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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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## **Don Quixote: The Last Of The Notable Adventures Of Our Good Knight (19/19)**

Don Quixote, as soon as he found himself free from all the quarrels by which he had been surrounded, held it high time to begin his voyage and bring to an end the great adventure unto which he was called and chosen. Therefore, having made up his mind to depart, he went and cast himself upon his knees before Dorothea and said: "I cannot but think, high and worthy lady, that our abode in this castle is nothing profitable, and may turn out to our disadvantage. For who knows but that your enemy the giant hath learned by spies or other secret means how I intend to come and destroy him, and he may by now have fortified himself in some impregnable castle or fortress, against the strength of which even the force of mine invincible arm will be of little use. Therefore, dear lady, let us by our diligence hinder his plans, and let us depart to the place where fortune calls us."

Don Quixote said no more but awaited the answer of the beautiful princess, who, with a lordly air and in a style not unworthy of Don Quixote himself, replied as follows:

"I thank you, sir knight, for the desire you show to assist me in this my great need, and I trust your desires and mine may succeed, that I may show you that there are some thankful women on earth. As for my departure, let it be as you wish."

Two days passed, when it seemed to all the noble company at the inn that it was time to depart, and they considered how, without putting Dorothea and Don Fernando to the pain of turning back with Don Quixote to his village, the curate and the barber could carry him home as they desired, and leave him cured of his folly in his own home.

This was the plan they decided on. They made a bargain with a wagoner, who chanced to pass by that way with a team of oxen, to carry him in the following manner:— They made a thing like a cage of timber, so big that Don Quixote might sit or lie in it at his ease, and presently Don Fernando, Cardemo, their companions, and the innkeeper did all, by master curate's directions, cover their faces and disguise themselves as well as they could, so that they might seem to Don Quixote to be different persons to any he had seen in the castle. This being done, they entered silently into the place where he slept, reposing after his recent battles. They went up to him as he was sleeping peacefully, not fearing any such accident, and, laying hold of him forcibly, they tied his hands and feet very strongly, so that when he started out of his sleep he could not move, nor do anything else but stare and wonder at the strange faces that he saw before him.

And immediately he fell into the idea, which his wild imagination had at once suggested to him, that all these strange figures were spirits and phantoms of that enchanted castle, and he believed that he himself was without doubt enchanted, seeing that he could neither move nor defend himself.

All happened as the curate who plotted the jest expected; and after they had brought him to the cage, they shut him within, and afterwards nailed the bars thereof so well that they could not easily be broken. Sancho all this time looked on in wonder to see what would happen to his master.

Then the phantoms mounted him upon their shoulders, and as he was carried out of his chamber door the barber called out in as terrible a voice as he could muster: "O Knight of the Rueful Countenance, be not grieved at thine imprisonment, for so it must be that thine adventures be more speedily ended. And thou, O most noble and obedient squire that ever had sword at girdle, beard on a face, or dent in a nose, let it not dismay thee to see carried away thus the flower of all knighthood. For I assure thee that all thy wages shall be paid to thee, if thou wilt follow in the steps of this valorous and enchanted knight. And as I am not allowed to say more, farewell!"

Don Quixote listened attentively to all this prophecy, and said: "O thou, whatsoever thou beest, I desire thee to request in my name that I may not perish in this prison before my work is ended. And as concerns my squire Sancho Panza, I trust in his goodness that he

will not abandon me in good or bad fortune. For, though it should fall out through his or my hard lot that I shall not be able to bestow on him an island, as I have promised, his wages cannot be lost to him, for in my will, which is made already, I have set down what he is to have for his many good services."

Sancho Panza bowed his head with great reverence when he heard this, and kissed both his master's hands, which were bound tightly together. Then the phantoms lifted up the cage and hoisted it on to the wagon that was drawn by the team of oxen.

After bidding farewell to all their friends, the procession started. First went the cart guided by the carter, then the troopers, then followed Sancho upon his ass leading Rozinante by the bridle, and last of all the curate and the barber, riding their mighty mules, with masks on their faces.

Don Quixote sat with his hands tied and his legs stretched out, leaning against a bar of the cage, with such a silence and such patience that he seemed rather to be a statue than a man. And thus at an alderman-like pace, such as suited the slow steps of the heavy oxen, they journeyed home.

At the end of two days they arrived at Don Quixote's village, into which they entered about noon. This was on a Sunday, when all the people were in the market-place, through the midst of which Don Quixote's cart passed. All drew near to see what was in it, and when they knew their neighbour they were greatly astounded. A little boy ran home before, to tell the old

woman and the niece that their lord and uncle was returned. It would have moved one to pity to have heard the cries and lamentations the two good women made, and the curses they poured out against all books of knighthood, when they saw Don Quixote enter the gates of his own house again in so strange a carriage. Sancho Panza's wife, when she heard of his return, ran forward to meet her husband, and the first question she asked was whether the ass were in health or no. Sancho answered that he was come in better health than his master.

"Tell me, then," cried his wife, "what profit hast thou reaped by this squireship? What petticoat hast thou brought me home? What shoes for the little boys?"

"I bring none of these things, good wife," replied Sancho, "though I bring things better thought of and of greater moment."

"I am glad of that," said his wife, "for I should like to see them, to the end that my heart may be cheered, which hath been swollen and sorrowful for so long, all the time of thine absence."

"Thou shalt see them at home," said Sancho, "therefore rest satisfied. For when we travel once again to seek adventures, thou shalt see me shortly afterwards an earl or governor of an island, one of the best in the world."

"I pray that it may be so," replied his wife; "but what means that island, for I understand not the word?"

"Honey is not made for the ass's mouth," said Sancho, "but thou shalt know all in good time. Do not busy

thyself, Joan, to know all things in a sudden. It is enough that I will tell thee all the truth, and therefore close thy mouth. I will only say this much unto thee as yet, that there is nothing in the world so pleasant as for an honest man to be the squire of a knight that seeks adventures."

Now, if I were to tell you that Don Quixote got quite well and lived quietly at home after all these adventures, and never went abroad again, I should tell you what is not true. For some day, and I hope at no great distance of time, you may read all that the great Cervantes has written, not only of the adventures of which I have told you the story, but of others. You will then learn how Sancho Panza became at last governor of an island for a short space, and may read of the great wisdom and shrewdness with which he ruled.

