The Fall of Roberto Robles

Roberto Robles is number two at Alqueria's only major employer, Olivarera de Alqueria. Owned and neglected by Fernando Rodriguez, the mill is in terminal decline. Rodriguez and his family have milked the place for years, while entrenched nepotism ensures nothing changes. Robles owes his position to his Father's boot-licking and retaining it to his own sycophantic soul. He is a man with very little ability and the sense of humour of a football manager. He does speak very loud though. He undoubtedly believes this is adequate compensation for his other shortcomings. Both factions in the village are employed at the mill but never in the same department. All of the managers and directors are however Newcomers, Los Recién Llegados thus ensuring conflict.

Robles carried the grand title of *Director de Ventas,* his title being inversely proportional to his abilities. He worked on the theory that if he couldn't solve a problem he simply created another to cover the first. His department is staffed by the Hill people, Los Gente del Cerro and is always in a state of undeclared warfare, clandestine manoeuvring and point scoring. This manifested itself in may ways. From replacing the desk photograph of Robles's wife with one of a Chacma Baboon which took him three day to notice to causing him to have a total nervous breakdown. The latter was engineered and perpetrated by Manuela the heroine of Alqueria, unofficially of course.

It all started in a small way. She simply moved his spectacles and watched the resulting confusion as he retrieved them. She experimented with his swivel chair, jacket and brief case. Flushed with success she hit on the idea of phoning his mobile using a suitably husky voice and thanking him for a wonderful night. Robles stopped answering his mobile phone and took to wearing his spectacles on a cord around his neck. He went into a decline. He skulked in his office behind closed doors seeing no one. Arriving and leaving via his window, crouching low as he headed for the car-park.

Manuela timed her *gota que colma el vaso* with perfection. Lifting Robles's car keys she drove his company Range Rover to his home leaving it in the substantial drive-way. After making her way back to the mill, she carefully replaced his car keys. The whole office waited. Robles left through the window and sprinted to his car or where he believed his car would be. Finding his space empty he sank to his knees, sobbing, his shoulders shaking with despair. They were still shaking as he was loaded into the ambulance and driven away. Manuela peered through the office blinds at her handiwork.

It was six months until Robles returned to work. Just as inefficient, still the sycophant but his booming voice now breaks and his hands shake.

As Robles fell so Manuela's prestige grew. She wasn't the sort of girl to rest on her laurels however.