The Zoo

A zoo in Alqueria may seem a curious concept considering the strangest of all creatures are the humans that walk the streets of the Pueblo. The behaviour of the most disgusting of animals is somewhat better than that of the vast majority of Alquerians. Some thought the Zoo was a scheme by the World Wildlife Fund to give the animals something to look at and stop them from becoming bored. It was however an Alquerian ploy to attract cash rich visitors from Spain. As the health and safety laws in Alqueria are non-existent and particularly ferocious animals could easily be exhibited.

Unfortunately it isn't only heath and safety that is not regulated there is also a distinct lack of building regulations. The result, shoddy pen construction which allowed several of the most vicious animals to escape some weeks before the attraction was even opened. They appeared to have made every effort to quit Alquerian territory as rapidly as possible and now roam the Spanish mainland devouring domestic animals and terrorising the population. The Alquerian authorities of course deny all knowledge of such carnivorous escapees. These animals were replaced with sheep, goats and the like. To make them appear like lions, tigers and drooling grisly bears cardboard ears, plastic teeth and rubber claws were attached to strategic areas. In most cases this didn't work very well and only confused the less intelligent of the remaining animals.

Loco Paco when appointed chief keeper of the zoo responded by wearing a pith helmet and carrying a lion tamer's whip. It seemed a strange choice for a man whose only friends are an invisible two metre tall rodent and a Saharan Dung Beetle called Benjy. His ability to recognise one species from another was also thrown into doubt when he was seen throwing bread to helicopters at Murcia Airport.

Prospective visitors to the Zoo had to run the gauntlet of the more dubious Alquerian elements of which there are many. Dubious elements are a speciality of Alqueria. It

was akin to a ritual mugging and overcharging was rife. Everything from car parking to admittance came at a premium. The squalor of the Zoo itself was breathtaking. Attempts to pass domestic pets off as ferocious man-eaters fooled no one apart from Loco Paco of course. He was in his element but couldn't understand why the tabby cat with glued on plastic fangs didn't devour the half a horse dropped from the back of a Land Rover. The success of the undertaking was never in doubt.

The end came when the animals made a mass breakout and gave themselves up to the Spanish zoological authorities. The Zoo simply joined the ever increasing list of failed Alquerian ventures.