The Obsessions of Loco Paco

Loco Paco is one of Alqueria's leading citizens. A senior member of the Government, one of the three who re-established democracy in the Republic and a recognised trainer of Saharan Dung Beetles. This isn't bad for someone who is clinically insane, apart of course from being a member of government, here being insane is almost a requirement.

Being clinically insane did make Paco somewhat obsessive with whatever took his fancy and Paco's fancies included the mundane and the exceedingly worrying. This week Paco was totally preoccupied with Manuela. He worshipped the very earth she tread upon to the extent of collecting it and keeping it under his pillow. He had to stop this practice however not only because of the strangely brown hue of his pillowcase but also the burrowing rodents which scurried about his headboard had become a health hazard.

Paco's strategy in the wooing of Manuela was not based on any romantic ideal but conjured up from the fleeting messages that Paco's damaged brain received from whatever source. A source which appeared to have no experience whatsoever concerning winning the charms of the fairer sex. Whether this source was divine or not is difficult to tell but if so then Paco probably simply overhead a message meant for someone else.

His first ploy was to serenade Manuela under her window at the dead of night. He expected her to appear a shadowy figure behind the rejas, drawn by his melancholy guitar notes and lilting flamenco canto. He failed. Firstly because he was under the wrong window, secondly because his guitar playing attracted cats and his singing attracted airborne boots and porcelain night jars.

His second attempt involved the sending of flowers. Again he failed. Again he got the wrong address. His choice of flowers was also somewhat unfortunate. Amalia de

Vega Alqueria's oldest inhabitant at 103 was not impressed with the Lilies and cypress wreath which mysteriously appeared on her doorstep.

Paco was becoming discouraged and decided on the direct approach. He followed her everywhere reciting sickly and trite poetry he wrote himself and believed it to be timeless. It was all to no avail. If Paco had been a drinking man he would have turned to alcohol instead he decided on one last grand gesture. Paco would throw himself from the top of the church tower dressed in Sevillian hat and cape. This of course had one obvious drawback, if Paco was successful he would find it difficult to have a meaningful relationship with Manuela, her in this life and he his next. But the deluded Paco didn't worry about such technicalities.

The attempt, although spectacular was again disappointing. An updraught caught his cape which made him airborne and safely deposited him among the slurry of Pongy Pedro's pig farm.

Paco gave up and started collecting the earwax of famous Abyssinian Goat Shirlers.