

**Miguel de Cervantes**



*The Illustrious  
Scullery-Maid*

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# **The Illustrious Scullery-Maid**



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[goodpress@okpublishing.info](mailto:goodpress@okpublishing.info)

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# **The Exemplary Novels of Cervantes — The Illustrious Scullery-maid**

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In the famous city of Burgos there lived two wealthy cavaliers, one of whom was called Don Diego de Carriazo, and the other Don Juan de Avendaño. Don Diego had a son called after himself, and Don Juan another, whose name was Don Tomas de Avendaño. These two young gentlemen being the principal persons of the following tale, we shall for the sake of brevity call them Carriazo and Avendaño.

Carriazo might be about thirteen or little more, when, prompted by a scampish disposition, without having had any cause to complain of bad treatment at home, he ran away from his father's house, and cast himself upon the wide world. So much did he enjoy a life of unrestricted freedom, that amidst all the wants and discomforts attendant upon it, he never missed the plenty of his father's house. He neither tired of trudging on foot, nor cared for cold or heat. For him all seasons of the year were genial spring. His sleep was as sound on a heap of straw as on soft mattresses, and he made himself as snug in a hayloft as between two Holland sheets. In short, he made such way in the profession he had chosen, that he could have given lessons to the famous Guzman de Alfarache.

During the three years he absented himself from home, he learned to play at sheepshanks in Madrid, at rentoy in the public-houses of Toledo, and at presa y pinta in the barbacans of Seville. In spite of the sordid penury of his way of life, Carriazo showed himself a prince in his actions. It

was easy to see by a thousand tokens that he came of gentle blood. His generosity gained him the esteem of all his comrades. He seldom was present at drinking bouts; and though he drank wine, it was in moderation, and he carried it well. He was not one of those unlucky drinkers, who whenever they exceed a little, show it immediately in their faces, which look as if they were painted with vermilion or red ochre. In short, the world beheld in Carriazo a virtuous, honourable, well-bred, rogue, of more than common ability. He passed through all the degrees of roguery till he graduated as a master in the tunny fisheries of Zahara, the chief school of the art. O kitchen-walloping rogues, fat and shining with grease; feigned cripples; cutpurses of Zocodober and of the Plaza of Madrid; sanctimonious patterers of prayers; Seville porters; bullies of the Hampa, and all the countless host comprised under the denomination of rogues! never presume to call yourself by that name if you have not gone through two courses, at least, in the academy of the tunny fisheries. There it is that you may see converging as it were in one grand focus, toil and idleness, filth and spruceness, sharp set hunger and lavish plenty, vice without disguise, incessant gambling, brawls and quarrels every hour in the day, murders every now and then, ribaldry and obscenity, singing, dancing, laughing, swearing, cheating, and thieving without end. There many a man of quality seeks for his truant son, nor seeks in vain; and the youth feels as acutely the pain of being torn from that life of licence as though he were going to meet his death. But this joyous life has its bitters as well as its sweets. No one can lie down to sleep securely in

Zahara, but must always have the dread hanging over him of being carried off to Barbary at any moment. For this reason, they all withdraw at night into some fortified places on the coast, and place scouts and sentinels to watch whilst they sleep; but in spite of all precautions, it has sometimes happened that scouts, sentinels, rogues, overseers, boats, nets, and all the posse comitatus of the place have begun the night in Spain and have seen the dawn in Tetuan. No apprehensions of this kind, however, could deter Carriazo from spending three successive summers at the fisheries for his pastime; and such was his luck during his third season, that he won at cards about seven hundred reals, with which he resolved to buy himself good clothes, return to Burgos, and gladden the heart of his sorrowing mother.

He took a most affectionate leave of his many dear friends, assuring them that nothing but sickness or death should prevent his being with them in the following summer; for his heart was in Zahara, and to his eyes its parched sands were fresher than all the verdure of the Elysian fields. Ambling merrily along on shanks' mare, he arrived at Valladolid, where he stopped a fortnight to get rid of the mahogany hue of his complexion, and to change his rogue's costume for that of a gentleman. Having equipped himself properly, he had still a hundred reals left, which he spent on the hire of a mule and a servant, that he might make a good figure when he presented himself to his parents. They received him with the utmost joy, and all the friends and relations of the family came to congratulate them on the safe arrival of their son Don Diego de Carriazo. I had forgotten to mention that, during his peregrination, Don