

Mingo Drum Vercingetorix stood in front of Ce-Ra, Lord and Emperor of Madrawts and Emperor of the West. He smiled every now and again at Ce-Ra's insults and grimaced and showed hate when he was slapped and kicked by his guards.

Ce-Ra wanted Mingo humiliated, broken and groveling at his feet for mercy before he killed him.

Maybe he would grant him a slow death, like in the tin mines. The idea of toying with Mingo's life excited him and was a welcome break from ruling his empire.

Mingo one of his most hated foes now stood directly in front of him.

What a pleasant experience it was.

Then a shadowy figure appeared behind Ce-Ra and Mingo growled when he recognized Diviciacus who stood still, as if he had entered a room and met a dangerous lion.

Only when he realised Mingo could not hurt him he advanced and played a game upon Mingo's chest with his butchering knife, pretending to be after a heart for wonderful Huitzilopitchli.

Ce-Ra moved in his seat as he watched Mingo's blood run down his chest.

Diviciacus pulled back his hand ready to thrust his dagger.

"No," Ce-Ra shouted thinking about the tin mine.

"Huitzilopitchli demands the heart of his enemy," Diviciacus.

Bird man

The courtiers not guards murmured agreement.

Ce-Ra mentally noted each who had opened a mouth; *soon they did be opening their mouths to drink things they didn't like.*

He also noted Diviciacus had got too **big** for his shoes.

Diviciacus was too full of hash to realise Ce-Ra was annoyed, only that Huitzilopitchli wanted this strong heart to keep evil away from the Madrawt world.

The heart of Ce-Ra.

And Kernwy smiled slightly as he knew Huitzilopitchli would speak to Diviciacus and tell him to tell his people to make him Priest Protector of the Madrawt Empire.

And the smile grew inside Kernwy as he visualized Ce-Ra's response. *As if the Madrawts would allow themselves the indignity to be ruled by a human hash addict.*

Now Diviciacus had brought in Boudicca who stood behind Ce-Ra and when the later became aware of her:

"Bring in Boudicca," Ce-Ra demanded

About her a belt and controls in Ce-Ra's hands that tightened the belt at his whim.

And his whim was to show Mingo how it worked and eventually Boudicca passed out and lost her entertainment value.

Mingo prayed to his bird gods for strength to avenge this act.

Instead he could only stand manacled and watch Boudicca with saddened eyes.

Now when Boudicca came too she saw Mingo's stare and mistook it for the look of a beast full of pity for her, when it was broken love, but then love twists and turns does it not like a knife?

Bird man

So her love for him made her stare back haughtily when her stare should have been directed at Ce-Ra and none of the lovers asked themselves how was their partner captive?

And the eyes of Ming Drum went cold for he saw she still hated him.

And Ce-Ra was a brilliant man, had to be to get where he was, and saw the game of love at play and was amused *again*.

The pain involved here was far greater than that of the tin mines or the quick dagger thrust of Diviciacus! He also had an ace card which he now produced.

Verica was taken out, and Mingo died when he saw his son captive.

The boy should have been safe with Boudicca in the lands of Tzu Strath.

“Verica,” he shouted in agony.

And the Bird man went berserk in his manacles took his guards and used his talons and raked.

Ce-Ra was alarmed, was the Bird man that strong, but he did not flee his seat; he paid guards to die *didn't he?*

And Boudicca pulled her child Arthur to herself.

And Madrawt hands tried to pull him from her.

And the boy who for over a year had been called Arthur and told his father was a savage beast did indeed see his father as a savage that day, tearing throats and innards wrapped about his taloned feet.

And the grunts were not human, for Arthur had quite forgotten he was not all human. A father he had not seen in a year and shyness that comes natural to children prevented the boy being close to this stranger who was called father.

Bird man

“Bat’s son, a bird egg hatched, a wer- creature that howls at the moon,” where some of the names he had heard imperial children taunt him with at his school.”

Boudicca had decided to allow Arthur as much a normal education as possible, for those brought up entirely at court, history shows make bad emperors.

And grandfather Tzu was an eager helper to humanize the boy.

And Mingo Drum Vercingetorix aided by not insisting he see the boy he knew as Verica for his love for Boudicca demanded he stay away from her for he believed she hated him for he was a beast.

The boy needed one soul; these two had given him two.

A boy needs a mother more than a father.

Mingo was not there to call him Verica.

What pair of fools this man and woman.

In an effort to control Mingo Ce-Ra used the belt on Boudicca whose gasps and shouts brought Mingo towards her and when she lay still with Verica lying motionless atop her, he thought them dead and in a final desperate act to kill his aggressor rushed the podium where Ce-Ra sat.

And managed to rake the left knee of Diviciacus apart.

Then many stun guns felled the savage beast that was the father of Arthur/Verica.

Verica the name almost escaped Mingo’s mouth.

Arthur a human name, Verica should know what Mingo Drum Vercingetorix stood for:

The pride of vanity that the Bird man Nation stood for.

Honor.

To speak the truth.

Bird man

Never lie.

Look after the backward.

Be fearless in battle.

Only be afraid of the sky falling on your head.

And the waves drowning you.

*

Mingo awoke alone, his head hurt, he could taste blood on his lips and his eyes were puffed up; some people had beaten him up pretty good.

Worse he wanted a wee and saw he was in the public stocks.

Tars ran between his legs, bird droppings littered the iron stocks, the air grey, dawn would be coming soon.

With it a torture he could not imagine as the Madrawt public filled the market outside their Hall of Law; they would poke, spit, beat and make day hell.

During hell three times the city watch would come and feed him.

He was almost naked.

His toilet was a hole underneath his sprayed legs.

About him cages, tall stakes and gallows adorned with the executed and glass beakers containing the pickled remains of those that went before him.

The Madrawt public liked their tormentors to suffer slowly.

Mingo Drum Vercingetorix knew this was where he would die. He accepted his fate as he knew his loved ones were doomed and he did not have the strength to break the iron stokes.

Even the thought of his other free son Cuchulain by Cartimandua did not strengthen his desire to live.

Bird man

Cuchulain he never saw, Cartimandua made sure of that, hurting him, the boy was Gododdin, enemy to any Artebrate.

Just like Boudicca, what was wrong with women? You love them and have children and then they don't let you near them!

"I have two fine sons and I cannot hug and kiss them to make feel safe and wanted. Women, why do I need them?" He gasped to a rat that actually raised itself on its haunches to listen to him.

Now I Vern Lukas speak from the heart, "He loved Cuchulain and he was not from the womb of the woman he loved. Nor was Cuchulain involved in the affairs of destiny.

The Vate had side stepped the lad and unless Arthur/Verica committed suicide and ended the roads that were planed for him before he was born into the flesh, Cuchulain would be mostly ignored. *It is not for us to complain against the master potter!*

"You did not live for me Mingo Drum Vercingetorix," Cuchulain own words much later in life.

Mingo, silly man, he still is a son of your blood.

"Daddy daddy you are my best friend," Verica had shouted as he ran for a hug and a carry on those big shoulders when he remembered as a man but forgot it when he was separated from his daddy as a boy.

"When I was a baby I knew not my father for I was a baby. When I was a boy I knew not my father for he was not there," Cuchulain.

Poor Mingo Drum was a complex man full of complex guilt.

Poor Mingo Drum was a complex man full of remorse.

Bird man

Poor Mingo Drum was a complex man full of pessimism.

Poor Mingo Drum was a complex man full of defeat.

And took silent joy in watching the grey dawn sky come alive with a paint brush that filled the horizon with pinks and reds.



Illustration 87: In the stocks

Each day he would not disappoint his public for he roared and grunted and they clapped and Madrawt children ran up to him and spat, kicked and pulled his long brown hair.

One even poked his left eye.

“I am the last of the free,” he would cough.

And the Madrawts would agree with him.

With the bad food and lack of fluids under the Madrawt sun he would soon dry out

Bird man

and be stuck in one of those glass beakers for future Madrawts not to fear their boggy man.

“I am the last of the free,” Mingo coughed and a Madrawt girl child ran to him and slapped his lips so they bled.

She also ran away crying for his eagle beak grazed her palm; *what goes round comes round!*