

XII. What Happened to Lazaro in an Inn Three Miles outside of Valladolid

In this chapter from "The Life of Lazarillo of Tormes," Lazaro reflects on his departure from Madrid and recounts his experiences with gypsies and a surprising encounter at an inn outside of Valladolid. After securing two hundred pieces of silver and selling a diamond band for four hundred gold pieces, Lazaro sets free from his past entanglements and heads toward Valladolid. Along the way, he ponders the gypsies' way of life, astonished by their freedom despite their notorious reputation for thievery and by the fact that many among them were once members of the clergy or other religious orders who had abandoned their posts for a life of crime.

Upon arriving at an inn three miles from Valladolid, Lazaro encounters the old lady from Madrid and her young maiden friend, now in the company of a gallant young man. Unrecognized due to his disguise, Lazaro observes their impoverished state firsthand; the trio could only afford a meager meal of pork liver, while Lazaro opts for a quarter of kid, which becomes a source of envy for the others at the table. This meal leads to a comical moment of shared hunger and desperation as the three companions of Lazaro begin to siphon off his food under the guise of communal generosity.

The tension sharply rises with the arrival of two armed men believed to be the brothers of Clara (the young maiden) seeking to reclaim her. A dramatic confrontation unfolds, revealing the young man's valor as he single-handedly disarms and dominates the brothers, turning the tables on them. They are mistaken for thieves, disarmed, and confined by the innkeeper with the help of Lazaro and the women. The chapter culminates in a chaotic but ultimately triumphant moment for Lazaro and his companions as they assert their control over the situation, capturing the brothers and securing their belongings, all while under the mistaken premise that they were merely

thieves after their riches. This episode adds to the picaresque nature of Lazaro's adventures, highlighting themes of survival, deception, and the fluid boundaries between appearances and reality.

