

## Chapter 9

*In which the stupendous battle between the gallant Basque and the valiant Manchegan is concluded and comes to an end*

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In part one of this history, we left the brave Basque and the famous Don Quixote with their swords raised and unsheathed, about to deliver two downstrokes so furious that if they had entirely hit the mark, the combatants would have been cut and split in half from top to bottom and opened like pomegranates; and at that extremely uncertain point, the delectable history stopped and was interrupted, without the author giving us any information as to where the missing parts could be found.

This caused me a good deal of grief, because the pleasure of having read so small an amount was turning into displeasure at the thought of the difficult road that lay ahead in finding the large amount that, in my opinion, was missing from so charming a tale. It seemed impossible and completely contrary to all good precedent that so good a knight should have lacked a wise man who would assume the responsibility of recording his never-before-seen deeds, something that never happened to other knights errant,

the ones, that people say  
go searching for adventures,<sup>1</sup>

because each of them had one or two wise men whose purpose was not only to record their deeds, but to depict their slightest thoughts and fancies, no matter how secret they might be; and so good a knight could not be so unfortunate as to lack what Platir and others like him had in abundance.<sup>2</sup> And therefore I was not inclined to believe that so gallant a history had been left maimed and crippled, and I blamed the malignity of Time, the devourer and consumer of all things, who had either hidden it away or consumed it.

On the other hand, it seemed to me that since works as modest as *Deceptions of Jealousy* and *Nymphs and Shepherds of Henares*<sup>3</sup> had been found among Don Quixote's books, his history also had to be modest, and

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1. These lines, probably taken from a ballad, appeared in Alvar Gómez's Spanish translation of Petrarch's *Trionfi*, although nothing comparable is in the Italian original.

2. A commonplace in chivalric fiction was that the knight's adventures (Platir's, for example) had been recorded by a wise man and then translated, the translation being the novel.

3. Published in 1586 and 1587, respectively.

though it might not be written down, it had to live on in the memories of people from his village and from other villages nearby. This thought left me disconcerted and longing to know, really and truly and in its entirety, the life and miracles of our famous Spaniard Don Quixote of La Mancha, the model and paragon of Manchegan chivalry, and the first in our age and in these calamitous times to take up the exercise and profession of chivalric arms, righting wrongs, defending widows, and protecting those maidens who rode, with whips and palfreys, and bearing all their virginity on their backs, from mountain to mountain and valley to valley; and unless some villain, or some farmer with hatchet and pitchfork, or some enormous giant forced her, a maiden could, in days of yore, after eighty years of never once sleeping under a roof, go to her grave as pure as the day her mother bore her. I say, then, that for these and many other reasons, our gallant Don Quixote is deserving of continual and memorable praise, as am I, on account of the toil and effort I have put into finding the conclusion of this amiable history, though I know very well that if heaven, circumstances, and fortune do not assist me, the world will be deprived of the almost two hours of entertainment and pleasure the attentive reader may derive from it. This is how I happened to find it:

One day when I was in the Alcaná market in Toledo, a boy came by to sell some notebooks and old papers to a silk merchant; as I am very fond of reading, even torn papers in the streets, I was moved by my natural inclinations to pick up one of the volumes the boy was selling, and I saw that it was written in characters I knew to be Arabic. And since I recognized but could not read it, I looked around to see if some Morisco<sup>4</sup> who knew Castilian, and could read it for me, was in the vicinity, and it was not very difficult to find this kind of interpreter, for even if I had sought a speaker of a better and older language,<sup>5</sup> I would have found him. In short, fortune provided me with one, and when I told him what I wanted and placed the book in his hands, he opened it in the middle, read for a short while, and began to laugh.

I asked him why he was laughing, and he replied that it was because of

4. A Moor who had been converted to Christianity.

5. An allusion to Hebrew, spoken by the Jews who were merchants in the Alcaná.

something written in the margin of the book as an annotation. I told him to tell me what it was, and he, still laughing, said:

“As I have said, here in the margin is written: ‘This Dulcinea of Toboso, referred to so often in this history, they say had the best hand for salting pork of any woman in all of La Mancha.’”

When I heard him say “Dulcinea of Toboso,” I was astounded and filled with anticipation, for it occurred to me that those volumes contained the history of Don Quixote. With this thought in mind, I urged him to read the beginning, which he did, extemporizing a translation of the Arabic into Castilian and saying that it said: *History of Don Quixote of La Mancha. Written by Cide Hamete Benengeli,*<sup>6</sup> *an Arab Historian.* I needed a good deal of cleverness to hide the joy I felt when the title of the book reached my ears; moving more quickly than the silk merchant, I bought all the papers and notebooks from the boy for half a *real*, but if he had been astute and known how much I wanted them, he certainly could have demanded and received more than six *reales* for their purchase. I immediately went with the Morisco to the cloister of the main church and asked him to render the journals, all those that dealt with Don Quixote, into the Castilian language, without taking away or adding anything to them, offering him whatever payment he might desire. He was satisfied with two *arrobas* of raisins and two *fanegas* of wheat,<sup>7</sup> and he promised to translate them well and faithfully and very quickly. But to facilitate the arrangement and not allow such a wonderful find out of my hands, I brought him to my house, where, in a little more than a month and a half, he translated the entire history, just as it is recounted here.

In the first notebook there was a very realistic depiction of the battle of Don Quixote with the Basque, both in the postures recounted in the history, their swords raised, one covered by his round shield, the other by his pillow, and the Basque’s mule so lifelike that at the distance of a crossbow shot one could see that it was a mule for hire. At the mule’s feet was a caption that read: *Don Sancho de Azpetia*, which, no doubt, was the Basque’s name; and at the feet of Rocinante was another that said: *Don Quixote*. Rocinante was so wonderfully depicted, so long and lank, so skinny and lean, with so prominent a backbone, and an appearance so

6. *Cide* is the equivalent of *señor*; *Hamete* is the Arabic name *Hamid*; *Benengeli* (*berenjena* in Spanish) means “eggplant,” a favorite food of Spanish Moors and Jews. In chapter II of the second volume (1615), the “first author” is, in fact, referred to as Cide Hamete Berenjena.

7. Two *arrobas* is approximately fifty pounds; two *fanegas* is a little more than three bushels.

obviously consumptive, that it was clear with what foresight and accuracy he had been given the name Rocinante. Next to him was Sancho Panza, holding the halter of his donkey, and at its feet was another caption that said: *Sancho Zancas*,<sup>8</sup> and as the picture showed, he must have had a big belly, short stature, and long shanks, and for this reason he was given the name Panza as well as Zancas, for from time to time the history calls him by both these surnames. A few other details were worthy of notice, but they are of little importance and relevance to the true account of this history, for no history is bad if it is true.

If any objection can be raised regarding the truth of this one, it can only be that its author was Arabic, since the people of that nation are very prone to telling falsehoods, but because they are such great enemies of ours, it can be assumed that he has given us too little rather than too much. So it appears to me, for when he could and should have wielded his pen to praise the virtues of so good a knight, it seems he intentionally passes over them in silence; this is something badly done and poorly thought out, since historians must and ought to be exact, truthful, and absolutely free of passions, for neither interest, fear, rancor, nor affection should make them deviate from the path of the truth, whose mother is history, the rival of time, repository of great deeds, witness to the past, example and adviser to the present, and forewarning to the future. In this account I know there will be found everything that could be rightly desired in the most pleasant history, and if something of value is missing from it, in my opinion the fault lies with the dog who was its author rather than with any defect in its subject. In short, its second part, according to the translation, began in this manner:

With the sharp-edged swords of the two valiant and enraged combatants held and raised on high, they seemed to threaten heaven, earth, and the abyss: such was their boldness and bearing. The first to strike a blow was the choleric Basque, and he delivered it with so much force and fury that if his sword had not turned on its way down, that single blow would have been enough to end this fierce combat and all the adventures of our knight; but good fortune, which had greater things in store for Don Quixote, twisted the sword of his adversary, so that although it struck his left shoulder, it did no more than tear through the armor along that side, taking with it as it passed a good part of his helmet and half an ear, both of which, in fearful ruin, fell to the ground, leaving

8. *Zancas* means “shanks”; *panza*, as indicated earlier, means “belly” or “paunch.”

him in a very sad state.

Lord save me, who can accurately tell of the rage that now filled the heart of our Manchegan when he saw himself so mistreated! Suffice it to say it was so great that he stood again in the stirrups, and grasping his sword in both hands, he struck his opponent with so much fury, hitting him square on his pillow and his head, that despite those good defenses, and as if a mountain had fallen on him, the Basque began to bleed from his nose, mouth, and ears and to show signs of falling off the mule, and he would have fallen, no doubt, if he had not thrown his arms around the animal's neck, but even so his feet slipped out of the stirrups and his arms loosened, and the mule, terrified by the awful blow, began to run across the field and, after bucking a few times, threw his rider to the ground.

Don Quixote watched very calmly, and when he saw him fall, he leaped from his horse, raced over to him, placed the tip of his sword between the Basque's eyes, and ordered him to surrender or else he would cut off his head. The Basque was so stunned he could not say a word, and he would have come to a bad end, given Don Quixote's blind rage, if the ladies in the carriage, who until that moment had watched the battle with great dismay, had not approached him and implored him most earnestly that he do them the favor and grant them the boon of sparing the life of their squire. To which Don Quixote responded with pride and gravity:

“Certainly, beauteous ladies, I am very happy to do as you ask; but it must be with a condition and a stipulation, and it is that this knight must promise to go to Toboso and present himself on my behalf to the peerless Doña Dulcinea, so that she may do with him as she pleases.”

The frightened and distressed ladies, without considering what Don Quixote was demanding, and without asking who Dulcinea was, promised that the squire would do everything he was ordered to do.

“With confidence in that promise, I shall do him no more harm, although he so richly deserves it.”