

III. How Lazaro Escaped from the Sea

In Chapter III of "The Life of Lazaro of Tormes," Lazaro finds himself on the brink of death and great fortune simultaneously. With the duality of fear and delight battling within him, he makes a desperate attempt to seize the treasure by swimming, driven by sheer necessity despite his lack of skill in the task. His journey is marked by the painful encouragement of fish, which nip at him and spur him on until he surfaces, only to be ensnared in a fisherman's net alongside the fish. In this precarious position, he almost drowns, swallowed up by the sea and the overwhelming taste of its waters, which he unfavorably compares to a vile drink his wife once tricked him into consuming.

His predicament escalates when the fishermen, upon reeling in their catch, discover Lazaro entangled within. Mistaking him for some aberrant sea creature or devilish apparition due to his human visage on one end and the rope tied to his foot on the other, they initially pull harder, jeopardizing their vessel. Just in time, they sever the rope, inadvertently also severing Lazaro's dreams of wealth and status. Upon realizing Lazaro is alive, albeit barely, they offer him wine, which miraculously revives him like fuel to a flame.

Struck by curiosity yet weakened, Lazaro remains silent until he is offered sustenance. Once revived, his first inquiry is about the shackles that had bound him to his ill fate. The fishermen's astonishment at Lazaro's survival and their subsequent actions paint a picture of a man narrowly escaping death, yet losing his opportunity for prosperity in the process. This chapter vividly encapsulates Lazaro's continued struggle with his fate, marked by fleeting hopes and enduring misfortunes, all relayed through his engagingly sardonic perspective.