

## Bird man

## Vern Attack

““The young auburn haired woman awoke to find herself strapped to a float bed. At once she realised she was a prisoner, saw the clouds swirling above her and with a slow disbelief she grasped the fact that the white strips of cloud were very close.

“I am not on the ground, Creator save me,” she thought for she had turned her head and seen she was barely six inches from the edge of the floater bed. Then she reminded herself of who she was and whose blood flowed in her veins. *I am his daughter and must behave as such she chided.*

It won't do to let these Bird people see me weak, the safety of pioneering families depended on it.

Human dignity was at stake.

She was afraid of heights without proper support.

There was one thing flying a space fighter and another lying on an open floater bed five hundred feet above jagged rocks below.

“You will be alright,” a rough voice said.

And she opened her eyes and saw The Bird man King himself, Mingo Drum Vercingetorix just above her but did not know his identity then, only that he was a horrid Bird man, so she shut her eyes, turning her head to avert his yellow eagle bird eyes.

*“He will eat me later,”* she figured.

And after ten minutes she looked again hoping he had gone, but he was still there gliding, looking her over like a piece of meat.

## Bird man

In fact, if the human woman had suppressed her fears, she would have seen another look in the King of The Bird man's eyes?

Pity.

Instead she saw an ugly man with membranous wings and a hideous scar running from his left temple to the bottom of his right chin.

So made his beak of a nose much more pronounced. She shut her eyes again but his face remained in her memory, his streaming brown hair that looked more like a lion's mane but to her,

**The feather's of a vulture.**

"Hello my dear," and she turned to see an ape like being sitting at her feet that wasn't there a moment ago she swore, it was Little Drum.

And fought not to scream over the hideous being.

And The Creator had forgotten her, these were devils come to torment her.

"Don't be alarmed, did you see how brave I was killing the Madrawt's? Was some fight but they weren't a match for me," the orange ape boasted chatting on.

*"What a big headed little monkey, full of wind and,"* she stopped herself. She had breeding and wouldn't allow any alien, no they weren't aliens, General Ce-Ra and the Madrawt's were the aliens.

These were MUTANTS.

DNA and RNA strands escaped from the test tubes of Star Dust Genetic Corporation labs. Tissues that were washed down the sink spawning themselves into these, these?

She had no words to describe them.

## Bird man

“Little Drum, leave her be,” The Bird man commanded in a bass voice and after some verbal protesting Little Drum left but gave her a last paw about her knees.

*“Little Drum, the Bird man's sibling, Oh my Creator, they breed amongst themselves by aping humans.”*

And imagined what Mingo Drum's wife looked like, a gigantic hairy ape with six arms and large udder.

And what would The King of The Bird man look like if this ape was anything to go by?

She did not realise the king was present.

She was totally human.

And what did fate have in store for her? She had heard stories, seen the news, knew about the recent war with the Bird men of this Planet Maponos.

Watched the imperial regiments of Tzu Strath return beaten.

No one in recent history had ever defeated an imperial army, not alone stopped the Great War Lord Tzu Strath.

But King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix had and she knew him well. A butcher of men, uncivilised, barbarian who sacrificed his prisoners to his gods of the elements. Not one, but thousands at a time, stabbing, strangling and drowning them till the victims were dead.

The Triple Death they called it.

They said he tore the hearts out of the bravest enemies alive, and then ate, believing he sustained himself on his enemy's valour.

Just a superstitious murderer.

## Bird man

Now she was on her way to meet her War Lord's enemy, former ally and hired mercenary general in the sacred war against the Madrawt's.

A king who had betrayed Tzu Strath in the heat of the battle against the Madrawt's.

It was The Bird man's fault the alien Madrawt's were here upon Planet Maponos towards their slow advance to earth and forgot conveniently the Bird men got here first.

"Eeeeeeeeeee," the high pitched wail took the Earth woman out of her depressive thoughts. She now focused on the sound and immediately her heart beat faster.

A flock of Verns was circling them, readying themselves for the kill and they were the meat. "Sharks of the air waves," she remembered Tzu Strath call them.

"At least I will be spared meeting King Mingo Drum," she thought.

And The Bird man who seemed their leader, the one with the ugly scar running across his face grunted back his war cry.

It did not register that the news associated the coughing grunt of Mingo Drum with King Vercingetorix. To her and millions like her, the coughing grunt was made by all Bird men and not just by one.

And watched the lone Bird man fly towards the sharks as the two others and the ape hurried the float away, distancing themselves.

Pity crept into her bosom for the lone Bird man. He might be alien, a mutant or whatever, but he was flying to a horrid death.

## Bird man



*Illustration 8: A Vern had a mouth full of teeth.*

He was a very brave man, the War Lord himself would be proud of that Bird man.

So the first Vern started straight at the Bird man who dropped underneath and speared its belly. A red stinking vapor hissed angrily out of the wound.

It was Vern blood.

And the air carried it swiftly to the other Verns who became excited and ate their wounded comrade. Raising her head the daughter of Tzu Strath saw the ape creature called Little Drum flying back to aid the lone Bird man; that made her happy the Bird man would not die alone. She was also glad the little ape was really brave and “*Silly brave thing,*” she thought as a Vern with open mouth attacked it.

## Bird man

And to her relief saw Little Drum had inflated a foil shield just as the teeth closed upon it.

But the ache in her neck made her rest it and when she lifted her head again, a cloud covered the killing area.

“In here quick,” the female Bird woman shouted and then it was dark.

The earth woman heard the opening of shutters and soon the place she was in filled with the warm rays of the purple suns.

“Shall we arm her?” The male Bird man asked.

“Wait and she what Mingo Drum does,” the female replied.

Now fear filled their captive as thought their dreaded king was near as the news media made him out to be uglier than a warthog.



*Illustration 9: Branwan and Bran Llyr.*

And guessed they were speaking of arming her as a mouth of a Vern burst through the window, shutting out the suns purple warming rays.

“Bran Llyr,” the female Bird woman screamed as the toothed mouth closed upon his left shoulder.

The captive Earth woman felt his warm blood over her; so panic gripped her, she was trapped, defenseless and although she fought against her leather straps she could not free her wrists or ankles.

And the female Bird woman sunk her short sword into the face of the Vern which died falling away below.

But more Verns battered the door of whatever they had sought shelter in, banging with snouts, bodies and tails.

Suddenly the human captive’s wrists were free.

“Defend yourself,” the Bird woman commanded and gave her a laser pistol and spear, then turned her back on the human and tended the bite on her companions’ shoulder.

*“I am alone,”* the thought shook her, never had she been in actual combat. Combat a distance leading a squadron of Comet Fighters, squeezing off missiles, and then pulling away.

The War Lord had not changed his mind about letting her participate in close quarter combat.

What would he think now? She asked herself as she stood facing the splintering door.

Then she asked herself what the hell was she doing here standing facing Vern with nothing but a laser pistol and a spear out of the Bronze Age.

## Bird man

A memory flashed across her eyes of the lone bird man who had given his life for them to get into this shelter and of Little Drum the ape like creature.

She swallowed hard.

Well, she had always begged Tzu Strath to allow her real combat, *well she had it now.*

She steadied herself, she was a squadron leader, must be brave and show no fear in front of these lower beings the Bird people.

She would show them how an Earth woman could die.

She fired at the whole head of a Vern as it broke through the door.

The head she shot filled the room with that stinking red vapor.

But she stood her ground as the door was ripped off its hinges as the school of Vern ripped apart the Vern she had just killed. What she didn't know was that there were now only three Vern left alive outside the shelter they were in.

And took careful aim at one and killed it and as it died a human head fell out of its belly.

Making her reel back in horror and disgust.

Just then the lone Bird man arrived through the open window carting Little Drum.

Trained reflex action almost made her shoot him, just like the computer traced her shots on the target screen.

But she was a human and not a machine and her finger stopped and the Bird man lived.



*Illustration 10: She speared the Vern with her bronze age spear.*

It was one of those ‘if’ situations and she would ask herself a hundred times over what if I had killed him. But fate had chosen him to live, to exist and a single event that could have changed history becomes very important in the what ‘if’ question and fate is blamed.

OR GOD.

Then her attention was brought to the door as another Vern tried to get in; she aimed and fired: nothing happened.

The laser pistol was empty.

Throwing it away she thrust her spear into the Vern.

The doorway cleared.

## Bird man

She managed to turn and look for the lone Bird man but he was gone and the purple suns warmth flooded in again.

Either dead, a very brave beast or a fool but never used the word coward?

Then the silence.

Then a coughing victory grunt of the Bird man.

*'Mingo is here?'* and with this thought she clutched the spear ready to hurl it at the king.

She was indeed an Earth woman.

She was squadron leader of Tzu Strath's Praetorian Comets.

"Are you alright?" The Bird man asked her as he framed himself in the busted doorway. She looked for his king, no doubt overseeing the butchering of the slain Verns into choice meats. Tasty steaks to lie beside her when they wheeled her out on stolen silver function plates with an apple in her mouth.

But his voice was so gentle it took her back to her present situation; her muscles tensed.

If he wanted this spear he would have to take it from her, she would kill this brave Bird man if she had too.

"Excuse me," he said instead, "my friends need me," as he walked unafraid past her.

He knew he was taking a risk and as he passed that spear his gut muscles tightened wondering?

And after a wait she looked out of the door, saw nothing except clouds above her and below the carcasses of the Verns.

## Bird man

It was the news media's fault; it had her mentally warped to expect King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix the murderer of decent human women and babes as a monster.

And her nightmare was present all the time!

All that greeted her was a barren landscape and on the horizon dark forests.

"Help us put Bran Llyr onto the float bed?" He asked but she knew by the confident way he said it, he expected her to do as he bid; it was a command and as a commander she recognized it as such.

If Bran what's his name hadn't been wounded she would have protested.

That was her excuse.

Bran was a warrior in need of assistance, he had fought to save her, and she was not a barbarian like the Madrawt's or that Bird man King Mingo Drum. After, she stood away from them still clutching the spear.

"You can stay here till another school of Verns pass by or come with us?" The big Bird man and it was obvious they were leaving.

"Staying Bird man," she replied her eyes narrowing to slits of defiance.

"Can you fly human woman?" The Bird man inquired sarcastically.

This made her look out the door, up and down, saw that whatever they were in was floating in mid air and below ferocious beasts lurked.

One a lion beast and the other the Maonos elephant with two tusks.

"I have no choice have I?" She asked knowing she was defeated and prisoner again.

"No I am sorry you don't," The Bird man replied gently, "Come," he added and held out a brown gloved right hand.

## Bird man

She hesitated; the spear was her only defense. What 'IF' she ran him through with it? Then what?

She ended up holding out the spear for him to take.



*Illustration 11: Eight legged lion beast.*

She was puzzled when he didn't take it.

She realised with horror he wanted her hand instead.

She would have to touch the barbarians' beasts' hand.

And it galled her own sense of command that he allowed her the spear; in a reversed situation she did have disarmed and chained him for him to know his doomed situation.

Was this Bird man playing with his supper?

## Bird man

Worse was to come, not only did the Bird man want her hand, but wanted her to strap on a leather belt and then lie down

*“Was he stupid or something?”*

Strange thoughts went through her pretty head.

“Please hurry, we don’t have all day, Bran Llyr needs help quickly or will die,” The Bird man pleaded? Well, she lay down and allowed herself the indignity of having the barbarian stand over her and strap her up.

To her horror he just threw her out the door just like like that, tossed out like a bag of tubers.

“God,” was her very own words as she saw nothing but clear sky about herself. Nothing under her, she was falling, then there was a jerk as the warm air current pushed the Bird man and her up.

And the Bird man had no intention of carrying her all the way to the City of Flaming Crystals. It was sixty miles away, his friends were below; all he wanted was her down.



*Illustration 12: She was strapped in and quite safe.*

*“He was not stupid or something?”*

And the Earth woman found her fear demise as instead of rushing to hit the ground, she descended slowly.

Was the Bird man *crazy or something*, there was a lion beast and elephant waiting for them?

“You chicken turd,” she shouted at him, so she was to be torn apart by wild beasts, she should have used the spear.

It was his revenge for The Star Dust Genetic Corporation shipping Bird men to the Public Arenas throughout the empire as entertaining sport.

It was said their Emperor Alexander Caesar Vortigern enjoyed the spectacle of Bird men fighting gladiatorial contests and wild beasts.

Bird men were top billing and crowd pullers.

The public paid well, they paid for the emperor’s wars.

The Star Dust Corporation got rich.

Glen Zowanski bought a new planet, for his own sport, built a ranch and swimming pool and flew himself and shuttle loads of girls and guests there.

A whole planet.

Revenge was sweet to them handing it out.

But instead of being torn apart she found herself standing opposite the Bird man.

And the wild beasts grunted and bellowed and approached.

And the barbarian made no effort to fly away and leave her. She still had the spear, she raised it and he pushed it down.

“These are my friends,” he told her without anger.

## Bird man

Even so she was not used to being so close to wild ferocious beasts without a cage enclosing them or in this case her.

“The City of Flaming Crystal is over there,” him pointing towards the forested horizon.

She followed his gaze upwards and saw the float bed with Bran Llyr and Little Drum on it heading towards the forest.

She understood he must go.

She was free?

She turned to head back towards where she had left Tzu Strath and stopped.

*“Where had she left the great War Lord? She was without compass, water or food, in an alien environment and armed only with a primitive bronze spear?”*

And what would happen to her if she survived the trek? Would Tzu Strath obey his emperor again, and hand her over to General Ce-Ra? For the sake of imperial peace?

If the wild beasts out here didn’t eat her, the Madrawt’s would recapture her perhaps? She was on their side of the Planet Maponos wasn’t she?

She felt crushed, she wanted to cry, but she was a squadron leader wasn’t she?

“The City of Flaming Crystals over there, my friends will guide you. I will return with help,” the Bird man and hopped into the air.

He seemed ungainly on land, a monstrous escapee from the Star Dust Corporation labs. But once air borne became graceful and she admired him as one does a soaring bird.

And he was brave and fearless.

Bird man

And a wet nose prodded her back.

She turned to stare into the big brown eyes of the lion beast and screamed out of  
shook.”””

As told by the

Great Mingo

Himself,

Vern Lukas.