Dawn brushed the clay roofs of La Mancha with rose-gold light when \*\*Diego Marín\*\*, a farmer, led his mule toward the barley fields. His life followed the reliable rhythm of seasons: sow, weed, harvest, mend, repeat. He prized predictability the way kings prized gold. Yet that morning, his well-ordered furrows were destined for disruption.

Halfway to the paddock, Diego heard clattering armor and a loud shout. From a cloud of dust emerged an angular horse whose ribs showed through a faded grey hide. Astride sat a gaunt knight brandishing a lance that looked longer than hope itself.

“Halt, honest tiller of the soil!” cried the rider. “I am \*\*Don Quixote de la Mancha\*\*, redresser of wrongs, defender of damsels, and foe to foul enchantments.”

Diego blinked. “Señor, the only wrong here is drought, and the only damsel is my mule, Carmela.”

Quixote raised a finger toward the farmer’s windmill—a squat wooden contraption Diego had built from olive crates. “Behold, a giant skulking in disguise! Its arms turn to grind the bones of innocents. Stand aside while I deliver justice!”

Before Diego could protest, the knight spurred his steed. \*\*Rocinante\*\* lurched like an old gate in a storm, advancing three dignified paces before stopping to reconsider existence. The lance drooped. Quixote leaned down, whispering encouragement as though into a conspirator’s ear. Diego, sensing disaster, hustled ahead and seized the bridle.

“Sir Knight,” he said gently, “this contraption grinds only grain. Without it, my village would go hungry.”

Quixote regarded the mill anew, eyes flickering between suspicion and sorrow. “If it serves the common good,” he conceded, “then perhaps the giant has repented.” His voice softened. “Tell me, good farmer, do you crave a boon for guiding my crusade?”

Diego thought of rain, new seed, a roof without holes—but an idea brighter than dawn arrived. “I crave a story, Señor. Sit with me at the field’s edge and speak of your quests. My barley can wait one sunrise.”

So they sat beneath an almond tree. Quixote removed his battered helmet, revealing eyes alight with galaxies of impossible faith. He spoke of tilting at towering silhouettes, freeing chained men, and courting the incomparable \*\*Dulcinea\*\*. Wind swayed barley like attentive listeners. Carmela dozed. Even the mill’s creak slowed, as if machinery itself wished to hear.

Hours passed like breath. Diego’s imagination sprouted scenes wilder than weeds: dragons disguised as tax collectors, sorcerers hiding in tavern shadows, kingdoms reachable by stubborn hearts. When Quixote finished, the sun stood triumphant overhead.

“I must resume my vigil,” the knight declared, fastening his helmet. “Yet remember, farmer, every furrow you carve is a line in the epic of mankind. Plow bravely.”

Diego watched Rocinante amble toward the horizon, lance high against the merciless blue. Returning to his field, he felt the soil crumble between his fingers, familiar yet freshly enchanted. The windmill turned, no longer a machine but a sentinel. And Diego, whose life had prized predictability, found himself scanning the skies—hoping, one day, for another impossible visitor.