

Bird man

Amenities

“Boudicca, bursting gave up searching for the toilet. It was obvious her prison didn’t have one so she asked her guards.

Laughing they showed her by the touch of a palm on a red crystal a sliding wall to reveal a loo and bath. *It was very private for very private affairs.*

The guards were female and left her.

So she sat down thankful their seat resembled a human one. There was a black slot she guessed their rudder like tails went in.

Being civilised she soon knew she needed a bath and hoped the handsome Bird man with the scar hadn’t smelled her and being a beast he like a dog probably had? Then fear overcame her as she knew her month end trouble was about to begin. These were alien beasts, they might have a different birth canal, might be smaller or bigger or not have any birth canal at all; they might not have periods?

Something the Madrawt’s or battles could not produce overcame her; panic.

This made her summon her women guards again. This time the Bird man with a scar was there and when told by a guard what Boudicca needed he seemed embarrassed and ashamed; but the guards were laughing at him.

This made Boudicca relax and go on the attack and start telling him off knowing she was safe to do so for her guards were belittling the man.

Just shows girls stick together no matter what species; where males didn't for like dogs used trees in public parks so knew nothing of finer things that kept females one.

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“I am sorry I forgot you are not of our culture. I should have pointed out the amenities,” he said his scar a bright pink.

And Boudicca did not show she felt sorry for him but kept her verbal attack up, women when men were involved should have the upper hand at all times and be in control, even if the idiots, *men*, believed they were.

She had come to the conclusion this Bird man meant her no harm. How could she ask him about private things anyway, it was as much her fault as his?

“Anyway, I did like you to have Little Drum for company,” he told not asked and she changed her opinion rapidly.

A spy for dinner.

And Little Drum scuttled past, showing bandages and playing up for attention.

“Not my idea, it’s the kings, he thinks you could do with female company,” Little Drum complained. Boudicca did not click she was referring to the Bird man hovering over her but to the elusive Bird man King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix.

And it was a shock also that Little Drum was female.

Upon closer inspection she was a woman with very short hair.

And the Bird man walked past and made himself at home; Little Drum sat on his knees. The two of them sat there like they were old friends visiting.

“How are you finding our city?” He asked.

“I haven’t seen much have I?” And she felt her period start, “Oh Creator, dam, trapped with my back against the wall till he leaves,” she thought.

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Illustration 32: Little Drum was a girl oh dear and even if she was an ape, she had nice legs to make Boudicca take notice. Was someone jealous?

“I can show you, it is very lovely at night,” he replied and she wondered what could be lovely about living in caves?

Then she remembered the crystals and how quickly she forgot them, she had something more pressing to think about.

And he sensed her agitation at his presence and guessed she must hate him, he was an alien beast to her as she was an alien to him.

He was her captor.

She must be afraid.

Without hope.

But he was not a Madrawt.

And she remembered as a teenager how she was at a disco and her first period had started and she had danced the night away oblivious to the stain on her rump. She had

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died of shame when she had got home.

She felt exactly like that now.

“Maybe later, I will come in two hours, time enough for your private needs,” he said rising, he was at a loss at how to put her at ease, “*Treat her like a princess,*” he thought and reached for her hand.

Better it be told her he was taking her home to her father and that would put her at ease.

She resisted but his hold was strong; he had tremendous strength and easily brushed his lips across the back of her hand.

Like you do a *human* princess.

And walked away.

“*Jerk,*” she thought as if a dirty old man had brushed against her, he was no different from any Casanova womanizing man.

“Well Little Drum, do you have periods” She asked.

“Ready to have babies are we?” Was the reply.

*

The Bird man Mingo Drum was hungry and his hunger made him realise that the human woman must be as well.

“By Taranis my thunder god,” he exclaimed with this knowledge coming to an abrupt halt.

She would be offered their food? He hurried back knowing it was not what humans ate.

“Lord,” the two woman guards gasped and stood up.

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The door was open and the human woman was standing sampling the trolley of food offered *and heard*.

She was in the process of swallowing a meat cube covered in white sauce. “So you are a master?” She asked accusingly then watched his face pale and the scar go white as his blood drained because a secret had slipped out.

“Never seen a woman before?” And she turned slowly in a silken bath robe provided in the time he had been gone. And see saw the colour quickly come back to his face as the silk was still moist from her shower.

The wet silk clung.

He saw too and she knew he had and was deliberately making him uncomfortable.

Deep down in her subconscious she knew she was safe enough to do this, he was not a Madrawt fiend.

Deliberately teasing him, getting back at being captive, the arranged marriage, the Vern attack; he was her stress dummy to tear into *and was asking for his attention*.

And it hadn't helped she was suffering from woman's month end pains and had to explain to Little Drum what she needed.

But the Bird man could smell the perfume of the Flowering Forest flow from her like the warm winds around him as he flew high over his domains.

“Satisfied my Lord?” She was being sarcastic as he couldn't help noticing she was **all woman**.

Now Little Drum replied for him since he was speechless, “*Nice isn't she?*”

The warrior Bird man fled.

And Boudicca ate more of what was on the dinner trolley, she must ask what it was

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nice and wanted the recipe home; *she knew she would be going home*, she had this Bird man wrapped round her fingers already; she swallowed the unknown cobra meat in butter sauce.

“Drink, it is a pain killer for womans' troubles,” and Boudicca took the silver cup that had grape vines etched on it.

“How beautiful, who made this?”

“The artisans, they do not fight but make beautiful things instead.”

The Bird men were a class society, she had much to admire and learn of these savage warrior people.

“And these cave drawings?”



Illustration 33: A cave painting of a Bird girl fishing.

“Their ancestors, we have men and women of the literacy class to write and tell stories.”

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And noticed Little Drum stuffed the tail of something into her mouth and Boudicca became suspicious of what was on the menu?

“The pain killer will not hurt you, we have been in contact with humans for hundreds of years, it is herbal based,” Little Drum allaying her fears over the drink.

“Are all your medicines herbal?” Boudicca.

“Oh no, we have many drugs and genetic men, how else do you think we can talk?”

Little Drum said **knowing** she was behind the times.

And Boudicca looked at Little Drum and her guards and wondered how advanced they were in genetic engineering? How much had they stolen from Star Dust Corporation?

Being human she just couldn't credit the alien Bird men with thinking things out for themselves!

It was a defensive mechanism against the grim realisation that was sinking in that these primitive barbarians weren't as backward as they seemed.

Were the Madrawt's or the Bird people the real threat to imperial peace?

Was she warming to them *or just one*?

She was not labeled a Bird man lover.

“Try some of the mushroom,” Little Drum offered.

Mushrooms, she liked those, and now knew what she eating?

“Where those mushroom fields I saw?” Boudicca remembering the acres of mushrooms and toadstool plantations under her as she had flown in.

“Yes, our ants farm them for us.”

“Ants?”

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“Nearest thing in human tongue for you to visualize,” Little Drum, “someone has to do the farming when the men are needed to fight.

We are a warrior people, the ants do the menial work, collecting the garbage along with sea gulls.



Illustration 34:

Scavengers are what I call them but Mingo Drum doesn't want to offend so he insists I call them *ants*."

"You mean they can understand you?" Boudicca.

"Oh yes they understand, they have a limited vocabulary. Would you like to meet one?" Little Drum asked.

Boudicca would like too very much, the information she was gathering was priceless for the peace of the empire and its citizens.

She was also confirming what a few had written about these people.

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Bird lovers they were called as the citizens wanted books about heroes fighting winged Bird men, which is what sold, not books on Bird men architecture.

The popular imagination of the scribes filled the arenas with Bird men in fights to the death with imperial gladiators **who always won.**

And deep inside she felt sorry for the Bird people as she knew Tara 6 would become an imperial colony. She would do her best to help those left to adjust to imperial society. She was the daughter of Tzu Strath; people listened to her because of that.

She could see already Glen or some one like him making balconies for paying guests to view the caves with their drawings.

“Do not feed the animals,” signs would be nicely spaced.

Stuffed Bird men in fearsome poses while real Bird men in dioramas as living ones would pass by sweeping up the litter.

And the peace and stability of the empire assured.

No these were a proud free people who needed to be shown that the empire needed them as much as they needed the empire.

They had nothing to fear from the human/alien imperialists.

She could dream on?

But remembering her Peace Marriage brought bile to her mouth, she owned the emperor nothing. He had ordered her to marry Ce-Ra, a death sentence.

Loyalties were becoming confused; these people treated her with respect and kindness. She must remember who she was, retain her identity, yes the Bird men were using physiological warfare on her.

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These people were her enemy as much as the Madrawt's were?

She must remember all the horror stories about these people outweighed anything good written about them.

They murdered colonists in imaginative ways.

According to the imaginative scribes.

They liked to trade in beautiful women and alcohol and she knew she was good looking.

They mixed up human genes with their own to look less brutal.

They had slaughtered the makers of wall drawings; had not inherited a culture but were the product of escaped mutants from Star Dust genetic bubbling vats.

They ate humans and anything that moved; they were more carrion birds than majestic birds of prey.

They had been more at war with the empire than at peace.

No official peace existed with Mingo Drum.

She could be taken, used and while they butchered her, see her genes floating in a test tube; and the butcher would be a black crow with a face of an angelic choir boy.

Little Drum must be referring to human/alien slaves and not real ants.

It was her duty to escape as a P.O.W.

"We will finish off the snake and take you on a tour of our beautiful city, we are very proud of it," Little Drum offered.

"Snake," Boudicca felt her stomach tighten a little, yes they were birds all right and ate bird food, carrion, snakes, mice, voles, rats and such and the bird food that was bought in pet shops.

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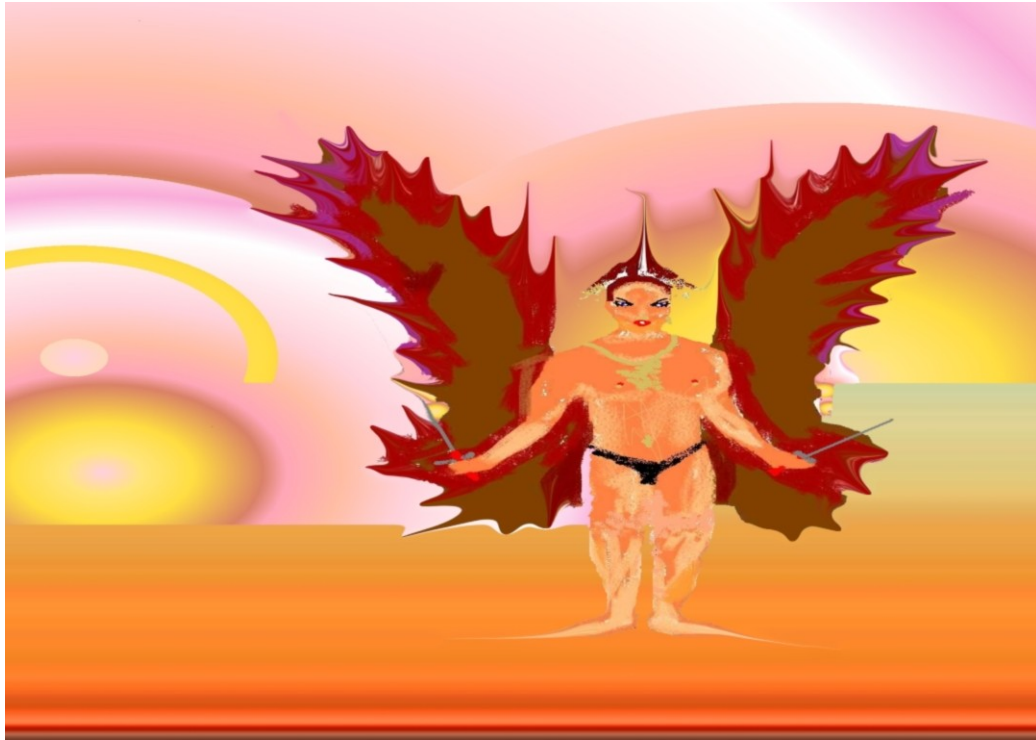


Illustration 35: Majestic

What have I been eating?

In the kitchen Mingo Drum was instructing his chefs to serve up tasty human food.

“Sweet and sour worm, chopped up small so she won’t know?”

“Sweet and sour chicken.”

“Worm is meat.”

“Cow, sheep sort of thing.”

“We don’t have any.”

“Do your best then,” as Mingo could see his chef’s were about to tell him to get out of their kitchen; this was their domain and hoped they wouldn’t leave the next tail in the next dish.

Which proved Bird men were sensitive to the needs of their guests?

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And above in a well padded cell that could pass off as a human four star hotel room, Boudicca examined a spoon; it was shaped like an owl's mouth.

What did owls eat; she would look for tails in her dishes in future.''''

Vern Lukas, scribe.