For Manuela a competitor

The rumour mill had been grinding out stories of a new arrival in the Newcomer's barrio. A female who has recently returned after a long absence from Alqueria. The girl or rather woman has the given name of Gabriela. Tall, raven haired, olive skinned and with eyes like paperweights. A description which bears an uncanny resemblance to Manuela, the Hill People's very own heroine and 'femme fatale'.

Manuela decided to investigate and weigh up the competition. If Gabriela did indeed classify as a rival it could lose Manuela the ability to influence male Newcomers. Something she has been doing for years with great effect by deploying her arsenal of womanly wiles.

Disguised as a one armed prickly-pear salesman with a limp and dandruff, Manuela entered the lair of the Newcomers, the Bar La Golondrina Verde. There in an alcove surrounded by the cream of Newcomer manhood was the woman Gabriela. 'A force to be reckoned with' Manuela thought. She quickly made her way back to the Bar La Casa Devante to plan and scheme. Manuela duly sent a note to Gabriela asking for a showdown on neutral ground in the old olive grove to the north of the village.

Now, fights are always popular. Fights between women even more so but a cat-fight between the two village beauties promised to bring out the whole village. Anselmo Adamso, Alqueria's very own war correspondent and photojournalist, although we only have his word for it asked Manuela if he could be the official photographer. Manuela threatened to shred him through a garlic press causing Adamso to take flight and hide in Poyato's hay loft where he stayed for three weeks.

Twelve noon at the olive grove, corny but it works. With a tossing of curly hair and the flashing of deep brown almond eyes the two women approached each other. The villagers waited, expectant. The men with their cameras at the ready. This promised to be the spectacle of the year.

Manuela and Gabriela stood face to face their, noses almost touching. Brown soulful eyes stared unblinkingly into brown soulful eyes. The villagers looked on as the rivals eye-balled each other. The gentle afternoon breeze ruffled hair but not tempers as the scrutiny continued.

The would-be pugilists continued their stand-off, neither flinching nor giving ground. The villagers soon became bored, most headed for the bar. The afternoon shadows grew longer and Loco Paco was out for his evening stroll deep in conversation with his imaginary pet rodent, Bert. Still the deadlock continued.

Will the stalemate be broken with violence?
Will they ever blink again?
Will they develop moss on their north side?
We shall see.