

“I am so sorry,” Mungo to The Elder who sat ape like with crossed legs with tufts of growing fur blowing in the breeze.

That wasn’t the only thing blowing for The Elder winded often and didn’t make excuses. If Mungo and that ugly lizard Malachi couldn’t accept age then he wasn’t accepting them.

“I will instruct a mazarrat chiseller to carve the man lion thing on his knees crying under the Heavens,” The Elder knowing Mungo wouldn’t make the change; he was a man thing like the tufts of new fur following the wind.

“Thank you,” Mungo.

Malachi peeled a banana for The Elder.

It went down in one swallow.

And then each looked at each as their noses wrinkled, scenting women with perfumes.

That’s when the arrow hit dirt and Malachi rolled under a rhododendron bush whose six foot yellow flowers hid him.

“Hey cub, you some sort of idiot to stay out in the open?” Malachi called at Mungo.

“Leah,” Mungo.

She was there and she wasn’t Leah any more.

## Mungo

She was bigger, her blond hair entwined with gold bands reaching her knees at the back.

And the solid green eyes peering from bronze helmet slits could be anyone's.

On her belly stretch marks from child birth and her charms hidden in silver cups except when she pulled the light silk cape back with anthropomorphic designs over them to use the bow.

"Leah," Mungo pleaded and The Elder was motionless from shock.

He had cousins inside Telephassa with big singing mouths and he was about to play dead which all his kind did when confronted with something about to eat them.

"Abel, Eve," Mungo upon seeing them growling for they were Leah's companions and Malachi cursed as his right elbow stiffened suddenly: arthritis.

"It's only Mungo," Mungo and very slowly Malachi came out with his arrow pointed at Abel; he would get one of the dung heads first before he ended up a lizard rump steak.

And Lord Vinki followed Leah chatting with some friends all on cloud 9.

"Wa," he as Malachi heard his elbow click click with painful arthritic resistance, but sent his arrow straight through one friend into a Berserka behind for so strong was Malachi.

And the friend was a Fermanian dandy and did not die well as expected of Fermanian who are brave and fearless for he screamed and screamed trying to tug out the barbed arrow head.

## Mungo

A mistake but his entrails were on fire and soon as he tugged would have none any way.

And something happened, Abel and Eve turned on Lord Vinki. They didn't like him for he threw them fish skeletons from the kitchens as insult to remind them they were domestic cats only.

Now was the time for freedom, like the wild mazarrats that sang nightly from cherry trees, "It's time for freedom, the Wild One's here," and Abel closed his mouth about a wonder Lord's groin and ate.

Never mind just another friend of Vinki and Malachi grunted satisfaction; they were definitely not Fermanians in his eye.

Now Eve, she chased Vinki away why Malachi seeing the opportunity attacked the Berserkas.

And heard a snake hissing.

"Are you to shame me again Mungo?" Leah asked of Mungo who held her tight.

Then a deinonychus appeared and raked a claw down Leah's back and fortunately only her light cape was ripped apart.

But she did fall and knock herself unconscious against a rock.

Just as a white object sailed over her.

And Angus Ogg had no other reason to help Malachi apart from self survival, he didn't like lizards just like the other humans.

*And maybe all of the new Leah wasn't new, she had remembered?*

## Mungo

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The way the Elder awoke from his fright induced sleep and knew he was still in hell for this was Mungo's cave.

About the floor gnawed bones and lion fur and fleas that were sampling him.

And lots of lions and Malachi and they were facing a large stone slab.

*What had Mungo been up to in here?*

"Mungo dead?" The Elder asked but getting no response forced his old stiff limbs to work again and got up. It was Sasha lying on the slab, a great gash ran between her bosoms and although attended too, it was obvious she was passing away.

"I always hand Leah to you, my rival in love, why Mungo?"

"Out of love for me," Mungo replied.

Sasha sighed.

*The Elder wondered what Mungo felt?* Then found three cubs rubbing at his legs.

"Mungo has broken down prejudice," The Elder looking at the cubs and attracted Mungo over who shouted, "These are my heirs."

They owned Red Hide's entire kingdom, and all that Mungo saw from a red star fruit to a yellow metallic bird that flew over these lands.

And the smile faded on Sasha's lips as her soul went down a lighted tunnel and she was greeted by Red Hide her father on the other side..

"Am I late? John Wrexham sent me?" The vet entering the cave just as Mungo roared.

## Mungo

“Guess he was too late,” Cameron Black to John hearing the roar and then the roars of many lions down the hill at the ranch.

“Yep, pity we haven’t told him we isn’t cloning her,” John replied and then an earth quake struck.

A high place for human gods crumpled a hundred yards from them and a priest fell upon his dagger from fear thinking it was doomsday.

Now Cameron Black had been thinking of using Sasha’s skin for a new winter robe.

John about her head as a new trophy.

“Yep, she sure was wasted,” John added watching black smoke rise from a quaking nuclear plant nearby.

“Yes, but these three cubs will grow up and then what?” Cameron.

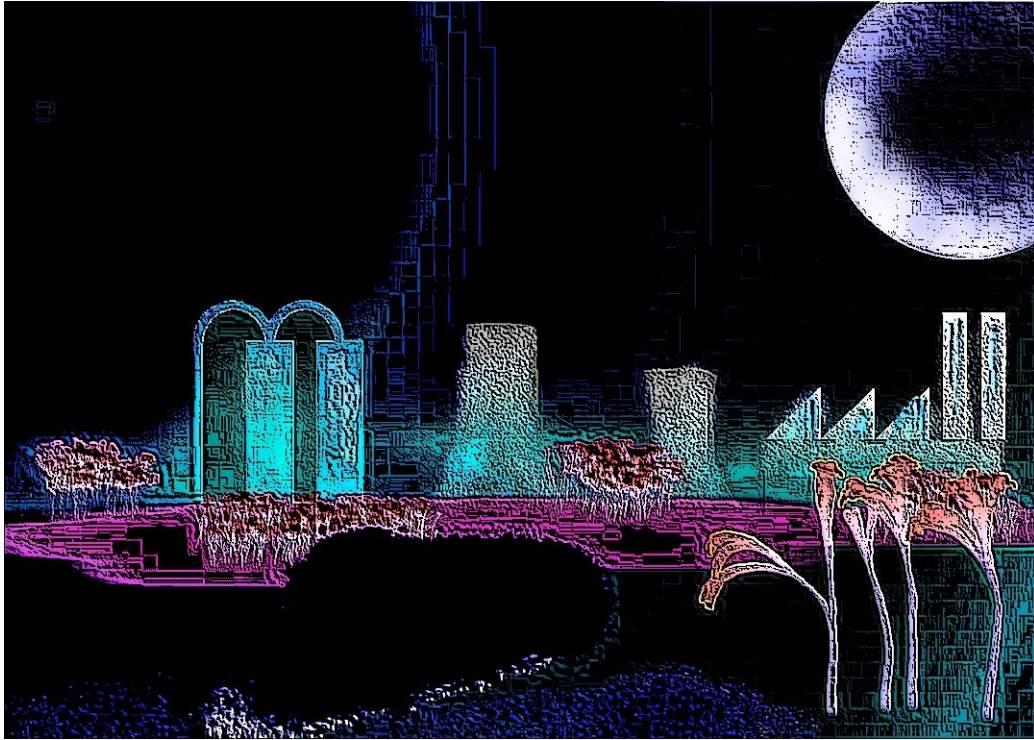
Both humans knew what the mazarrats sang; no lion brat was going to be their king.

And made their way to a group of men holding pha for the vet to return.

And that night Mungo dreamed of a beautiful woman beckoning him to her arms and when he accepted she bit him on the neck, filling him with poison.

“I am too late my love,” a white lioness coming and passed straight through his dream and out the cave walls for she was a spirit.

So Mungo awoke and tried to fall upon his sword but Malachi awoken by the shouts stopped him and summoned the harpist.



*Illustration 28: Nuclear reactors*

And Mungo also dreamed of a stone cairn a hundred feet high for Sasha, built from Fermanian prison labour *and hoped many would die, but this last bit he told Malachi not.*

“It was the end of her chosen road,” The Elder shouted but that didn’t help Mungo’s grief either.

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It took a month working lunar nights and solar days to build the cairn and Malachi said nothing as he watched Fermanian prisoners of war labour.

## Mungo

“Food for Sasha on her trip over the River of Darkness to Light on the other side,” he had heard Mungo and had made sure Mungo kept the harpist near him always.

Just in case Mungo ordered out of the influence of the bad spirit that would tell him to destroy the prisoners as it possessed him.

And when the cairn was finished and filled with Sasha’s personal things, her robes and favourite gold torcs and bracelets, both ankle and wrist, The Elder sealed the tomb entrance with carvings of Sasha with Mungo riding into battle, then all went home as the red sun settled down to sleep the night past.

And none saw a grave robber approach.

“It is yours for Keira and some land down at Muddy Bend and a herd of pha?” Angus Ogg hopefully for what he had cut off.

“Can’t promise Keira, Mungo might object,” John mused over Sasha's gold torcs.

“He’s a past lizard lover,” Angus boasted.

“Well since we understand each other and I want a new white robe for winter,” Cameron Black and gave Angus a new laser pistol and a bag of coins to spend in Red Town.

For he knew what Angus liked to spend his money on, and it would be all gone in the wink of a night.

And John put Sasha's head in a large amphora containing cleaning solution before he would mount it up on his trophy wall.

Mungo and his friends never came visiting so would never see it.

## Mungo

Besides, there were many white lions on the Red Plains *and this was one of them he had killed with only a single arrow would be his story.*

“So Mungo’s history,” John and Angus grunted agreement.

*Maybe John and Cameron had a man at last to do the dirty work,* get blamed and take the consequences if he failed or succeeded, Malachi was still about!

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Nannaha did not look herself for Vinki had paid for gene shuttle transplant to make her face softer and voice demure and figure richer for Vinki knew Cathbadh was a lonely man.

“There was no man alive who did not desire the old Nannaha except one, now even Mungo can be added to the list of hopefuls,” Vinki admiring the new Nannaha who oozed trouble in the form of sexual pheromones and curves.

“Vinki speaks the truth,” mazarrats sang from rhododendron trees, “Mungo lies with any woman as long as she is fair for he grieves for Sasha.”

Now Vinki took Nannaha into Cathbadh’s gardens and left her there to be found by Cathbadh who did eventually, for the garden was a peaceful place to think and have ones heart calmed.

“What is your name?” Cathbadh.

“Nannaha and she fell so he could wipe his feet on her perfumed hair.



## Mungo

And he found her hair soft and smooth and was aroused and said, “Nannaha I hear is the queen of harlots and more fair than the moon goddess and is a nymph for she has wings?”

“I hear Cathbadh is a lame blind beggar who sits outside the public baths,” she boldly replied.

And this boldness and dig at gossip spreaders amused him and he was attracted to her wit.

And that is not all he was attracted too.

For Nannaha knew how to bow so her spine was curved in just the right posture to make it appealing, so her bottom rose into the air and was rounded and covered in fine muslin only; so Cathbadh lost his reason.

And he walked about her admiring all he saw and lust completely filled his head.

*“I am a single man, the gods have answered my prayers for a companion and who more fitting than the highest comforter in the land, Artebrates thrown aside harlot.”*

And he took her into his house and joyed with her and she made sure he thought of nothing but her.

*Hiss.*

