

VOL. 1, ISSUE 1

SEPT. 2023

# EPIC ECHOES

MAGAZINE

*Exciting!  
First issue!*



*Featuring:*

Brandon Barrows

Jen Mierisch

Joseph Buckley

Spencer Nitkey

DC Diamondopolous

Paul O'Neill

Luke Foster

Burt Rashbaum

Manfred Gabriel

Matthew Roy

Kevin Hopson

E. Michael Lewis

*and* Matias Travieso-Diaz

EPIC

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Vol. 1, Issue 1

September 2023

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MANAGING EDITOR

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Interested in subscribing to *Epic Echoes* or publishing your own work in a future issue? We're always looking for punchy, genre-oriented short stories that can captivate, intrigue, and entertain a diverse audience. See [our website](#) for submission guidelines and more information.

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“There are cold storage tanks beneath this castle, powered by nuclear batteries that will last a thousand years. You will be safe down there until men of the future can finish my work. I’m going to freeze your brain.”

\*\*\*

Time passes, presumably.

I am cold.

For the first time in a long time, I feel sensations. I would have thought this would be comforting, welcome, but I have grown used to my nothing, senseless existence.

I shiver. My body is slick with fluid. The lights are too bright for me to open my eyes.

“Mr. Farragut, can you hear us, sir?” It is not Meursault’s voice. The accent is strange. I have traveled the world and never heard an accent like it before.

“Wha... What?” a voice croaks from my drooling mouth. It sounds so much like my own.

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The characteristically cocky Don Juan gets his comeuppance in this light romp through the bedrooms and back alleys of 17th-century Spain. Travieso-Diaz's straight-faced narrator relates a slapstick fiasco that's savvy, snappy, and just plain fun.

## Don Juan, Derided

by Matias Travieso-Diaz

*Born in Cuba, Matias Travieso-Diaz migrated to the United States as a young man. He became an engineer and lawyer and practiced for nearly fifty years. After retirement, he took up creative writing. Eighty of his short stories have been published or accepted for publication in anthologies and paying magazines, blogs, audio books and podcasts. Some of his unpublished works have also received "honorable mentions" from a number of paying publications. A first collection of some of his stories, The Satchel and Other Terrors, was released in February 2023.*

*Madamina, il catalogo è questo  
Delle belle che amò il padron mio;  
un catalogo egli è che ho fatt'io;  
Osservate, leggete con me.  
In Italia seicento e quaranta;  
In Almagna duecento e trentuna;  
Cento in Francia, in Turchia novantuna;  
Ma in Ispagna son già mille e tre.  
Mozart, Don Giovanni, Act I*

**A**n important part of my job was to defend my master when he was attacked.

There had been many attempts by fathers, brothers, husbands, and other male relations of Don Juan's female victims to exact retribution for his transgressions. I helped him fend off those

attacks. This duty posed little peril for me, because Don Juan was an accomplished swordsman and nimbler than a mountain cat. We were seldom at real risk of harm, though I must confess that a couple of times I came close to wetting my britches.

In addition to guarding him from physical danger, it was my responsibility to defend Don Juan from the invidious tales cast about by women whose honor he had compromised. I kept a running catalogue of Don Juan's dalliances, including how many times he had encounters with a given lady, where, and when. On occasion, I was forced to draw on the catalogue to set the record straight as to what he did and did not do.

Despite my pleas for discretion, Don Juan pursued just about all women he encountered: young and old; single, married and widowed; poor and rich. He plucked young girls from convents and often went after the guarding nuns as well. If a human being wore skirts, he would attempt to get inside them.

People ask how I could have stayed in the employ of such a scoundrel. My answer is difficult to formulate. He demanded loyalty, but gave little in return. It was always "do this, Catalinón," or "Catalinón, fix that," with no showing of gratitude. Indeed, he treated me rather poorly, and more than once pointed to me as being responsible for some crime he himself had committed. In all honesty, I followed him because of admiration for how he got away with all his evil deeds. I was under his insidious spell, like a scarab caught in a spider web, watching helplessly as fly after fly was consumed.

\*\*\*

In the spring of 1620, we found ourselves narrowly escaping from Seville, as Don Juan had just slain a Comendador of the Order of Calatrava, the father of one of his attempted conquests. I believed his near escape would put a brake on my lord's pernicious behavior, yet only one week after our flight he was again on the prowl. He was now operating out of a farm he rented in Cazalla de la Sierra, close to Seville but out of the reach of his pursuers.

After a while, having exhausted the female population of Cazalla, Don Juan turned his attention to La Cartuja de Cazalla, a nearby nunnery whose novices became targets for his appetites. At the nunnery, he met Clara de Ulloa, the disobedient daughter of a nobleman from Málaga, who had been placed in the convent against her will by her father. Clara was expected to become a nun and thereafter lead a life of quiet devotion.

I was always reluctant to voice my concerns about my master's behavior, but on the matter of Doña Clara I felt compelled to warn him about the lady's temperament. I had served as go-between in arranging for Don Juan's secret meetings with Clara and could attest first hand to her fiery disposition. "My Lord, it would perhaps behoove you to exercise caution in dealing with Doña Clara. She is as spirited as an unbroken colt."

"That's the way I like them," replied Don Juan scornfully. And then he scolded me: "You better stick to your duties and let me handle my affairs, of which I am perfectly capable. Otherwise, I will find myself a less intrusive servant."

\*\*\*

After several meetings, Doña Clara and Don Juan decided she would leave the nunnery and move with him. He promised he would marry her when they settled down.

Don Juan enjoyed a few days of passion with Doña Clara and then got tired of the dalliance. I was present when he advised his paramour that it had been good while it lasted, but it was time for them to part ways. He would give her a purse of money and send her back to her family in Málaga.

Doña Clara refused to be discarded. She berated Don Juan for his duplicity, accused him of having stolen her honor through false promises, and insisted that the only possible solution would be for him to marry her and restore her good name, since her virginity was no longer capable of being repaired.

Don Juan tried to reason with Doña Clara and appealed to her common sense. He offered her even more money, which infuriated the lady to no end. “I am not a common whore that can be bought for a few reales,” she fumed. When his efforts at bargaining failed, he gave her an ultimatum: “You are to leave this house by tomorrow, or else.” To which Doña Clara, in an icy tone, responded: “Don’t threaten me. Marry me, or you will pay!”

Don Juan then lost his composure and replied in a loud voice: “I have made arrangements to bring friends here tomorrow to remove you by force if you refuse to go voluntarily.”

“Bring them on!” shouted back Doña Clara, slamming the bedroom door.



Somewhat later, I answered a soft knock on the door to the apartment to let in Don Juan's new conquest, the main reason for sending Doña Clara back to her family right away. Doña Ana de Pantoja, barely out of her teens, was the daughter of one of the wealthiest merchants in the Spanish Empire. I conveyed Doña Ana to my master's top floor study, three rooms down from the conjugal bedroom to which Doña Clara had retired. Don Juan was waiting for Doña Ana, a glass of claret in hand. I tried to make no sound as I closed the study door and returned to the servants' quarters.

\*\*\*

Early the following morning, I was standing outside Don Juan's townhouse grooming his horse in preparation for a trip to Ronda, where he was to meet with certain lowlife elements. He would bring these people to Seville, seize Doña Clara by force, and with their help deliver her—preferably in one piece—to her father's house in Málaga.

I had my arms full with a bucket of water, a large brush, and a saddle and was busy with my work when a loud noise drew my attention to the upper floor bedroom window, which all of a sudden opened violently, revealing a stark-naked Don Juan. Behind him I could hear a torrent of insults in the familiar voice of Doña Clara. At almost the same time, the front door opened and a trembling Doña Ana, dressed only in a sheer, see-through *négligée*, ran out of the apartment and onto the street.

Next second Don Juan was jumping out of the window,



falling into the bushes that encircled the front of the townhouse. It was not a big drop, but Don Juan flopped to the ground in a most ungainly manner. His body was now covered with dirt and scratches from the shrubbery; as he got to his feet, he was favoring his left ankle. Without waiting a second, he began to run as fast as his injured ankle allowed. He reached the street, took a few steps, and turned into an alley a short distance away.

The door to the townhouse, already wide open, was filled with the figure of Doña Clara, dressed in night clothes. Her face was contorted with anger; she looked like a Fury from hell. In her hand she brandished a long, sharp butcher's knife. She began running in pursuit of my master, screaming obscenities that would have made a mule driver blush. The insane look on her face chilled my blood.

Soon, she entered the alley where my master had disappeared moments earlier.

I experienced a rare moment of rebellion. My duty, as I mentioned, required me to go after the pair and try to protect Don Juan. On the other hand, I was smarting from my master's dismissal of my warnings about Doña Clara and his curt dressing down. At the end, anger gained the upper hand. For once, let him take care of this problem by himself.

\*\*\*

I ran after Doña Ana, gently led her to our next-door neighbor's apartment, and knocked on the door. Luckily, the knock was answered by Sebastián, the majordomo, a man I knew well

and on whose discretion I counted. I explained the situation in a few words and asked him to give shelter to the shivering young woman until someone could retrieve her, which he agreed to do. As I turned my back on them, Sebastián was escorting Doña Ana to an antechamber off the main living room.

I then began running in the direction of the alley. As I entered the passage, all I could see at first was Doña Clara, stooped over something huddled against the brick wall at the alley's end. I drew in closer, stepping softly not to draw attention to myself. I was finally able to discern the figure of the naked Don Juan, folded in on himself and trembling with fear, as Doña Clara lifted the knife and lowered it towards my master's genitals.

He let out a screech, which was followed by a cackling, demented burst of laughter by the lady. She turned around and ran out of the alley, passing by me as I pressed my back against a wall. She was clutching something in triumph in her left hand, knife still held high in her right.

I forced myself to look at the figure on the ground. There was no blood, only a quivering mass of frightened manhood. I looked towards his bare private parts. His member, which when erect was of above average proportions, was so shrunken with fright as to be almost invisible. The thick clump of pubic hair that had framed his manhood had been neatly severed. Urine ran down one leg: he had soiled himself.

I helped my master to his feet and led him out of the alley, trying in vain to suppress the urge to titter at the pitiful figure he

cut. A crowd had gathered at the alley's mouth; the bystanders were less circumspect, and some were doubling over with laughter.

It took all my self-control not to point out with a smirk: "I told you so!"

\*\*\*

I returned to our next-door neighbor's apartment and, while waiting for the arrival of Doña Ana's relatives, heard from her an account of what had happened. Don Juan had used all his powers of persuasion to convince Doña Ana to come to his apartment that night in a hired cab, alleging he was suffering from a severe attack of gout and, because of these painful circumstances, he could not leave the apartment, yet could not wait one more minute to join Doña Ana in a blissful embrace. After her arrival, Don Juan had plied her with wine, and later brandy, and had ultimately made love several times to the intoxicated girl on a large divan that rested against the studio's back wall.

They both had slept until shortly after sunrise, when they had been awakened by a loud knocking on the studio's door and shouting from a female voice commanding Don Juan to show himself.

Don Juan blanched, mumbling, "I meant to send you home before dawn, but I passed out myself. Quick, hide under the divan, I'll try to get rid of her!"

The moment Don Juan opened the studio's door, an indignant Doña Clara exploded into the room, screaming: "Where were you all night? Were you trying to hide from me? Didn't you

hear what I told you?" Her barrage was cut short as she looked in the direction of the divan and saw the half-naked Doña Ana trying, unsuccessfully, to hide under the furniture. Doña Clara shrieked and ran out of the room.

"Quick!" ordered Don Juan. "No time to explain. Go downstairs and get out of the house before she returns!"

"Who is she?" mumbled Doña Ana, bewildered.

"It's my crazy aunt!" cried Don Juan. "Go, and I'll explain later!"

As Doña Ana rushed downstairs, she saw Don Juan's "aunt," who was approaching from the back of the apartment, wielding a large kitchen knife. Fortunately, Doña Ana got to the front door before the other woman could reach her and burst out into the cold morning air. She was ashamed and humiliated, but Don Juan was to fare worse.

\*\*\*

To this day, the alley that witnessed Don Juan's ordeal is known to the locals as Callejón de las Carcajadas, that is, "Alley of the Guffaws," because those who witnessed the naked nobleman running for his life from a woman holding a butcher knife and the ludicrous scene that followed break into uncontrollable laughter at the mere mention of the incident.

Don Juan was so mortified by the scandal that he made me report that he had been driven to hell by demons summoned by the statue of a Comendador he had slain days earlier. He then dismissed me from his employ and gave me a paltry severance purse.

Last I knew he had grown a beard and taken a ship to La Habana, where he remains in obscurity (or, at least, beyond my reach).

He may someday come back to Seville, his hometown and the scene of many of his adventures. I have included in the running catalogue this accounting of his humiliation and may make it public if he returns.

Seville, 1621.

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