The Animals of Alqueria

The animals of Alqueria are as singular as the Village Republic's human population. Many inhabitants keep pets and there is even an Olive Baboon population in Alqueria which rivals the famous Barbary Apes of Gibraltar.

The Alquerian Baboons previously resided in a safari park north of Madrid. Over the years as they scrambled over visitors' cars breaking off windscreen wipers, aerials, exhaust systems etc., plans for their freedom matured and eventually jelled. The Baboons waited until they had collected sufficient parts, built a car, piled aboard and drove out of the safari park splintering the security barrier. As there is no extradition agreement for primates in Alqueria the Pueblo was ideal for their needs.

A White-headed Capuchin Monkey called Pieter relaxes on the patio of a house in the Calle Mirador. He was once an organ grinder's monkey working in Amsterdam. One day he seized his chance for freedom and absconded with the grinder's tin mug full of cash. He now lives in Alqueria enjoying a luxurious lifestyle paid for with his ill-gotten gains.

Many of the residents have pets. Manuela takes in stray cats caring for them until they can be re-homed. The last creature she saved was scooped up from the very wheels of a speeding car. She pressed the lucky feline to her ample breast. It was the first time many had seen a cat smile from ear to furry ear. Other village cats soon got wind of this treatment. Manuela is now almost always followed by a retinue of quite happy and healthy cats all pretending to be lost and pathetic in the hope of receiving similar therapy.

Rodriquez, Manuela's arch enemy has no empathy with animals he can't actually eat. The closest he has ever been to a non-food creature is having a face like a badgers bottom after a rough night. Antonio Poyato owns Pepe, a bad tempered Sulphur Crested Cockatoo. This feathery linguist makes disparaging remarks about the world's

religious leaders and is not above telling house guests to attempt feats which are physically impossible.

Loco Paco's pets are numerous and legendary. From dogs and cats to the more exotic animals including huge rodents and marsupials. He converses frequently and fluently with them all. Unfortunately apart from Benjy a Saharan Dung Beetle they are all fictitious, only existing in Paco's disturbed mind.

It is not surprising that the dysfunctional population of Alqueria should have equally dysfunctional pets. One can only wonder how long it will be before these domesticated creatures begin to take part in barrio rivalry.