

Bird man

The Call of the Beast

“Mingo sat looking out of the basement grills. He was moody, today was Arthur’s birthday, a day he never forgot; around his neck apart from the gold torc was a beaded necklace, a bead for every son and daughter born to him now dead.

He was not a selfish man; he loved his other son Cuchullain and wondered how Cartimandua faired.

He had learned to share his thoughts to each member of his family living or dead.

He also knew he was not a good father or his children would be at his side.

“Curse the humans for coming to Maonos,” he before he heard the call.

Each Bird man has an individual call you know.

Mingo Drum coughed back.

Arthur smiled, his daddy was in an ordinary cell, escape would be easy, what had horrible Henry been thinking of?

He, Cedric Henry had just apprehended Colonel Nelson and Private McNash.

He also figured out why they had tussled Mingo into an ordinary cell;

Kenala was free.

He would come for Mingo and **be killed.**

Now fifty miles to the west a skim jet was hurtling, twisting, zooming, snaking this way and that as its terrified occupants tried to control it.

For Reeman Black Hair this human fun craft designed to glide sixteen year olds over the dunes and between the lime stone monoliths was a horrid machine indeed.

The only thing he could find as the Dictator Henry’s storm troopers and friendly Bird men fought hand to hand with the last pockets of fanatical Madrawt zealots.

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Madrawts who wanted to get to Huitzilopitchli's promised paradise.

It was said, "That if a Madrawt wouldn't give his heart on the alter under Diviciacus's knife, he would give it in battle," Vern Lukas.

In front of Reeman Black Hair the City of Winds.

There a group of men from the Star Dust Corporation examining Kenala.

He was a good catch for the laboratories, strong and healthy.

The corporation had moved into Tara 6 in a big way since most of Maponos was in imperial hands and settling to human ways; buying genes from friendlies, just taking genes from prisoners and even from Bird men corpses.

Man had always wanted to fly.

And poor poor poor Kenala was a fine specimen.

Now the President of The Star Dust Corporation, Mr. Glen Zowanski of Atlantic City, Old Earth had decided FLIGHT was fashion and was a willing ally to Cedric Henry, thus bypassing Tzu Strath who would not allow such operations again on his beloved planet he had forgotten because all he remembered these days was his young wife.

Although Tzu would not admit it, he regarded Tara 6 his home, just as Custer regarded the plains of the Sioux as his. It was something he had neglected to tell his young pretty wife Oona who wanted to retire to Old earth and society and power.

But power Oona did not realise rested in the hands of those who made it, not just in one place because of a name, Earth.

Earth was fashion, the ancestral roots of the emperors.

Everything else was provincial.

Oona wanted London.

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She also wanted America, India and the Great Wall of China.

Earth was full of monuments reflecting human power.

Tara 6 was wind swept and had strange looking bird like creatures walking the pavements with folded up wings trying to imitate humans.

Tara 6 was frontier; whether Tzu wanted it or not he was going to Earth, here she would behave like an empress and once seen as such would be called such in private and then next step would be called that in public.

She couldn't do that on Tara 6 as everyone knew her as Conchobar's daughter, a mare to be divorced and remarried for alliances; sure people showed respect, her men would punish those who didn't bow to her.

She was an imperial bed companion who made babies whose futures was questionable depending who ruled and threatened by their existence!

And as for the Bird man:

Mingo languished in a tiny cell which was dank, six feet by three wide with a toilet hole.

"Hart Woo, Hart Woo," Mingo called as he recognised her scent.

Remember he was the beast lover of Boudicca.

Now Hart Woo came closer, looking to her right, to her left, making it obvious she was up to mischief; but the day was hot and the twin purple suns belched their heat upon Tara 6 and the human soldiers sought shade.

"Mingo, is that you?" She answered eventually.

He saw the human soldier with her and sank back into the cool blackness of his cell.

"He is my man Mingo," Hart Woo said assuring.

PAUSE AND SHUFFLING OF CHAINS.

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“Help me Hart Woo?”

Hart looked and saw the security cameras watching her.

“My man is a major of the Old Guard of Tzu Strath; I will get a pass to visit you.”

She looked at the cameras again hating them.

The security cameras were not the only ones watching.

A little Bird boy sat hunched behind his wings on a ledge of a tower block three stories away.

He was the masked space adventurer bat Wing of Galaxy 5, direct descendant of Bat Man of Old Earth.

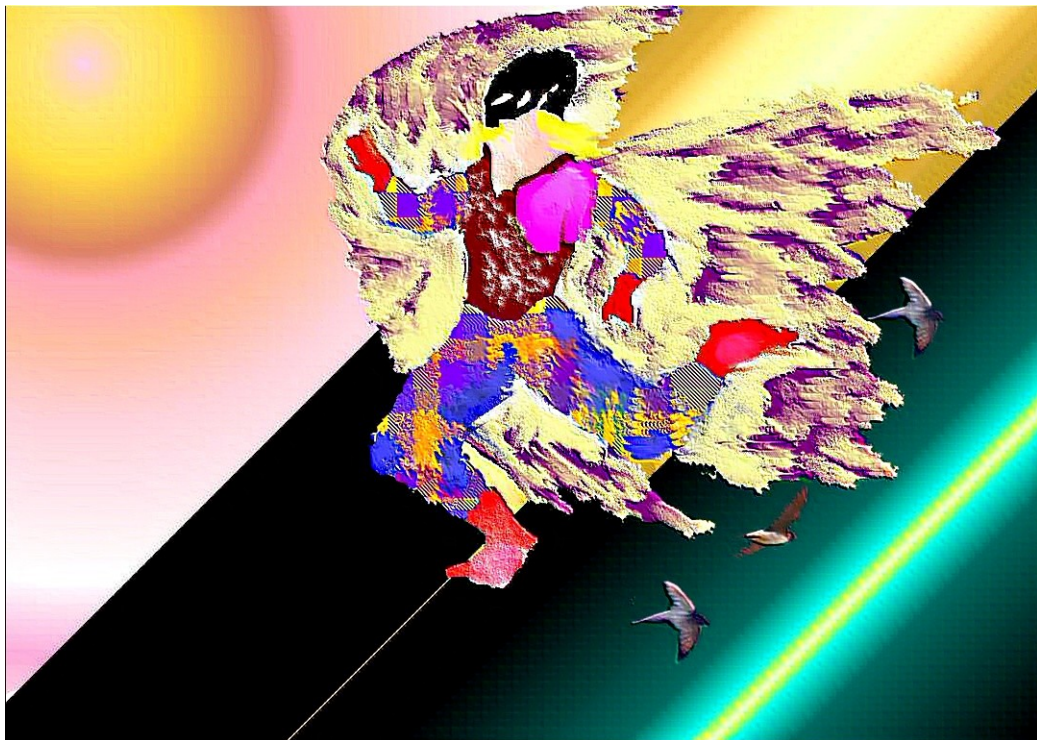


Illustration 99: Bat Wing the Boy Defender?

Arthur had read all the comics he could smuggle in through the front door when mummy wasn't looking.

Boudicca didn't like Arthur reading too many comics as they gave strange

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ideas, like he was a super hero and diverted him from homework.

But he was a boy with wings and so she put up with his comics and flying about shouting, "Make way for Bat Wing the caped defender."

She even went so far as to buy him a Bat Wing caped defender suit for a present.

Now Arthur was in his fantasy world seeking courage, a world of imagination and just as well for as long as he played his part he knew no fear.

After all, he was the masked defender Bat Wing.

Then he soared off the ledge and followed Hart Woo not knowing who they were except that they had stopped to talk to daddy.

Mingo Drum Vercingetorix swelled his lungs and threw back his head and called forth his grunting cough.

The call was long and invaded listeners' ears with high and low notes.

A friendly staggering out of a bar was too drunk to understand the message the cough carried.

Soon a bunch of human and alien soldiers would come out and demand from him the meaning of the call, a Bird man was a Bird man whether friendly or hostile and because he was too drunk to answer they beat him up pretty good!

Above nearby a friendly missed the lights in his hover car as he listened and soon cars behind where honking. The Bird man driver coughed back and drove away; he got away with what he done because the lights were at red and humans understand what red means.

A hostile P.O.W. stopped cutting grass on a humans front artificial lawn. The message he understood and who had sent it and he grinned and coughed back.

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But the human owner came out of his domed house and kicked the Bird man like a dog as he was property and the dictator wanted them dead anyway.

Another hostile P.O.W. stopped raking the green algae off the surface of a sewer as he read the call. He called back his own individual grunt for the winds too carry away.

But guards came and threw him in the septic pool, he was garbage living on borrowed time; they were saving the dictator the cost of a bullet.

But as the Bird man was sucked down towards the sewer mincer he knew he would be revenged on his guards, *their time was up!*

Another P.O.W. road sweeping stopped working and called back and the human dump truck driver ran him over just to be on the safe side.

But pretty soon every P.O.W. hostile was grunting and coughing and not all were whipped or beaten up, minced or squashed.

And the wind carried the grunts of half a million condemned Bird men, condemned because of their race across the City of New Alexandria.

So the friendlies stopped drinking their beers, rutting human/alien working girls in imitation of their betters, whipping their own P.O.W. slaves to work harder in an effort to be more human. And all turned down their TV's and listened.

And the human/alien population stopped what they were doing too. They stopped beating up drunken friendlies too drunk too speak.

They stopped watching Bird man chum float back up the sewer mincer plug hole.

They stopped beating their gardeners.

They stopped watching speeding fleeing Bird men in hover cars.

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Mingo Drum Vercingetorix was about to be freed, but they didn't know that.

The whole City of New Alexandria had gone crazy because of one man's coughing grunt.

But to be fair, not all human/aliens treated the Bird men as beings without rights. Those that came and fought or settled under the regime of the Great War Lord knew them as people.

These were the Bird lovers of Tzu Strath.

And there were many.

And Dictator Henry feared them and why he encouraged mass immigration to silence them, for it was with the new settlers and his troops that he was popular.

He was the great Bird man fighter, he gave their lands to humans and aliens who deserved them by divine right.

Then people could have heaps of kids, white fences and sleep easy at nights.

And Hart Woo had married a Bird lover and didn't take orders from the dictator.

"I am the last of the free,

To the north polar ice caps.

To the south the foe.

Die a free man

Than slave," was on the wind from a million coughs."

Vern Lukas as told him by Hart Woo.