

# **X. What Happened to Lazaro with an Old Bawd**

In a chapter narrated by Lazaro, a young man struggling to survive in a world filled with deceit and hardship, he encounters an old bawd who offers him the task of carrying a heavy trunk for forty coppers. Driven by extreme hunger, Lazaro accepts, even though he is barely strong enough to carry the trunk. He carefully transports it, driven by the promise of payment, to the house of a young, plump maiden, who is evidently the intended recipient. The old woman instructs the maiden to keep the trunk safe until she returns from a trip to Segovia, leaving Lazaro enchanted by the maiden's beauty, yet more consumed by his hunger.

Upon delivering the trunk and receiving his payment, Lazaro ponders the transformative power of money, which momentarily uplifts his spirits and grants him a fleeting sense of strength and valor. The following day, adhering to the old woman's instructions, he returns to retrieve the trunk, this time finding it mysteriously lighter. His journey back takes a calamitous turn when he trips and falls, causing the trunk to burst open and reveal not linens, but a dashing young man dressed in green satin, complete with a sword and dagger, who quickly makes his escape.

The household, initially stunned, erupts into chaos. The sons of the house vow vengeance against the young man for reasons Lazaro can only guess at, while Lazaro, injured and immobile from the fall, fears he will be the scapegoat for the young man's untimely appearance. Indeed, the family's anger swiftly turns towards him. Subjected to a flurry of abuse from every member of the household, from the young boys to the slaves, Lazaro endures a brutal beating. The sons brandish empty threats of tracking down the elusive young man, and in their frustration, they and the rest of the household unleash their fury on Lazaro.

The chapter paints a vivid picture of the treachery and betrayal lurking in every corner of Lazaro's world, where survival often depends on one's ability to navigate a landscape filled with danger and deception. His encounter with the old bawd and the subsequent tumultuous events at the maiden's house highlight the precarious nature of his existence, where even the most straightforward tasks can descend into violence and chaos, leaving him worse off than before. Through Lazaro's eyes, we witness the cruel irony of his fortunes, where hope is continually overshadowed by misfortune.

