Alqueria Unido
(The Game)

The team that Alqueria Unido were meeting in the final of *El Trofeo Desafío del Pueblos*, the Village Challenge Trophy is academic. For the record however it was *Tontos del Mar*. The match was to be played on mutual territory, away from the polite gaze of nearby population centres. The Civil Guard were on standby and plain clothes police mingled with the crowd. Crowd, being a grand title for the diminutive group of spectators that had bothered to make the trip. The forces of law and order easily outnumbering those watching.

The referee was specially chosen for his work in government correctional institutions. The linesmen did the job as an alternative to a custodial sentence. None of them knew much about the game and some of their decisions were inspired. One linesman when signalling a throw in kept changing his mind as the two teams argued. His flag was going in all directions. One ex-naval rating in the crowd thought he might be signalling 'Enemy in sight'.

Alqueria lost the toss, which was surprising as they called and supplied the coin. Unfortunately a Hill Person called, they use a double headed coin. However the coin used was a Newcomer's and that was doubled tailed.

Their opponents had been in training for the final, in fact they had been in training for the whole season. Alqueria Unido didn't bother with such trivialities. Putting on their shirts required enormous effort. Nor was their much interest, free beer supplied by the sponsors was the main attraction. Nestor Clacketo thought they were there to celebrate the Feast of San Sebastian and continued genuflecting throughout the whole game.

The Alquerian side refused to be panicked into playing football and never let the fact they couldn't pass, dribble or tackle affect their game. Playing as a team was impossible as the two factions in the side refused to pass to each other. It was as if

there were three teams on the field. This totally confused the opposition and allowed Alqueria to score. This was alien to the side and they had to be shown how to restart.

Resorting to intimidation, brutally and bribery Alqueria managed to hold off the opposition for the remainder of the game. During one flurry of activity when Tontos del Mar almost scored the Alquerian keeper, Blythe Gruntmore was seen on his knees. The righteous in the crowd thought he was praying. In fact he was trying to open a bottle of brown ale without an opener.

The score stood and Alqueria Unido emerged victors. The cup is duly on display in the Ayuntamiento off the Calle Horno. The victorious team returned to Alqueria with two minor injuries, five summonses for grievous bodily harm, three for will-full destruction of property and one for indecent exposure. The latter was Nestor Clacketo who carried a hip-flask of Remitroot liquor and started to hallucinate.