

Colour backdrop: Vegas, bright neon's, advertisements, domed cities, hotels, casinos.



Illustration 17: Llatchur in his nightclub

As taken from Nesta's diary.

Vegas was a free planet run by Don Llatchur the Strong.

A human of tenth generation extraction, a man who liked plaid suits and high heeled red boots, a pink Stetson and pale green cravat and no shirt for he liked to impress his admirers with his orange dyed chest hairs.

He also had a large nose and silver ear rings.

Splashed on bright cosmetics as fashion demanded and knew he wielded
ABSOLUTE power over life on Vegas Hotel.

And smoked local black cigars.

Vegas Hotel was crime gone over the top.

It was the fun planet of space.

And the Emperor Augustus allowed its existence because it was a thorn in the side
of the dictatorship.

Also pirates sold their wares here and the planet was a supply base for ships.

BUT TRUTHFULLY VEGAS WAS JUST A FLESH MARKET.

Behind it dark uncharted space existing for pirates and there was an unwritten
agreement that if Vegas Hotel was attacked by The Man the pirates would defend the
place.

Now others like Aelfric Europe hoped to use it as a base for the Trading
Association with him as ABSOLUTE ruler. A giant trading post that would stretch
into uncharted space from which robots would conquer.

THEN HE WOULD BECOME MORE ABSOOLUTE.

His face would be on postage stamps; *some things just never change.*

So the traders paid Augustus well to leave Vegas alone, bribes that amounted to a
sixth of imperial revenues.

And of course it went by Po Wei!

And if Po Wei was happy,

Augustus was happy,

Po Wei made sure of that

Cannot you hear the hounds baying and a man breathing hard running?

*

Posidonus was not so lucky when he landed in his tube on Vegas Hotel in its outback. Most known planets had their share of MUTANTS from the wars. Not many habitable planets escaped for you were either on one side or the other.

And still you got a mushroom cloud.

NEUTRALITY WASN'T IN THE DICTIONARY.

And Posidonus that evil person found himself swinging under a pole being carried to supper for he was it. And his head ached from a nasty gash, he also found a tincture about his neck making it hard to breath; *shame?*

Now curiosity bordering on panic made him struggle to have a look where the drip drip drip plunk sound came from?

To his horror there was a tin cup dangling underneath him to catch **his blood**.

Well who said "*What goes round doesn't come round?*" These mutants knew how to play doctors too?

Also a game called butchers? His blood would make tasty black puddings and enhance gravies.....black pudding, greasy sausages and soft fried eggs with heaps of runny HP sauce.

Certainly not dandelion tea?

Now when the mutants reached their destination they placed Posidonus and his pole across two Y beams, so he hung softening up by the polluted winds that brought midges, thousands to soften him further as a cook beats a steak with a mallet.

Posidonus shall we say was not happy, who cares?

Posidonus wailed, moaned and begged for life and sobbed so he sounded like a pig, but that just confirmed what the mutants knew already, he was a pig.

Posidonus was getting poked by mutant kids to speed up the tenderising process; they were ravenous. Green winds.

Posidonus was finding out first hand about the false doctrines of Hedonism.

Posidonus was half dead.

As for myself Nesta I was taken to a burnt out double decker space bus from which tinny music drifted out from.

Anyway inside, “Kneel woman,” a female guard whose face was a mass of tiny pock marks and helped me by shoving me face down so I was prostrate.

And a yellow dung beetle scuttled under my nose frantic to escape.

MUSIC STOPS.

That was a heavenly relief.

Now my guard scooped up the bug and swallowed it.

These were ravenous people.

A battered wing stuck to her lower lip.

Now I lifted my head and saw in the smoky light somewhere at the back of the bus a raised rattlesnake skinned leather platform; someone was shaking the rattles for effect.

“Crawl to your King Kernute,” the same guard ordered and prodded my bottom.

I shrugged and crawled up the moth eaten Chinese blue carpet;. I had already lost pride and dignity earlier.

MUTANTS sat in the seats lining my progress.

Half way down a man sucking on something pulled whatever it was out of his mouth; **a rat’s tail**.

The mutants looked as if they had escaped a bath of Aelfric’s; knew they hated me, knew normal people had left them to die and breed to die and breed.

But what made me want to vomit was the baby flies on the carpet and a spider ran across my face looking for a new web.

“1.....2.....3.....,” I began to count.

The spider entered my mouth and didn’t come out quick enough.

“4,” I managed.

I Nesta walked on until

THUD

A spear landed in front of me.

“5, 6, 7, 8,” I counted.

“Catch,” and a mutant threw me something.

I caught without thinking and looked down into the eyes of an alien whose decapitated head I held.

I screamed, couldn't help myself.

Dropping the head I jumped over it and went on shaking wondering when all this rubbish would end.

"Human woman why do you come to my kingdom?" King Kernute asked.

Now the lights about the rattlesnake throne brightened and I saw the grossest man ever seen. Rolls of flesh hung from him and I couldn't see where his knees started?

I noticed a rat watching me from a skull on a shelf above the king.

"I was kidnapped by that man outside and brought here," I replied.

"I have heard of Posidonus, who has not heard of him?" And the king sent men out for Posidonus. "But I don't know you," and he clicked his fingers and I was roughly snatched off my feet by apes from the ceiling, but upon closer inspection they were mutants with long arms.

They passed me from hand to hand till I was dangling in front of the king of a double decker space bus.

He peered into my green eyes.

Bad breathe.

He stroked my auburn hair.

Rubbed his fingers on my teeth and stuck his hand into my mouth.

I gagged and salivated heavily.

Squeezed my bosom so they hurt.

Pawed me.

Had a blooming good look.

He was a crap artist.

“I will either eat or marry you, maybe I will do both after you have given me a fine son,” the mad man told me.

“I am Posidonus, rewards will be given you if you take me to Vegas Hotel,” Posidonus told King Kernute as he walked held up by mutants.

So the king rubbed his left ear in thought.

This ear badly eaten by radiation fell off.

The stink of pus hit me and I vomited over Posidonus.

Revenge was sweet.

A wolf spider ran out from under the throne and carried the ear away for supper.

The rat in the skull scurried after the spider and ear.

“Why?” The king asked and Posidonus was stunned, he was not used to being challenged.

“I am Posidonus, friend of Aelfric and Llatchur the Strong, they will give you want you ask for my safe release,” Posidonus worried.

Now King Kernute knew what money could buy, he bought farm animals, human and alien slaves, booze and drugs but Llatchur would not sell him laser guns.

“A million gold dollars and a thousand slaves, all women,” for Kernute hoped to introduce clean fresh genes into his people, him first of course.

While Posidonus hoped Aelfric valued him that much.

And I knew a thousand women had been consigned to die. How evil was Posidonus to barter his useless life for their's.

So King Kernute gave Posidonus a message cylinder and he typed: "Free me or this mutant will loosen my tongue, Posidonus" and the message was sent to Llatchur the Strong.

"And you my dear will marry straight away," and I passed out for hanging up side down had got the better of me.

*

Aelfric got the message as well and knew his relationship with Posidonus was over. He took the cash from Posidonus's accounts and had Llatchur buy the slaves; now that cheered him up, humans were trash and deserved their fates.

Posidonus he would arrange to have a bath when he was safely back, no one threatened him, especially the likes of Posidonus and all the secrets Posidonus knew would swirl down the bath drain when the plug was pulled.

*

That night I awoke to the sound of something slithering on the grass outside the burnt space bus I was in. I tried to rise to look out the broken bus window and found I was chained to a rusty oven grill.

It looked like King Kernute was going to have his pie and eat it?

And my sleeping guard did not see the face above me.

I did and hoped it was The Man.

Already the green mists had made my skin itchy.

Already I had caught a bed bug ½ inch long and crushed it in horror.

Already seen a foot long red centipede crawl in through the window and eat a six inch roach.

Already I had enough of this mad house that belonged to a House of Horrors.

Now the face at the window was dark and an arm held out a stick with a noose on the end of it.

This was not The Man but an assassin and I had the choice of wakening my guard or what?

I watched the nose drop and tighten on the throat of the guard.

It seemed made of wire and cut deep and as the mutant's flesh was not healthy, the wire cut right through decapitating.

And there was Posidonus; his head wound open to the green mist a festering sore. He had escape on his mind, he was heading to Vegas Hotel and going to collect all that cash Aelfric was paying for him into his own pockets.

As for the slaves, he wasn't bothered about them although he would like to pick them as if they were sweets? The rest he could sell and that's if he was bothered for Posidonus wasn't feeling energetic at the moment.

And Posidonus wanted me as a hostage against The Man. That's why he put the gory noose about my neck.

Into my lock he stuffed a small rubbery pellet and a little BANG.

I was free and stood up but not for long as Posidonus had a knife at my throat and was dragging me to the window with the noose that tightened.

“Coming?” He asked as I tried my best not to get cut as I went out the window.

*

Half a mile from the compound of vehicles that was King Kernute’s coral
Posidonius roped my hands behind my back as I choked, gasped and panted for the
beast had pulled the noose tight to disable me.

Would I ever be free?

And Posidonius wanted revenge against Kernute; no one treated him badly except
for The Man, Aelfric Europe and Augustus. And someone did not like King Kernute
for it had been pure fluke Posidonius had seen the lit gas pipe.

A GAS OVERFLOW BURNER FROM A HEATING SYSTEM the mutants had
got going, and the blue lever to increase the gas flow was clearly visible.

AND POSIDONIUS LEVERED IT TO MAX.

Blew out the lit end and then scurried away to me.

The boilers the gas pipe fed were rusty and old and huddled about them hundreds
of mutants for the nights were cold.

Many would be gassed as the gas inside expanded and found rusty plates could not
hold it back.

And escaping was lit by the flames of small fires.

The five old boilers exploded.

FLAMES.

Then he started kicking me all the way to Vegas Hotel. Behind me I could hear the
screams of the roasting, did I feel sorry for them? Yes I did, although mutants they
did not deserve such a cooking.

“Halt,” and then Posidonius was shot in the groin and fell rolling in the muck where more disease for him lurked.

Let’s hope he didn’t have his inoculations up to date?

“Who are you?” The voice demanded again thinking we were mutants.

Whatever, the voice belonged to the big boot that found its way into the mouth of Posidonius.

Poor evil Posidonius, who cares?

Let’s feel sorry for him shall we?

Now the hand in the red leather glove that yanked him up was not human

Posidonius was sure of that?

“The Man has me?” He yelled.

“You know The Man?” The voice demanded and Posidonius found himself thrown roughly into the back of a black jet truck.

It was the Vegas Police that Posidonius stared at in the back of that truck.

“Help me,” he begged “I am Posidonius.”

“And I am Aelfric Europe,” the officer replied and put his boot on Posidonius’s begging hand.

There was cracking sounds and Posidonius knew not to ask for mercy for he would get none.

THESE WERE ROBOTS, PROGRAMMED TO BE CRUEL FOR THEY WERE
MUTANT HUNTERS.

They also knew who Aelfric Europe was and he had been talking to Llatchur the Strong their boss.

They also knew who Posidonus was, he wasn't Aelfric's friend any the more the more just TRASH.

*

From Tintagel's Chronicles.

And The Man was many light years away and he fretted for Nesta with arms folded and his silver wings tidied away.

She was a companion, unlike the other women in court who showed him their treats; Nesta was now a soldier, also a woman and he feared for her for he knew Posidonus well.

“He was also driven by a strong sexual urge and that makes a conqueror.”

Unknowingly he was falling for Nesta, it was not only the pheromones at work for The Master Priest was good at his job, but he needed someone to stand under the stars with and know YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

“To be infected by spring fever but it is not spring fever but a oneness with the heavenly spirit and a good thing. It keeps for morals and moderation and Nesta had it and so The Man knew she was like himself. He would not have to be silent on how he perceived things; he had found someone,” Tintagel.

“I will rescue her from Posidonus and bring Aelfric Europe back to New Saturn 12 to hang and rid Nesta of a virus,” The Man and Tintagel was satisfied, the termination of Aelfric was long overdue.

The gallows that was used for the execution of assassins that murdered rulers and child murderers and those who profited from the exploitation of others and of course, the drug barons.

AND THE MAN SLEPT WELL AT NIGHT. In a way he was no better than Aelfric who as a robot terminated humans because they were humans.

AND HE SLEPT WELL AT NIGHTS TOO.

And The Man knew FEAR as he imagined what Posidonus was doing to Nesta as he stood with arms crossed and wings unfolded and grunted that FEAR out of him.

*

“Any friend of Aelfric is a friend of mine?” Llatchur the Strong was telling Posidonus and gave him a black cigar to smoke. Except Posidonus wasn’t into that vice but coughed on it to show Llatchur he was his equal.

And Llatchur blew smoke towards Posidonus to cause discomfort. He didn’t like the man; he wasted good slaves *but paid well*.

“The blue room is ready for you Posidonus,” Llatchur knowing the genes and stem cells injected into this monster were making him stronger every minute.

Never mind Aelfric had handed over a million dollars into Posidonus’s account, soon it will all be his; he had just brought in a new shipment of slaves from the frontier.

“What about the girl?” Posidonus asked.

Llatchur replied with a false grin, this was a waste; then swivelled his chair about

so he could see Nesta on a screen. There was poor Nesta strapped in a chair with electrodes stuck to her head as her recent memory was copied from her;

ONLY RECENT.

A pity as then Llatchur would have discovered she carried a virus that saw him as a nursery for the billion off spring it was waiting to off load on him.

“No pain killers?” Posidonus asked hoping.

Llatchur wondered what a cute thing like Nesta had done to Posidonus to deserve this, and then what had any of the evil runts toys ever done to him?

Why Llatchur bit off the end off his cigar and spat showing disgust. Posidonus noticed and looked forward to the day he could operate on him, most ‘trash’ as Aelfric called them floated into his surgery. Since Llatchur looked better smiling he did arrange for the smile to remain till the last.

It would make for a more pleasant atmosphere, for Posidonus at least anyway?

*

Now Alexander Llatchur the Strong had examined the memory tapes and knew the girl was keen on The Man; but the question was was The Man keen on her.

Llatchur like most sensible life forms FEARED The Man.

Llatchur had more brains than Posidonus didn't he?

Llatchur ran a quiet place never looking for trouble.

Now he had Aelfric's side kick and suspected Aelfric wanted the girl dead; a building foundation could be found and have her thrown in the wet cement. But what about The Man, he heard

HE LAY WITH ALIEN WOMEN.

ONE SAID SHE WAS A SNAKE.

AND HE HAD A SON FROM A VIAL

OF SLIME.

So he better keep Nesta and give her back a lot wiser and educated? Even at a time like this he was thinking sexual profit; he was a man and Nesta stirred him.

Somehow Llatchur smelt he was in some kind of fix.

“Such the devious thinking of a criminal mind that goes beyond rational thinking,” Tintagel.

And on her first night there Nesta witnessed a pretty black girl on stage inserting needles into her body. Of course the male crowd drank heavily and didn’t notice the drinks were highly priced.

When she started using a fluorescent razor the customers bought anything just to get the waitresses dressed as zoo animals out of their line of vision.

The girl had been promised genetic surgery and any scar tissue would be removed; Llatchur was not Posidonus, he would keep his word, an ugly scarred girl would not make him a profit.

“Long live The Man,” she suddenly shouted and slit her throat and that wasn’t in the act.

Llatchur was furious, he was also shaken, who would do such a thing to themselves? *A person driven insane by continual customer abuse.*

AND THE MAN WOULD CONDEMN THOSE WHO DROVE HER TO HER DEATH.

The silence was complete, her act and words had got through to everyone here for FEAR had risen in them for they FEARED The Man for they were the guilty.

So in his anger Llatchur ordered her dragged off the stage and put in the fertiliser bin; she would not be needed again, no cloning, she would be an example to other would be suicidals not to worship The Man, it was he Llatchur see, that decided who lived and died on Vegas Hotel.

And the place was almost self sufficient and had vegetable farms under domes. Apart from cows milk there was also more profitable distilleries, and all needed fertiliser in the chain and the girl would be part of that chain.

And unknown to Llatchur he might be part of that chain when a virus said “Hello World” and woke up and ate him all up down to his last pinky.

Now on her seventh night Nesta watched a young man steal a coat and hat and walk towards the bouncers whom he had bribed to look the other way; then he would be out, stowaway on a ship or join the mutants and become a

MUTANT.

But he had only bribed them with himself and it wasn't enough, the Vegas Robot Police were waiting for him and took him round the back and beat him up real good; and since he didn't have any money he wasn't getting a doctor either.

A warning to the other slaves and it was reported to Llatchur that as he was getting roughed up he had shouted “Long live The Man.” For this Llatchur had his head stuck on a spike so the other slaves could see what would happen if any one else shouted

“Long live The Man.”

On the tenth night Nester learned that a customer had welched on a gambling bill. He wasn’t a girl so Llatchur had him beaten and given the medical bill that would take him forty years to pay off.

And Llatchur would have him clean the ovens day in and day out till thirty nine years later he had had enough and stuck his head in one and lit the gas.

SUCH WAS LIFE ON VEGAS HOTEL.

SUCH WAS THE LIFE OF THE VEGAS SLAVES,

The trash.

*

Colour backdrop: the deep darkness of space. 

A quick reminder of events elsewhere.

The Master Priest had awoken to see the face of The Man above him opening the latches on his exit tube

Alarms bells buzzed buzzed buzzed and an oxygen mask dropped to his face. It looked like an octopus attacked him.

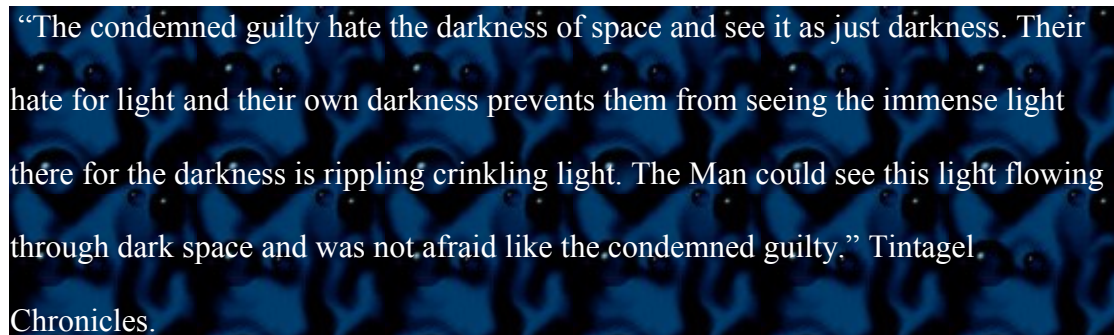
A fat lot of good it would do when he was sucked away into space to swell up and exploded because of the pressure.

“Nesta, I can save her?” He shouted at The Man who stopped the execution of the GUILTY.

So it was then The Man learned about the virus and Aelfric Europe had paid for its creation and very casually The Master Priest said “I alone can kill it.”

And to his horror watched The Man plug in his waste line.

“I hate you Cluny James Smith,” The Master Priest had said also “The devil looks after his own.”



“The condemned guilty hate the darkness of space and see it as just darkness. Their hate for light and their own darkness prevents them from seeing the immense light there for the darkness is rippling crinkling light. The Man could see this light flowing through dark space and was not afraid like the condemned guilty.” Tintagel Chronicles.