



*Illustration 27: The boy emperor*

Colour Backdrop: Yellow, purple, red grasses of Planet Rhigid; lots of tall red men.

Aelfric Europe was informed of The Man's approach so quickly he disentangled himself from Madam Butterfly Chou and hurried to switch on his private screen.

"I have him at last?" He screamed and did not think it might be the other way round?

"Who?" Madam Chou asked.

“The Man,” he replied and gave instruction for part of his fleet to close upon The Man’s ship New Saturn.

Now Madam Chou decided she must save The Man and the future of space. She would destroy this vile robot Aelfric but how? She gazed at the coffee table with the lacquered top of the Mona Lisa; for Aelfric being modelled on a human liked his luxuries and with that went vice.

He liked human wine.

Human women.

Human food.

And he trusted Madam Butterfly Chou and trust belonged to flesh and blood

Not cogs and ball bearings.

She plunged a wine glass deep into the back of his neck and twisted. It was horrid, blood splattered her and digging deeper with the glass saw wires which she grabbed just as he turned to face her.

ASTONISHMENT WAS WRITTEN ACROSS HIS FACE.

“You are a robot like me?” He gasped.

Her reply was yanking the wires out of his neck.

BANG and PUFF of SMOKE.

Whatever she had pulled certainly did something to him because he was sneezing flames and smoke was coming out of his mouth.

For good measure she rammed what was left of the glass into the front of his throat and slashed this way and that.

Aelfric tottered and fell backwards as arms and legs jerked uncontrollably as his tongue streaked in and out of his smoking mouth like a snake.

Somewhere in him was a tiny control box, she wanted it and taking his dagger from his belt cut him down the front; she had no idea where to look.

She stuck her hand in

BANG.

It was a very brave thing to do.

Robots run on high voltage.

Madam Butterfly Chou flopped on top of him like a fish out of water. Now Aelfric used his auxiliary power to regain some control and dignity in his jerking limbs and bowel movements and so throwing Chou off stood up and saw himself in a full length mirror.

FEAR had him, he looked a mess and being very much human saw what Posidonius would see!

HE WAS EXPOSED.

NOTHING BUT A JUNK HEAP OF ROBOT WIRES.

HE COULDN'T ANSWER

HIS GUARDS WHO WERE DEMANDING IN.

HE HAD CONVINCED THEM HE WAS NOT A ROBOT AFTER VESPA'S  
ANNOUCEMENT.

HE HAD DOUBLED THEIR PAY ALSO.

## NOW THEY WOULD SEE HIM AS A LOUSY ROBOT

AND NO ROBOT BULLIED A HUMAN AND SURVIVED.

“He typed into a keyboard for an electrician to be sent for and one was.

At that moment he caught a movement, Madam Chou was reaching for the wine beaker and he started to give her a kick in the mouth so she would need a dentist, but there was a puff of smoke and his leg froze sticking out like a sore plum.

Madam Butterfly Chou knew her ancestors were still with her and didn't need telling what to do.

She stuck the beaker and contents into Aelfric's exposed groin so LED lights blinked and disc's whirred.

There followed an almighty

B000M.

And Aelfric was thrown against the door and Madam Chou scrambled onto a bunk bed and did what The Master Priest did so often, and experience in working in beds had taught her, she EXITED his ship on a tube, a life boat.

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“Ships and a tube approaching,” The Man was informed.

“Take the tube aboard and search it well and send a welcome to our friends The Rhegid,” The Man.

There followed a twenty one gun salute but the boy emperor wanting not to be outdone replied with a hundred gun salute, then moved his ships to do battle with what remained of Aelfric's Traders.

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Smell: Overpowering stink of electrical fuses burnt out.

"We cannot get an answer," the guards complained to the electrician outside Aelfric's door.

The captains and admirals where here too, not happy as they had been given an order to surrender unconditionally from The Man.

And at last the electrician got the door open and all saw Aelfric sitting on the edge of his bed in a hooded robe, the room also stunk of burnt electric train engines.

"Fight, fight I order you," and Aelfric dismissed his captains and admirals who just wanted away.

And the electrician was confused, a medic was needed not him.

"Come here."

The electrician approached, the door slid closed and Aelfric grabbed him by the throat and disarmed him. Eventually the sailor looked up into his own pistol and the  
ELECTRICAL WOUNDS OF AELFRIC.

He understood.

He knew the truth of Vespa's radio statement.

He had been serving a dam robot.

He was a dam fool.

He was going to die and begged Aelfric for his life.

“Mend me as much as you can then I will let you live.”

The electrician went to work; he had his chance to live by putting the red wire into the blue socket and the green wire into the black socket but didn't, he had been offered life and besides the pistol was pointed at him all the time.

He was just an electrician with two wives, one on New Earth and the other on New Jupiter who didn't know about each other and each others kids. He should be going home soon he hoped on leave, it was the Augustus's birthday soon when Aelfric usually allowed a months leave.

He wanted home when the tree went up and the kids got their presents in their stockings and then they ate the turkey afterwards. You see he wasn't motivated by VEANGANCE and Aelfric shot him in each eye just in case some medic read the last images on the back of the retina and saw he was a robot and Vespa hadn't lied.

Now Aelfric exited another tube and dressed in gold chest armour opened the door.

“Madam Chou has shot the electrician and escaped in a tube and how is the battle going?” And wished he never asked and wasn't believed about Madam Chou either!

His captains and admirals had put two and two together and weren't dying for some metallic man; *'pull the wool over the other eye Aelfric?'*

Robot was scrawled across a wall.

Aelfric knew his time was up, blasted human crew.

And guess what, the electrician had died for nothing!

At least he wouldn't be around when his two wives found out about each other?

"I am alone all alone," Aelfric muttered in an empty ship and surrendered to the Red men that boarded, no resistance, they saw only a man speaking gibberish about being the ruler of space.

Well, Aelfric was taken to meet an ABSOLUTE RULER and didn't know any FEAR as his bits and pieces weren't working too well. Madam Butterfly Chou had really messed him up bad; and because he was more human than he cared to admit, was suffering shock.

\*

"I am Aelfric Europe; I demand the respect due to me," Aelfric shouted at the boy Emperor An t-each Mall who was alarmed because Aelfric was twitching and pouting his lips

at him. The electrician you see encased in FEAR had not repaired Aelfric well, some wires should have been earthed but were sticking out and it was obvious here was a robot who had forgot its place in society?

So why Aelfric got the notion he was about to be treated well from who knows? Just there was no indication of the savage beating that followed.

***Who says what goes round doesn't come round?***

I mean you don't rave and rant showing disrespect for one of Alien Lands most powerful boy emperors who didn't like Aelfric anyway; who had smoke coming out

of his body armour and he smelt of electricity gone off, like when a socket blows and burns the kitchen black.

And then Aelfric sensed something in the air, his robot bit did, and he sensed ION WAVES that are used to transmit matter through space.

*“Legendary ion waves that mankind has searched for but failed. The ions in a body are copied by a machine and numbered then sent ahead, then the originals ions are broken down and sent and join the copy at the destination and reassembled on the copy’s blank number by number but at hyper speed..*

*Like numbered bricks, whole armies, food, ships, medicines, all the works, perhaps like ghosts,”* Tintagel the Clone.

And the Rhegid officer read the ion copy print out and knew he was in the presence of a robot. Now Aelfric collapsed, not from the savage beating but because ion waves interfered with his circuitry.

But they still pushed him into the ion machine with a tag on his back.

“Robot trash,” it said.

Rhegids didn’t trust robots, they had a robot revolt five years earlier so saw robots as scum, worse, TRASH and knew how to deal with them..

WORKED THEM REALLY HARD OUT IN ALL WEATHERS SO THEY  
RUSTED UP AND PRESENTED NO THREAT TO NON ROBOTS.

Aelfric had come to the right place for a rest, permanently and what goes round comes round for he was not alone in this thinking that some life forms were TRASH.



So he reassembled on the back of a grided prison wagon pulled by eight legged beasts resembling water horses except they had tusks and a spiked spine.

“I am the ruler of New Jupiter and demand respect,” Aelfric shouted up at the guards sitting, one holding the reins.

For an answer one of the guards peed on him which set the other prisoners against Aelfric and he got another sound beating.

An t-each Mal the Slow Horse had told the guards to treat Aelfric as TRASH for he was a robot and they were.

And Aelfric looked out of his puffed eyes and knew FEAR for he was in the presence of horrid locking alien ruffians who did not need an excuse from the guards to beat him up again.

“Posidonus,” he heard that name mentioned and looked about his company.

“Do you know Posidonus?” He asked.

“Yes,” one of the guards, “a powerful man, friend of Emperor Augustus” but he was grinning and Aelfric should have been warned but he was enthusiastic to press on that he was a friend of Posidonus and be allowed out of here for he saw hope.

And the guard stopped the prison wagon and dismounted.

“Posidonus, friend of Augustus?” The guard and opened the wagon door and Aelfric shuffled his leggings towards the opening, he was getting out, he would make sure these men who beat him paid.

And as he stuck his head out and opened his mouth wide to breath in air that didn't reek with sweat the guard beat him about his head and shoved him back in with these words, "Show him what we do to the friends of Posidonius boys," and they did.

"This cannot be happening to me, I am Aelfric Europe," the robot moaned and it was happening to him, at the end of his journey they threw him out of the wagon and showed him his new home, it was about the size of a dog kernel and full of fleas, and a plate of watery slop was ready for him to eat as it was raining.

Afterwards he joined a chain gang draining out a swampy lagoon that was full of midges, snakes and crocodiles. And since Aelfric was a superior built robot cyborg having human flesh and nerves, he felt it all.

"Why are they treating me like this?" He would ask and the toad would crock and jump away from him. A pity he didn't investigate when he had power his enemy The Man, for he would have found out The Slow Horse Emperor's mother, a woman called Veig had once been ambassador to the Man's court and there were rumours that The Man had many alien women as lovers.

Why one was a snake with legs, another covered in fur and growled like a bear and The Man had many children from these unions and all had more than one head.

Strange The Slow Horse Emperor An t-each Mall only had one head so his mother wasn't one of these.