

The City of Monoliths



Illustration 19: City of Monoliths was exactly that.

Boudicca Tzu Strath awoke carried on a litter. Once again she found herself bound, this time she was smart enough to realize that it wasn't for her protection but to make her a prisoner.

Her journey had been rough for the Rock Dwellers had not the technology of float beds and she doubted if they had them, could even operate them.

She guessed not.

Anyway: Her captives turned into a canyon opening into a large valley covered in stone monoliths. And a huge shadow fell across her, looking she saw a gigantic pink sandstone shaped like a cross towering above her on the heights.

She was familiar with this place; she had seen that cross on routine patrol with

Bird man

her squadron of Comet Fighters in the Valley of Stonehenge that humans called it. But she had never seen these four legged spider monkey people come crawling out of cave mouths in these monoliths.

“We built this city,” one of her guards told her and she had to guess again, did they? These ugly conceited beings, who talked, scratched and behaved like monkeys?

And she noticed many metal rungs, ladders up the monolith walls; also sun dials here and there, some metal circles with pentagrams, perches and bird baths.

For birds?

Now her professional soldering helped her fight down fear when they told her she was going up there.

Many of the perches seemed rusty and old, not secure.

If one fell?

“Up here our Great King Dumezillian awaits you. When you see him fall flat on your face and wait till he tells you to stand. He is a great emperor and might be our god himself walking this our Planet Simian.”

And Boudicca looked at the fur glad face of her speaker; Planet Simian? This was Tara 6!

But the Bird man Mingo Drum would disagree, this was Maponos.

He did not call it by the inhuman name.

Anyway: they unlocked her copper manacles and prodded her with spears to climb up metal rungs up the tallest monolith; by some *miracle* next to her!

Bird man

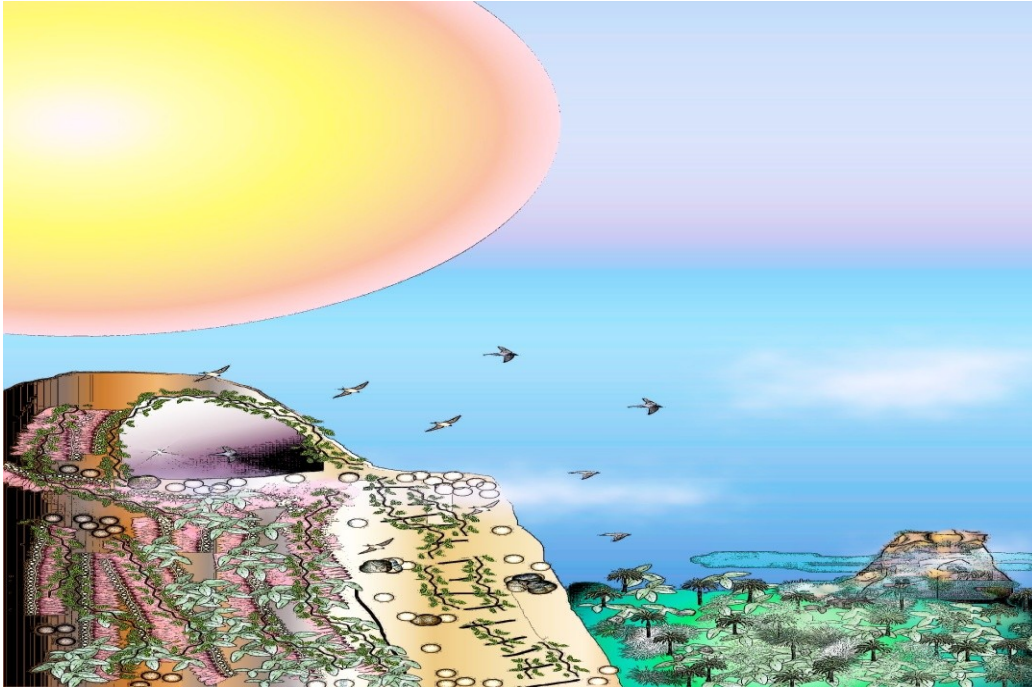


Illustration 20: It was a long way down

And as she climbed she noticed hieroglyphic drawings.

“We drew them, are they not beautiful?” One of her guards asked.

“What do they mean?” She as they beamed with information.

“I do not know, I did not draw them,” was the reply.

And she climbed ever higher and a fear of heights approached her. She was not enclosed in a Comet Fighter; here nothing separated her from the hard surface below apart from thin air that whistled up her dark green toga.

And hated it when the monkey people under her chatted excitedly and pawed her.

If she tried beating them away she risked falling, there was nothing for it but to climb faster.

But her molesters being monkeys easily kept pace with her.

Bird man

Life at the moment was a discomfort.

And almost at the top she was hauled roughly into a large cave, and saw evidence on the walls that the cave had been made by some intelligent life form and not these monkey people.

There were sun reflectors lining the walls now covered in mold.

And now walking she saw prisms that changed the light ray colors that brought out certain dyes used in the hieroglyphic drawings.

Now several prisms were broken and had not been repaired for they were deep in dust. Some pictures showed what she thought were spider monkey people in nets held by Bird men.

Now she was convinced these loathsome aliens had not made these caves nor understood how to fix the prisms or decipher the writings.

Also her mind battled against the notion that the Bird men in the pictures were responsible.

They were not human for a start.

So who had been the artists? Tara 6 was a new planet, once void of intelligent life

except for Bird people, but again she only saw them as winged mutants.

Had the Star Dust Corporation lied about life on Tara 6 to justify milking it dry? Before anyone noticed there was life that was now extinct thanks to humans?

It had happened before throughout human evolution.

She would tell her father Tzu Strath about what she had seen if she ever saw him again?

Bird man

She had never liked Glen Zowanski or his Star Dust anyway.

She was a soldier so judged all by standards of loyalty, honor and valor.

But Glen liked her and was not a soldier and judged his women by their beauty, and he must have the beautiful ones to own.

But then the musicians started up making a dreadful din.

A noise in other words.

And hurriedly she was pushed forward until she was forced to kneel then shoved to her face.

“Our Great Dumezillian has entered.”

She played safe; she would do as they forced her to do.

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Now Mingo Drum led his 1st cohort of Manticore to the City of Monoliths. He knew exactly where it was, why not? His ancestors had built it four thousand years ago and slowly it had degenerated into disuse with the wars against the Madrawt's.

It was such a big collection of monoliths and could be seen from space.

A war that had started long before human arrival, a war that continually flared up and always ended in a Bird people victory; but at a price.

Now the last war, The War of Survival as the Priests of Light called it had begun with the Madrawt's, as usual, who had conquered Maponos but a hundred year guerrilla war had driven them out.

And many cities like the City of Monoliths had been given up by Bird men people to live in holes in the sand or hollowed out boulders, empty giant tree trunks in the Flowering Forest and wilderness areas of the planet.

Bird man

Then the humans had arrived and the Bird people had stayed where they were hidden. They were now very very distrustful of aliens and no longer had the multitudes they once had.

Madrawt wars had depleted their populations.

So most of their beautiful cities remained empty; as a precaution, no point hauling the grand piano up four flights of stairs just to haul it back down when war started again?

So the Rock Dwellers and peoples like them took over the empty cities.

Now why would the Madrawt's tell humans about any of this?

Nor had Mingo Drum told Tzu Strath when he served him as a mercenary; *aliens weren't trusted.*



Illustration 21: Tzu dressed for the heat, plenty of time to wear Number One Uniform at his daughter's parties.

Bird man

Maybe Boudicca would learn the truth?

But now Mingo Drum was returning home to the city of his mother. Her tomb lay in the Canyon of Souls just outside the City of Monoliths.

Often he visited her tomb over the centuries, spying the Rock Dwellers, dreaming of the day when his people would return and drive them out.

But Mingo was a man of contrasts:

“But the caves have become their homes; I am not dealing with unintelligent life. No longer do we living call the City of Monoliths our home. Do we really have the right then to drive the Rock Dwellers out after so long a period of absence?

This city is now their home, we can build another city and much better one elsewhere,” he had often told his people. But they had been angry but he was their elected war chief and as long as he kept winning battles would remain so.

And his people allowed the question of the Rock Dwellers and other intelligent beings that lived in their empty cities to be swept under the carpet, for the moment!

Mingo Drum, they knew would change his views.

So Mingo Drum led his 1st cohort, Legion Manticore up the canyon wings beating.

He did not want to do battle with the Rock Dwellers; he would lose men that were needed in the fight against the humans and Madrawt's. So he believed a show of force would subdue these primitive spider people, as long as they knew he was not coming to evict them.

Besides, it was time they accepted his law over their own laws.

Bird man

Mingo Drum's cough was the law, the spider monkey people had settled on his domains, so it was their responsibility to accept his laws or go back to their own abandoned homes.

This was his domain and everything living in it were his subjects.

Anyway: King Dumezillian was admiring his latest human captive. He had enough brains to realise that she held rank, for she wore silver body armour over her dark green toga and a gold sun pip on each soldier.

He must possess her, she was beautiful, then he would hold her to ransom; she was defenseless, alone which meant she was vulnerable to his forthcoming advances.

He liked the idea even if she wouldn't if she knew about it.

Alone.

So King Dumezillian spoke words to that effect and very roughly Boudicca's armour was lifted off, but not before she had knocked a few monkey people cold.

Spirit.

Also the spider monkeys were on the small side.

This really impressed Dumezillian, she would fight like a fish on a hook, but he never did any fishing, just been told that happens.

And felt his loins stir.

"Who are you?" He asked.

And after a pause, "An officer in the empire's service," thinking it wise not to tell her real identity. Some hated her father so much they might take that hate out on her instantly. "Comet squadron," she added thinking that was mighty impressive and close enough association to Tzu Strath.

Bird man

But he had never heard of it.

Now he was grinning as he looked her up, “The War Lord will pay much to have you back?”

She knew her fate.

“Yes, a thousand imperial dollars,” she had lowered the price; but it pleased this king, he could do much with a thousand dollars, he could buy thirty laser guns from Madrawt traders and then conquer all life on this planet.

He was a dreamer.

Then he could really be a great king.

And this great king indicated with a royal finger flick to have her taken to his room.

Even here there was a throne, cut out of solid stone with the head of some savage hunting bird on top of the back rest.

It resembled a Bird man.

And the fear of knowledge crept into her as suspicions that the Bird people were responsible; thus admitting to herself the Bird people were not savages, that all she had been taught was rubbish.

It takes a lot for a human to admit they are wrong.

Then the doors slammed behind her jolting her thoughts.

Alone.

With this primitive spider monkey with very long fingers that seemed to be coming her way?

“You are very pretty,” the king drooled.

Bird man

It was revolting, long strands hit the floor.

“And you a hairy ape,” she insulting him.

“Rubbish,” he was annoyed, and went on to postulate that the Rock Dwellers were the most advanced race in the universes

After all he was a monkey.

Then attacked her and although she fought bravely, his many arms and great strength soon had her green toga in shreds.

And since monkeys are distant cousins of humans stood back and admired the merchandise.

He liked green like human men too.

And like a human attacked her and soon had her lying on the cold marble floor.

Boudicca did what any decent girl would do; she crossed her legs and folded her arms across her chest.

Yet the ugly baboon was so quick,

One moment the next
there,

Above her,

Below her;

So she gave up covering her body, resigned to the fact he was going to look and she

did be better off waiting with a clenched fist, two fists for the

Monkey.

bird man

But this monkey like a lone Mer cat male eying up a beautiful Mer cat floozy female who had deliberately wandered out of her family protective circle was

Mentally pawing,

Abusing her body,

And her mind.

But she was not a Mer cat but a human so he might have well beaten her up.

At least I still breathe; there are worse fates than this? Many of the hot night clubs of the empire have human/alien floor sex shows.

But this is not an alien, this king was something else.

Almost human but not quite.

She knew this was rape and promised herself that under the laws of the empire she did return and have

Vengeance.

And imagined a vet neutering this monkey king and see how he would like that?

Tzu Strath did not take female abuse lightly; the War Lord cherished women as they were the child bearers of the empire. He had his martial laws to protect them; Tzu saw women as contributing to the economy of the empire.

And would destroy this monkey.

“I must blank my mind as Diviciacus and the Shamans of Light have taught me,” Boudicca preparing herself for her ordeal; BUT

HEAVY HAMMERING upon the closed doors that averted the king’s attention turning his mood dangerously ugly.

Bird man

He bared yellow sharp fangs.

And the doors swung open and a Rock Dweller guard tumbled in, blood gurgling from his mouth.

BLARING sounds.

Loud military horns approaching.

Now Boudicca sensing escape suffered her naked affront with difficulty; why the monkey had just about eaten her green toga.

“Make way for King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix, true ruler of Planet Maponos,” she heard Bird men heralds shout.

And several heavily armored Bird men entered and King Dumezillian saw *their threatening malicious intent towards him*.

He could do nothing but stand and foam at the mouth.

Boudicca wrapped a mat about herself not wanting to be in a luring state now that the dreaded Bird man King Mingo Drum was here.

Her fate, what would become of her?

And the Bird man with the ugly scar across his handsome face entered the room and hope fluttered in her chest.

And he walked up to King Dumezillian and slapped his face very hard.

So a monkey fang flew across the.....room.

And Boudicca could not stop the revengeful smile.

The blow was so hard that the sound cracked across the room and out the corridors and the monkey king flew backwards into his throne, cracking his head there.

Bid man

Hard so a lump quickly *emerged*.

Anyway: “Quickly, gather up your clothes, we must go now, quickly,” Mingo Drum told Boudicca.

Now Boudicca walked past him holding the mat tightly about her.

Mingo Drum walked up to a chest against a wall and opened it; it contained spoils, and withdrew a female kilt and a soldiers' mailed vest.

He handed them to her and looked away.

She didn't need telling twice and was out of that flea ridden mat just like that.

The kilt was a size too small and the vest one size too big.

Boudicca was aware she did not look her best.

So was Mingo Drum who took her to the open doors.

Then shouts, the hiss of lasers and groans of dying.

The Bird man, whom she still did not know was Mingo Drum, thrust her to waiting arms for he had turned to wrestle the advancing King Dumezillian.

The ape didn't have a chance she thought as she was tussled into a secret door and along a sun reflector lit corridor, then she gasped as she was flung out into the purplish sky.

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Bird man

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For an instant she thought she had been flung to fall sixty feet to the sand below. But she landed in a net and was flown away by Bird men.

Now Mingo Drum wrestled King Dumezillian as his men held the Monolith of Justice, as the Bird people had once called the monolith where Dumezillian held court.

And the ape's remaining fang bit deep into Mingo's left arm as his right hand sought his foe's eyes.



Illustration 21: The monkey king bit his foe's arm deep.

Bird man

Outside Boudicca Tzu saw the remaining Cohorts of the Legion of Manticore arrive, carnyex horns blaring, standards fluttering in the warm wind.

She was impressed by their might and could see why her father had employed them under King Mingo Drum Vercingetorix as mercenaries against the Madrawt's.

The Rock Dwellers were impressed as well.

They scattered back into their monolithic homes.

But the Flowering Forest soon loomed up and while she lay trussed in the net, and wondered what had happened to the Bird man King and the warrior with the scar?

“My guardian,” she laughed for he had a habit of turning up at the right moment, saving her.

Would he return with her to civilisation and be her guardian there, riding the skies in her Comet Fighter as her flanking guard dog for the empires peace? She was sure he could be bought, were not Bird men mercenaries?

It would be really impressive, she would be famous, and a figure head and her flying dog a symbol of imperial power and enforced slavery.

She didn't like the enforced slavery bit, but when there was an empire nations had to give way and the slave trade was an accepted way of life.

To the victor the spoils.

To the vanquished, behold your fate,

The slave pens.

Bird man

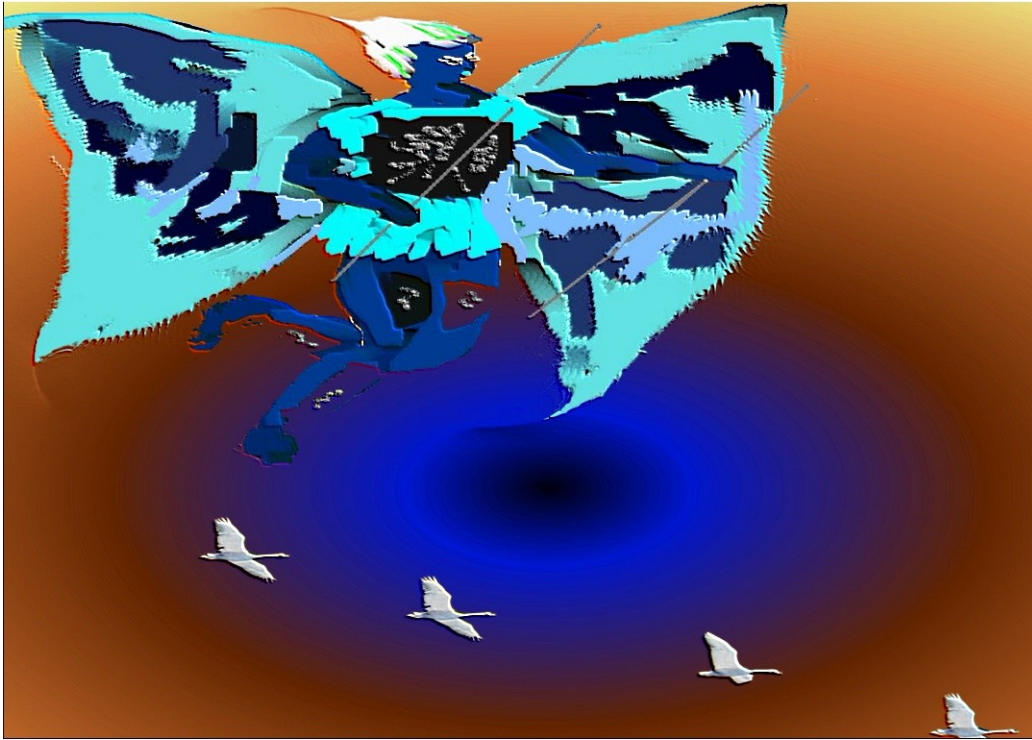


Illustration 22: The mercenary Bird men were slaves to the highest pay.

And an eye lay on the cold marble floor. It could still see Mingo Drum but could not send the picture back to Dumezillian who held his face in pain.

“One day Dumezillian I will give in to my people’s desires to reclaim our lost cities.

These lands are my domain.

My domain is my people’s soil.

My voice their laws.

The wind carries my law to all.

To all who live within my domain.

Live by my law or die Dumezillian?

Bird man

The choice is yours.”

So King Ming Drum Vercingetorix told his foe before he left.

And in time he would tell the human woman Boudicca this and she would disagree with him.

“Tzu Strath’s laws are the law, his courts for all.”

And the Bird man knew she was lying for Tzu Strath’s courts were for human/alien imperialists.

And he was a Bird man and the only justice he knew at the hands of the imperialists was rough.

Had he not found burnt Bird men and women hung from rock outcrops?

Was it not imperial law to neuter Bird people like stray cats so they could not have young and multiply?

Had he not found Bird children staked out as targets for imperial troopers to practice on.

Had he not found Bird men villages gassed and all within bloated, their skin peeling, eyes bulging, tongues swollen and choking, and all dead down to the last cockerel that wouldn’t crow with the sunrise again.

Bird men water holes poisoned?

Crops riddled with chemicals to destroy them?

And talked to escaped captives from the Star Dust Corporation and heard how they had been used as genetic guinea pigs?

“There is only one law here, mine,” he would reply to Boudicca.

Written from Memories from
Conservations with Mingo Drum Vercingetorix.
Vern Lukas,
Historian and Imperial Scribe.

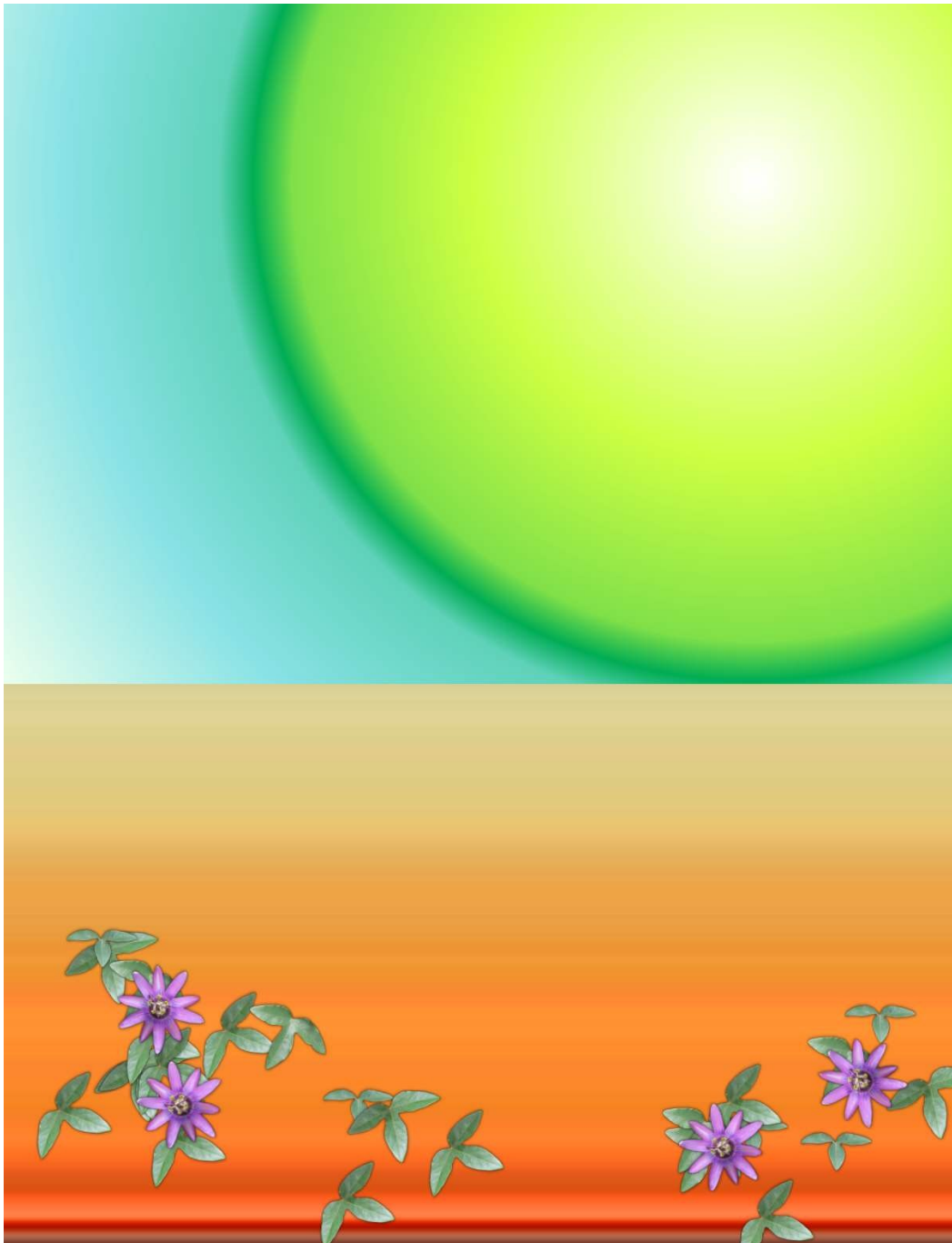


Illustration 22: Planet Maponos was a world of contrast and beauty where nature free from human restraints had truly diversified.