

The Man

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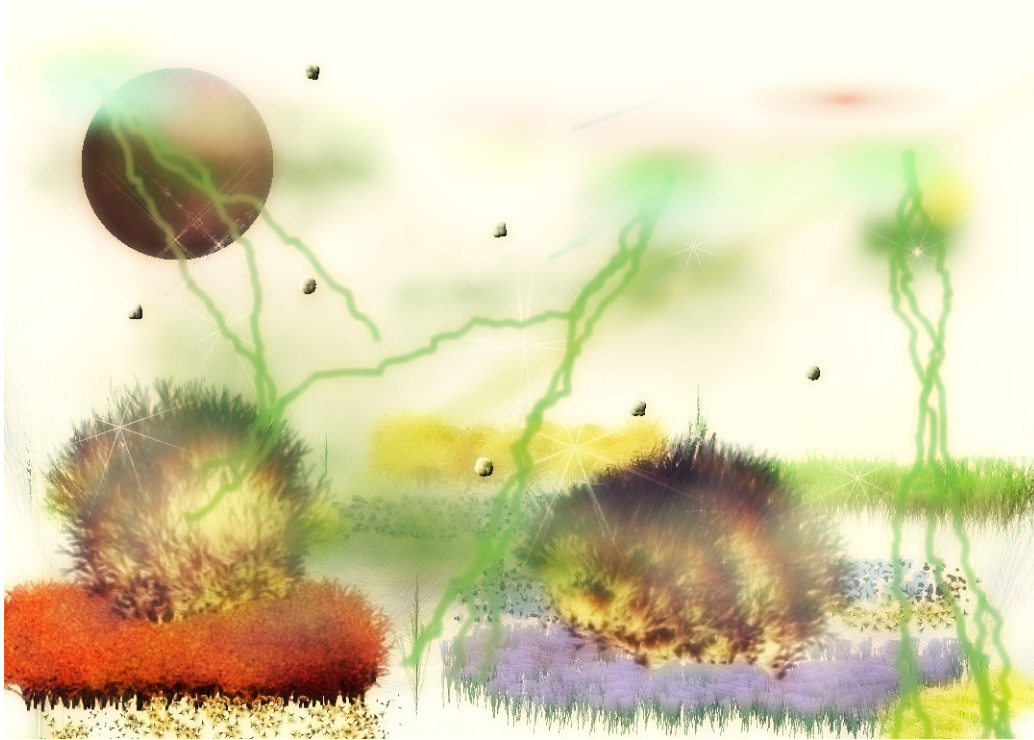


Illustration 8: Green electricity

New Earth 1, sky turning an insipid green, first signs of forthcoming mercury storm, the curse of new space and all planets. City domes just switched on their millions of bright lights.

Sometimes FEAR came to Nesta and not for the first time in her short life. She had FEAR of men and it had started early; an orphan and a pretty child she was brought up in a children's home and soon found herself sitting on the male matron's knees.

If she wore pretty things under her skirts he would buy her

Candy bars,
Dollies,
Let her stay up late at night,
Usually with him.
Had her own hologram television.
Cash to spend, his.
And his friends that she was introduced too.

She had been lucky, he really had taken a fancy to her, others he bored of had been sold to the Flesh Market; it existed, those with cash but no morals allowed it to flourish.

‘You won’t get babies if I touch you here,’ he had told her.

But she knew where babies came from so she ran away. It was hard eating off the streets at first. The strongest always took the biggest cardboard box unless you were pretty like Nesta. Then you got in but Nesta knew BIG BAD WOLVES lurked in those boxes and she was still very much LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

So settled snuggling up against warm heating pipes or went into derelict tenements; safe from the mercury storms and polluted winds.

Saw from the window a dog get hit by lightening and it fizzled away to ash. And some nights it got so cold, yes she remembered one bad night, frost set in and she stumbled upon a youth blue on the pavement. He had T.B. so was robbed of the strength to seek a warmer place and besides, who would hire his services with such a cough?

And when the hunting dogs of the police found his corpse, his undiseased useful parts would be removed and sold, the rest the incinerator.

Anyway Nesta shoved his bag of sniffing glue next to his nose so he could escape while he froze.

Now she was forced to seek the fires of the down and outs, a dangerous thing as they were mostly drunk or spaced out on drugs.

And that and her youth made a lethal combination; always the topic comes up and pawing hands.

And forced to leave and return when they are asleep but one wasn't, and when she dozed off in front of the fire he roughly clambered upon her.

He had hit her several times but she had bitten his nose off and pushed him into the fire to escape.

Another time she had found warmth outside a bakers vent and been set upon by muggers who laughing threw her clothes about. A passing hover car had not saved her; the driver had thrown her attackers dollars to encourage them for the SHOW was free.

Augustus William the Emperor loved muggers; they allowed him to live up to his name, The Crucifier.

And Nesta knew **fear**.

Mercury storm.

But the man in the hover car was not Augustus and soon became bored and a plan began to form in his robotic cyborg mind. So sent his minion Posidonus with a droid to clear away the muggers.

“Kill them kill all please,” Nesta had screamed in pain for the cold metal grills of a sewage cover stuck to her naked bottom.

And the droid killed them seeking them out of their hiding places.

And Aelfric liked her demands for she had not shouted ‘Forgive them.’

His plans involving her were called ASASSINATION ATTEMPT 19.

The Man must die for Aelfric to become dominate and for robots to rule, so sent Nesta to work as a child labourer in one of his factories putting aspirin into little bottles.

To become deliberately bored and see where power was held by those about her. The supervisors and teenage boys who pushed trolleys about began to abuse her. It was what Aelfric wanted and her way out was to learn that power was cool and could be got by siding with the factory manager.

And just like that the bullies where sent to the sewage works too breath in and corrode their insides. It was all about hate and Aelfric *was teaching Nesta to hate men.*

And Aelfric made an appearance and rescued her from her surroundings, showed her kindness and abused her not, for he was a robot predator and talked about the ills of society caused by The Man.

The Man’s fault, what a better place it would be if he was dead.

And she began to see his view point until one day he showed her Posidonus at work playing doctors on an opponent.

“Never send me to him please?” She had begged as Posidonius removed something and dangled it in front of his foe.

“If you are a good girl,” Aelfric had replied and Nesta had thought wanted to abuse her body but it was her mind he was after, so never mentioned The Man’s labour laws prohibiting child labour and abuse.

But Nesta had intelligence and it protected her for she saw through Aelfric’s lies and knew there was a better world out side.

And one day Aelfric drugged her, a powder in her soft drink and while she slept Posidonius *the doctor* inserted genetic implants provided by The Master Priest, who of course did not attend in person for he sought longevity.

And the razor blade cut marks on Nesta’s limbs put there out of despair disappeared, her limbs became shapelier and her chest more desirable by men, and in her brain a clock that while she slept spoke to her, ‘Kill The Man’ it crooned, and she wasn’t learning French but assassin ways.

“What have you done to me?” Nesta asked looking herself over in front of a mirror and for an answer Aelfric abused her.

SHE MUST HATE MEN.

And Nesta no longer trusted a living soul, knew FEAR and HATE and knew all about Posidonius who hired her as a kitchen porter in the second kitchen of The Man’s Palace.

‘With you gone Cluny James Smith we robots we be free,’ for Aelfric could dream for dreams were FREE.

Yes it was Nesta who had poisoned Simon the food taster and what had happened to the original kitchen porter, why Posidonus had allowed Nesta to see him operate on imaginary carbuncles on his back.

BUT THERE WAS A JOB VACCANCY WASN'T THERE?

And Aelfric rewarded Posidonus for he bought him two books, Micro eye surgery and Anaesthetics which Posidonus knew was a joke so made sure he laughed loudly for he never used them.

And Aelfric knew he never used them and “You should have been made a robot,” for robots knew about pain when they were dumped in junk yards by their human masters.

Had their precious metals ripped out of their circuits?

The castors and ball bearings removed.

Oh the pain, robots were made to feel pain and felt pain shivering in a wet cold or hot dry junk yard.

“Well done Posidonus,” Aelfric said and Posidonus glowed.

And poor Nesta had FEAR for she wondered when KIND Tintagel would abuse her, everyone else had? And another FEAR, Aelfric had told her he had implanted a bomb in her that would blow if she talked.

FRAR and HATE of men a good combination to make Nesta work as an assassin.

And now she was in the same room as The Man and a clock was ready for action, but so was Tintagel the Wise who was using Nesta to catch and hang Aelfric and the evil Posidonus.

And Tintagel had great faith in The Man's presence for Nesta would see all that she had been told about the dictator was lies.

NEON LIGHTS.

"For men and women are at continual war," From Tintagel's Chronicles.

And Tintagel only knew one woman, Wendy the robot cyborg.

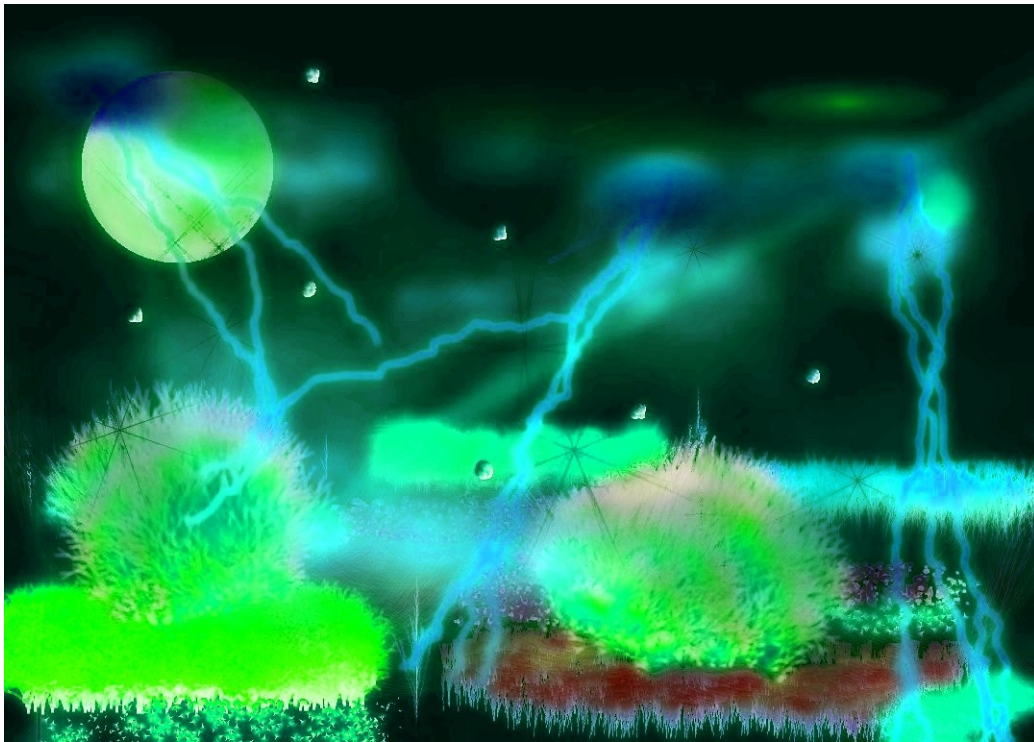


Illustration 9: Not safe to go out at night.