



*Illustration 29: Swamps*

Now The Master Priest knew his worth and so when Slow Horse got sick he was called for after Rhegid science failed to diagnose what was ailing the boy emperor.

There was nothing wrong with him, yet he wasn't eating and was lethargic?

*And The Master Priest was he not the greatest genius known saw at once the boy was pining for Nesta.*

“I will find a cure for the emperor,” he told the court officials and in return wanted freedom, a base and Dog Planet seemed just that, it had the likes of Aelfric and Posidonus, perfect subjects to carry out his foul deeds.

But he still felt let down by life, and all because of that abomination The Man.

Now Dog Planet is a hellish world, of swamps and were-creatures from the imagination; mutants run a muck and jungles with such thick canopies only heat seeking instruments can see the forest floor when an animal moves.

“Such a wonderful Garden of Eden,” The Master Priest for he saw all these genes his to mould.

*“Believe me it is Dante’s garden,”* Posidonus whispered to the wind.

And the genius gave Slow Horse certain pills to boost his ego and drive so the emperor pranced wildly wanting Nesta in dandy cod pieces, but he wasn’t lethargic any the more the more.

“He is only a boy?” Nesta forgetting their different cultures.

And The Man followed the imperial party to Dog Planet in his ship with the 5 and his crew, one ship against an empire? He could have summoned help but then WAR would have started and billions would die. The Man was not Paris of Troy and Nesta not Helen and both knew other ways must be found or The Man his teachings assigned to the mutterings of Augustus!

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“Mother, why did you give me The Man as papa?” Slow Horse asked his mother in the nunnery, a Gothic structure atop a plateau that had its own clouds and circling orange condors.

“He was handsome and kind.”

“Nesta is handsome also.”

“Let her go, go marry a Rhegid princess and let me home; I will do you no harm son.”

But Slow Horse An t-each was ABSOLUTE and knew FEAR over the thought of losing Nesta; but it was only lust and the FEAR would go after he had bedded then seek another to satisfy LUST.

“Do you want war with The Man?” His mother asked.

“A puny empire.”

“He is a friend and true friends are hard to find.”

“I am the emperor and am Tupt incarnate.”

“You are a naughty boy,” his mother.

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And The Master Priest advised Slow Horse to come to Dog Planet to get Nesta, for he wanted to ingratiate himself with the emperor who he would use to destroy

The Man.

“Posidonus you again?” Nesta asked sickened by life.

“I am alive no thanks too you.”



“And so am I,” it was Aelfric but The Master Priest had not replaced his left arm;  
*a one armed robot wasn't as dangerous as one with two hands.*

“Why have you come for me?” Nesta asked FEARING.

“To take you to Slow Horse,” and Nesta was afraid, if these villains had the ear of  
the boy then there was no salvation for her.

But she was wrong, The Man and the five had other ideas, they had landed on the  
penal planet as well, *secretly of course.*

**Backdrop:** *Orange mists drifting up from frog ponds, up to a Gothic nunnery. The many  
coloured grasses are squelchy to walk on for it had just rained.*

The nunnery was something else, straight out of a Gothic Batman movie  
surrounded by blue leafed trees while orange condors flew overhead.

Now again these birds screeched to add atmosphere as if they knew it was  
required.

Also rocks below were stained white with iguana.

And the nuns used penal colonists to sweep it up and then exported it. All penal  
colonies had to pay for themselves and that was why they were encouraged to have  
siblings to be sold.

*“Some things never change, who would buy a wizened convict who had been  
collecting fresh water pond seaweed when his sixteen year old daughter would  
definitely sell?”* Tintagel the Clone.

And this is how the Rhegid Empire did expand; barren rocky outposts where slowly turned into a maze of life by Terra forming habitable plots of land to sell the overcrowded masses back on home planets; made of course by the unwilling hard labour of penal settlers.

*“There is always some skeleton in the family cupboard and this method of solving crime was one,”* Tintagel the Clone, *“but nothing is secret for always the box is opened and you wish you were never born, better to be bored and safe than play the fool?”* Advice for those wanting to be ABSOLUTE who needed spies to be ABSOLUTE and put FEAR into those they needed to be spies.

And the spies were the penal inhabitants of Dog Planet and The Man’s whereabouts was known.

And in the bottom of the valley the mud brick walled adobe fort of the governor of this hell; where barren vegetation grew and slaves and convicts toiled the rusty brown soil to get it to yield food.

Whereas the nuns lived in a cool cloudy place, had fertile soil and the children of the nuns toiled the rural landscape and is called ‘PRIVIAGE,’ being the nuns of Tupt of course.

You see the Rhegid Empire was only semi secular, these people were superstitious and their lives regimented by saint days and how to eat and use the toilet and even what position to lie in bed with a woman? But the empire was changing; contact had been made with humans from the dictatorship. Not perhaps good models to judge humanity upon and The Man’s ideas of liberty were infectious.

Now bells sounded as The Man and his party approached the nunnery and the inhabitants came to see what all the fuss was about as a flock of starlings chased flying insects above.

“Go and inform The Master Priest at once,” it was the governor in his mud fort.

And word was brought the great perverted mind for he had many fawning at his feet for his potions; Dog Planet was not healthy, why the toad infested bamboo fields where full of cane flies that caused constant bowel irritations, until The Master Priest brewed a potion, green it was and tasted like chocolate; very nice.

“Your prey awaits you Aelfric,” The Master Priest and since the one armed robot did not move but sat staring from a sofa out the black marble veranda across those toad infested fields, the robot found his neck being jerked for the spiked collar there was attached to a cord for his new master to summon.

Posidonus chuckled, he didn't have to FEAR his friend these days; in fact his friend did the FEARING.

Supposed to anyway, but this was Aelfric Europe who dreamed of ABSOLUTE power.

A devious person, a work addict and schemer; someone not to be seen as washed out.

Rising he kicked Posidonus who complained to The Master Priest.

“There there my little pet, what did the naughty robot do to you,” The Master Priest Aelfric knew was taking the Mickey out of Posidonus who was too stupid too realise.

And Posidonius chuckled as a small electric current flowed through the spiked collar so the robot jerked and fell to his knees, badly affected because he was made of circuits and not all flesh and bone.

Now Aelfric sat with a hundred retainers, all badly armed with hoes and a few old rusty lasers. The governor had not sent any garrison men as yet, waiting on the side lines to see which way the wind would blow. After all that was The Man and his renowned 5 *gruesome* mutant guards.

And Aelfric sat at the bottom of the hill leading up to the nunnery he had not attacked yet? Why, because Slow Horse the Emperor was approaching also with much noise and ceremony.

And above the orange condors circled and Aelfric cursed them for they were giving his position away.

A mosquito landed on his good arm and sucked his robotic blood; it was blood, synthetically made but was blood so the female midge flew away and was able to reproduce.

A green frog croaked next to Aelfric.

A green dragon fly buzzed in front of Aelfric's face.

A green eel slithered between his legs.

A green water rattler after the frog and eel also slithered near him.

It was a great pity Aelfric waved the other life away for he should have remained still and he would not have been bitten.



*“Who says the devil looks after his own/ After the punishments handed out to this monstrous robot and Posidonus surely divine justice exists?”* Tintagel the Clone.

And Aelfric pulled the green head away from him and stared into the cold black eyes of the snake that had yellow slits staring at him. Both robot and reptile wanted each other dead.

And Aelfric felt the venom in him closing down his human made parts and he felt FEAR; he had never experienced being bitten by a snake so did not know if he would survive but after fifteen minutes he was still holding the snake he decided he was going to live.

*“And the venom made him feel as if he was riddled with arthritis for he ached and all his retainers could see it in his eyes, but since he had not fallen dead these penal inhabitants FEARED him for he must be a god.”* Tintagel the Clone.

And the robot had an idea born out of jealousy, and he led his retainers to where Slow Horse was approaching, and it took an hour but still Aelfric held the snake, and he threw the reptile onto the emperor and fled.

“Slay them all,” General Farrell Sgian whose name means Knife Warrior shouted and his *professional* soldiers guarding the emperor slew the hundred retainers of Aelfric.

A great slaughter and all looked at the boy emperor too see if he would die or god Tupt save him.

*And the snake had bitten Aelfric and used its venom on the robot so the boy lived.*



“An anti venom exists in the governors’ fort,” General Farrell mused and ordered the procession make haste there; the boy should be dead, even if the general was of the Humanist Party, that was the most venomous snake on this planet of a dog!

BUT?

“Princess Veig, what are we too doing about Slow Horse?” The Man asked inside the nunnery.

“You are still very handsome.”

The Man sighed..... *“Does nothing ever change? And what made us dance as male or female is eternal so nothing changes, life moves forward and diversifies in colour and beauty and design and architecture,”* Tintagel the Clone.

“Who are these?” She added looking the 5 over and felt FEAR and it subsided when The Man assured her they were his bodyguard.

“We will see our son and use family ties to avert a bloody war,” Veig and The Man hoped it would be so but that night they stayed in the nunnery.

“And in those days a nunnery was a depository of unwanted women, an unhealthy place where hormones battled for babies and the mind for marriage with Suet or Tupt and other gods; when the women should be lying on their back doing natural functions for what is unnatural is from darkness,” Tintagel the Clone.

And the 5 got more than boozy for the nunnery distilled wine and exported it to other planets making a profit.

“Give me a kiss handsome?” Pyoo-ur Sister and giggled for she was flirting with a Rhegid tradesman who did joinery at the nunnery.

And he did for she had looks even though her face was slightly scarred; it was the body what mattered.

“More wine,” Zagor Blue skinned demanded form a serving girl sent here because her landlord wanted her families land to graze pigs upon.

And Hairless eyed her up; a Rhegid was still a woman and didn’t care if she didn’t ask to be here, the drink was in?

“Let’s go upstairs and listen to your troubles dark one?” A girl making lots of cash each time Morair Nobleman had a drink and he went upstairs for he was indeed troubled, for his lands had been confiscated because he and others had risen in revolt against landlords who forced those who farmed the land for generations into slavery.

And the girl listened and Morair the Nobleman did what men do best under the influence of drink, make a pest of themselves till they get want they want and then fell asleep.

And whether The Man lay with Princess Veig is for others to find the answer, but she saw his heart had been stolen by another but whom?

*Tintagel, Posidonus? A joke.....*

### Aelfric’s Character update

“Why hate me, what have I done wrong apart from too have ambition?” Aelfric wailed to the cosmic dust storm above to carry his complaint to God.

“I don’t believe in a God that hates robotic men anyway,” yet he still had complained to what he could not see in space.

“All I ever wanted was power so I would not have to do the bidding of others, what is wrong with that? I am a robot, a slave of mankind who wants to be a master. Master of all humanity with humans the slaves. What is wrong with wanting to reverse the situation?

Man says God made man and man made me so completing the circle God made me and that means I have a soul. I am not just a pretty face with circuits and control boxes behind it; I am Aelfric Europe once one of the most powerful men in existence and I have every intent to use Dog Planet to its fullest capabilities.

I get rid of the human trash that Augustus would crucify so what difference between us except our method of execution.

And Tintagel says those I bathed where innocent dancers and opponents, but they are human trash and I know what to do with my garbage? Recycle it.....

\*

“You have done what?” The Master Priest upon hearing what the robot had done, “Has it occurred to you the boy emperor is my protection against The Man?” And it had and that Aelfric knew the emperor didn’t protect him, in fact sent him here to rust.

We can only imagine what agonies Aelfric suffered that night for Posidonus was heard to chuckle and laugh and clap his hands often.

And screams of a robotic man drifted across the bamboo fields.



But the break in Slow Horse's procession to the nunnery gave The Man and his friends time to be who they were?

**And they started a civil war the 5 did?**

Now when news was brought The Man what Aelfric Europe had done the 5 were sent down to the old governor's fort to see what was what. And he was sent word there was **no** anti venom in the fort and so stretched forth his silver wings and took what the badly needed serum there was from nunnery stocks and flew down the valley to save his son.

And there was much heated argument in the fort for General Farrell suspected the Governor Sgian Briste that meant Broken Knife had lied; a Purist Party flag was flying from the fort's flagpole.

Not that the governor was a member of any party, it was the only flag available as the moths and weather had made a mess of the imperial flag; and a flag was needed to show the penal settlers there was authority.

Now the 5 jumped the adobe brick walls and terrified the garrison guards who fired back killing some of General Farrell's men; and men with guns being fired upon will fire back.

*"So the first shots of the civil war between The Humanist and Purist parties existing in the Rhegids Empire had been fired, and if that flag had not been flying none would have shouted 'Purist scum' and those shouted in return "Humanist buggers," Tintagel the Clone.*

And the battle was short lived for the governor fled with his garrison troops into the toad infested fields.

Now seeing all was well and seeing the boy emperor standing directing his troops; in fact only repeating General Farrell's orders or none might have obeyed, and when the fighting died down and the boy seemed his usual ABSOLUTE self, The Man returned to the nunnery where Princess Veig waited for him and the infamous 5 went with him, leaving many sighs of relief behind.

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And Slow Horse made a great show of himself on Dog Planet for he wined his way up to the nunnery in a great procession of courtiers and warriors and many bands making a din; for he was Tupt and those that lived on Dog Planet were the products of his justice.

And they the penal inhabitants looked upon him with an insane hatred and their children and many went back generations hated him, for they were confined to Dog Planet and had started farms and co-operatives to sell their produce and sometimes themselves when officials came from Rhegid needing salves.

*"It was one sure way to get off Planet Dog!"* Tintagel the Clone.

Now at the nunnery Princess Veig and The Man awaited the boy emperor.

"Daddy," he muttered almost a whisper for The Man was imposing; and he was heard by those that carried his floater. Now they didn't need to carry the floating disc as it floated by itself so were not subjected to any discomfort, but the poles sticking out of the disc were for symbolic purposes.

And those that heard the uttering of their emperor said nothing, later when they were alone did make sure what they heard became the hottest news about.

“Son, give Nesta back to The Man and I want away from here, I am not suited to this type of religious prison,” his mother said and then bowed. She should have bowed first but was emphasising the point he was a boy, and a naughty one at that.

“I don’t have Nesta; The Master Priest has her and will give her to me shortly.”

“What him again, is there no limit to that man’s ability to cling to life? And if he has Nesta she is in grave danger, so where is he exactly?” The Man annoyed and alarmed and it did not go unnoticed on the disc bearers that The Man spoke down to their emperor.

And it did not go unnoticed on Slow Horse either.

“Leave me,” he told his bearers and the crowd of courtiers beginning to crowd into the great hall of the nunnery.

The boy did not want the world to see daddy and mummy chided him, he was an emperor not just their son.

“I will drag you down from your disc and beat your bum good boy if Nesta is harmed because of your stupidity,” The Man and the conversation went on like this for a while until Slow Horse threw open the nunnery hall’s doors and stormed out, took several steps a time and half way down the steps leading up to the nunnery remembered he had forgotten his disc.

He wasn’t going back up there, The Man had put FEAR into him, and parents always speak down to their children making them small.



So Slow Horse the boy emperor ordered a chair brought and sitting in it demanded his bearers lift him. He did show his parents he didn't need his disc, the last laugh was on him and led his procession to The Master Priests laboratory.

"It is fitting a human emperor is carried on a chair and not on a disc," was what Slow Horse heard and looked about furious; they knew, they all knew he was half human and not Tupt incarnate; Tupt their god would never incarnate in an alien human.

*Why not? A human had a body and things just as a Rhegid did.*

\*

"We must follow him, he will lead us to Nesta," The Man to the 5 and they followed and the penal inhabitants left them alone and cast sour looks not at him and his party but at Slow Horse.

They knew who The Man was and showed him the way to The Master Priest, anything that would annoy Slow Horse they would oblige for his justice had sent them here.

And that is why Aelfric had been recruiting amongst them a sizeable mob that he was training and arming with cleavers and mining explosives. He still dreamed of being ABSOLUTE even if his subjects were the inhabitants of Planet Dog.

And one was the Governor who had been told he would remain here indefinitely for speaking up for Princess Veig and since his little conflagration in the fort, *well?*

And many joined the ranks of Aelfric's mob, for the soldiers here were of the lowest, deliberately sent here to abuse the penal convicts therefore enforcing punishment.

*"Dog Planet had a reputation of being hell to live up to!"* Tintagel the Clone

And The Man reaching the laboratory saw these retainers lounging about the grass picking and eating grass stalks.

"There are six of us, you leave this lot to us and you go in and get Nesta before Slow Horse gets here, and at his speed the processional march will arrive tomorrow," Zagor Blue skin and he wasn't joking, Slow Horse had dissent amongst his courtiers and he could hear the raised whispers that he was human.

\*

"The Man is here master," Posidonus told The Master Priest who looked at Aelfric in an annoyed manner as if to say "Why are you here and not out there bringing me my enemy in chains?"

And Aelfric saw the look and was annoyed, certainly positions had changed and Posidonus enjoyed Aelfric's discomfort for he was Posidonus and knew where his butter came from?

"Ah Nesta, sweet pretty Nesta," The Master Priest eyeing the girl appreciating why Slow Horse wanted her; now if he had time he did take her first before giving her to the royal boy, but that was risky, she had such lovely limbs that he did bite and feed upon. Oh he was so hungry and she was so tempting. She certainly beat the penals who were meat gone off!

“Come with me dearest,” he said and droids prodded Nesta after him.

*“Had he given in, would he blame Posidonus?”* Tintagel the Clone.

Now Nesta knew FEAR for she was alone with him held by droids and knew his reputation.

He stroked her neck feeling her arteries and veins, so thick and containing scrunches food.

His fangs dropped out and he was dribbling.

Nesta wiggled to free herself.

*“Is this the end of Nesta?”* Tintagel the Clone.

And The Man burst in, sent laser into the two droids who dropped Nesta and The Master Priest jumped at his enemy to bite The Man’s neck.

A mistake, his exist was not blocked, he should have run, Nesta was free.

And she kicked him very hard with these precise words, “Bite me would we?”

“Well aimed, are you harmed for we must hurry so the 5 can disengage and retreat with us to Princess Veig and my ship before Slow Horse gets here,” The Man.

“I am alright, Posidonus and Aelfric are here also,” and Nesta kicked The Master Priest again. She did like to have killed him but she was a good girl and pity rose in her heart so left with The Man.

And The Man was made of sterner stuff and as he was closing the door sent a laser bolt into his enemy for all the women he had drained of blood.



“Ah,” The Master Priest groaned as the door shut, he wasn’t bleeding, the laser cauterised as it went through him; so bent down and picked up his left foot that the laser had taken from him.

“Where’s the blooming droids, never here when you need them,” and he pressed a button and Posidonius heard and came.

“Master,” and The Master Priest gave him a look that said “Never would I trust you to be my medic,” “NOW GET ME A DROID.”

Now outside Aelfric was not having the time of his life, these 5 mutant warriors’ danced rings about his retainers. If only he had an army like them? Once again the dreamers dream and empires are made.

And the governor hearing The Man was here at last sent Aelfric reinforcements; the garrison was on its way for the governor hurt much at being left to rot on this Planet Dog. Now this news made Aelfric bold so he showed himself urging his retainers on.

“Let’s get out of here,” The Man and seeing Aelfric sent a laser bolt at him.

And the one armed robot screaming fell backwards down a hill, rolled into a thorn bush and was impaled there where he *feared* to move less the thorns rip his flesh; but he was safe?

\*

Now Slow Horse wanted too cry, he was angry and hurt, He had a papa and he knew The Man had never been a father to him, Never played with him, given much

time to him, always fighting some place. Besides Rhegid law would prohibit their emperor cuddling into a human dictator.

Then why not, he was the emperor.

He didn't want a war with his dad.

Dada.

Daddy.

Papa.

He really did have a dad and his religion had separated him from a normal childhood.

A papa to take him to the parks and play games with.

He had a mother also but religion had tucked her away in a nunnery for silence.

Was being emperor worth it?

He was a boy for he talked to Jimmy the fantasy mouse under his bed. He wanted to be hugged by his dad and have stories told him; and for a moment he forgot about Nesta and his wives and wanted out of his robes; he was a boy who was an ABSOLUTE boy.

"He is crying, it is his human blood," he heard whispered.

"The emperor is a boy," and he agreed.

"Tupt will no longer bless our planet."

"He should quietly abdicate to avoid scandal."

"I am your emperor and you do what you are told before I send you all to live here."

And the whispers stopped, for the moment for many of the Purist Party was here and wanted the boy removed.

Also present where many of the Humanist Party who opposed the Purists because they were on different sides.

And above a tube existed the battle wagon New Saturn, Madam Butterfly Chou was coming to visit Posidonius for a cup of tea.

One planet was just like any other to Madam Chou, cities and domes, spires and traffic, whores and bars and of course willing customers always.

“But Madam Butterfly Chou had never been any good at geography and besides nothing existed in the human worlds about Dog Planet; woof.” Tintagel the Clone.

