

Chapter 5

In which the account of our knight's misfortune continues

Seeing, then, that in fact he could not move, he took refuge in his usual remedy, which was to think about some situation from his books, and his madness made him recall that of Valdovinos and the Marquis of Mantua, when Carloto left him wounded in the highlands,¹ a history known to children, acknowledged by youths, celebrated, and even believed by the old, and, despite all this, no truer than the miracles of Mohammed. This is the tale that seemed to him perfectly suited for the situation in which he found himself, and so, with displays of great emotion, he began to roll about on the ground and to say with faint breath exactly what people say was said by the wounded Knight of the Wood:

“Where art thou, my lady,
that thou weapest not for my ills?
Dost not know of them, lady,
Or art thou truly false?”

And in this way he continued reciting the ballad until the lines that say:

“O noble Marquis of Mantua,
mine uncle and natural lord!”

And as luck would have it, when he reached this line, a farmer from his village happened to pass by, a neighbor of his on the way home after taking a load of wheat to the mill; the farmer, seeing a man lying there, approached and asked who he was and what the trouble was that made him complain so pitifully. Don Quixote no doubt thought the farmer was the Marquis of Mantua, his uncle, and so the only answer he gave was to go on with the ballad, recounting his misfortune and the love of the emperor's son for his wife, all of it just as it is told in the ballad.

The farmer was astounded when he heard these absurdities, and after

1. These characters appear in the well-known ballad that Don Quixote recites.

removing the visor, which had been shattered in the beating, he wiped the fallen man's face, which was covered in dust, and as soon as he had wiped it he recognized him and said:

“Señor Quijana!” – for this must have been his name when he was in his right mind and had not yet changed from a quiet gentleman into a knight errant – “Who has done this to your grace?”

But Don Quixote went on reciting his ballad in response to every question. Seeing this, the good man, as carefully as he could, removed the breastplate and backpiece to see if he was wounded but did not see blood or cuts of any kind. He managed to lift him from the ground and with a good deal of effort put him on his own donkey, because he thought it a steadier mount. He gathered up his arms, even the broken pieces of the lance, and tied them on Rocinante, and leading the horse by the reins and the jackass by the halter, he began to walk toward his village, very dispirited at hearing the nonsense that Don Quixote was saying; Don Quixote was no less dispirited, for he was so beaten and broken that he could barely keep his seat on the burro, and from time to time he would raise his sighs to heaven, which obliged the farmer to ask him again to tell him what was wrong; one cannot help but think that the devil made Don Quixote recall stories suited to the events that had occurred, because at that point, forgetting about Valdovinos, he remembered the Moor Abindarráez, when the governor of Antequera, Rodrigo de Narváez, captured him and brought him back to his domain as his prisoner.² So when the farmer asked him again how he felt and what was wrong, he answered with the same words and phrases that the captive scion of the Abencerraje family said to Rodrigo de Narváez, just as he had read them in the history of *Diana*, by Jorge de Montemayor, where they are written, and he did this so deliberately that as the farmer walked along he despaired at hearing such an enormous amount of foolishness; in this way he realized that his neighbor was mad, and he hurried to reach the village in order to rid himself of the impatience Don Quixote provoked in him

2. The story is included in book IV of Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* (1559?), the first of the Spanish pastoral novels; it is one of the volumes in Don Quixote's library.

with his long-winded harangue. When it was concluded, Don Quixote went on to say:

“Your grace should know, Don Rodrigo de Narváez, that this beautiful Jarifa I have mentioned to you is now the lovely Dulcinea of Toboso, for whose sake I have performed, perform now, and shall perform in the future the most famous feats of chivalry the world has seen, sees now, and will ever see.”

To this the farmer replied:

“Look, your grace, poor sinner that I am, I’m not Don Rodrigo de Narváez or the Marquis of Mantua, but Pedro Alonso, your neighbor, and your grace isn’t Valdovinos or Abindarráez, but an honorable gentleman, Señor Quijana.”

“I know who I am,” replied Don Quixote, “and I know I can be not only those I have mentioned but the Twelve Peers of France³ as well, and even all the nine paragons of Fame,⁴ for my deeds will surpass all those they performed, together or singly.”

Having these exchanges and others like them, they reached the village as night was falling, but the farmer waited until it grew a little darker, so that no one would see what a poor knight the beaten gentleman was. When he thought the right time had come, he entered the village and came to Don Quixote’s house, which was in an uproar; the priest and barber, who were great friends of Don Quixote, were there, and in a loud voice his housekeeper was saying to them:

“What does your grace think, Señor Licentiate Pero Pérez” – for this was the priest’s name – “of my master’s misfortune? Three days and no sign of him, or his horse, or his shield, or his lance, or his armor. Woe is me! Now I know, and it’s as true as the death I owe God, that those accursed books of chivalry he’s always reading have driven him crazy; and now I remember hearing him say time and time again, when he was talking to himself, that he wanted to become a knight errant and go out in the wide world in search of adventures. Those books should go straight to Satan and Barrabas, for they have ruined the finest mind in all of La Mancha.”

His niece said the same and even added:

3. Knights chosen by the king of France and called peers because they were equal in skill and courage. They appear in *The Song of Roland*.

4. The nine were Joshua, David, Judith Macabee Hector, Alexander, Julius Caesar, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon (commander of the First Crusade).

“You should know, Master Nicols”-for this was the name of the barber-“that it often happened that my dear uncle would read these cruel books of adventures for two days and nights without stopping, and when he was finished he would toss away the book and pick up his sword and slash at the walls, and when he was very tired he would say that he had killed four giants as big as four towers, and the sweat dripping from him because of his exhaustion he would say was blood from the wounds he had received in battle, and then he would drink a whole pitcher of cold water and become cured and calm again, saying that the water was a precious drink brought to him by Esquife the Wise, a great wizard and a friend of his. But I am to blame for everything because I didn’t let your graces know about the foolishness of my dear uncle so that you could help him before it went this far, and burn all these wicked books, and he has many that deserve to be burned, just as if they belonged to heretics.”

“That is what I say, too,” said the priest, “and by my faith, no later than tomorrow we will have a public proceeding, and they will be condemned to the flames so that they do not give occasion to whoever reads them to do what my good friend must have done.”

The farmer and Don Quixote heard all of this, which allowed the farmer to understand finally what his neighbor’s sickness was, and so he called out:

“Your graces, open to Señor Valdovinos and to Señor Marquis of Mantua, who is badly wounded, and to Señor the Moor Abindarráez, captive of the valiant Rodrigo de Narváez, governor of Antequera.”

At the sound of his voice they all came out, and since some recognized their friend, and others their master and uncle, who had not yet dismounted from the donkey because he could not, they ran to embrace him, and he said:

“Stop, all of you, for I have been sorely wounded on account of my horse. Take me to my bed and call, if such is possible, Uganda the Wise, that she may heal and tend to my wounds.”

“Look, all of you,” said the housekeeper, “in what an evil hour my heart knew exactly what was wrong with my master. Your grace can go up and rest easy, because without that gander woman coming here, we’ll know how to cure you. And I say that these books of chivalry should be cursed another hundred times for bringing your grace to such a pass”

They led him to his bed and looked for his wounds but could find none, and he said it was simple bruising because he had taken a great fall

with Rocinante, his horse, as they were doing battle with ten of the most enormous and daring giants one could find anywhere in the world.

“Tut, tut!” said the priest. “So there are giants at the ball? By the Cross, I shall bum them before nightfall tomorrow.”

They asked Don Quixote a thousand questions, but the only answer he gave was that they should give him something to eat and let him sleep, which was what he cared about most. They did so, and the priest questioned the farmer at length regarding how he had found Don Quixote. He told the priest everything, including the nonsense Don Quixote had said when he found him and brought him home, giving the licentiate an even greater desire to do what he did the next day, which was to call on his friend, the barber Master Nicolás, and go with him to the house of Don Quixote,