for she is my queen and lady, and her beauty is supernatural, for in it one finds the reality of all the impossible and chimerical aspects of beauty which poets attribute to their ladies: her tresses are gold, her forehead Elysian fields, her eyebrows the arches of heaven, her eyes suns, her cheeks roses, her lips coral, her teeth pearls, her neck alabaster, her bosom marble, her hands ivory, her skin white as snow, and the parts that modesty hides from human eyes are such, or so I believe and understand, that the most discerning consideration can only praise them but not compare them."

"We would like to know her lineage, ancestry, and family," replied Vivaldo.

To which Don Quixote responded:

"She is not of the ancient Roman families of Curtius, Gaius, and Scipio, nor of the more modern Colonnas and Ursinos, nor of the Moncadas and Requesenes of Cataluña, nor even the Rebellas and Villanovas of Valencia, the Palafoxes, Nuzas, Rocabertís, Corellas Lunas, Alagones, Urreas, Foces, and Ourreas of Aragon, the Cerdas, Manriques, Mendozas, and Guzmanes of Castilla, the Alencastros, Pallas, and Meneses of Portugal; but she is of the family of Toboso of La Mancha, a lineage so fine, although modern, that it can give a generous beginning to the most illustrious families of centuries to come. And I shall brook no reply to this except under the conditions inscribed by Cervino beneath Orlando's victorious arms, which said:

Let no one move them
who cannot prove his worth against Roland."

"Although my lineage is the Cachopines of Laredo," responded the traveler, "I won't dare compare it to that of Toboso of La Mancha, for, to tell the truth, that name has not reached my ears until now."

"Is it possible that so notable a thing has not reached them?" replied Don Quixote.

All the others had been listening with great attention to their conversation, and even the goatherds and shepherds realized that Don Quixote was not in his right mind. Only Sancho Panza, knowing who he was and having known him since he was born, thought that everything his master said was true, but he did have some doubts concerning the

1. The lines are from *Orlando furioso*. "Roland" is the English (and French) for "Orlando." The Spanish version of the name is Roldán."

beauteous Dulcinea of Toboso, because he had never heard of that name or that princess, even though he lived so close to Toboso.

As they were conversing, they saw that coming down the pass formed by two high mountains were about twenty shepherds, all wearing black wool jackets and crowned with wreaths that, as they saw later, were made either of yew or cypress. Six were carrying a bier covered with a great variety of flowers and branches. When one of the goatherds saw this, he said:

“Those men there are carrying the body of Grisóstomo, and the foot of that mountain is the place where he said he should be buried.”

For this reason they hurried to reach the spot, which they did as the bearers were setting the bier on the ground, and, with sharp picks, four of them began digging the grave to one side of a rugged crag.

They exchanged courteous greetings, and then Don Quixote and those who had accompanied him began to look at the bier, and on it, covered with flowers, they saw a dead body, apparently thirty years of age, dressed as a shepherd, and although he was dead, he showed signs of having had a handsome face and a gallant disposition when he was alive. Around him on the bier were bound volumes and many papers, both opened and closed. And those who were watching, and the men who were digging the grave, and everyone else who was present maintained a wondrous silence, until one of those who had been carrying the dead man said to another:

“Look carefully, Ambrosio, to see if this is the place Grisóstomo mentioned, since you want everything he asked for in his will to be carried out to the letter.”

“It is,” Ambrosio responded, “for here my unhappy friend often told me the history of his misfortune. Here, he said, he first saw that mortal enemy of the human race, and here was also where he first declared to her his desire, as honest as it was amorous, and here was where Marcela finally disillusioned and disdained him for the last time, putting an end to the tragedy of his wretched life. Here, in memory of so much affliction, he wanted to be consigned to the depths of eternal oblivion.”

And turning to Don Quixote and the travelers, he went on to say:

“This body, Señores, that you look at with pitying eyes, was the depository of a soul in which heaven placed an infinite number of its gifts. This is the body of Grisóstomo, who was unique in intelligence, unequaled in courtesy, inimitable in gallantry, peerless in friendship,

faultless in generosity, serious without presumption, merry without vulgarity, and, finally, first in everything it means to be good and second to none in everything it means to be unfortunate. He loved deeply and was rejected; he adored and was scorned; he pleaded with a wild beast, importuned a piece of marble, pursued the wind, shouted in the desert, served ingratitude, and his reward was to fall victim to death in the middle of his life, which was ended by a shepherdess whom he attempted to immortalize so that she would live on in memory, which could have been clearly shown in those papers you see there if he had not ordered them committed to the fire when his body had been committed to the earth.”

“You would use greater harshness and cruelty with them,” said Vivaldo, “than their own master, for it is neither just nor correct to carry out the will of someone whose orders go against all reasonable thought. You would not think so highly of Caesar Augustus if he had agreed to carry out what the divine Mantuan had ordered in his will.² And so, Señor Amhrosio, although you surrender your friend’s body to the ground, do not surrender his writings to oblivion; if he gave the order as an aggrieved man, it is not proper for you to carry it out like a foolish one. Rather, by giving life to these papers, you can have Marcela’s cruelty live on as an example to those who live in future days so that they can flee and run from similar dangers; I and my companions know the history of your loving and desperate friend, and the reason for his death, and what he ordered to be done when his life was over; from this lamentable history one can learn how great was the cruelty of Marcela, the love of Grisóstomo, and the steadfastness of your friendship, as well as the final destination of those who madly gallop along the path that heedless love places in front of them. Last night we learned of Grisóstomo’s death and that he would be buried in this place; and filled with curiosity and pity, we halted our journey and decided to come and see with our own eyes what had saddened us so much when we heard it. And as recompense for this sorrow, and the desire born in us to alleviate it if we could, we beg you—at least, I implore you—o most discreet Ambrosio, not to burn these papers, and to allow me to have some of them.”

And not waiting for the shepherd to respond, he stretched out his hand and took some of the papers closest to him; seeing this, Ambrosio said:

“Out of courtesy I consent to your keeping, Señor, the ones you

2. Virgil requested that the *Aeneid* be burned at his death.

already have, but to think that I won't bum those that remain is to think vain thoughts."

Vivaldo, who wanted to see what the papers said, immediately opened one of them and saw that it had as a title "Song of Despair." When Ambrosio heard the title, he said:

"This is the last paper the unfortunate man wrote; and so that you may see, Señor, the lengths to which his misfortunes had driven him, read it aloud so that all may hear, for the time it will take to dig the grave will be more than enough time for you to read it."

"I will do that gladly," said Vivaldo.

And since all those present had the same desire, they came to stand around him, and Vivaldo, reading in a clear voice, saw that it said: