Conflict

The battle lines are drawn, the barricades built. Alqueria holds its breath as the belligerents from each barrio plot and scheme. The rivalry between the two sections of Alquerian society has climbed that extra rung on the ladder of escalation from undeclared warfare to 'de facto' hostilities.

The makeshift barricades of cobblestones and broken furniture, freshly broken for the purpose, kept the two factions apart as plans were laid by the belligerents to gain the upper hand. Nocturnal sorties became the operational choice with 'commando' groups from each barrio raiding the opposition by moonlight. Groups of black clad individuals faces obscured with burnt-cork could be seen creeping around the Pueblo after dark. Loco Paco took them to be friends of his imaginary five foot rodent friend 'Bert' and tried to lure them into his front room with large pieces of Manchego. The clandestine antagonists declined the invitation but were grateful for the cheese.

The Hill People, led by Manuela always came out on top during these altercations. Both sides employed sneaky and underhand methods during hostilities but the Hill People's sneakiness was always that bit more sneaky, better thought out and implemented with military precision worthy of Montgomery himself. To try and redress the balance the incursions by the Newcomers became increasingly desperate. The daubing of slogans on the walls of the Bar La Casa Devante, an old favourite of the Newcomers soon ended with the breaking of the bar's windows. One enterprising individual who had served in the Spanish forces powered CS gas tablets before putting them in the ash-trays. He reward came when the early evening drinkers evacuated the bar with eyes and noses streaming in an undignified but nevertheless pleasing spectacle.

Manuela was indignant and swore revenge. A council of war was summoned and plans duly laid for an audacious and hopefully ultimate raid on the enemy. The Alquerian drainage system suffers from the same problems as those associated with

certain Egyptian port towns. A road tanker used to remove backed-up effluent is the busiest vehicle in the Village and always has a full cargo of the disgusting human residue. It was a simple matter to high-jack the vehicle, after all who in their right mind would want to be within fifty metres of the thing. Reversing the pump's action our group of giggling pseudo terrorists pumped the entire contents into the bar of La Golondrina Verde, the Newcomer's watering hole. Manuela and her confederates were in high glee. A masterly stroke rendering the Bar uninhabitable and attracting a large flock of noisy seagulls.

That night the Newcomer's took speedy and terrible revenge. Manuela disappeared, kidnapped and spirited from Alqueria.

Alqueria waits.