

## Chapter 8

*Regarding the good fortune of the valorous Don Quixote in the fearful and never imagined adventure of the windmills, along with other events worthy of joyful remembrance*

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As they were talking, they saw thirty or forty of the windmills found in that countryside, and as soon as Don Quixote caught sight of them, he said to his squire:

“Good fortune is guiding our affairs better than we could have desired, for there you see, friend Sancho Panza, thirty or more enormous giants with whom I intend to do battle and whose lives I intend to take, and with the spoils we shall begin to grow rich, for this is righteous warfare, and it is a great service to God to remove so evil a breed from the face of the earth.”

“What giants?” said Sancho Panza.

“Those you see over there,” replied his master, “with the long arms; sometimes they are almost two leagues long.”

“Look, your grace,” Sancho responded, “those things that appear over there aren’t giants but windmills, and what looks like their arms are the sails that are turned by the wind and make the grindstone move.”

“It seems clear to me,” replied Don Quixote, “that thou art not wellversed in the matter of adventures: these are giants; and if thou art afraid, move aside and start to pray whilst I enter with them in fierce and unequal combat.”

And having said this, he spurred his horse, Rocinante, paying no attention to the shouts of his squire, Sancho, who warned him that, beyond any doubt, those things he was about to attack were windmills and not giants. But he was so convinced they were giants that he did not hear the shouts of his squire, Sancho, and could not see, though he was very close, what they really were; instead, he charged and called out:

“Flee not, cowards and base creatures, for it is a single knight who attacks you.”

Just then a gust of wind began to blow, and the great sails began to move, and, seeing this, Don Quixote said:

“Even if you move more arms than the giant Briareus,<sup>1</sup> you will answer to me.”

And saying this, and commending himself with all his heart to his lady

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1. A monstrous giant in Greek mythology who had fifty heads and a hundred arms.

Dulcinea, asking that she come to his aid at this critical moment, and well-protected by his shield, with his lance in its socket, he charged at Rocinante’s full gallop and attacked the first mill he came to; and as he thrust his lance into the sail, the wind moved it with so much force that it broke the lance into pieces and picked up the horse and the knight, who then dropped to the ground and were very badly battered. Sancho Panza hurried to help as fast as his donkey could carry him, and when he reached them he discovered that Don Quixote could not move because he had taken so hard a fall with Rocinante.

“God save me!” said Sancho. “Didn’t I tell your grace to watch what you were doing, that these were nothing but windmills, and only somebody whose head was full of them wouldn’t know that?”

“Be quiet, Sancho my friend,” replied Don Quixote. “Matters of war, more than any others, are subject to continual change; moreover, I think, and therefore it is true, that the same Frestón the Wise who stole my room and my books has turned these giants into windmills in order to deprive me of the glory of defeating them: such is the enmity he feels for me; but in the end, his evil arts will not prevail against the power of my virtuous sword.”

“God’s will be done,” replied Sancho Panza.

He helped him to stand, and Don Quixote remounted Rocinante, whose back was almost broken. And, talking about their recent adventure, they continued on the road to Puerto Lápice,<sup>2</sup> because there, said Don Quixote, he could not fail to find many diverse adventures since it was a very heavily trafficked place; but he rode heavyhearted because he did not have his lance; and expressing this to his squire, he said:

“I remember reading that a Spanish knight named Diego Perez de Vargas, whose sword broke in battle, tore a heavy bough or branch from an oak tree and with it did such great deeds that day, and thrashed so many Moors, that he was called Machuca, the Bruiser, and from that day forward he and his descendants were named Vargas y Machuca.<sup>3</sup> I have

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2. An entrance to the mountains of the Sierra Morena, between La Mancha and Andalucla.

3. A historical figure of the thirteenth century.

told you this because from the first oak that presents itself to me I intend to tear off another branch as good as the one I have in mind, and with it I shall do such great deeds that you will consider yourself fortunate for deserving to see them and for being a witness to things that can hardly be believed.”

“It’s in God’s hands,” said Sancho. “I believe everything your grace says, but sit a little straighter, it looks like you’re tilting, it must be from the battering you took when you fell.”

“That is true,” replied Don Quixote, “and if I do not complain about the pain, it is because it is not the custom of knights errant to complain about any wound, even if their innards are spilling out because of it.”

“If that’s true, I have nothing to say,” Sancho responded, “but God knows I’d be happy if your grace complained when something hurt you. As for me, I can say that I’ll complain about the smallest pain I have, unless what you said about not complaining also applies to the squires of knights errant.”

Don Quixote could not help laughing at his squire’s simplemindedness; and so he declared that he could certainly complain however and whenever he wanted, with or without cause, for as yet he had not read anything to the contrary in the order of chivalry. Sancho said that it was time to eat. His master replied that he felt no need of food at the moment, but that Sancho could eat whenever he wished. With this permission, Sancho made himself as comfortable as he could on his donkey, and after taking out of the saddlebags what he had put into them, he rode behind his master at a leisurely pace, eating and, from time to time, tilting back the wineskin with so much gusto that the most selfindulgent tavern-keeper in Malaga might have envied him. And as he rode along in that manner, taking frequent drinks, he did not think about any promises his master had made to him, and he did not consider it work but sheer pleasure to go around seeking adventures, no matter how dangerous they might be.

In short, they spent the night under some trees, and from one of them Don Quixote tore off a dry branch to use as a lance and placed on it the iron head he had taken from the one that had broken. Don Quixote did not sleep at all that night but thought of his lady Dulcinea, in order to conform to what he had read in his books of knights spending many sleepless nights in groves and meadows, turning all their thoughts to memories of their ladies. Sancho Panza did not do the same; since his

stomach was full, and not with chicory water, he slept the entire night, and if his master had not called him, the rays of the sun shining in his face and the song of numerous birds joyfully greeting the arrival of the new day would have done nothing to rouse him. When he woke he made another pass at the wineskin and found it somewhat flatter than it had been the night before, and his heart grieved, for it seemed to him they were not likely to remedy the lack very soon. Don Quixote did not wish to eat breakfast because, as has been stated, he meant to live on sweet memories. They continued on the road to Puerto Upice, and at about three in the afternoon it came into view.

“Here,” said Don Quixote when he saw it, “we can, brother Sancho Panza, plunge our hands all the way up to the elbows into this thing they call adventures. But be advised that even if you see me in the greatest danger in the world, you are not to put a hand to your sword to defend me, unless you see that those who offend me are baseborn rabble, in which case you certainly can help me; but if they are gentlemen, under no circumstances is it licit or permissible for you, under the laws of chivalry, to help me until you are dubbed a knight.”

“There’s no doubt, Señor,” replied Sancho, “that your grace will be strictly obeyed in this; besides, as far as I’m concerned, I’m a peaceful man and an enemy of getting involved in quarrels or disputes. It’s certainly true that when it comes to defending my person I won’t pay much attention to those laws, since laws both human and divine permit each man to defend himself against anyone who tries to hurt him.”

“I agree,” Don Quixote responded, “but as for helping me against gentlemen, you have to hold your natural impulses in check.”

“Then that’s just what I’ll do,” replied Sancho, “and I’ll keep that precept as faithfully as I keep the Sabbath on Sunday.”

As they were speaking, there appeared on the road two Benedictine friars mounted on two dromedaries, for the two mules they rode on were surely no smaller than that. They wore their traveling masks and carried sunshades. Behind them came a carriage, accompanied by four or five men on horseback, and two muledrivers on foot. In the carriage, as was learned later, was a Basque lady going to Sevilla, where her husband was preparing to sail for the Indies to take up a very honorable post. The friars were not traveling with her, although their route was the same, but as soon as Don Quixote saw them, he said to his squire:

“Either I am deceived, or this will be the most famous adventure ever seen, because those black shapes you see there must be, and no doubt are, enchanters who have captured some princess in that carriage, and I needs must do everything in my power to right this wrong.”

“This will be worse than the windmills,” said Sancho. “Look, Señor, those are friars of St. Benedict, and the carriage must belong to some travelers. Look carefully, I tell you, look carefully at what you do, in case the devil is deceiving you.”

“I have already told you, Sancho,” replied Don Quixote, “that you know very little about the subject of adventures; what I say is true, and now you will see that it is so.”

And having said this, he rode forward and stopped in the middle of the road that the friars were traveling, and when they were close enough so that he thought they could hear what he said, he called to them in a loud voice:

“You wicked and monstrous creatures, instantly unhand the noble princesses you hold captive in that carriage, or else prepare to receive a swift death as just punishment for your evil deeds.”

The friars pulled on the reins, taken aback as much by Don Quixote’s appearance as by his words, and they responded:

“Señor, we are neither wicked nor monstrous, but two religious of St. Benedict who are traveling on our way, and we do not know if there are captive princesses in that carriage or not.”

“No soft words with me; I know who you are, perfidious rabble,” said Don Quixote.

And without waiting for any further reply, he spurred Rocinante, lowered his lance, and attacked the first friar with so much ferocity and courage that if he had not allowed himself to fall off the mule, the friar would have been thrown to the ground and seriously injured or even killed. The second friar, who saw how his companion was treated, kicked his castle-size mule and began to gallop across the fields, faster than the wind.

Sancho Panza, who saw the man on the ground, quickly got off his donkey, hurried over to the friar, and began to pull off his habit. At this moment, two servants of the friars came over and asked why he was stripping him. Sancho replied that these clothes were legitimately his, the spoils of the battle his master, Don Quixote, had won. The servants had no sense of humor and did not understand anything about spoils or

battles, and seeing that Don Quixote had moved away and was talking to the occupants of the carriage, they attacked Sancho and knocked him down, and leaving no hair in his beard unscathed, they kicked him breathless and senseless and left him lying on the ground. The friar, frightened and terrified and with no color in his face, did not wait another moment but got back on his mule, and when he was mounted, he rode off after his companion, who was waiting for him a good distance away, wondering what the outcome of the attack would be; they did not wish to wait to learn how matters would turn out but continued on their way, crossing themselves more than if they had the devil at their backs.

Don Quixote, as has been said, was talking to the lady in the carriage, saying:

“O beauteous lady, thou canst do with thy person as thou wishest, for the arrogance of thy captors here lieth on the ground, vanquished by this my mighty arm; and so that thou mayest not pine to know the name of thy emancipator, know that I am called Don Quixote of La Mancha, knight errant in search of adventures, and captive of the beauteous and peerless Doña Dulcinea of Toboso, and as recompense for the boon thou hast received from me, I desire only that thou turnest toward Toboso, and on my behalf appearest before this lady and sayest unto her what deeds I have done to gain thy liberty.”

One of the squires accompanying the carriage was a Basque, who listened to everything that Don Quixote was saying; and seeing that he would not allow the carriage to move forward but said it would have to go to Toboso, the squire approached Don Quixote and, seizing his lance, in bad Castilian and even worse Basque, he said:

“Go on, mister, you go wrong; by God who make me, if don’t let carriage go, as I be Basque I kill you.”

Don Quixote understood him very well and replied with great serenity:

“If you were a gentleman, as you are not, I would already have punished your foolishness and audacity, unhappy creature.”

To which the Basque replied:

“Not gentleman me? As Christian I make vow to God you lie. Throw away lance and pull out sword and soon see which one make horse drink. Basque by land, noble by sea, noble by devil, if say other thing you lie.”

“Now you will see, said Agraies,”<sup>4</sup> replied Don Quixote.

And after throwing his lance to the ground, he drew his sword, grasped his shield, and attacked the Basque, determined to take his life.

The Basque, who saw him coming at him in this manner, wanted to get off the mule, which, being one of the inferior ones for hire, could not be trusted, but all he could do was draw his sword; it was his good fortune, however, to be next to the carriage, and he seized one of the pillows and used it as a shield, and the two of them went at each other as if they were mortal enemies. The rest of the people tried to make peace between them but could not, because the Basque said in his tangled words that if they did not allow him to finish his fight, he himself would kill his mistress and everyone else who got in his way. The lady in the carriage, stunned and fearful at what she saw, had the coachman drive some distance away, and from there she watched the fierce contest, in the course of which the Basque went over Don Quixote’s shield and struck a great blow with his sword to his shoulder, and if it had not been protected by armor, he would have opened it to the waist. Don Quixote, who felt the pain of that enormous blow, gave a great shout, saying:

“O lady of my soul, Dulcinea, flower of beauty, come to the aid of this thy knight, who, for the sake of thy great virtue, finds himself in grave peril!”

Saying this, and grasping his sword, and protecting himself with his shield, and attacking the Basque were all one, for he was determined to venture everything on the fortune of a single blow.

The Basque, seeing him attack in this fashion, clearly understood the courage in this rash act and resolved to do the same as Don Quixote. And so he waited for him, shielded by his pillow, and unable to turn the mule one way or the other, for the mule, utterly exhausted and not made for such foolishness, could not take another step.

As has been said, Don Quixote was charging the wary Basque with his sword on high, determined to cut him in half, and the Basque, wellprotected by his pillow, was waiting for him, his sword also raised, and all the onlookers were filled with fear and suspense regarding the outcome of the great blows they threatened to give to each other, and the lady in the carriage and all her maids were making a thousand vows and offerings to all the images and houses of devotion in Spain so that God would

deliver the squire and themselves from the great danger in which they found themselves.

But the difficulty in all this is that at this very point and juncture, the author of the history leaves the battle pending, apologizing because he found nothing else written about the feats of Don Quixote other than what he has already recounted. It is certainly true that the second author<sup>5</sup> of this work did not want to believe that so curious a history would be subjected to the laws of oblivion, or that the great minds of La Mancha possessed so little interest that they did not have in their archives or writing tables a few pages that dealt with this famous knight; and so, with this thought in mind, he did not despair of finding the conclusion to this gentle history, which, with heaven’s help, he discovered in the manner that will be revealed in part two.<sup>6</sup>

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5. The “second author” is Cervantes (that is, the narrator), who claims, in the following chapter, to have arranged for the translation of another (fictional) author’s book. This device was common in novels of chivalry.

6. Cervantes originally divided the 1605 novel (commonly called the “first part” of Don Quixote) into four parts. The break in the narrative action between parts was typical of novels of chivalry.

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4. Agraies, a character in *Amadis of Gaul*, would say these words before doing battle; it became a proverbial expression used at the beginning of a fight.