La Feria del Corsé. Part 1

As *José Ortega y Gassett* had said “Every reality which is ignored prepares its vengeance”. Los Gente del Cerro were becoming weary of being on the losing side every year. The Hill People had decided to turn the tables. A council of war unanimously voted the girl known as Manuela as operational leader. Tall, raven haired with large deep brown eyes that could tear your heart out at 20 paces. However nothing or nobody is perfect. Manuela’s imperfection was her soul, warped as damp cardboard drying in the sun. Hence her epithet *La Pervertida*.

Secretly provisioned under Manuela’s guidance the tower lay ready for the Feria. Food, alcohol, stones, and water all that was necessary for a determined defence. Manuela was very thorough and it was with confidence that the Hill People gathered for the start of the Feria.

At five o'clock the fun began. The Los Recién Llegados contingent attacked Alqueria's castle tower with blood curdling cries and volleys of water bombs. Their aim was to reclaim Napoleon's corset and carry it back to the town's museum. There was no response from the tower. One could have heard the church clock ticking if it had been working. It stopped in 1978 when the priest Ramós locked himself in the vestry with the clock's main spring, the second hand and a nun from a convent near Murcia. This was the result of the priest drinking the Communion wine which was fermented from the best Remitroot.

The pause may not have been pregnant but it was certainly well conceived. The drama of the silence was more than matched with what followed. Manuela appeared on the battlements clad only in Napoleon's corset. Like some latter day Boudica albeit the x-rated version she shouted to her followers. “¡Fuego!”. Rocks, stones and bottles rained down on the plaza scattering all and breaking windows.

Rodriquez the Olive mill owner, arch enemy of Manuela and Los Gente del Cerro

cowered behind the oak doors of the church. He had the roundest stomach and foulest mouth in the village. Self styled village elder and self professed sage. He is in fact an idiot who thinks he is clever. A dangerous mix.

Rodriquez decided to exert his authority or at least what little authority he had. He first appealed to Manuela's better nature, that simply wasted time. He then tried to patronise her followed by a foul mouth tirade against her and her ancestors. Manuela answered with a freshly emptied one litre San Miguel bottle. With unerring accuracy it took a high trajectory and hit him square on the temple. He fell as did a fundamental silence in the plaza, broken only by the wailing sirens of approaching Civil Guard vehicles.

What will become of Manuela? We shall see.