

## Bird man

## The Old Man Again

The Madrawts wanted Mingo to suffer as long as possible, so his guards would come and throw disinfectant over him and then when this happened the crowd heaved this way and that for the liquid would splash burning them.

Not even a strong man like Mingo could stop his body withering in agony.

He would *foam, grunt, roar* and try to rear to shake the fluid off.

Also crusty scabs had appeared where he was beaten.

And he was so tired he began to sag and fall asleep and as he did the neck clasp would choke him and awake him rudely.

As for abolitions he tried to keep that for the night when few Madrawts were about, but because of his bad diet he found it humiliating during day time.

Feeding times was also a popular with the crowds for his guards mixed hot peppers into his watery gruel where they showed him the floating roaches.

And forced fed him *and he would grunt, roar and foam* over the disgusting mixture.

For the Madrawt public came to see a beast and the guards made sure they saw one.

“Mingo Drum Mingo Drum,

Mingo pig,

Mingo chained,

Mingo Mingo Drum,” the Madrawt kids would sing as they played their own form of hopscotch.

And we heard it on our approach to the Tower of the Condemned.

“What does this mean?” I asked.

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Tribune Henry read my mind, was Mingo alive?

“Our mission is to free Arthur,” he reminded and knew he was right, “Don’t screw things up or I will make sure Tzu Strath finds you scribe!”

Well at least his silent hostility towards me was in the open, he had not wanted a pen pusher on this dangerous mission.

It was also because *I* was famous, a scribe people associated with Arthur and the Golden Age, *bird men*.

So he felt awkward in my presence, as if my fame made him submissive to my orders. But he was well known too, all knew Tribune Cedric Henry was Tzu Strath’s right hand.

Into the Tower of the Condemned.

It was dark, badly lit, damp, decay smelling.

Abandon hope all yee who enter.

Here Arthur had been condemned to lingering ill health and death through disease.

What looked like beggars manned a desk.

The Madrawt sign for prisoner was branded upon their foreheads. But their desk job was a reprieve from the sharpened stake that would have been their execution.

“We wish to seek a condemned Walking Death; we know not what cell he is in. But his name is Pahtamon,” Henry lied.

The reprieved checked their computer for they had many Pahtamon’s here as it was a common name on Madrawt.

It also took many Sus; the Madrawt dollar to make sure two reprieved showed us about the cells.

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These men were dressed in an assortment of clothes taken from the condemned.

Now the first Pahtamon was a Madrawt covered in boils.

He had no eyes, *they had been removed.*

He was speechless, *they had taken his tongue.*

One of our guards used a cattle prod on him so he awoke.

“That him?”

Henry shook his head negatively.

“He stole from the offering table of Huitzilopitchli that is why he is here,” then the guard prodded the condemned all over his body.

We grunted approval and left the condemned having a fit on the floor that was his furniture.

The second Pahtamon turned out to be an elderly man.

Now what did this have to do with finding Arthur? Everything, we were in the tower for a start and hoping to take things from there.

“He was a general and she was a favorite of Ce-Ra,” one of the guards and sure enough there was a woman in the cell also.

“For a few sus you can have her,” he really meant it believing he was doing us a favour as he saw us no better than himself.

And he threw a switch and electrocuted the general but not enough to kill.

“Think I used to serve under him, well not so posh now is he?” And the guard electrocuted him again for good measure.

“Here some sus for both of us with the woman?” Henry offered and the man accepted.

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*Illustration 89: A Madrawt cell*

*Was Henry insane, nothing in this world would induce me to join with that woman; she needed a bath, she was famished, bedraggled, what was Henry thinking?*

Henry turned off the lights with these words, “You stay here and act like you are having a good time.”

I wasn’t going to do anything else, the floor was covered in filth.

This was indeed the Tower of The Condemned.

All who entered only left for their execution which was a relief too them.

And twenty minutes later Henry returned, “I have found him, but we need keys.”

Boldness and an urgency to get Arthur out of this dump made us seek our guides and ask them to show us the other Pahtamons.

We needed those keys.

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Outside in the corridor and alone with one guard Henry stuck his short sword into him, took the keys and dragged the dead guard into a cell and looked the door delaying discovery.

He had our keys.

“Mingo Drum Mingo Drum,

Why loiter as you do?”

Meanwhile at the stocks: Mingo opened his red eyes and saw the old man Vate. He seemed solid yet the Madrawt public took no notice of him.

“Why have you come?

“To free you whom are called Mahbon reborn,” the man Vate replied.

“Fat chance,” Mingo replied with a painful chuckle.

“There are powers that exist that we cannot see. And the Madrawts don’t believe in me so none will be looking for me.”

“I don’t believe in you either so go away and leave me to die with what dignity I have left,” Mingo replied defeated.

“Look Mingo, the keys to your stocks,” and Vate showed them and like a dog in a pound who only believes it is escaping from its cage when the door opens, Mingo the beast waited to see what would happen and if there was a dog biscuit also.

Vate touched the locks.

“They are badly rusted; a strong man like you should have broken them by now?”

Mingo thought about it.

Vate was giving him an invitation.

Mingo strained upwards to free himself.

The Vate had gone.

Nothing happened.

He strained again.

Nothing.

Had he been dreaming about the Vate?

The locks are rusted and worn.

He pushed up again.

The Madrawt public were gathering amused by his antics.

“First he talks to himself, and now thinks he can break our locks.

Mingo Mingo Drum.

Crazy Mingo Drum,” they chanted at him.

Mingo gave up straining to be free.

The crowd left bored with him.

He had only imagined Vate.

But he had heard the click of the locks being opened when the Vate had touched them.

He started straining again.

The crowd reappeared but with rotten fruit and vegetables and threw them at him.

This made him angry and took away his depression and defeat and was replaced with a  
will for freedom.

And of course vengeance.

A lock pinned open, his hands were free.

The crowd stopped the throwing act and stood staring in disbelief.

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Mingo took off the bar of his stock and threw it at the crowd.

It landed amongst them killing a few.

Now he pushed against the lower bar.

Also a soldier climbed his platform to restrain Mingo, should have shot Mingo because Mingo took his pistol as the man climbed and shot him, showering the crowd with gore.

Then he shot the locks of his feet and he was truly free.

He stood up.

He fired a stream of laser light from the pistol into the crowd.

Vengeance was upon the Madrawts.

Then he flew away as the crowd scattered for cover.

He was a beast, he was a man, and he was a Bird man. Brave brave Mingo, poor poor Ce-Ra who heard the grunt and cough of his enemy and froze with terror.

It couldn't be possible; Mingo was locked in a stock dying.

To the highest tower Mingo flew and landed;

Coughed and grunted.

“This is my domain,

My law is my word.

I am the last of the free.

To the north the polar ice caps.

To the south my enemies.

I am Bird man.

I am Mingo Drum Ve5rcingetorix.”

Bird man

Suddenly Planet Madrawt wasn't a safe place for Madrawts to live upon.

The whole city was in an uproar and soldiers ran about streets firing at shadows.

A lot of those shadows were Madrawts, poor blighter's!

And we could not have asked for a better diversion for our tricks!