Matas's revenge

The damp of the cave troubled Matas, old bones are so hard to please. His cave on the southern slopes of the Sierra Alhamolla could not compare with the splendour of its counterparts in Guadix but it was reasonably comfortable. It had running water albeit down the walls, ventilation via a hole in the roof and panoramic views over Alqueria. Tricked out of the Olive Mill by Rodriquez's Father and believing the Civil War still to be on, Matas spends his days pottering about the three subterranes which form his cave.

The main chamber with an opening to the south forms his living quarters and armoury. A rack of ancient smooth bore mausers leaning against boxes of deteriorating ammunition. A fire in the centre vents through a hole in the roof and an old table and chair complete the furnishings. Looking to the rear and on the right is his sleeping chamber with a small shaft leading to the outside. A bolt-hole in case of surprise attack from a marauding party of falangists. To the left is the third chamber containing jars and cages constructed from fine wire mesh. In these Matas breeds the *Bactrocera oleae* or Olive Fruit Fly. By feeding the flies on a mixture of crushed olives, Remitroot liquor and insecticide he has produced a strain with remarkable qualities. The crushed olives strengthen their liking for the fruit, while the Remitroot makes them fearless and aggressive. An extremely erratic flightpath is a side-effect of the liquor however. The insecticide gives an immunity at attempts to control. He lovingly rears his minuscule warriors until they are ready to be deployed.

Matas only leaves his cave during the early hours, moving with stealth in a seemingly treacherous and hostile environment. A skill every married man should learn perhaps. Occasionally on these travels he would pass the shadowing figure of Manuela abroad on some errand or other. These errands always seemed to involve the riverbank and a minimum of clothing. This interested Matas, however he couldn't remember exactly why.

Skirting the village he would follow the Río Verde to the southern extreme of Alqueria passed the cemetery and then westward to the olive grove. Now his precious prodigies would be given their freedom, where high on Remitroot liquor and insecticide they gleefully infested Rodriquez's olive trees. This was the revenge of Matas. It gave the old man a meaning to his life, although he was slightly concerned about the relationship which was forming between him and his insects.

Señor Fernando Rodriquez never understood why he and he alone was subject to this particularly virulent strain of Fruit Fly. He could also never understand why they flew in such a haphazard manner.