

Queen Cartimandua allowed Boudicca a great deal of freedom on the outside of the temple for she wanted her seen.

And Boudicca found her days occupied being a full time parent. Tiring work for the little boy demanded much. Play play play, hugs for bruised knees and then wounds kissed to make better.

Worse, to be carried to his play area, and when refused would complain of a sore leg to get carried. A play area Queen Cartimandua allowed Boudicca and other women to sit on benches carved as the fruits of the forest!

To disentangle rows with other mothers when fighting broke out between the children.

Her private thoughts were lonely and happened when Arthur played happy in a sand pit making castles in the sky.

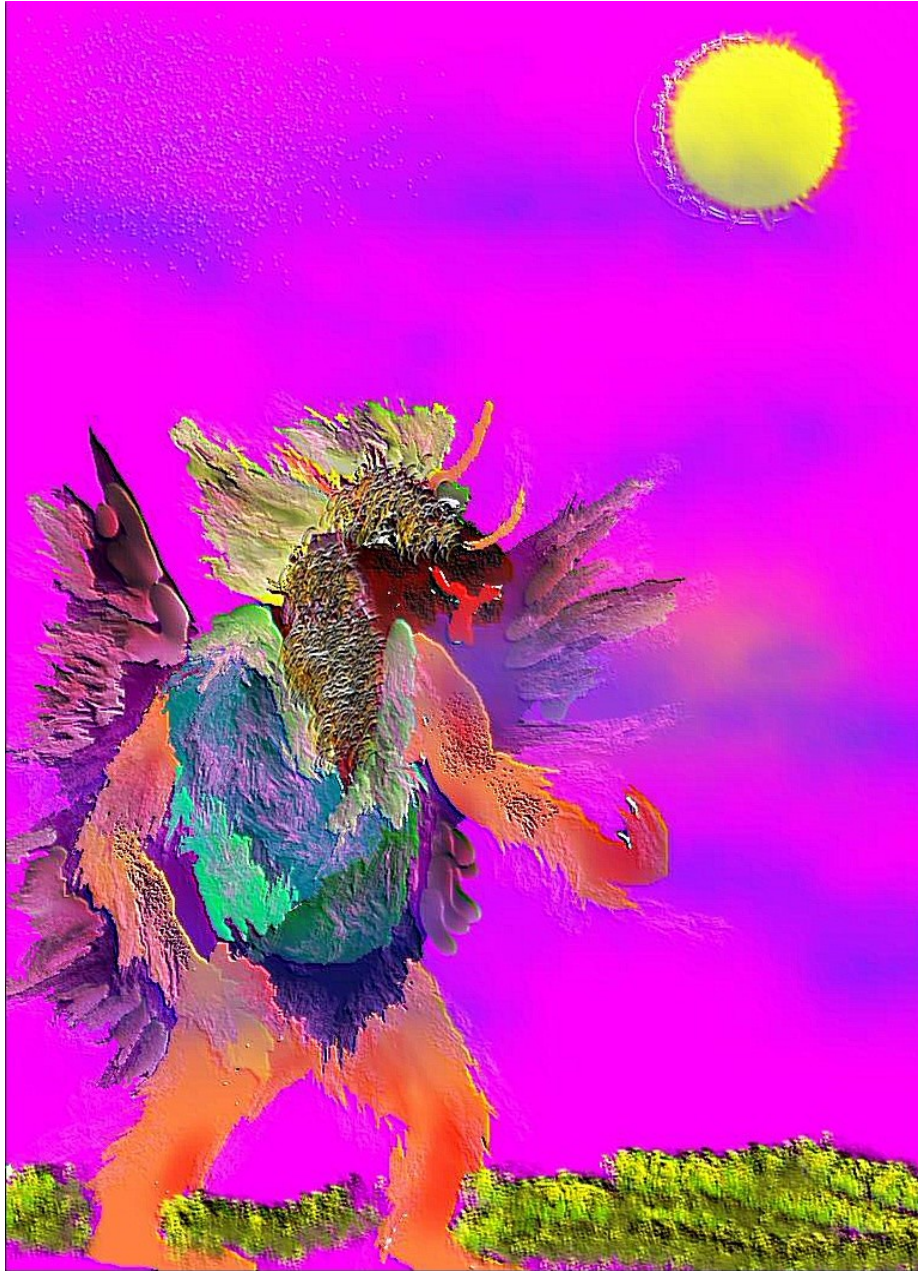
And the thoughts were always interrupted when sand was kicked in the boy's face or when in a paddling pool water.

She weighed life, for crisis brings forth truth and the action of truth in doing what is right.

Selfish she knew in denying her child full time love all because of who she was, "I am a squadron leader and mother, *one must come first?*"

And when the little one wanted his flight membranes tickled she did so and was reminded her son was a beast, non human.

## Bird man



*Illustration 65: Is this how Boudicca saw her half human son?*

But being so young they were soft to touch, not feathers like his father's. So soft and no hint of the savagery of the bird there, and because there was none, prejudice melted away.

And his long blond curly hair she twisted and that at least reminded

her he was human.

“Don’t you mind having two names?” She asked him.

“Arthur mummy,” he replied hugging her. The boy when with Mingo would call himself Verica and get a hug, *he was no fool*.

So she thought of the terrible wrong she had done Mingo leaving him, but it had been him who had left her.

She felt very bitter towards Mingo.

If he could only talk instead of being so much flying valour.

“I will be your mother always, squadron leader second, a cleaner of planes, but mother first,” she promised the little boy and felt an urge to have a little girl also so she could play with her long blond curls.

Perhaps they would be red?

Or black?

There was Tribune Henry or what about Mingo?

And did not look forward to having to share Arthur with Mingo when he came for him.

“He is my only surviving son, I want him,” he would demand.

“Well he could rave and rant, huff and puff like the bad wolf he is,” she told the boy and knew because of Mingo’s turn at being father had got them into this mess; Arthur was always safe in the imperial sector.

And the purple sun tanned their skin high up on the temple to the gods of Queen Cartimandua where they were prisoner.

Below the River of Skulls became a swamp. No one saw the body entwined in the branches of a large uprooted tree and Mingo Drum

## Bird man

opened his eyes now and again and flies flew off his eye lids. It was the strong smell and roar of wild beasts that awoke him out of his feverish sleep. Straining he focused his eyes and saw the Temple of Skulls and knew where he was, then forgot, then remembered for he was not himself.

And the estuary water rippled past him as the back of a swamp dragon passed. The current made up Mingo's mind as it swept him to an island.

An artificial island, very large and well camouflaged.

Then night came.

And the midges.

Again the roar of wild beasts awoke Mingo and this time he fell into the water, better that fate than the midges!

He was weak but alert; a water snake crossed his path and his talons came out.

It tasted good even raw, he was a bird, the genes of eagles flowed through him.

Then he crawled onto the island.

Technically he was High King of the Bird men, but he was no fool. There was only one temple whose steps were lined with skulls, decaying heads and freshly cut trophies.

"The Temple of Skulls," he cursed, "Queen Cartimandua." If he called for help and was captured they would hold him hostage or kill slowly.

He knew Bird men politics well.

## Bird man

Unlike Reeman Black Hair.

And a leech fell off where the smile broke the skin.

Every beast has its own call and he recognized Old Rag calling from a cage. That could only mean one thing; his woman and child were here too.

Queen Cartimandua!

If Old Rag was in a cage so were they.

Then a light appeared and vanished.

A door?

He crawled forward prodding the grass in front with a stick. It was the rainy season and the snakes will have been flooded out of their holes.

Then two things happened.

A Gododdin warrior appeared in front of him and emptied his full bladder upon him.

And a disturbed water cobra rose up.

The swaying drunken warrior watered it too.

Hot steam floated off the serpent's head and in revenge bit him where it would hurt and the man tried to draw his short sword and being in so much pain, dropped his weapon to land beside Mingo.

Staggering backwards for help but the snake followed.

Showing a truth that these reptiles are amongst the most aggressive on Maonos (Tara 6) and bit again.

Mingo saw it as one less enemy to deal with; he wasn't thinking



*Illustration 66: Gododdin warrior under the moons of Maponos*

about a united Bird man nation any more.

## Bird man

And Mingo with the sword went into the shadows near where the cages should be from Old Rag's callings.

Whose bars were stiff vines and roofs ponds of lilies so if seen from the air would be seen as swamp?

Such the capital of Torrs of the Gododdin.

Now a doorway light and remained open as the stricken warrior's friends came to deal with the snake.

And Mingo being a Bird man knew that once in that light he could loose himself in connecting corridors.

And the water cobra gave up biting since it was getting beaten with pick axes and slithered quickly into a stream and safety.

It wounds bloodying the stream, diluting out towards everything nasty that liked the smell and taste of blood.

*What goes round comes round, even in the animal world, it is a law.*

But Mingo made it to the doorway and entered, it was a guard room for those who minded the captives' cages.

And Mingo staggered down a corridor angry that Bird men guards could be so derelict in their duty.

Behind him a certain reptile slithered in also intent on revenge.

Alone Mingo went looking for a corridor that would take him to Old Rag, his friend by scent and sound.

Outside the Gododdin warrior lay silent upon the grass.

His friends fearing the snake in the dark had not the advantage so

## Bird man

retreated to the guard room too get torches or better, wait till day light?

They had a lot of beer inside them and really just wanted to lie down and sleep.

“Draguar would have to get himself bit while taking a leak?! One of them complained as the door was shut.

Oh dear something had slithered in earlier?

And as Mingo went up a level he heard men swear and furniture thrown about.

“Kill it,” and “Who let that snake in?” He heard and smiled.

“Judas it bit me.”

Mingo thanked the unseen for looking after him.

“Zap zap zap,” it was a laser.

“Gododdin rubbish,” he spat knowing the snake was dead.

Then he opened a grilled door that led out to the cages and could smell his friend.

“Old Rag.”

It was a telepathic picture of himself.

It was a mistake for Old Rag picked saw him in his mind and roared excitement and set off the other beasts and the din would soon awake Torrs.

Mingo knew he had to do something quick but what?

So released all the beasts as he searched the cages for Old Rag.

Lion creatures, canine hybrids, ape like creatures that ran up walls and down corridors in their haste to be free.

He apologized to his maker for using them for many would die for him to be free.

## Bird man

Now in answer to the roars and grunts of these beasts the Maponosian elephants on another Island trumpeted.

“I will come for you as well,” Mingo promised sending out a message of hope to Baldy.

And could hear the shouts of Gododdin warriors confronting the freed beasts.

Then he found and freed Old Rag the Griffin of the planet and could not resist the temptation to add his call to the noise of the night.

Then he fell across his friend’s rough back and allowed Old Rag to jump off the top of a veranda into the friendly darkness that was night.

Why Queen Cartimandua thought she recognized a grunt of a certain Bird man as she looked over her veranda that was carved in the shape of a swamp dragon’s mouth and adorned in flowering creepers.

Camouflage again.

She had been told the wild beasts awaiting the games HAD been freed.

The coughing grunt was indeed an old enemy.

Mingo Drum Vercingetorix was here.

\*

Little Arthur woke his mummy up, “Daddy,” he said.

Boudicca looked about the room that was lit by the scarlet moon outside the grilled windows. Seeing nothing she told her son that he was mistaken and to go back to sleep.

## Bird man

Once again she was dismissing his Bird man instincts, he was human wasn't he?

But the boy refused and went to the grills looking out across the swamp islands listening to the freed beasts; Boudicca joined him, hugging and kissing the top of his head, stroking his long blond hair to comfort.

"The beasts, that is all it is, please come back to sleep," and Little Arthur allowed himself to be carried back to bed where he would be safe warm and cosy and dream of his daddy.

Arthur thought he was lucky, he had two homes, two names, one grand dad and most important, a daddy and a mummy to love and get hugs from and give him toys.

Especially hover car models.

He was nuts about them.

And crazy over the ones that went eaw eaw eaw with flashing lights.

Also floating garages with car park spaces.

Mummy was a better squeeze for these types of toys. All daddy gave him were wooden swords, bows and arrows and lectures in how to fly and not to pull Old Rag's ears.

"Will I be able to made daddy's sound?" He asked.

"What sound?"

He tried to imitate the coughing grunt but ended up clearing his throat. Boudicca produced a hanky that all good mummies have tucked up a sleeve for emergencies.

## Bird man

Now she was afraid for she believed the boy that Mingo was outside; she had hoped Tzu Strath would have arrived first but it was Mingo out there *being the beast*

**AS USUAL.**

Her heart beat faster as she remembered the past.

He was her were-creature, half civilized half bird.

\*

Diviciacus the High Shaman of Light was accompanying his, master, Caesar Alexander Vortigern, Emperor of the West on a peace mission to General Ce-Ra.

The emperor because he bribed at home could not learn his Madrawt lessons.

“I hope the entertainment is to your satisfaction Vortigern?” Ce-Ra mused as they watched a gladiator contest in the Arena.

He deliberately did not use Vortigern’s title as that would have made them equals, and Ce-Ra did not think humans were equals.

Just alien life forms beyond contempt that lived for nothing but their sexual drives, wealth and power.

And to rub in further insult into a vassal, the human gladiators were badly outnumbered by their Madrawt opponents and wild beats.

Already one human gladiator sprawled below the royal stand where Ce-Ra, Emperor of the Madrawts was as two Madrawt gladiators armed with lances looked for a thumb down.

## Bird man

Ce-Ra gave the honour to Vortigern who disgusted with the human performance and to please his host gave it.

The result long spears entered the human gladiator and withdrew.

The crowd applauded.

The doomed human gladiator raised a knee, flopped a hand towards his human emperor and with a last gesture gave the 'V'.

Ce-Ra smiled, Vortigern did not have the love of his own species.

"The human has offended my younger brother?" Ce-Ra and the two Madrawts used their spears till no life remained in the gladiator.

And was obvious the Emperor of the West had accepted his vassal state. Was he not the younger subservient cringing, obsequious brother?

A vile image of a statesman?

And Diviciacus wanted him dead.

Kernwy wanted Diviciacus dead.

Ce-Ra wanted them all dead.

And the Emperor Caesar Alexander invited the Emperor Ce-Ra to send troops for the war that was about to start against the Emperor of the West, his son Conchobhar.

But there was a price to pay, that the troops bring their families which was an open door to Madrawt colonization.

Wasn't it?

And the news would split the empires of the humans between those who saw profit in trading with the Madrawts and those who opposed

them.

Factions would spring up, some would not unite and so perish as little insects and others would join Tzu Strath or the Emperor of the East, Alexander Caesar Conchobhar.

And human and alien planets would declare independence.

Because of one man who refused to quit, a man who would lead his citizens into bondage as long as he could stay at the luxurious top.

“Come and help me my older brother Ce-Ra,” Vortigern begged.

*“Bad Vortigern,*

*Who thinks he is Alexander,*

*Because he’s an emperor.*

*And foams at the mouth like Caesar,*

*So he thinks he is Caesar.*

*But Alex and Caesar turn in their tombs.*

*Because they know what Vortigern is?*

*Vortigern the Madrawt,”* the children of the empire would chant as they played hopscotch.

And Ce-Ra invited Diviciacus to the Temple of War:

“I will make you the shaman priest to our war god Huitzilopitchli and introduce him into the worship of Dispater the good spirit,” Ce-Ra invited as Diviciacus was given a green blue feathered cape to wear, a pipe to smoke containing mind bending drugs, a head dress that had been carved into a fearsome face and heavy hot feathered wings.

Diviciacus soon ignored the weight as the drugs took effect

## Bird man



*Illustration 67: Diviciacus used mind bending herbs for an excuse for spirit flight and the evil things he then did for the gods told him to do it not his own paranoia.*

imagining himself as the sun bird of war that nourished the Madrawt  
soldier in battle with strength.

He chanted in a strange tongue believing the god was speaking  
through him. Then saw Huitzilopitchli fly down and land and  
Dispater kneel before him.

“Come,” Huitzilopitchli said to Dispater who obeyed and spread  
eagled himself across a stone alter.

## Bird man

And men with bird heads held the good god's limbs firm and Huitzilopitchli hacked out Dispater's heart with a long knife and drank from it.

And when Diviciacus looked closely at the fierce face of Huitzilopitchli he saw his own face.

And Huitzilopitchli said, "I feed on the hearts of the vanquished so I can have strength to fight evil that threatens to destroy all life.

Give me life Diviciacus.

"I will great god I will," and Huitzilopitchli stood back and showed Diviciacus the line of patient humans and aliens waiting to come forth and spread eagle themselves on the stone slab.

And they were many, common men and princes numbered amongst them from all nations of the vanquished who had accepted fate.

And Huitzilopitchli gave Diviciacus the long knife that dripped Dispater's red blood and the remains of his heart to eat and "Share with me, become one with me the most powerful god known to life and we will rule life together?"

Diviciacus bit into Dispater's heart so that his lips and face were smeared red.

And Diviciacus saw Madrawt soldiers herd the waiting sacrifices forward and sank the long knife into the chest of a human male so that blood rushed out and down the alter, and Diviciacus thrilled at the sight and tore the heart out and ate it.

## Bird man

And Diviciacus took twenty thousand beating hearts and still Huitzilopitchli was not happy.

“I have given you life and great power and you have not repaid me Diviciacus.”

“What must I do Lord?”

So Huitzilopitchli showed him a man in the line who refused to shed his old cloak and face the great and only god Huitzilopitchli.

Even from his back Diviciacus knew him as Caesar Alexander Vortigern.

And Diviciacus walked up to him and plunged the long knife deep into his emperor’s back and with both hands cut out a heart.

And now Huitzilopitchli smiled.

When Diviciacus came out of his trance he was standing over a stone slab alter and he saw Kernwy drag a body off it and topple the corpse into a smoking pit.

So Diviciacus looked in and saw at least twenty six humans and ten aliens in there.

They seemed all naked with gaping holes in their chests.

## Bird man

He also held a long knife and the floor were wet with slippery blood.

And he looked and saw many hearts, some still beating in a cauldron.

“I will rip his heart out and give it to you Great Huitzilopitchli,” Diviciacus swore.

And Kernwy was afraid at the slaughter he had witnessed and vowed he would do something for he was infected with Diviciacus’s sickness and longed to be made clean.

He felt as if he was an evil cog in an evil empire and wanted out. And unknown to his master Diviciacus, he had read many of Vern Lukas’s books proclaiming the coming of golden age with the birth of Little Arthur.

“And the Bird man King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix will defeat the Madrawts and the boy Arthur will lead his human/aliens armies under his banner and all Bird men will pay homage to him, and he will become the new Bird man King and his mighty armies will sweep the galaxies clean of the evil Madrawts for ever more.

He is the chosen one of Dispater and all gods. Men of all religions and races will follow him.

Fate has decreed it,” Vern Lukas.

And Kernwy believed.

Kernwy’s secret diary.

V. Lukas