

II. How Lazaro Took up with a Priest and the Things That Happened to Him with That Man

In this chapter, we delve into the continuing misadventures of Lazarillo, starting from a cunning ploy to trick his blind master, leading to misfortune for the blind man and Lazarillo's swift departure to Torrijos. Further escapades lead Lazarillo to Maqueda, where he meets a miserly priest and becomes his servant. The stark contrast in their characters is swiftly unveiled through Lazarillo's struggles with hunger due to the priest's stinginess. Desperate to supplement his meager food rations, Lazarillo devises clever schemes to access a locked chest containing bread, employing tactics from feigning rodent damage to personally creating access. His resourcefulness demonstrates a survival instinct, continually adjusting his plans to react to the priest's increasingly stringent measures to protect the chest's contents.

Lazarillo's life under the priest's roof is marked by extreme hunger, only momentarily alleviated by his inventive thefts from the chest and the scant meals provided at funerals they attend. His constant hunger leads him to pray for the death of others, highlighting the dire straits of his existence. Despite considering escape, Lazarillo is deterred by his weakened state and the fear of encountering a worse fate with another master. His strategies evolve from blaming non-existent mice to physically altering the chest, which sparks an escalation of countermeasures from the priest, culminating in a mousetrap and, eventually, total seal off of the chest.

The narrative expertly portrays Lazarillo's desperation and cunning intelligence as he navigates his fraught relationship with the priest. His fear and resourcefulness blaze a trail of dark humor through the grim reality of his struggles for survival. This precarious situation reaches a climax when the priest, mistaking a whistling sound caused by Lazarillo's makeshift key storage for a snake, delivers a violent blow to Lazarillo, mistaking him for the snake he feared was invading their home. This chapter not only advances Lazarillo's tale of survival but also weaves themes of desperation, deception, and the lengths to which one will go to overcome adversity.