

V. How They Took Lazaro to the Capital

In his tale, Lazaro recounts a grim period during which he was confined in a makeshift "coffin," a display reminiscent of a fish tank, orchestrated by his captors to exploit him for financial gain. For six excruciating months, Lazaro endured a harsh existence, subsisting solely on the insubstantial nourishment provided by tub water. This meager diet, tainted and unclean, ironically sustained him primarily through its unintentional side effect of severe, prolonged diarrhea, likened by Lazaro to enduring a watery purgatory.

The chapter progresses with Lazaro's journey being taken to the capital, a venture overseen by three individuals: the mule driver, the rope handler, and the orator. This trio of exploiters transported Lazaro from location to location, showcasing him as an oddity—a man purportedly transformed into a fish. Throughout the journey, whenever privacy allowed, they engaged in conversations with Lazaro, humorously indulging his inquiries about their motives while firmly upholding the fantastic narrative of his transformation. Resigned to the absurdity of his situation, Lazaro reluctantly embraced the identity imposed upon him, internalizing the populace's belief in his metamorphosis.

Upon arriving in the capital, Lazaro's exhibitors capitalized on the local population's affinity for novelties, garnering significant attention and profit from the idle curiosity of the city's inhabitants. Among the throngs of spectators, two discerning students scrutinized Lazaro closely, concluding with a conviction that defied the widespread deception. They recognized Lazaro for what he truly was—a man, not a fish—and voiced a determination to unveil the truth through more direct means if given authority.

Lazaro's account of this chapter of his life paints a vivid picture of extreme exploitation and survival, marked by physical deprivation, psychological manipulation, and an ever-present yearning for deliverance from his plight. Through his ordeal, Lazaro's resilience and adaptability shine as testament to the lengths to which he would go to preserve his life, albeit in the guise of a creature from beneath the waves.

