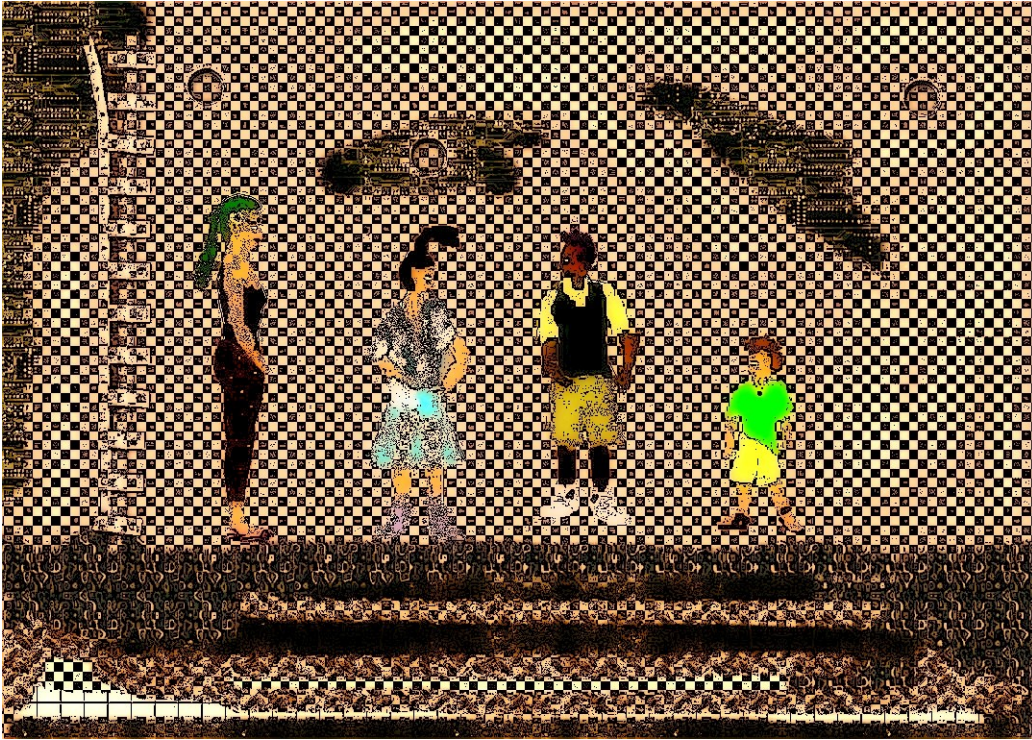


## The Man

## The Children



*Illustration 15: Heaps crammed in a dark hot ship's hold where vermin were a mock.*

The ship's lights were repaired now by engineer droids but the red light went on in the bridge; battle station would remain for they were not home yet.

And in the hold droids hung up blue party lights from the beams and rafters so the environment was softer and many children fell asleep now they were fed, cosy and safe.

"83F," Tintagel gasped and Nesta could see him wiping his sweaty forehead with his red and white spotted hanky as if he had done all the repairs and not the droids.

He was sitting down over a cup of tea and eating a cucumber sandwich a droid had brought him.

“What will he do with them?” Now Nesta did not address Tintagel as SIR, as he and The Man did not like to be addressed in such a way, but expected ALL staff too know when not to cross the line of familiarity: *jobs existed elsewhere*. And thankfully Nesta knew when to toe the line?

She also knew that The Man did not send his sacked employees to flesh markets for profit.

But FEAR kept surfacing in her, a virus was on overtime. She did not want to lose this job, it was brilliant, it was cosy, safe and had travel benefits. Also a hint of romance for she knew The Man was interested and that made the virus happy for it wanted him close for at the year’s end it would activate and kill him and itself in the process.

The virus lacked the higher values of humanity, of compassion, mercy and forgiveness.

“Sixty six children are a lot of trouble,” Tintagel replied as he checked star co-ordinates. “Double check,” it was an order and she did on her calculator.

“He won’t sell them will he?” And she regretted asking.

“Woman,” it was a rebuff but worked for Tintagel flicked on a screen and she saw The Man on a wooden sparse throne; beautifully carved depicting mythological scenes, truly a work of art and more valuable than a gold throne.

“Affairs of state for the dictatorship cannot run without him and he arranges homes now for our passengers,” Tintagel and then showed her on the screen a part of space she had never seen before.

*This indeed was a brilliant job!*

*It was high adventure.*

*And doubted even Aelfric or Posidonius had been here*

*Or even Emperor Augustus.*

“Phoenix Hope,” Tintagel pointing at a ball of blazing white and sucked another Victory V. Why Nesta hoped he would breathe the other way; the heat from those sweeties was awesome and more powerful than garlic.

“The planet is run by a single consul under The Man’s protection, we are heading there. It is a small population and the children will be appreciated and welcomed, all will find new homes. This planet is where he brings the orphans he finds in space; here they learn his ideals.”

“Ideals?” Nesta seeing hundreds of future dictators on the make.

“To love one another,” Tintagel quickly.

“Oh god oh no,” Nesta alarmed and Tintagel saw as they passed one of The Man’s satellite obelisks a floating body attached to it.

A radio message was transmitted from a clone of Prince Vespa; of course it was dead out here. :

“A FRIEND OF THE MAN AND ENEMY OF THE EMPIRE.

Nesta had been wrong; Aelfric’s tentacles had been here.

“How much do you think they got out of him?” It was The Man and he startled her.

“Everything,” and Tintagel looked at Nesta.

“They have to catch me first,” Nesta defended seeing her fate there for siding against Posidonius and Aelfric.

Now Tintagel sent a droid out and freed the body so it drifted away.

Then a war head from the ship slammed into it.

The clone exploded and became a

HOT FIREBALL.

Nothing was left, not even the clone’s left shoe. It was a precaution against bobby traps as a virus inside Nesta FEARED for it was a virus bobby trap was it not?

***Besides the clone's spirit had moved on elsewhere.***

At first Nesta did not think along these lines but was aghast that was how The Man buried his friends. And the virus seeing a chance prompted her to think unwisely for it sent thoughts into the right side of her head.

*“You are his friend, is that your fate also, target practice?” For it lacked the higher values of humanity although it sounded like a human?*

\*

Phoenix Hope was a bright derelict moon. No body wanted it for it wasn’t rich in ores, people to barter or anything.

So The Man claimed it as his own at The Peace of Augustus 50199 A.D. and declared it a neutral zone.

Of course those in the empire kept a close eye on the place, The Man must want it for a reason, and the reason was PROPAGANDA for The Man sent the orphans of space here.

And Phoenix Hope became a bye word for HOPE.

It made imperialists ill at the mention of the place and slaves rebellious.

And since it made Augustus ill no one was allowed to speak of the place in his presence, but not so Po Wei who saw it as a symbol needing eradicated from space.

“Hope,” a child slave would shout at Aelfric as he handed her over to Posidonus to correct for malicious misconduct for she did not want to be a slave.

“Hope,” the child screamed at Posidonus before she breathed her last.

So even Posidonus FEARED the future for all meet DEATH and what lies behind DEATH, something for the good and something for the bad and he was bad, ugly and not good

And all imperial spies sent out reported back encyclopaedia computer entries: “A haven for orphans, no weapons storage, declared neutral by Peace of.....” and Po Wei and Aelfric knew there must be hidden gold mines and they were correct, orphans lived there, whole generations had been saved from the streets. For beggars on the streets was *a sign that the government didn’t care.*

\*

“The doors are opening,” and her two companions ignored her for they knew she was excited because thousands of children waited for them on the other side.

Nesta was breathing hard and perspiring.

And they opened and a white light blinded them for Phoenix Hope was bright light from the artificial lights installed as suns.

So none noticed an asteroid shower pass through their false atmosphere above.

And brightness greeted them, the children were smiling.

“Greetings Dictator,” the Consul Tha Fios Aig said that was the signal for the children’s band to play the national anthem of Phoenix Hope.

An adaptation of ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ on Chinese classical instruments.

And The Man stood in his pressed uniform which wasn’t much as he wasn’t known to wear medals and gold plaids. So his yellow bandoleers, red cape, and polished brown knee high boots and pressed bright pink pantaloons certainly made an impression.

But power was shown for in his gold torc a diamond and in his gold head band another so they sparkled in the lights.

He was The Man and dressed how he liked and definitely needed a female's touch..

He liked to keep an image of brutal eccentricity but the children weren’t afraid, he had never harmed them.

Now Nesta believed what she had been told about him was lies. She was on Phoenix Hope, The Man’s planet where love existed and that was what he planned for the rest of space.

DECENCY.

Where the wrong are punished.

Where victims knew LAW existed.

His ruthless courts.

Where the weak knew they was safe.

Human, alien and robot under his laws.

He was the one who 'CONDEMNED THE GUILTY.'

Yes he was absolute and did it justice for he ruled wisely for he cared for his people, and here he was beaming love to thousands of orphans, his children.

And here is the secret of The Man, he was capable of loving anything for that is what he felt when he looked into deep space, love, a oneness with something unseen so he was filled with spring fever.

So he wished to share it,

he was an enema.

And once again Nesta like others wondered where he came from, indeed he was special.

So special Aelfric and Augustus knew he stood for a new order and the slaves, abused, oppressed and disillusioned waited for that special day when The Man would

be victorious.

Phoenix Hope unknown to the children had the best anti missile systems money could buy, for it had become a bye word and its enemies wanted it destroyed.

All children leaving it on life's big adventure spread hope throughout the empire.

So they came, two hundred ships and thirty thousand space marines and ten thousand trader sepoys to invade this moon.

The Major Domo had the moon's exact star co-ordinates in his circuits and Aelfric had drained those memory banks.

Now there are some who would sell their mothers into the genetic melting tanks and Consul Fios Aig was one.

The invading fleet should have been wiped out? That missile system was expensive and the best; children lived here not presidents.

And The Man walked off his ship into a trap.

And Phoenix Hope was so dangerous that Po Wei and Aelfric had worked together to destroy it. Of course Po Wei would tell Augustus a hundred enemy ships and sixty thousand dictatorial troops had been destroyed to enhance his victory.

But The Man had arrived and the band was playing 'House of the rising sun' in honour of The Man's house.

But Tintagel noted Tha Fios Aig was nervous when he had nothing to FEAR.

"I have brought you sixty six new children, badly treated Aig," The Man unsuspecting.

There was no warning.

Posidonus the evil one pushed through the band.

"Et Tu Brutus?" The Man cast at his consul Aig.

By the curl of Aig's lips Nesta knew death was present and now expected to see Aelfric appear behind Posidonus.



Now inside Nesta the virus became excited, it wanted its master Aelfric also; *hopeful to devour?* Its prescience reminded Nesta an alien life force lived within her; she would ask Tintagel for help in ridding herself of it.

“Too late sweetie,” the virus responded.

And Tintagel went and stood in front of The Man, short sword and laser pistol in hands.

“What the heck,” Nesta and joined him.

The Man noted and smiled.

A virus wanted some place to hide, a liver or toe, another body would be better then it could reproduce and clone itself and live.

NESTA WAS ABOUT TO DIE.....THEN IT WAS TOO.

And the curl on Aig’s lips was his defence at his own disgust that The Man made him feel like what littered a pavement after a careless dog passed.

Why Aig drew a laser pistol intending to assassinate The Man but ran screaming towards Posidonus, “You threatened to kill the children,” and was cauterised into bits by space marines behind Posidonus. So Aig fell believing he had paid for his treachery.

“Medic,” Posidonus shouted for Aig still lived for attached to a block of tissue his head; *Posidonus would get to play doctors later.*

And evil Posidonus used the children as shields for his men lined up their lasers on them and The Man knew what had been asked of him.

Now Nesta prayed to every god of goodness that The Man decide what action to take and to take responsibility away from her.

A sword and pistol clattered in front of her.

Then Tintagel added his.

Then she threw her weapons in.

The Man was not the beast his enemies made him out to be.

“No greater love is there for a friend to lay down his life for another,” it is written somewhere.

“There is a greater love, laying down your life for a child,” Nesta added.

“Bravo, what spirit?” Posidonus clapping his hands.

\*

And true to his word Posidonus kept Aig alive for six days on a door taken down from its hinges for the purpose of doctoring.

And he had no need to strap Aig down for Aig was just one large block of cauterised tissue with a ridiculous neck and head at the end.

The horrid thing about it all, this time Posidonus played his game in public.

“Thus treatment is given to the

Empire’s enemies,”

Was the sign tacked above the table on a pole.

So as the children passed on their way to trader ships they saw and FEARED and would be model slaves of the empire they despised.

A finger in this green bottle.

The spleen in this bright yellow jar and it went on and on till Aig was fitted into a thousand vials for a thousand planets.

‘A traitors’ remains,’ was stamped on each.

It was no different from medieval times when the heart of William Wallace was sent to Aberdeen as warning and his hands some place else and his legs elsewhere and and and?

And of the brain, just before Posidonus extracted the AWARENESS centre from it placing it all by itself in a special jar with filter tubes and oxygenated blood to be sent to Augustus, The Man gave his screeching war cry and Aig heard and knew revenge would seek Posidonus.

Aig was still alive, that part that made him who he was.

And in their public cages Nesta told The Man and Tintagel everything about her past; enough to hang Posidonus and Aelfric when ever they ventured into the dictatorship.

“But what use is that, we are prisoners destined for that door following Aig to to to JARS?” And Nesta felt her mind breaking but the virus was pleased, it could live happily in a jar especially if Nesta’s liver was there as well?

And The Man held her so she felt his strength in her and she calmed down. She would have calmed down anyway, but her body language had deliberately worked, The Man was trapped.

His smile was like a beam of summer sun and “Where do you come from?”

He shrugged and went red then gave her a big hug.

And the time came for The Man to be dragged from his cage to be whipped and weakened. So The Man snarled showing his white implanted incisors, “For effect,” he often said why he did this.

And faked moans and groans as they butted him with their spear shafts and rifle butts and pricked him with their blades.

And evil Posidonus seemed to be jumping up and down on the spot.

Then suddenly The Man took the whip intended for him and lashed his tormentors taking their weapons and killed them quickly.

He killed thirty men, both human and alien,

WITHOIUT THINKING,

FOR HE WAS THE MAN.

And did it without his bees?

For Posidonus had no children present so no control over The Man

He who condemns the Guilty.

So Nesta wondered how he did it, too kill so easily.

FOR HE WAS A BIONIC MACHINE MADE FOR WAR.

“I condemn the guilty,” he shouted sparing waiters and fanners who fled from

Posidonus who slipped on wine spilt from a fallen decanter.

So Posidonus looked up into the eyes of The Man towering above him so sweat broke from his face and dribbled from the evil one’s nose.

“I can give you life or death choose Posidonus?” And the silence was broken by the whir of the camera that was The Man’s camera eye; as hundreds of imperial troops took up positions.

“Loooooofe,” Posidonus coughed for FEAR had him.

And The Man could be cruel for Posidonus was under him and pressed down with his foot on his enemy’s throat till Posidonus went blue.

“I want fast ships and what children are left for my fleet is coming, hear me Posidonus,” The Man and the imperial soldiers became discontent at that news; they wanted away.

“I don’t have the authority to give you ships,” Posidonus coughed as the foot was eased off.

In reply The Man shot off Posidonus’s left index finger and stuck it in his belt.

“Allow Tintagel to pass,” Posidonus ordered and the troopers did, wanting The Man as far away as possible from them with his ships.

And Tintagel summoned droids from The Man’s ship to help gather the children and navigate the ships by typing in the star co-ordinates for New Saturn 12.....and the bees came and flew just above the imperial troopers.

“Truly a king of men,” Nesta sighed and a virus could live with that yucky talk for Aelfric wanted Nesta to get close to The Man so the virus could jump bodies.

An easy thing to do for it was simple life and knew what death was so could reason on a virus level.

It too was made of LIGHT!

*“He needs taming, he loves all but loves none,”* Nesta meaning he had not one woman to love special above all his courtiers, *“I will be that woman,”* and the virus was ecstatic, *“and he will not catch anything from me as the medicines on New Saturn 12 are the purest made so the most effective,”* and a virus was not happy and curled within its DNA strands for protection.

*“And because he The Man has self control for I have seen him looking at my bottom as I display it for treat I know he is tameable,”* so thought Nesta about he who stood with his arms crossed with his glorious folded silver wings, he who installed FEAR in the GUILTY.

#### Character Update Posidonus

Notes to historians on The Man, leave these updates were they are...

Born: 50123 A.D.

Posidonus had always been an unusual outcast, as a child and as a man. His father Constantine and mother Virginia had had a large family, planned by his mother who took it upon herself to be different from others.

A tall dark haired woman from New Earth of good family, wealthy, always at the front of society and as a child studious until her teens, then went wild, always the most outrageous, drunk, drugged sexually active girl out.

SHE WAS AN HEIRESS.

And it was she who sent fire to the shanty towns about Augustus and such notorious acts brought her to the attention of The Emperor George Apollo, Augustus's father.

"She has cleansed the capital of riotous elements," he was quoted.

But made the mistake of going from aliens to the bed of an emperor whose dominant wife married her off to Constantine Tarso from New Jupiter.

A far away place so was away from court and here she gave birth to ten children and the youngest was Posidonius whom she neglected for he was strange and ugly.

Some said some of the children were the illegitimate off spring of the Emperor George Apollo Sutherland and if true perhaps Posidonius was next in line to the imperial throne?

And young Posidonius became infected with his parents Hedonism and deep down hated his mother who did not live up to his 'sacred mother image' for she was a brazen harlot.

And his father presented no picture of a man to model oneself on for he was all that Hedonism stood for.

TO LIVE FOR PLEASURE AND NOTHING ELSE.

So Posidonius with the other children of the affluent watched actors in painted bodies play basketball against apes in nappies, so became ill with Hedonism," Tintagel his Chronicles vol: 6 pp 67.

"Posidonius was an extension of the illness that gripped the soulless wealthy of the empire," Tintagel Chronicles Vol: 6 pp 70.

“So when Posidonus started playing doctors was he merely trying to show love, compassion, a caring attitude to his patients, (the prisoners, slaves and such) or was he showing his contempt for flesh that was sold and bought everyday.

DOES POSIDONUS DERSEVE TO BE CALLED ONE OF THE MAN’S  
GUILTY AND BE CONDEMNED?

In his worlds the strongest survived.

Their genes bettered the human race.

There was no place for the weak.

They deserved to perish.

So Posidonus did not believe in any good divinity except for the laws of his emperor that protected and prospered his kind,” Tintagel Chronicles Vol: 6 pp 132.

“I disown you, you are not my son,” his mother Virginia to him for so shocking was his exploits they threatened to cause riots and harm the rich.

But some spark of slumbering fatherhood in Constantine Tarso made him give his son an allowance as he was banished from home.

“Did I spawn this monstrous creature?” This man asked often, Tintagel Chronicles Vol6 pp 99.