

Chapter 3

Which recounts the amusing manner in which Don Quixote was dubbed a knight

And so, troubled by this thought, he hurried through the scant meal served at the inn, and when it was finished, he called to the innkeeper and, after going into the stable with him, he kneeled before him and said:

“Never shall I rise up from this place, valiant knight, until thy courtesy grants me a boon I wish to ask of thee, one that will redound to thy glory and to the benefit of all humankind.”

The innkeeper, seeing his guest at his feet and hearing these words, looked at him and was perplexed, not knowing what to do or say; he insisted that he get up, but Don Quixote refused until the innkeeper declared that he would grant the boon asked of him.

“I expected no less of thy great magnificence, my lord,” replied Don Quixote. “And so I shall tell thee the boon that I would ask of thee and thy generosity has granted me, and it is that on the morrow thou wilt dub me a knight, and that this night in the chapel of thy castle I shall keep vigil over my armor, and on the morrow, as I have said, what I fervently desire will be accomplished so that I can, as I needs must do, travel the four corners of the earth in search of adventures on behalf of those in need, this being the office of chivalry and of knights errant, for I am one of them and my desire is disposed to such deeds.”

The innkeeper, as we have said, was rather sly and already had some inkling of his guest’s madness, which was confirmed when he heard him say these words, and in order to have something to laugh about that night, he proposed to humor him, and so he told him that his desire and request were exemplary and his purpose right and proper in knights who were as illustrious as he appeared to be and as his gallant presence demonstrated; and that he himself, in the years of his youth, had dedicated himself to that honorable profession, traveling through many parts of the world in search of adventures, to wit the Percheles in Málaga, the Islas of Riarán, the Compás in Sevilla, the Azoguejo of Segovia, the Olivera of Valencia, the Rondilla in Granada, the coast of Sanhicar, the Potro in Córdoba, the Ventillas in Toledo,¹ and many other places where he had exercised the light-footedness of his feet and the lightfingeredness of his hands, committing countless wrongs, bedding many widows, undoing a few

1. These were all famous underworld haunts.

maidens, deceiving several orphans, and, finally, becoming known in every court and tribunal in almost all of Spain; in recent years, he had retired to this castle, where he lived on his property and that of others, welcoming all knights errant of whatever category and condition simply because of the great fondness he felt for them, so that they might share with him their goods as recompense for his virtuous desires.

He also said that in this castle there was no chapel where Don Quixote could stand vigil over his arms, for it had been demolished in order to rebuild it, but, in urgent cases, he knew that vigils could be kept anywhere, and on this night he could stand vigil in a courtyard of the castle; in the morning, God willing, the necessary ceremonies would be performed, and he would be dubbed a knight, and so much of a knight there could be no greater in all the world.

He asked if he had any money; Don Quixote replied that he did not have a copper *blanca*,² because he never had read in the histories of knights errant that any of them ever carried money. To this the innkeeper replied that he was deceived, for if this was not written in the histories, it was because it had not seemed necessary to the authors to write down something as obvious and necessary as carrying money and clean shirts, and if they had not, this was no reason to think the knights did not carry them; it therefore should be taken as true and beyond dispute that all the knights errant who fill so many books to overflowing carried well-provisioned purses for whatever might befall them; by the same token, they carried shirts and a small chest stocked with unguents to cure the wounds they received, for in the fields and clearings where they engaged in combat and were wounded there was not always someone who could heal them, unless they had for a friend some wise enchanter who instantly came to their aid, bringing through the air, on a cloud, a damsel or a dwarf bearing a flask of water of such great power that, by swallowing a single drop, the knights were so completely healed of their injuries and wounds that it was as if no harm had befallen them. But in the event such was not the case, the knights of yore deemed it proper for their squires to be

2. An ancient copper coin whose value varied over the years; it eventually was worth half a *maravedí*.

provisioned with money and other necessities, such as linen bandages and unguents to heal their wounds; and if it happened that these knights had no squire—which was a rare and uncommon thing—they themselves carried everything in saddlebags so finely made they could barely be seen on the haunches of their horse, as if they were something of greater significance, because, except in cases like these, carrying saddlebags was not well-favored by knights errant; for this reason he advised, for he could still give Don Quixote orders as if he were his godson, since that is what he soon would be, that from now on he not ride forth without money and the provisions he had described, and then he would see how useful and necessary they would be when he least expected it.

Don Quixote promised to do as he advised with great alacrity, and so it was arranged that he would stand vigil over his arms in a large corral to one side of the inn; and Don Quixote gathered all his armor together and placed it on a trough that was next to a well, and, grasping his shield, he took up his lance and with noble countenance began to pace back and forth in front of the trough, and as he began his pacing, night began to fall.

The innkeeper told everyone in the inn about the lunacy of his guest, about his standing vigil over his armor and his expectation that he would be dubbed a knight. They marveled at so strange a form of madness and went to watch him from a distance, and saw that with a serene expression he sometimes paced back and forth; at other times, leaning on his lance, he turned his eyes to his armor and did not turn them away again for a very long time. Night had fallen, but the moon was so bright it could compete with the orb whose light it reflected, and therefore everything the new knight did was seen clearly by everyone. Just then it occurred to one of the muledrivers in the inn to water his pack of mules, and for this it was necessary to move Don Quixote's armor, which was on the trough; our knight, seeing him approach, said in a booming voice:

“O thou, whosoever thou art, rash knight, who cometh to touch the armor of the most valiant knight who e'er girded on a sword! Lookest thou to what thou dost and toucheth it not, if thou wanteth not to leave thy life in payment for thy audacity.”

The muleteer cared nothing for these words – and it would have been better for him if he had, because it meant caring for his health and well-being; instead, he picked up the armor by the straps and threw it a good distance away. And seeing this, Don Quixote lifted his eyes to heaven and,

turning his thoughts – or so it seemed to him – to his lady Dulcinea, he said:

“Help me, Señora, in this the first affront aimed at this thy servant's bosom; in this my first challenge letteth not thy grace and protection fail me.”

And saying these and other similar phrases, and dropping his shield, he raised his lance in both hands and gave the muledriver so heavy a blow on the head that he knocked him to the ground, and the man was so badly battered that if the first blow had been followed by a second, he would have had no need for a physician to care for his wounds. Having done this, Don Quixote picked up his armor and began to pace again with the same tranquility as before. A short while later, unaware of what had happened – for the first muledriver was still in a daze – a second approached, also intending to water his mules, and when he began to remove the armor to allow access to the trough, without saying a word or asking for anyone's favor, Don Quixote again dropped his shield and again raised his lance, and did not shatter it but instead broke the head of the second muledriver into more than three pieces because he cracked his skull in at least four places. When they heard the noise, all the people in the inn hurried over, among them the innkeeper. When he saw this, Don Quixote took up his shield, placed his hand on his sword, and said:

“O beauteous lady, strength and vigor of my submissive heart! This is the moment when thou needs must turn the eyes of thy grandeur toward this thy captive knight, who awaiteth so great an adventure.”

And with this he acquired, it seemed to him, so much courage that if all the muledrivers in the world had charged him, he would not have taken one step backward. The wounded men's companions, seeing their friends on the ground, began to hurl stones at Don Quixote from a distance, and he did what he could to deflect them with his shield, not daring to move away from the trough and leave his armor unprotected. The innkeeper shouted at them to stop because he had already told them he was crazy, and that being crazy he would be absolved even if he killed them all. Don Quixote shouted even louder, calling them perfidious traitors and saying that the lord of the castle was a varlet and a discourteous knight for allowing knights errant to be so badly treated, and that if he had already received the order of chivalry, he would enlighten him as to the full extent of his treachery.

“But you, filthy and lowborn rabble, I care nothing for you; throw, approach, come, offend me all you can, for you will soon see how perforce you must pay for your rash insolence.”

He said this with so much boldness and so much courage that he instilled a terrible fear in his attackers, and because of this and the persuasive arguments of the innkeeper, they stopped throwing stones at him, and he allowed the wounded men to withdraw and resumed his vigil over his armor with the same serenity and tranquility as before.

The innkeeper did not think very highly of his guest’s antics, and he decided to cut matters short and give him the accursed order of chivalry then and there, before another misfortune occurred. And so he approached and begged his pardon for the impudence these lowborn knaves had shown, saying he had known nothing about it but that they had been rightfully punished for their audacity. He said he had already told him there was no chapel in the castle, nor was one necessary for what remained to be done, because according to his understanding of the ceremonies of the order, the entire essence of being dubbed a knight consisted in being struck on the neck and shoulders, and that could be accomplished in the middle of a field, and he had already fulfilled everything with regard to keeping a vigil over his armor, for just two hours of vigil satisfied the requirements, and he had spent more than four. Don Quixote believed everything and said he was prepared to obey him, and that he should conclude matters with as much haste as possible, because if he was attacked again and had already been dubbed a knight, he did not intend to leave a single person alive in the castle except for those the castellan ordered him to spare, which he would do out of respect for him.

Forewarned and fearful, the castellan immediately brought the book in which he kept a record of the feed and straw he supplied to the muledrivers, and with a candle end that a servant boy brought to him, and the two aforementioned damsels, he approached the spot where Don Quixote stood and ordered him to kneel, and reading from his book as if he were murmuring a devout prayer, he raised his hand and struck him on the back of the neck, and after that, with his own sword, he delivered a gallant blow to his shoulders, always murmuring between his teeth as if he were praying. Having done this, he ordered one of the ladies to gird Don Quixote with his sword, and she did so with a good deal of refinement and discretion, and a good deal was needed for them not to burst into laughter at each moment of the ceremony, but the great feats they had seen

performed by the new knight kept their laughter in check. As she girded on his sword, the good lady said:

“May God make your grace a very fortunate knight and give you good fortune in your fights.”

Don Quixote asked her name, so that he might know from that day forth to whom he was obliged for the benison he had received, for he desired to offer her some part of the honor he would gain by the valor of his arm. She answered very humbly that her name was Tolosa, and that she was the daughter of a cobbler from Toledo who lived near the stalls of the Sancho Bienaya market, and no matter where she might be she would serve him and consider him her master. Don Quixote replied that for the sake of his love, would she have the kindness to henceforth ennoble herself and call herself Doña Tolosa.³ She promised she would, and the other girl accoutred him with his knightly spurs, and he had almost the same conversation with her as with the one who girded on his sword. He asked her name, and she said she was called Molinera, the miller’s girl, and that she was the daughter of an honorable miller from Antequera, and Don Quixote also implored her to ennoble herself and call herself Doña Molinera, offering her more services and good turns.

And so, these never-before-seen ceremonies having been performed at a gallop, in less than an hour Don Quixote found himself a knight, ready to sally forth in search of adventures, and he saddled Rocinante and mounted him, and, embracing his host, he said such strange things to him as he thanked him for the boon of having dubbed him a knight that it is not possible to adequately recount them. The innkeeper, in order to get him out of the inn, replied with words no less rhetorical but much more brief, and without asking him to pay for the cost of his lodging, he allowed him to leave at an early hour.

3. The unwarranted use of the honorifics *don* and *doña* was often satirized in the literature of the Renaissance.