

The Claim of Don Quixote

Gilad Evron

Cast of characters:

Don Quixote

Sancho Pancha

The duke Alfonse

The duchess Donna Elvira

Alfredo, The stage manger

First production: Herzlia Theatre Ensemble, 2008.

Director: Ofira Henig

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(Quixote, wearing armor and holding a lance, with a packing box and a helmet at his feet, is dozing on a stool, while Sancho is seen running in one place in the wings, shouting as he runs.)

Sancho: Your honor, your honorable honor, the revered Hidalgo!

(Quixote does not move. Sancho enters center stage.)

Sancho: Is his honor asleep? Is he alive?

(No reaction.)

Sancho: It would benefit his lordship to live to hear that which I have heard... If he is alive that is... Sire... For if he is not alive, or cannot hear me, or... well, there are no more options... For this is incredible news. Last night Krasko came to the village and I went to greet him, and he told me that your lordship's story has been written in a book under the name of: «Don Quixote de la Mancha, the Ingenuous Hidalgo».

(Quixote makes a movement.)

Sancho: Ah! And they also mention my full name. Sancho Pancha and Dulcinea Del Toboso, and the other things that happened to us...

(Quixote opens his eyes.)

Sancho: And Krasko also said that his lordship is more powerful than all the other traveling knights who help the weak and battle the wicked, And that they've already printed more than 12,000 copies... Each copy is this thick. They're reading about us even in Anter, Antwer..Antwerpen; I can't remember its name...

Quixote: One of the best things that can happen to an honest man, is knowing that he is spoken well of during his life time.

Sancho: I immediately told everyone about it at Ernesto's pub.

Quixote: And what did the good people say there?

(Silence)

Quixote: You woke me Sancho, so speak up. What did the people in Ernesto's pub say about our book?

Sancho: Your lordship will be angry.

Quixote: Loyal servants should always speak the truth before their masters...

Sancho: They think that your lordship has lost his mind...

Quixote: Those poor people... First they ignore you, then they laugh at your expense, then they fight you, and then you win...

Sancho: There are some that said that he's crazy but amusing, others said – Wretched but brave, and others said that his lordship himself added the title Don to his name, and dared present himself as a knight, although he only owns only four grapevines, ten meters of land, and a rag on his front door and one on the backdoor.

Quixote: It is obvious.

Sancho: Obvious?

Quixote: Those who are graced with many fine qualities are doomed to be persecuted. They said that Alexander the Great was a drunkard, Hercules was said to be lustful and soft.

Sancho: Lustful?

Quixote: And soft. So let them speak, but it's good that that's all they said.

Sancho: That's the trouble...

Quixote: There's more?

Sancho: It's about Dulcinea...

Quixote: What did they say?

Sancho: Well, they were drinking quite a bit by that time...

Quixote: I'm listening.

Sancho: They said that she doesn't exist. That his lordships feverish mind invented her. And the book also questioned whether she exists.

(Quixote stands up.)

Quixote: Had the offence been directed only towards me, so be it, but to besmirch such a noble ladies honor is intolerable. A knight cannot let this pass unanswered. If he truly is a knight...

Sancho: Does his lordship intend to burst into Ernesto's pub? I wouldn't cause a raucous.

Quixote: This abuse, the contempt, the ignorance... Some knights are crude, some are made of false gold, but not I, Sancho. I am not worthy of such pub insults. I have become one of the traveling knights I have read about in books by the strength of my virtue. I have become a book because I stood alone against the emissaries of evil and corruption. Exposed to the fury of the skies, the sun, the winter and the

wrath of the winds. I have seen what people do not dare see. I have to prove anew who Don Quixote is? To redeem Dulcinea del Toboso's name?

Sancho: None the less, I would not burst in to the pub, because all they do there is drink and talk idle talk. Life is not serious there, his lordship.

Quixote: The time has come, Sancho, to travel the roads again. To expose the truth about our noble tales. To waken the nostalgia for the fine things, the wandering thought under a hot summer's sun, to that which is lies hidden beneath... And if people say that Dulcinea is but a figment of my imagination, I shall present her before them. We shall come to her. I shall bow before this unique lady and all the world shall know her. Ladies and gentlemen, honored guests – Dulcinea! No figment of any imagination but a great truth... Adjutant! Helmet and spear!

(Sancho mechanically hands him the helmet.)

Sancho: Just one moment, sire. Everything has suddenly sped up. I just told him about the book and my lord already asks for his helmet and spear?

Quixote: What did you wake me for if not to go on the road once more?

Sancho: What do I know? My mouth speeds ahead before my brain and find myself in the midst of a full fledged journey?... I haven't even thought this through with myself...

Quixote: You mean with Theresa, your wife.

Sancho: I mean, weighing all the blows we have been dealt, add the abuse, the scorn, calculate the pain and shame and divide them with my lordships bravery, the meager amount of money I have earned at his service, and add into account the publicity we have gained. The sum comes to...

Quixote: I'm listening.

Sancho: That I have to ask Theresa.

(Sancho leaves in a hurry while Quixote shouts angrily.)

Quixote: What is better? To crush worms with leaves, or serve a knight? To lie in a warm bed and eat soup, or be a hero in battle? To gaze day after day at that same tired and desolate plot of land... or discover that you are the ignorant mule chewing at his rein...

(But nothing happens. Quixote remains standing. Darkness.)

2

(Light comes on. Quixote realizes that Sancho has returned.)

Quixote: I didn't expect you to come back.

Sancho: I bespoke to my wife.

Quixote: What?

Sancho: I bespoke my wife for permission to go with his lordship.

Quixote: I spoke. You spoke with your wife, Sancho. Not bespoke.

Sancho: That's very funny. I've already asked your honor not to correct my language. It annoys me, even if I am very trashy.

Quixote: Now, what do you mean by trashy, Sancho?

Sancho: I am very trashy, means exactly what it means! Theresa says that I should take care with his lordship. For it is better to have one bird in the hand than two on a tree. She says that even if our fields are poor, and the labor is hard, we should stay here. Theresa says as did the Romans, that if you don't know which direction to turn to it is best to remain where you are.

Quixote: Then go. Go back to your Theresa. Why did you return anyway?

Sancho: Again, he gallops before I am through. What I want is for his lordship to give me a month's wages, in the hand. At the end of each month, but in the hand. Because that's how things are done in

the world today, and I cannot afford to be outside a world about which was said...

Quixote: No.

Sancho: No?

Quixote: I have read all the knight books and do not recall that a traveling knight has given his adjutant a salary.

Sancho: So what happened?

Quixote: They served in the name of honor, and if their masters were lucky they gained property or even an island. I will not change the customs of the traveling knights.

Sancho: Island?

Quixote: An island, yes.

Sancho: An Island in the sea?

Quixote: What's wrong with being the governor of an island on the sea?

Sancho: A big island or a small one?

Quixote: An island... Medium size. An island.

Sancho: With people?

Quixote: No, with turtles! Go back to your Theresa. I will easily find more loyal adjutants, ones who are less clumsy and talkative than you.

(Sancho, seething at the insult, packs up Quixote's belongings.)

Sancho: It will not be said of me that I left because of such a trifle as that of wages. That I forsook my lord. I must also protect my reputation as well now. And

if the heavens award me an island, or something,
I will say that I am of healthy mind and sound
spirit not only to rule an island but a few kingdoms
as well. And I proclaim that I volunteer to serve
his lordship loyally and better than other adjutants
that ever received an island, or that received... well,
anything else.

3

(Quixote and Sancho stand side by side. Quixote bearing his fighting equipment, Sancho loaded like a beast of burden.)

Quixote: We're off!

Sancho: We are!

Quixote: The most important thing is that we're off. The spirit is healthy and willing.

Sancho: Very willing. The stars are shining in the heavens. After you sir.

(They are still standing.)

Quixote: To Toboso, Sancho. Straight to Dulcinea's palace!

Sancho: To Toboso!

Quixote: Let's go!

Sancho: We're just left with the small issue of figuring out which direction we should go.

Quixote: Figure out how?

Sancho: By asking someone who knows.

Quixote: You should be the one to lead us there, you dope!

Sancho: Me?

Quixote: You saw her in Toboso. I sent you to her with a letter.

Sancho: I'm confused now, his lordship. It's night time and all the directions look the same to me. Perhaps it is a good time to mention that all rivers flow to the sea.

Quixote: And all the roads lead to Toboso? One day your stupidity will really kill you, Sancho. Come on.

(Sancho, under pressure, finally takes one step forward and stops)

Quixote: Why did you stop?

Sancho: I had hoped that the first step would lead to the next one, sir.

Quixote: This step will lead us nowhere.

Sancho: So, let's see where the other will lead us...

(Sancho takes another step and again stops, then throws his arms up in disappointment.)

Sancho: There have been first steps that have led further than this...

Quixote: You cause me to despair, Sancho.

Sancho: Had the author been here to direct us.

Quixote: The author?

Sancho: The writer. Who has written about his lordships incredible journeys?

Quixote: I don't see any author stealing around us.

Sancho: They mentioned a second part in the pub.

Quixote: A second part?

Sancho: A continuation that would follow. He must be around, the author. Otherwise he wouldn't be able to write about us. He must be snooping around somewhere. We could ask him...

Quixote: You won't be able to move if your thoughts about the writer weigh on your mind. Why are you waiting for him? Use your eyes!

(Sancho stares in front of him, with no results. He realizes Quixote's growing disappointment.)

Sancho: Sir, it is almost dawn. Let me look for her by myself in Toboso, which surely must not be too far away. I shall find the ladies palace.

Quixote: I shall await your news here.

Sancho: Good. It's night, butterflies. Rest...

Quixote: You will find her won't you?

Sancho: I will find the lady, I swear on the life of Theresa and my daughter. I swear to his lordship. I will find her and bring her to him.

Quixote: I am looking forward to this meeting. Very much so.

(Quixote sits down on a little stool which Sancho takes off his back and places it in centre stage, then moves to the side.)

(Quixote takes Dulcinea's gown out of his box.)

Quixote: If you exist. How can one doubt the sky? The sun light? Two great mules has this dress cost me, even though these buttons are almost falling off. When you put it on you shall appreciate my great journey to you. For I, oh wondrous lady, am no longer... You, your skin must still be fresh, smelling of Napolitano soaps. You are radiant and flexible, and I... At noon I become so tired, and even my thoughts... wander. But I do not give in. The spirit has awoken... On its way to you, madam. To you.

(Sancho, in the wing, feels pressed.)

Sancho: Your lordship, the author, your highness the writer?... Can you hear me? If you could come closer I would be able to introduce myself properly. I am Sancho Pancho, a native of La Mancha, the adjutant of the famed Don Quichote. Healer of the lame, who quenches the hungry and feeds the thirsty. Can you hear me? I am looking for a princess, beautiful as the sun, as all the heavens, and there is only one small problem. She might not exist. Can the esteemed lordship advise me on this matter? A small nod? I mean, it's obvious that his honor is hiding... I understand, because otherwise...

(Sancho continues to look for the elusive form of the author.)

Sancho: Your highness, it will catch up with you. My master once sent me with a letter to the princess. I did not know the way, but did not argue. I waited, ate some nuts, came back and told him I saw her. And what was the result? That I myself confirmed to him that she exists. I admit that I am foolish. Foolish because I follow him, and get more and more mixed up. Now, you'll probably ask me – Why do I walk with him? First of all because he pays me. Badly, but he pays none the less. And he's a scholar! He can read! But mainly because I like being with him. Life is more interesting, the imagination flowers... What does he say? Well... God is also silent sometimes.

5

(Silence. Sancho hesitates, then turns with determination towards Quixote.)

Sancho: Important news, sir, the ingenious Hidalgo! I come with news about the excellent Dulcinea del Toboso!

Quixote: Why are you drilling in my ear?

Sancho: I saw her?

Quixote: You saw her? Really? In her palace?

Sancho: As clearly as I see his lordship.

Quixote: Do not awake a false joy in me. Do not toy with me Sancho.

Sancho: He should have seen her – Dressed up, decorated, with bead necklaces, jewels, and more than ten layers of silk embroideries...

Quixote: You really saw her Sancho, did you?

Sancho: Her hair flows to her back as rays of sun playing on a breeze. It's a sight to see...

Quixote: That's her. We're off.

Sancho: Your lordship! Speeding off again!

Quixote: Let's have it then...

(Sancho kneels down.)

Sancho: I knelt before her...

Quixote: Well done...

(Sancho talks as if reproducing his address to Dulcinea.)

Sancho: Beautiful duchess, will your gigantic royal highness, I mean majestic royal highness, please accept most mercifully her enamored knight, who shall kneel as I do, as a stone, stunned in the presence of her magnificence, but as she heard that his lordship is on his way to her, she panicked. She really became confuzled...

Quixote: Confused?

Sancho: Confuzled... Confused. I mean. She asked that you don't come...

Quixote: But why?

Sancho: She asked... That you defeat with your tremendous acts of bravery wizards who change forms and do mischievous deeds throughout the land, for other wise... other wise...

Quixote: Go on!

Sancho: She will end up as an ugly slave or something... If his lordship will forgive me, she began to transform before my eyes... Into such a slave one that you worry might fart without warning.

Quixote: Fart.

Sancho: A garlic fart.

Quixote: A garlic fart... Evil wizards have transformed my Dulcinea into a stinking country bumpkin?

Sancho: The bastards, those wizards, I wish I would see all of them hung on a fishing hook as sardines.

(Quixote is in anguish.)

Sancho: Sir, it is true that sadness is for humans and not for animals. But if a human is too sad, he becomes an animal.

Quixote: You can speak like this because you have seen her, her beauty.

Sancho: Beautiful and glowing as the sun. Her eyes... pearls.

Quixote: You confuse things. Eyes that resemble pearls are fish eyes. Like a Carp.

Sancho: I must have been confused because of her beauty.

Quixote: Dulcinea's eyes should be as Green Emeralds! Pearls are like teeth. You confuse the eyes with the teeth.

Sancho: Perhaps...

Quixote: I did not see her again... And how can I when I don't go forward. I am stuck in the middle of the road trying to learn something from a bumbling adjutant as a blind person consults his walking stick!

6

(Quixote replaces the gown in the box. Sancho moves away, somewhat insulted, sits down on the ground, produces a big sandwich from his bag and starts eating. Meanwhile, a cloud of smoke rises and swirls on the stage. Quixote turns his eyes to the growing cloud. Sancho follows his look.)

Sancho: The smoke looks like clouds, what ails you, your honor? When I was a child the clouds were like... Now they're just plain...

Quixote: These aren't clouds but pillars of dust that rise from the road. Dust that a giant army is raising in its wake as it draws near.

Sancho: Really? And maybe it is dust that rises from a herd of sheep on the way, your honor?

Quixote: Only a sheep herder like you can see that as sheep. If you were an Ostler you'd think it was a herd of horses. This is how people live their lives without understanding anything because their eyes cloud their minds. Tear the cobweb from your eyes Sancho! The leader drawing closer !

Sancho: Where, your lordship?

Quixote: On the right, he is Emperor Elipenperon, the ruler of Trepobanna the island... And that knight in the yellow armor, the one who on his shield is a lion crouches at the feet of a lady, is Lourcalco the brave, lord of the silver bridge. And the one with an armor adorned with golden petals, is Mikokolmbo the terrible.

Sancho: I, your honor, with respect, see nothing.

(As the smoke get thicker Quixote gets more and more excited.)

Quixote: The one on the right, the big one, is Brandbabaran del Boliche, ruler of three Arab kingdoms is clad in horned viper. With the first ranks are the mountain folk who go through the fields of Massilia, and filter the fine gold and take pleasure in the cool waters of the clear Tramodon river, and there are the Nomids who cannot be trusted, and the Ethiopians with their pierced lips.

(Sancho tries to see what Quixote describes, but fails.)

Sancho: I am shocked by all this, your honor.

Quixote: Finally we are in luck, and much faster than we expected. They come to us! Look at the giants, and the horrible monsters.

Sancho: What giants your lordship?

Quixote: Those. With the long and powerful hands. I shall fight and destroy them.

(The revolving shadows of the arms of the windmills are seen on the floor. Sancho hastens to interpret the sight.)

Sancho: But your honor, the dust is clearing, it was just dust, and these are but windmills.

Quixote: You show your lack of experience in adventure.

Sancho: But sir, these are the arms of the windmills. They can be seen everywhere, every day.

Quixote: Every day, but not today.

Sancho: Does your lordship forget that he once fought windmills?

Quixote: We shall destroy this evil and banish it from the face of the earth!

Sancho: His Lordship will break all his bones!

Quixote: So? If you are afraid, sit down and watch. Go and pray as I fight one against many. I am happy to do so!

Sancho: Windmills!

Quixote: Shut up and behold a true knight's bravery!

Sancho: Why won't you believe what your eyes show you, your honor?

Quixote: I have relied on your eyes for one last time. Now I rely on mine. I will cast the spell off of Dulcinea. For Dulcinea!

(As the shadows continue to revolve, the light flickers, the wind blows, music, Quixote charges forward as Sancho tries to restrain him. Darkness. A spotlight reveals Alfredo, the stage manager, in his cubicle. He opens his mouth and sings soundlessly.)

(light on centre stage. Sancho takes care of Quixote who lies stunned on the ground. The shadows are still revolving, but now it is clear that they are produced by simple electric ceiling fan.)

Sancho: Did I not warn his lordship to watch out? I did!
These are windmills! I had thought that you had
been chopped up.

(Sancho continues to help Quixote, referring to the revolving shades.)

Sancho: Now he can see for himself – Windmills. Please
do not move your lordship. Some bones may be
broken.

Quixote: The giants have been transformed by wizards into
windmills.

Sancho: So why did they become windmills when his
lordship attacked them?

Quixote: To prevent me from being victorious. I shall be
victorious next time.

Sancho: Next time?

Quixote: If needs be, I will fight them again, and again.
And I will expose their transformations. Just as
you cannot remain unmoved when a woman is
imploring her rapist to cease, or a child whose
parents have been hanged on a tree. You can't let
things take their course without doing anything.
For what can be done? Should we just turn on our
mattress and carry on snoring like a pig?...

(Silence)

You think me crazy Sancho?

Sancho: No your honor... But I am also not wrong in what I see.

Quixote: And everything that you see is acceptable to you and clear as a noon sun?

Sancho: Yes, your honor.

Quixote: As these windmills.

Sancho: Exactly, like butter in a bowl.

Quixote: And if I tell you that you're interpreting wings when they really are shadows?

Sancho: If there are shadows, then what are they shadows of?

Quixote: Of what you suppose they are. You confirm the way the world looks and are happy. Snoring like a pig.

Sancho: With respect, your honor, you'll end up driving me insane too.

Quixote: Don't worry, Sancho, your innocence is deeper than any insanity.

8

(The shadows on the floor stop turning. Sancho helps Quixote to his feet. They again stand where they first ventured out.)

Quixote: We're off

Sancho: We're off.

Quixote: The main thing is that we're off.

Sancho: The only thing left is to inquire as to which direction we should go and everything will be fine.

(Sancho looks around.)

Quixote: Inquire with whom? It seems to me that we've had this conversation before. You know the road to Toboso. Let's go!

Sancho: Toboso again, sire?

Quixote: Why not – Toboso?

Sancho: Because we are not sure...

Quixote: We're not sure of Toboso?

Sancho: It's a pity that our author isn't around so we could ask his advice.

Quixote: You expect too much of him. It's him following us, not us following him.

Sancho: I just want to see how I develop in the second book. Because it is said that I am one of the main characters.

Quixote: Character, not characters, Sancho.

Sancho: The main thing his lordship is that if I will be famous it might help me find the island I will rule over.

Quixote: Trust in God and the day shall come.

Sancho: Because I have seen other rulers and feel they do not reach my ankles.

Quixote: But now you can't even move your ankle! Stuck like a nail to the ground!

Sancho: Why me? Why do I have to be the first? I am the adjunct. I follow...

(Nevertheless he takes one step forward, then stops.)

Quixote: Why did you stop?

Sancho: I had hoped that after the first step the rest would follow.

Quixote: Now I'm sure that we've had this conversation before.

(A small cloud arise suddenly from the side, and an elegant young man emerges from it.)

Sancho: I think that my step did bring something, your honor. Unless he tells me that it is a shadow, or a shadow of a shadow, a shady shadow or something.

Quixote: If my eyes do not deceive me... And they might.

Sancho: This man looks very respectable.

Quixote: At the very least a duke.

Sancho: But maybe he isn't...

Quixote: If he isn't then what is he?

Sancho: Maybe he's our honorable writer?

Quixote: The writer again? Honor the duke. Go on! Introduce me!

(Sancho approaches the elegant man and takes a bow.)

Sancho: Sir, this knight is known as the knight of sorrow and he has sent me to greet you and express his admiration.... To... His emperorship... Unless... His emperorship is the writer? The author?

The duke: The knight, of sorrow? You say? Get up. Adjunct of the renowned knight, no need to kneel, Donna Elvira!

(The duke pulls a curtain aside revealing a duchess napping in an armchair.)

The duke: Is there something more fascinating than characters that rise from the pages of books?

The duchess: Where is this language game leading us, dear?

The duke: The knight of sorrow. The knight who has gone to seek adventure, to banish monsters... etc.

(The duchess rises in excitement.)

The duchess: The hero of “The Ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote de la Mancha”?

The duke: The book by your bedside which entertains you every evening.

(Sancho pushes forward.)

Sancho: And his adjunct, who should appear there too, Sancho Pancha. That’s me! If I wasn’t left out in the procedure, I mean process.

The duchess: Take us to your master.

(Sancho turns to Quixote and the ducal couple follow him. Quixote rises on the top of his toes.)

The duchess: I am very pleased at this opportunity to meet you, Don Quichotte. My bridegroom, Don Alfons Elvira, already know that I have a special affection to your tales of bravery.

The duke: Not to say insanity.

The duchess: Ah! He always says that I exaggerate. So I do and want to hear everything, dear knight. Adventures, journeys, monsters... Dulcinea!

Quixote: I shall forever be at your service, oh beauty incarnated. But the roads call to me and the wizards plot... On we go Sancho!

The duke: Our lordship, we shall be happy to invite you to our palace.

The duchess: Such a respectable and famous guest!

The duke: Your lordship, I insist!

Quixote: Well, for a short time... One must be polite... The pleasure is mine, madam.

The duchess: No, it is mine. The pleasure of hosting you will transcend by far the pleasure of reading the book.

9

(Alfredo brings two chairs to the stage. Sancho puts the stool to center stage. Everybody sit down, with only Sancho standing.)

Sancho: If I may your lordships, I shall relate to you something that happened in my village...

Quixote: Better not. If you'll start you'll never finish.

The duchess: But he's so funny in the book.

Sancho: In real life too, madam. I'm a real pain in the ass as they say...

(But Quixote singles to Sancho energetically to move away. Sancho reluctantly obeys.)

Quixote: I agree that he is one of the most amusing adjuncts. Sometimes his nonsense is so sophisticated that the question whether he is an idiot or a genius can be most amusing.

The duchess: Tell us about Dulcinea... We read that she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

Quixote: Dulcinea... if I could rip out my heart and put it before you on a plate you'd see how deeply she is etched in it. Words do not suffice to describe her. She is worthy of the rhetoric of Demosthenes.

The duke: But if we should believe the book about Mr. Don Quichote, it turns out that his honor has never seen Ms. Dulcinea.

The duchess: It says that she is a figment of his lordships imagination.

(Sancho intervenes from a distance.)

Sancho: She is more alive than I am, madam. In my eyes she is the most beautiful thing in the world.

Quixote: My trusted adjunct has seen her with his own eyes.

The duchess: How thrilling. Then she exists!

Quixote: But I cannot see her until I vanquish the wizard who threatens to transform her from a princess to a slave, from an angel to a slave.

The duchess: You saw her bewitched, Sancho?

Sancho: Yes, I did. She's as bewitched as my father! Almost farted a garlic fart.

The duke: What a calamity, garlic?

The duchess: Who causes such harm in the world?

Quixote: Who but the terrible wizard I have been hunting down. A damned breed that has come to this world to darken our lives, block our imagination, and soil beauty...

(The duke tries to listen, but it is not clear that he does.)

Quixote: But try duke. Listen to the chirp of the birds, the sound of the good breeze... If you concentrate you can hear a woman breastfeeding a baby in the village beyond the next hill... Can you hear her singing, duke?

The duke: You know, I think I do hear... something...

Quixote: The world can be a more beautiful and more just place.

The duchess: You make me fall in love with you, you romantic knight.

Quixote: But instead the wizard tries to weaken my courage, to paint me as a mad man, and Dulcinea as a fatamorgana. It hurts and scars me in the most painful place possible as a traveling knight without a lady is like a tree without leaves... like...

(Sancho intervenes again from a distance.)

Sancho: A roof without walls...

Quixote: A shadow without a body to carry it...

Sancho: An unmule like mule...

Quixote: Oh, shut up you idiot! And don't reveal your crudeness before us. You sinner! A gentleman is more respectable when his servants are respectable too!

Sancho: A thousand pardons his lordship.

Quixote: If they knew that you're only a country simpleton, they'd think I was a blabbering idiot or a fake knight!

Sancho: My mouth is sealed.

The duchess: Calm yourself, Quixote, we did not suspect him to be a simpleton. On the contrary in my eyes Sancho is wise.

Quixote: They'd think I was a fool... I who exposes all that blinds the eye and the soul. Why? Because only a fool or a crazy man would do justice, and does not fawn, or grovel before anyone? Why? Because I avenged evil acts, punished the impudent and beaten giants and abolished monsters. One cannot wage battles by sighing or moaning. What can be

done? Everything is in the hands of God. It will turn out for the best in the end. I say. Stand! Fight! But why am I considered the fool?

Sancho: Bravo. His lordship need not add another word.
(Quixote is highly excited. Alfredo serves him a glass of water.)

The duke: Calm down your lordship. No one doubts him or his sanity here. Drink up. Your words touched us. I am sure that you will be able to prove your bravery soon.

The duchess: And meet your beloved.

Quixote: On the day I meet her, my journey will come to an end.

The duchess: I expect that we shall read much about her in the second part.

Quixote: Second part, madam?

The duchess: Didn't you hear? Your second part has already been printed.

Quixote: Our second part of what?

The duchess: Of the book: Don Quixote de la Mancha. The second part. The continuation. I am anxiously expecting my copy.

(Sancho intervenes again.)

Sancho: I just hope they won't write that I eat too much and am a drunkard. I want to be a more dramatic character.

The duchess: I like your character as it is, Sancho. It's very amusing.

Sancho: I'm more amusing than my character. But I'm aiming higher.

The duchess: To what for example?

Sancho: Ruler of an island.

The duchess: An island?

(The duke and the duchess burst out laughing and are joined by Alfredo from his cubicle.)

Sancho: Yes. That's what master Quixote, the best master in the world said, that God willing, he – will not lack kingdoms to rule over and I islands to rule over.

The duchess: I'm sure that my bridegroom the duke can find you an island to rule over. Alfons?

The duke: An island?... Yes without doubt.

Quixote: I sometimes think Sancho's stupidity will be his downfall... But I see a form of ruler in him. For experience proves that one does not need talent or education to be a ruler.

(Quixote begins to sing Sinatra's song "my own way". Sancho is close to his ear to remind him of the words.)

The duchess: Don Quixote, you must stay with us tonight.

(Darkness)

10

(Light comes on. Quixote finishes the song. Suddenly a powerful roar of a lion is heard. Sancho startles. Alfredo picks up a bucket and refers to a trapdoor in the floor.)

Alfredo: Gentlemen, the lion as not eaten all day and is hungry as his lordship can hear.

The duke: These tremendous animals, a wonder of creation, call on us to act more humble.

(The duke and duchess turns to leave.)

The duke: His lordship will join us for dinner. You shouldn't be here when he feeds the beast.

Quixote: A beast? A lion.

The duchess: And a big one at that.

The duke: Better not to meet him face to face.

Quixote: A traveling knight will not succumb to fear.

(Alfredo wants to open the grilled trapdoor, but Quixote is on his way.)

Alfredo: Forgive me sire, but I need to feed him, if he does not eat he will bite the bars off his cage. He cannot be mastered.

Quixote: Is that the case? A lion? A lion against me? Face to face? We'll see about that.

Alfredo: Why are you standing in my way?

Quixote: I herewith swear. Now I'll prove who Don Quixote de la Mancha is!

Alfredo: Why are you standing in my way? Duke!

Quixote: This is no ordinary lion. It is a monster sent to fight me. I will beat him and no wizard shall stop me! Open the cage and let him out! Now!

Alfredo: Your lordship!

Quixote: Sancho, the helmet!

Sancho: You're wearing it!

Quixote: Spear!

Sancho: With me!

Quixote: Good. Sancho! Chair!

(A roar is heard. The trap shakes. Sancho picks up the stool.)

Sancho: Sire, I implore you.

The duchess: Don quixote!

Sancho: The wind mills were but child's play!

The duchess: Alfons, stop this knight!

The duke: Should this knight wish to prove his bravery, who are we to stop him!

The duchess: Don Quixote!

Quixote: Open the cage!

Sancho: Your honor!

(Quixote draws out his sword.)

Quixote: Open the cage or I'll put this sword through you!

(Alfredo opens the trapdoor. A stronger roar is heard.)

Sancho: What madness is this, your lordship! It's a lion, the first cat, the original model.

Quixote: So leave, save yourself.

Sancho: No wizard, no magic, no shadow of a shadow,
your lordship!

Quixote: If I die here, so be it. Go.

(Sancho retreats and hides on the side of the stage. The ducal couple hide on the other side of the stage. Alfredo opens the trap door wide, and pulls a chain which leads into the opening. Quixote raises his sword, ready for battle.)

Quixote: Come out kitty cat. Come out so I can rip you to shreds. Who are you trying to scare? Come here giant cub, eyes, teeth and claws, come to me!...
What is he doing there?

(Alfredo peers cautiously above the edge of the opening.)

Alfredo: He's watching you sire, staring.

Quixote: And I stare at him... I pierce his eyes. I spear you with my stare! Come out!

(No reaction. Alfredo peers again.)

Alfredo: He's licking his face.

Quixote: The washing ceremony before death.

Alfredo: He's scratching his ear...

(Quixote waits.)

Quixote: Drag him out!

Alfredo: Am I insane? If I do that he'll eat me first.

(Quixote waits.)

Quixote: What now, what's he doing?

Alfredo: He's getting up on his four feet.

Quixote: I'm ready for him.

Alfredo: Pounding on the floor with his tail.

Quixote: The drums to accompany the king's final journey.

Alfredo: He's turning.

Quixote: To the trash can of history.

Alfredo: Swivels his ass and shakes his balls.

Quixote: What?

Alfredo: He's shaking his balls.

Quixote: He's turning his ass to me?

Alfredo: It's nature's way, sure?

(Silence)

Quixote: Well?

Alfredo: He's lying on the floor and yawning.

Quixote: Well?

Alfredo: That's it.

(Alfredo and Quixote approach carefully the opening of the pit.)

Alfredo: See his yawn? All teeth, but he won't move any more today. Balls, Yawn. It's over sire. You've proven your courage. Well done. Pure madness.

(Quixote stands in confusion, looking around.)

Quixote: Where's everyone?

Alfredo: They ran away.

Quixote: So that's it?

Alfredo: As far as I know – yes.

Quixote: That's it?

Alfredo: Want to close the cage?

Quixote: In a minute...

(Quixote looks around, hoping to see someone.)

Oh, alright.

(Alfredo throws the chain into the pit and closes the trapdoor. The Ducal pair enter.)

The duchess: I was so afraid that you would die.

The duke: I think it is fitting to change Don Quixote's name from Knight of sorrow to knight of lions.

(Sancho dares to enter.)

Sancho: The knight of lions! Well bless me if there was ever such a victory from here to Antwerpen. The knight of lions. Where is the writer when you need him?

The duchess: Such courage needs to be sung after. I'm sure you will see Dulcinea soon.

Quixote: I wish I would see her now, gazing from a balcony, smiling...

(The ducal pair turn to go in order not to embarrass Quixote in his sorrow.)

The duke: Alfredo!

Alfredo: Your honor.

The duke: Deliver the lion to the cooks.

(The couple exit downstage. Darkness.)

11

(In the dim lighting of the stage Quixote sits on the stool reading. Sancho sits on the floor and eats. The ducal couple peer from upstage. Sancho suddenly stops munching.)

Sancho: Am I disturbing his lordship? What does his lordship think of the second part that will be published about us? Because I don't understand how it can be published when we're in the midst of it taking place... I want to know if I am anything like my character there...

Quixote: After the lies of the first part you're still waiting for the second part? Eat Sancho. It's good to be like the ancient tales of bravery and knighthood, to imitate a great knight like Amadis de Geula. One shouldn't pay attention to new books, which are not profound, and do not possess the power of imagery. These are books that one forgets once they leave your hand.

Sancho: I thank your lordship.

Quixote: What are you thanking me for?

Sancho: I enjoy speaking with him. An honorable conversation is the manure that is thrown on the stinking ground of my dried up brain...

Quixote: Eat up Sancho my friend. Eat well, for life is more important to you than it is to me.

(Sancho stops eating.)

Quixote: I Sancho was born to live my death and you to die while eating.

(Sancho swallows with difficulty.)

Quixote: I hoped today for a crowning glory. I waited to discover Dulcinea, the one and only, on the balcony, and nothing happened... I would rather that filthy beasts kick within me than have this emptiness within... I have decided to die.

Sancho: And how does his lordship plan to do that?

Quixote: I am thinking about hunger, starving to death. That is the cruelest form of death.

(Sancho ponders Quixote's words and then resumes munching.)

Sancho: I do not intent to kill myself. On the contrary I intend to do as the shoemakers – stretch the skin by the teeth until it is as taut as they want. I will stretch my life eating until the end decreed from the heavens arrives. You'll see your lordship - you'll see things differently after a good sleep.

(Sancho finishes eating and lies down to sleep. Silence. It appears that he is sleeping.)

Sancho: Your lordship.

Quixote: Go to sleep my son.

Sancho: I ask his lordship not to kill himself.

(Sancho falls back to sleep. From his cubicle Alfredo produces night sounds as well as the twittering of birds. The Duke and the Duchess peer at them from upstage.)

The duchess: We can't let Don Quixote leave. He and his servant make me laugh so.

The duke: How will you hold him here?

The duchess: He'll stay if he believes that through us he'll find Dulcinea... We'll figure something out...

(Darkness)

12

(Dim light. Quixote and Sancho are standing. The Duke dances with delight from the Duchess's chair from one side of the stage to the other side, to Alfredo, who holds up a poster. They both enter center stage. The light grows stronger.)

Sancho: What are the three thousand lashes?

The duke: That's what's written. Read it to him again, Alfredo.

Alfredo: These are your words, brave and wise Don Quixote. Know this – For that is the wizard's decree: So that the spell be lifted from Dulcinea, your beloved, Sancho Pancha. Your adjunct must, reveal his great butt cheeks to the world and whip himself three thousand torturous and stinging times.

Sancho: Why don't I just kill myself and be done with it? What do my butt and this spell have to do with each other? I wish this cursed Dulcinea would just die!

Quixote: So that's how it is?

Sancho: Yes that's how it is! This is too much!

Quixote: I'll catch you, you lowlife peasant, reeking of garlic, I'll tie you to a tree myself and flog you three thousand times...

The duchess: That is not what is written. The blows must be dealt the good Sancho willingly.

Sancho: No one shall touch me. Did I give birth to this Dulcinea that my butt has to pay such a high price for her? It would make sense that my master would. He keeps calling her "my life"– So he should be beaten, no I.

Quixote: I shall sunder all contact with this dog!

Sancho: Threats, beatings and curses.

Quixote: Where is your soul?

Sancho: My soul? Has anyone ever spoken well of it? No. It's straight to the beatings. Has anyone even tried to talk nicely to it?

The duke: Sancho, my friend, if you don't have a change of heart you shall never receive an island to rule over.

Sancho: What did his eminence just say?

The duke: That if you don't flog yourself you will never rule.
(Silence. Sancho addresses Quixote.)

Sancho: Perhaps I can have a reprieve of two days to think this through?

The duchess: Go on, good Sancho, demonstrate courage.

The duke: Considering your firm body build, a good hiding, one that will draw blood, would only do you good.

The duchess: It's a matter of health you see...

Sancho: Your lordships are toying with me. Jokes at my expense. A bit like that old lion if you ask me...

(But he notices Quixote 's look and restrains himself.)

The duke: Are you trying to say something to us, adjunct?

Sancho: I'll flog myself gladly, your lordships.

The duchess: I am proud of you, Sancho.

Sancho: Yes, yes...

Quixote: She won't forget and neither will I.

Sancho: But on the condition that I'll do it when I want and how I want...

The duke: What do you think of this condition dear?

The duchess: I agree.

Sancho: Although I myself don't understand why I am agreeing to this...

The duke: Sancho!

Sancho: No, no. I agree...

Quixote: Come to me, my son.

(Quixote hugs Sancho. The ducal couple and Alfredo groan with rapture and exit.)

13

(Sancho hurries after the ducal couple towards Alfredo's cubicle. Quixote is left standing in center stage.)

Sancho: I would thank you royal highnesses... I ask that...

The duke: Sancho!

Sancho: A moment for the miserable adjunct. Perhaps the noble lordships would try... to talk to these wizards... To change the punishment? Three thousand lashes? Would the second part of the book be here you lordships would read and see how loyal I am! I don't deserve this punishment.

The duchess: We already have the second part.

Sancho: So you can read about me.

The duke: The writer says that you are gluttonous and a drunkard and that your wife's name is Marie Guitieres and not Theresa as you said.

(Sancho is stunned.)

Sancho: And maybe my name isn't Sancho either?

The duchess: I'd rather assume that it is.

Sancho: But three thousand lashes? I'll die!

The duke: So you'll die! What are you moaning about! This is your masters bidding and you will do as he says, and that's that! What is this, a market place? You ignorant, impertinent peasant. I'll give you a good hiding myself.

The duchess: We must continue to believe that Dulcinea exists, Sancho. For if she doesn't all our lives will be rendered meaningless.

14

(Quixote stands in his usual place in center stage. He is ready for the road Sancho depressed, assumes his usual burden and joins him.)

Quixote: I feel that this day is smiling at me, Sancho. It's your flogging day... Where will you flog yourself?

Sancho: Where?... In the woods.

(They stand side by side in their usual places.)

Quixote: We're off.

Sancho: Yes we are.

Quixote: The main thing is that we're off.

Sancho: Yes.

Quixote: We're just left with the small issue of figuring out which direction we should go.

Sancho: Figure out how?

Quixote: I get the distinct feeling that we've had this conversation before.

Sancho: Yes.

Quixote: So. Let's go.

Sancho: Yes, but where, his lordship?

Quixote: To Toboso.

Sancho: Toboso, sire?

(Quixote loses his self confidence.)

Quixote: No? Maybe the wood? We've had this conversation before haven't we?

Sancho: Not this part – no.

Quixote: You don't know the way?

Sancho: No.

Quixote: So let's return to safe ground. Take your first step. The one that will lead to the other steps. That might lead us in the right direction.

Sancho: What if we don't take the first step, your lordship? Not this time. What would happen if we don't take the first step?

(Quixote is dumbfounded by the possibility)

Quixote: But we have to otherwise there is no plot or narrative.

(Sancho hesitates. Quixote loses patience, bends towards Sancho and tries to take off his pants.)

Sancho: What is this? He's unbuckling my belt?

Quixote: We must proceed to the flogging, Sancho! We must save Dulcinea. Take off your pants.

Sancho: What is this? Why the speed? Leave me in peace your lordship! The lashes must be dealt willingly and not by force, and only in the wood!

(Sancho moves away from Quixote.)

Sancho: I swore that I would flog myself, but when I feel like it and now I don't! Leave me alone your lordship!

Quixote: We can't leave this to your word of honor. Pants. Buttocks!

Sancho: No!

(Sancho and Quixote begin to quarrel. Sancho, being stronger, throws Quixote to the ground and strangles him.)

Sancho: Calm down your lordship, or I'll...

Quixote: Traitor! Rebel!

Sancho: I will set your lordship free if he promises not to
take my pants off!

(Sancho gets off him. Quixote, exhausted by the fight, remains inert on the ground. He struggles to stand up but fails. Sancho, embittered, does not help him.)

15

(Quixote is still on the ground but Sancho cannot bear it anymore. He pulls up the groaning Quixote and sets him on the stool in center stage. Quixote is confused.)

Quixote: Where are we, Sancho?

(Silence)

Are we waiting?

(Sancho puts his load down and begins to undress.)

Sancho: No, we are here.

Quixote: Where is here?

Sancho: The wood.

(Alfredo enters, places some low trees on the stage. Quixote is full of admiration.)

Quixote: Look at the power of the wizards that they can grow a wood like this, what imagination... Think of what I'm up against...

(Quixote notices that Sancho has stripped.)

Quixote: Why are you naked my son?

Sancho: I am going to flog myself.

Quixote: Blessed Sancho... Dulcinea and I shall be indebted to you for all our lives. All this anguish has been worth it if the moment has arrived.

Sancho: Yes. What great joy. I'm going to flog myself while your honor will sit here and rest amongst the flower and butterflies. Great.

(Sancho moves away from Quixote)

Quixote: But carefully, do not wear yourself out, wait between blows. I mean, take your time – And don't flog yourself too hard.

(Sancho begins to flog himself with his belt on the side of the stage. The blows are very painful. Quixote, in center stage, is incapable of looking at it. He puts on his helmet so that it covers his face and puts his hands on his ears. Sancho, in frustration, hits the chair next to him. Quixote winces. Sancho notices it and begins to hit the trees and the chair, accompanying it with loud screams. Quixote is shocked by the noise and doesn't move. Sancho continues to flog the trees with great relish. The ducal couple enters. Sancho notices them and stops the flogging orgy. Darkness.

Light.

The duke and the duchess are lounging on the ground seemingly having a picnic in nature.

Quixote sits motionless on his stool, his head hidden by his helmet, unseeing and unhearing. Sancho turns to the couple in despair.)

Sancho: Let us go your lordships.

The duchess: No.

Sancho: Look at him. He can't be driven crazy for the fun of it. To amuse you. Forgive ignorant Sancho, but have pity on that poor man.

The duke: Poor? He's famous. The renowned Don Quixote.

Sancho: He isn't even a Don, sirs. This man is Alonso Kachada, the poor Hidalgo. That is his name. What is he worth? Your lordships? Four grapevines, ten meters of land and a rag on his front door and one on his back door.

The duke: Exactly. His life means something only through their madness. Plus, if he is cured, we will lose you Sancho and you won't get the island we promised you.

(Sancho falls silent, realizing their attitude, and comes to a decision. He resumes flogging himself so badly that he wounds himself. Only his heavy breathing is heard. The scene becomes oppressive, not amusing at all.)

The duchess: Enough Sancho. Enough! Are you trying to kill yourself?

Sancho: Aren't these the wizard's orders? Perhaps this disappointment will finally cure him.

(Sancho continues to flog himself.)

The duchess: That's enough. This isn't funny!

(Sancho continues to flog himself.)

The duke: You mutt in the form of a peasant!

(Sancho continues to flog himself.)

The duchess: Stop flogging yourself I say. Let's play a new game!

(Sancho stops beating himself.)

Sancho: Sires, with all this laughter and pain I sometimes don't know which is my front and which is my backside, and which of them I should turn to your lordships. Together with the books written about us, I need to touch my face to remember who I am... And why I flog myself... But this pain reminds me. This pain your lordships reminds me of who I am.

(Sancho resumes flogging himself. The duke gets up.)

The duke: I am afraid Elvira, This stupid peasant will do himself in...

The duchess: Go inform Don Quichote that you have found his Dulcinea!

(Sancho ceases beating himself. He is unsure whether he heard right.)

Sancho: Your lordship? The duchess: Tell him it is I. I am Dulcinea del Toboso, the one and only...

The duke: Nonsense and tom foolery.

The duchess: I am a figment of the imagination, totally insane. Dulcinea is in heaven. Go call the great knight. It will make him so happy. We'll celebrate all day.

The duke: What is this foolishness that has taken over you?

The duchess: Beautiful Dulcinea, the dream of all knights...

The duke: Take him back to his village, Sancho. Your Kichada. You're through here.

The duchess: No, bring him here, the knight of lions. We'll make look at the clouds and the stars, and knights with cooking pots on their heads will dance around us, and all sorts of fat generals will be speared from behind, and kisses on every page, and princes and frogs, what joy...

The duke: No.

The duchess: No what? What will we do without them, Alfons?

The duke: We'll have tea on the balcony. I have no remedy for this boredom. Off you go.

(They leave. Alfredo lifts Sancho, stunned by his own flogging. Darkness.)

16

(Light focuses on the sitting Quixote. He removes his helmet.)

Quixote: Good Sancho, she shall finally come. We'll hold a ball. Many will want to congratulate... Grand ladies and generals even. Everything must be ready.

(Quixote looks up at the ceiling.)

Quixote: Light, we need light. Light the lamps. I can't see!

(Quixote bows, sitting on his stool, to an imaginary lady guest.)

Quixote: Amancia, your great beauty only deepens your wisdom... Dulcinea. Today. Here. Soon. The excitement.

(Quixote picks up the packing box.)

Quixote: This is my gift for the wonderful lady. I can't say... The music. The music. Play with fervor. My ears sing. Flowers! I forgot to order flowers!

(Quixote bows towards the new imaginary guest.)

Quixote: A Carlos de Mana! It is said that you are hosting General Mendoza at your palace... The music? A group from Sevilla... Angels. I agree...

(Quixote looks up.)

Quixote: The light.

(He sees another guest.)

Quixote: Don Antonio Moreno! What an honor. The limp is better I see. Soon. The excitement is tremendous. The music. Angles. This time without flowers. .. Ah, the general is here.

(He turns in another direction.)

Quixote: Remind me later.

(He turns to the General.)

Quixote: General Mendoza, hero of El Alamein and the battle of the Som. The knight of sorrow thanks for this honor. The lady is already on her way... I have heard, General, without flowers this time, that the terrible Turkish navy is patrolling the sea and his purpose is as of yet unknown. I would very much like to propose a plan, very simple to execute, should the general care to listen and perhaps present to the king. All that must be done is recruit all the traveling knights in Spain and even if he should come alone, one knight alone could defeat an army of 200,000 men as though they were made of paper Mache. I hope his honor understands, one of them stands before you.

(He struggles to stand up but his legs collapse under him and he falls to the ground.)

Quixote: I am not a fool who pretends to be wise, your lordship. I only wish to explain to the word that it is a mistake to see every enemy as though he truly exists. He can be but an illusion. And in order to battle them one must over come monsters on the way. Things aren't as they seem general. One must be daring into to see. It is difficult in places of corruption, where idleness and the depth of ones pocket triumph and an honest man is what is so lacking, sire. A knight is lacking who resembles

the Don in courage... A knight whose imagination
lives inside him. A knight worthy of Dulcinea.

(Rising to his knees, he makes a deep bow.)

Quixote: Here she here your lordship. Your lordships.

(He opens the box.)

Quixote: She is...My gift, light. The light. I need more light.

(He takes out the gown and spreads it.)

Quixote: Dulcinea. Soon.

Patience.

I need more light. I can't see.

Where is everyone? Where are they?

(He waits, but nothing happens. His disappointment grows. He loses his confidence. He is filled with consternation. He weeps.)

Quixote: She didn't come.

(Sancho, carrying all their baggage, enters the stage and sits Quixote again on his stool.)

17

(Sancho lays down the belongings as they were seen originally in Quixote 's room.)

Quixote: We're off.

Sancho: We're off

Quixote: Most important thing is that we're off. This place looks familiar.

Sancho: It's home.

Quixote: Between the first step to the second.

Sancho: Smack in the middle.

Quixote: I feel that we've had this conversation before...
We are moving forward, aren't we, Sancho?

(Silence)

Quixote: Now, you usually turn to the author who is tracking us for advice

Sancho: No.

Quixote: No?

Sancho: Your lordship, the relationship between myself and the author have been severed.

Quixote: I see.

Sancho: He writes lies about us. He wrote that his lordship is mad, that I am gluttonous and a drunkard and that I married to some Marie Guitieres.

Quixote: I see... So what now...

Sancho: You sit.

(Silence)

Quixote: Sancho, can you see me?

Sancho: Yes, your lordship.

Quixote: No a shade of a shadow on the wall?

Sancho: You are well lit.

(Sancho brushes his hair and spruces himself to the best of his ability.)

Quixote: Why are you beautifying yourself for?

Sancho: I'm going to see my wife Theresa. First impressions are what counts.

Quixote: I thought that you were married to Marie Guitieres.

(They both laugh.)

Sancho: How do I look your lordship?

Quixote: Like a groom. Your wife should be pleased that she is marrying the best adjunct in the kingdom... Bless her for me and hug the kids.

Sancho: I will your lordship.

(Sancho stands for a moment hesitantly, then lays his head on Quixote's shoulder. He turns to go and then stops.)

Sancho: The island didn't work in the end... The island with people...

Quixote: An island with turtles.

(They both laugh. Sancho leaves.)

18

(Quixote holds the gown.)

Quixote: Where are you dearest lady? For if you are not, I am not. Come forth. Your smile, your golden hair, dotted with stars, lips that desire to be kissed, or be still. I implore you, my lady. Come forth. Come to me.

(He waits, and waits, and continues to wait.)

- End -