The Coup

It was a glorious morning too glorious for the criminal act which was about to be perpetrated. The pigeons weren't the only creatures planning a 'coo' during that morning. Rodriquez, Robles and the two hired hands Forcan and Olam were about to unleash their coup d' état on the still slumbering people of Alqueria. Unleash is perhaps too strong a word. The four had little in the way of arms. Their arsenal consisted of an old shotgun with only one working barrel and an unconvincing replica Luger. Logistical support existed in the form of a beaten-up panel van with four bald tyres and the olive mill's push-bike.

Rodriquez and his co-conspirators planned to hold captive the three leading Hill People, Poyato, Gruntmore and the lovely Manuela and then to take control of the legal government of Alqueria. Poyato was easily taken. He had been drinking his own Remitroot liquor the night before so seeing strange apparitions in his bedroom was nothing out of the ordinary. Blythe Gruntmore, not understanding Spanish thought it was another strange Iberian custom so came willingly. The conspirators couldn’t understand why Blythe kept giggling as he was led away. Blythe thought he was being a good sport by joining in the spirit of the imagined occasion.

They could hear Manuela, her voice like a Spring breeze gently caressed the sleeping street. She had not been to bed and was at the window when the four entered the Calle del Siniestro. Realising something was wrong, she put into practice a long standing escape strategy. Originally designed to make herself scarce in case of visitations by the police, who have never really understood her, she made good her escape. Disappearing into the warm still night with an emergency backpack of clothes and other essentials.

Manuela climbed high into the Sierra Alhamilla before she stopped to look down at the village bathed in the morning sun. She was eating her emergency rations when she became aware of another presence. Out of the long morning shadows stepped an old,

old man, his face weather beaten and creased. Over his shoulder he slung an ancient smooth bored Mauser, his clothes patched and threadbare with age.

Old man Matas told Manuela how he was fighting for the Second Spanish Republic and how he would resist Franco's fascists. Manuela, not wanting to confuse her new found ally allowed him to continue in this belief. She gratefully accepted his offer of shelter and settled into his cave overlooking Alqueria.

Matas watched as Manuela washed and freshened herself, semi-clad she was silhouetted against the glare of the morning sun. He felt a long forgotten but strangely familiar stirring, he wondered what it meant. Perhaps it is better he can't remember.