

Bird man

Boudicca Strath

“Her grip on the bronze spear tightened, she had been left on the ground with a lion and elephant that were going to eat her up.

But instead of leaping at her and tearing out her throat, the Maonosian Lion knelt down and the elephant used its two proboscises to edge her onto the Griffon’s back.

“Quicker than walking,” she joked, “hope you like me,” and patted the griffin..

It gave a bored yawn towards her.

But she noticed the flesh tearing teeth and the long upper incisors that over lapped the lower rubbery gums.

So swished the Bird man with the scar would come back and hoped the beast here had recently eaten.

And suddenly all went off at a tremendous pace.

She of course fell off, she hadn’t been ready.

They waited for her to get on

Again

Again.

This time she would grip the bright dark mane.

And in the distance she caught glimpses of the Flaming Forest when they reached the top of small canyon summits. “To the City of Flaming Crystals,” the Bird man had said. Ah the name conjured up buildings made of crystals, water falls, pools full of lilies and tall trees with flamingo nests in them.

Guess what? She would find most of her imagination had not played games.

Earth cities had less colourful names. Then it occurred to her she was given these Bird people credit for having architectural science.

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Illustration 15: The City of Flaming Crystal.

They were just mutant birds.

They made good aerial scouts against the Madrawt's and nothing less.

Apart from messing up statues in squares; that was her private joke delegating them to pigeons.

Of course, servants and slaves and good dissecting specimens in school class labs.

It also dawned upon her as she rode the Maonosian Griffin that she knew very little about Bird people apart from what her father Tzu Strath and the media told her.

“They are secretive, only that originally they were an intelligent new species of flying primate. The Star Dust Corporation owns the Planet Maonos and has netted thousands of them into its ‘gene tanks.’

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And her father was being delicate here, gene tanks was another way of saying experimenting on them, extracting their vital body fluids and breaking down their genetic codes, substituting blocks with human genetic blocks, making monsters.

Spares for the arenas.

And the corporation had seen the profit that could be made from selling genes that could give YOUR CHILD THE GIFT OF FLIGHT.

Bird people genes were in big demand.

Even the Emperor Alexander Caesar Vortigern wanted wings until he was told the planting of flight genes would be a painful process, dangerous at his age and bodily condition, also costly.

Perhaps if cloned and was more genetically stable.

That had been enough.

The emperor quickly dropped the idea of parading in front of his courtiers with golden wings while he was dressed in a silver toga draped with a scarlet jewel encrusted robe.

“Make sure my clone has them,” he insisted instead, it could have the pain.

But that had been five hundred years ago.

Then Mingo Drum Vercingetorix was born and led his people to freedom.

A flying apes stripped of the benefits of imperial civilization.

“What would I have done?” Boudicca caught herself asking.

Done exactly the same.

Freedom.

And wished she had bothered now to search news videos before coming to Planet Maponos to see the early films on Mingo Drum.

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The Bird man she was about to meet, she had no idea what he looked like, “He,” “Thing,” she meant.

But her thoughts were interrupted when her guardians stopped at the edge of a forest water hole she would never have seen or been able to find even with a spectrogram water diviner.



Illustration 16: Her guardians, one had two trunks.

The spring came up through a hollow plastic, was encased in rock and the beasts knew that to paw the flat surface activated pumps gushing up water.

Lovely and cool.

REFRESHING.

She drank and then fingered a bit of the plastic.

It was unknown to her.

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What intelligence had discovered this material?

Certainly not the Bird people who it was reported at the time of their discovery lived in trees and rock ledges.?

Did this planet hide a past civilization that WE humans do not know about?

And that is when the Rock Dwellers attacked.

There first arrows thundering into the thick hides of the Monopodium elephant and Griffin.

Their enraged bellows and roars making Boudicca swallow the wrong way. Then the trained soldier took over and she sought immediate cover.

Looking quickly over the grey granite rock she saw that none of the arrows were falling about her, until she stood up to run, then they fell.

“They are not for me,” she meant the arrows and she was correct for she saw the hail had driven off her guardians.

“Well, I begged my father Tzu Strath for hand to hand action and now I am getting it?”

Nothing to do now but wait.

“We are the Mighty Rock People.

All this is out land.

Mighty warriors we are,” there sounded like a hundred out there and she didn’t know who or what they were? Except that they were conceited.

But they came scrambling down the rocks, out of sand pits and behind dunes.

Little four legged fur clad creatures, the way their legs worked made them look like wolf spiders, but they had tails and humanoid heads making them look like

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monkeys.

“See how valiant we are? Throw down your stick.

We have weapons,” they chorused and she looked and most had bows and those that didn’t, short swords and spears.

So she crawled up a rock for safety and distance which was the same thing.

If they had really wanted her dead, she would be dead.

But they prodded her till they all rushed her at once.

And her spear went through one.

Was violent hissing

As the creature

Had massive cobble wobbles,

IT

SHOT

LEFT

AND

RIGHT,

SHOT HISSING EVERYWHERE

Made a bad stink as it died.

And like a deflated child’s balloon hissed through the air to rest on the ground till it *was totally flat?*

And Boudicca was revolted.

“And what right did she have to be revolted?”

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These things were manifestations of everything she hated about Maponos, (Tara 6.)

It was not earth, it was not human.

But she didn't have time to reflect for as soon as the others got over their comrades demise they attacked anew with a berserka fury, throwing stones and sand.

Boudicca was hapless *and so were they?*

Then a stone hit her temple.

A lucky throw.

Perhaps?

She fell down.

And for the second time in the thirty six hour day of the Planet Maponos (TARA 6) she was unconscious. As her eyes shut she heard, "No one can defeat the Mighty Rock Dwellers whose empires reaches the moons?"

Now where had she heard that tripe before?

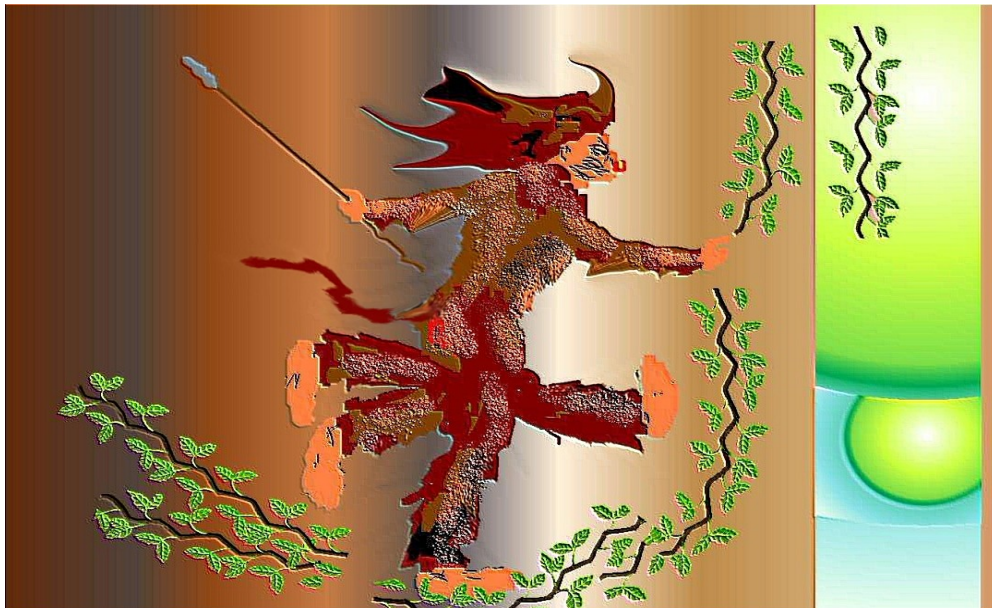


Illustration 17: A rock dweller was a monkey with lots and lots legs.

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The coughing grunt was answered by the bellowing trumpet of the Maonosian elephant and deep roars of the Maonosian lion, the Griffin the Earth settlers called it.

He the Bird man circled above his friends now.

He was not alone.

Only fools come alone.

Some tough friends were with him.

They were his friends because he was honest.

It sort of showed up their faults so clung to him for the light that came out of the Bird man.

And a cohort of the Legion of Manticore, so named by the Great War Lord himself in the war against the Madrawt's, because he saw the flying people as magical Peter Pans for it is man's ambitions to fly like birds.

And the Bird people did fly all about Tzu

So he was sore in spirit that he could not fly too.

And as independent warriors, chaotic, unpredictable but under a single strong respected leader, controllable up to a point, as each was a separate individual swordsman, not an army unit; fantastic light infantry.

Anyway, enough to get them at the enemy before their ranks depleted and they broke the charge. But to kill one HATED MADRWAT.....was worth it for they were

... Foreigners.

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So the Bird man landed and was filled with rage at the wounds inflicted upon his friends.

The enemy arrow shafts told him much!

Rock Dwellers the spider monkey people of Maonos who since they evolved had mimicked their betters and worse, when Star Dust Genetic Corporation had set up labs on this planet, interfered with the spider monkey peoples gene codes, enabling them to speak and jump a few rings up the evolutionary ladder.

They were very dangerous beings, more unpredictable than his famed warriors for they had no worthiness and knew not the meaning of honor and valor.

“To the City of Monoliths,” the Bird man grunted, his scar swelling with blood rage.

Their King Dumezillian was large, almost the size of the Bird man himself, but an emperor and ruler of planets and moons. When He was imitating the Emperor Vortigern of Earth of course.

The Bird man knew the knowledge of knowing the human woman’s fate made him responsible for her. That King Dumezillian would mate with her thinking he was runting with a goddess, for that is how these spider monkey people saw humans, as gods who flew across the skies wielding weapons that destroyed at a distance.

But the Bird man knew different, human/alien imperialists were like Bird people, beings with souls. Then King Dumezillian would eat her and the soup’s left over’s would be given to his people to share believing that they would gain human attributes, her wisdom, her beauty, her hairless skin, two legs and five fingers.

And be goddesses for the duration of the feast.

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And the Bird man Mingo Drum Vercingetorix did not know the true identity of the woman, did not know her to be Boudicca Strath, his enemy's daughter, and if he did he was still responsible for her safety.

He wanted to sleep well.

Leaving medics and a small platoon behind to see his friends on the Road of Crystals that led through the Flowering Forest to the City of Flaming Crystals, he set off at once to the City of Monoliths and King Dumezillian.

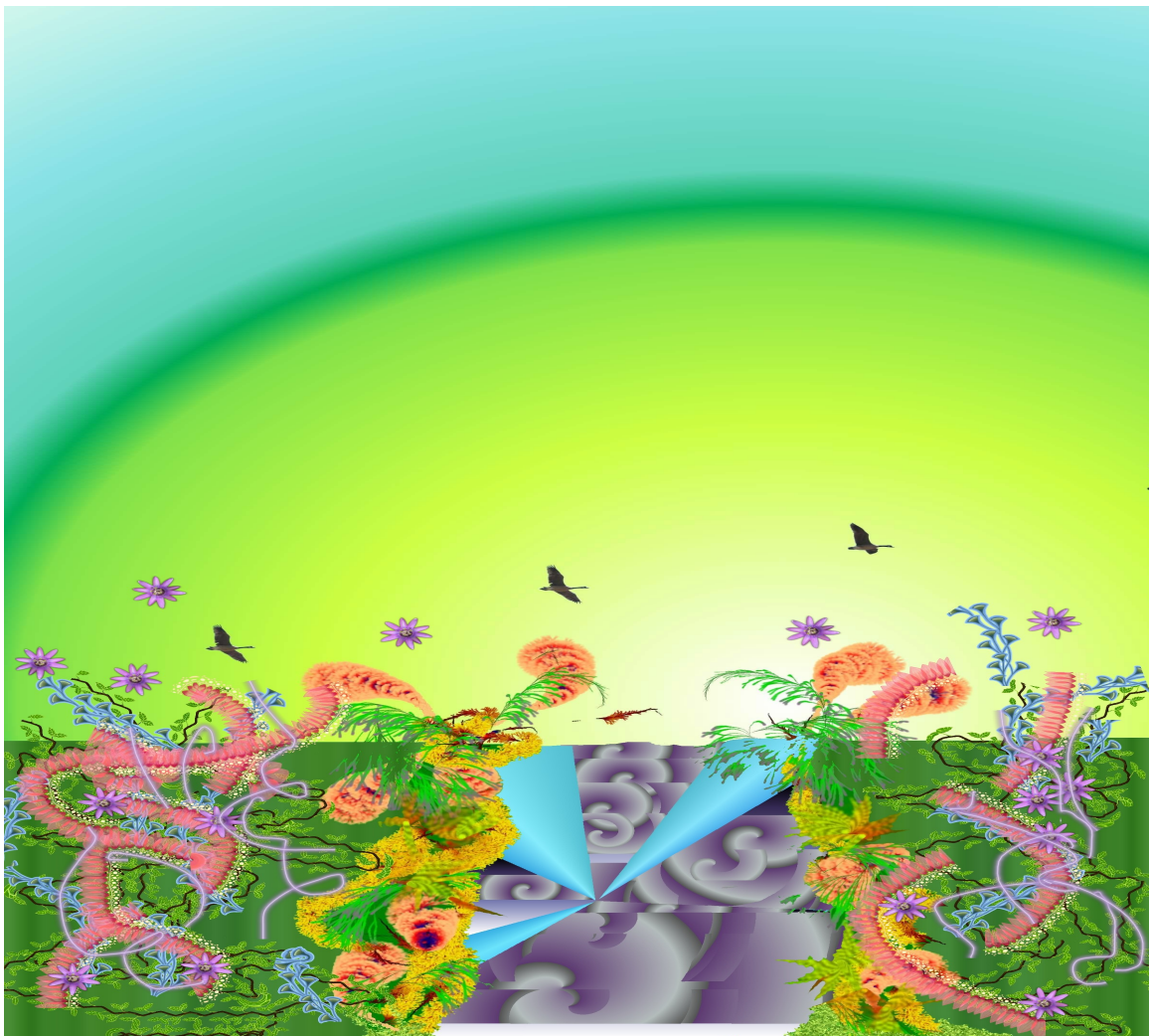


Illustration 18: The road to Flaming City.

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A messenger flew fast ahead of the medics and escorts to his crystal city to summon the full Legion of Manticore.

They were his honour guard.

His flying House Carl's.

“This is my domain,

What I see is my people's land.

My speech is my people's laws.

My cough you violator's warning.

My grunt the sword to dispatch you.

The purple skies above our highways,

The lands below our land.

Death awaits the visitor here,

Go stranger and return not,”

They were his words,

Chiseled into huge black granite slabs

sixty feet high on each compass point bordering his kingdom.

His kingdom of The Flaming Crystal, so named after the principle city.

How little the humans really knew anything about the Bird people.

Explorer's first, then miners, then soldiers, missionaries, settlers and Glen Zowanski Star Dust and his people's planet Maponos renamed Tara 6.

Because of five hundred years of struggling contact with the Great War Lord Tzu Strath.

The sixth mining planet in the Star Dust Galaxy.

Bird man

Which meant very little to humans throughout the empire of Alexander Caesar
Vortigern apart from mineral ores and wars?

A name depicts much, Maponos meant the Divine Son and so the planet was for the
herb healers who were the precipitants of knowledge amongst Bird people who said
the universe would rise again from this planet in the form of light that would spread
throughout the universes wiping out darkness, so creation may begin again.

The Bird man felt sorry for humans who had lost the meaning of names.”

As told Vern Lukas the scribe

By the Lady Boudicca Strath.