**Oh to be a cat in Alqueria!**

Animals in Alqueria are well fed, well cared for and contented. They don't get involved in the civil unrest caused by barrio rivalry, they have no enemies, there is no food chain. This applies to the four legged varieties and those with the power of flight. The power of flight is a commodity much sought after by the human population of Alqueria. This is due to the regular arrival of men in cars with blue lights from across the border. But it is the animals we are interested in.

Tiberia is the Village cat. Not just an ordinary cat but a very intelligent and motivated cat. She doesn't belong to anyone, people belong to her. She lives where she wants and owing to her ability to unlock doors, can leave just when she wants. Other cats pay her homage and respect whatever territory she chooses to claim. Her 'sidekick' is a part Siamese, part European cat and if she were human would be the archetype blonde bimbo. Unlike the astute Tiberia she is rather slow and timid.

Roaming the village is a fat cheeked Iberian Pig which hungrily eats the windfalls from the Holm Oak and gets visibly fatter by the hour. His only concern is his greed. The Villagers intend to name him after a suitable Tory politician, unfortunately they are spoilt for choice. Pound for pound this acorn fed porker is the most valuable asset in Alqueria after the Remitroot crop of course.

The Alquerian Hunting Dog is the only true canine aborigine in the Village. Bred to hunt the Alquerian Back-Fanged Newt which is now extinct, not because of over hunting but because the Newts seemed to prefer it that way. The Hunting Dogs now roam the village, unemployed due to the lack of newts. They have placards around their necks. 'Five children to support. Destitute. Hungry. Please give generously'. The people of Alqueria sympathise with destitute, they themselves are only a Remitroot crop away for the same condition and give generously. These dogs now live in considerable comfort and wonder why they ever hunted newts in the first place.

Perhaps the happiest and most contented animal in the Village is Lorenzo, Manuela's beaver. Fed Remitroot leaves twice daily, which although none addictive are strangely hallucinogenic, the animal thrives. Manuela, while petting this creature will often squeeze it to her ample breast, cradling it in her considerable cleavage. Lorenzo has made it into the 'Guinness Book of Records' for being the only beaver ever recorded to grin from ear to ear.

If Sartre was right and 'hell is other people' then the animals of Alqueria are in heaven.