The Alquerian Expeditionary Force

Manuela and her fellow exiles prepared for their first sortie into enemy territory and the liberation of Benjy, Paco's pet Saharan dung beetle. Old man Matas had been persuaded to handover his arsenal of antiquated weapons for the common good. At least it was believed it was for the 'common good' or it may have had something to do with Manuela's morning shower that persuaded him.

Manuela was mounted on Matas's grey hack, a stallion half as old as Matas himself and unwilling, before now to do any work whatsoever, but Manuela had the 'touch'. Just how Manuela's touch was applied to the stallion is perhaps something we should keep veiled for the purpose of this narrative. Manuela's eyes glowed with that inborn fire of feminine determination while a rifle slung over her shoulder confirmed her intentions. Antonio Poyato carried a shotgun and rode a particularly obstinate donkey which preferred walking backwards rather than forwards forcing Poyato to ride facing the creatures tail end. Poyato's grinning face surmounting a donkey's rear end while in full charge would most likely strike fear into the stoutest of hearts. Loco Paco carried a plastic 'dirty Harry' special water pistol and rode a skateboard. Pepa carried the first-aid kit consisting of a 'sticking plaster', a packet of senna pods and a bottle of Remitroot whisky. Matas stayed in reserve at the cave in case the enemy tried to assault Manuela's rear. It was force to be reckoned with.

Our brave partisans set out in the early hours of Sunday morning. A full moon required them to avoid the crests of hills as they made their way to the outskirts of Alqueria. Manuela dismounted, much to the displeasure of the stallion and led the four along pathways and tunnels known only to her. Pathways and tunnels used by Manuela for quite different purposes other than clandestine military operations.

Antonio Poyato pushed away a large rounded boulder which sealed the entrance of the tunnel through which they were crawling. The moonlit Village square lay before them, the castle clearly visible. It was in the castle that Benjy was imprisoned.

A note had been secretly passed to Benjy telling him to be ready but not to raise the suspicion of his jailers. It is obviously absurd to think that a Saharan dung beetle can read, whether it be Alquerian, Spanish or English. Manuela, being aware of the illiteracy of dung beetles, Saharan or otherwise drew a series of ideograms depicting the rescue attempt which the soon to be emancipated Benjy had no trouble in deciphering.

The Alquerian four moved stealthily towards the castle dungeon, Benjy lay quiet in his cell, alert, waiting for the sounds that would signal his release.

Will the attempt be successful?
Will the plot be discovered?
Tune in next week.