

“I don’t think you are my daughter any more?” The hunch back watching Leah suck life out of rats.

In reply she offered him a shrivelled carcase and when he refused she opened her mouth dropping her bottom jaw too swallow.

In true Fermanian fashion as is the way of snakes their cousins.

And the wily Serrant also.

So slowly the rodent went down her throat as a bulge.

The oily coat allowing it quick passage down to her stomach.

The ringed tail slowly disappeared like a piece of spaghetti.

With the usual wiggle at the end that always sprayed the sauce.

“I am vegetarian these days,” he “but did cook you these,” and he pushed a silver tray towards her with mice baked in honey or mustard and stuffed with sage and red onion.

Leah hissed and showed her purple snake tongue.

Truly a Fermanian!

Fifteen minutes later the tray was empty and the hunchback finished playing with young Conn, Mungo’s child by the original Leah.

“I am satisfied,” but Leah thought he meant he had eaten already but he meant satisfied that the gene shuttles he was feeding them was working, more on young

Mungo

Conn whose scales under his flesh were dissolving as they were now foreign bodies as antibodies ate them up.

Leah wasn't as fortunate as Cathbadh saw her every day in his frenzy to make her more reptilian; a true Fermanian of course.

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John hefted the head up for nailing on his trophy wall.

"So Mungo's history?" John as Angus grunted agreement.

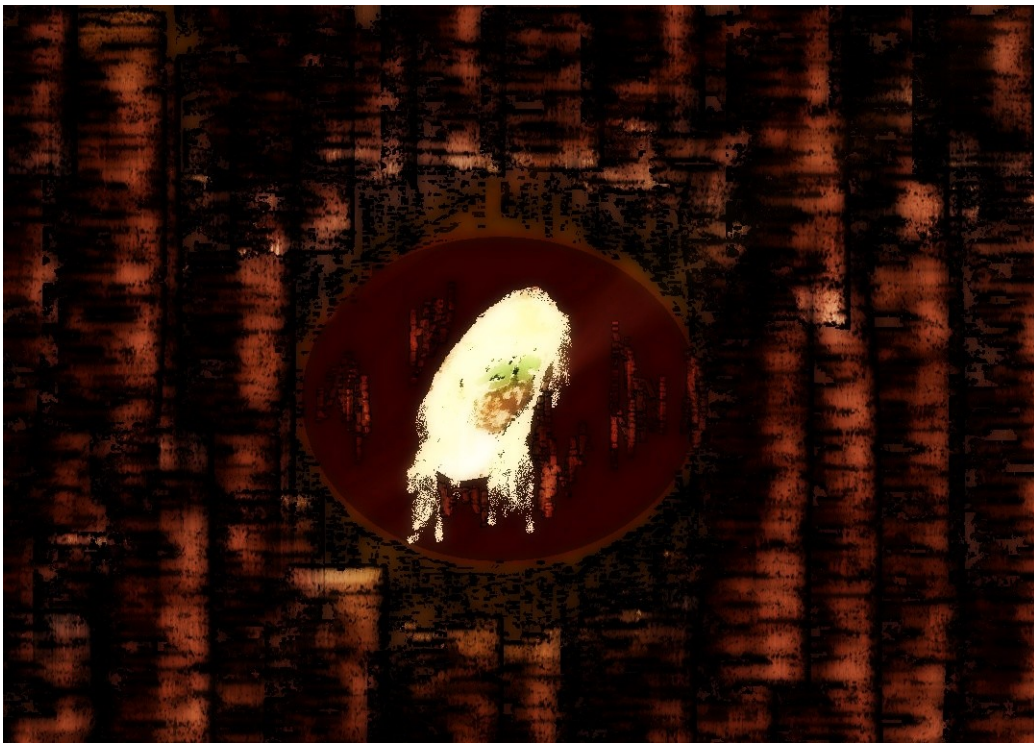


Illustration 29: Sasha was a trophy on a wall as she was lion thing.

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Mungo

And Nannaha spied on Cathbadh for her true love, Wonder Lord Vinki and Cathbadh grew suspicious for he had intelligence and although he could not prove Nannaha's ill ways, he suspected and one day confronted her.

"Don't you like me any more?" Nannaha asked making sure she dropped her silks but Cathbadh turned his back on her to prevent his eyes seeing then lusting.

"Leave my house," was his firm reply but Nannaha was skilled and wrapped herself about him and he lusted.

But he had warned Nannaha who informed Vinki who had a mob visit Cathbadh while he mediated in his garden in the early morning hours when the insects were rubbing their legs together in music and the flowers were just opening spreading their perfumes.

And the mob beat Cathbadh and prepared to hang him from a Rowan tree branch, and his weight would have snapped the branch and brought down hundreds of red berries.

And one smirked from a yellow sedan chair watching from the open garden gate.

Wonder Lord Vinki who saw the rope tighten and Cathbadh's face go blue and Vinki admired his own blue suspenders, "Such a lovely colour!"

Then a mighty sound of carnyex horns and shields beaten with steel swords and Vinki saw Lord Artebrates on a shield approaching, and the way he was carried denoted to all he was a general so beware!

Mungo

“Release Cathbadh or die?” Artebrates demanded and was ignored so signalled Berserkas to use lasers and one hundred and sixty of the mob died.

“Bearers take me away,” Vinki cursed knowing this day would cost him treble what he had promised the mob. “An easy task, even Carman wants him dead. Why? He is a descendant of King Sess,” and the mob believed Carman would not send Berserkas to stop Cathbadh’s lynching.

And Vinki had forgotten Artebrates a friend of Cathbadh was in Telephassa, and was not on poppy seed as Vinki believed for Nahanna was busy elsewhere these days.

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Angus could think of nothing else than owning Keira which was a mistake for a woman like her belongs to a man of her choosing and she had chosen Hamo.

And Angus waited at a watering hole and Mungo approached alone.

And Angus threw his lance and would have killed Mungo if an armed mazarrat had not dropped in its path.

So Angus withdrew, there would be another time to get his land, pha herd and Keira.

And Mungo carried the unknown mazarrat to Malachi and told what had happened and as The Elder chanted death hymns, they found a tree hollow and wrapped the body in leaves and placed it within as is mazarrat custom.

“The cycle of life goes on,” The Elder.

“Already hungry eyes are watching,” unseen mazarrats chorused.

“Water to the air,

Mungo

Elements to the tree,” The Elder.

“Already hungry eyes are watching,” mazarrats with hands on the shoulder in front perilously walking branches carrying the body.

“The body goes the way of its father,

The spirit to the power of all,

Join the elements good woman, your spirit is with the Ceugant Dana the white force,” The Elder.

“Already hungry eyes are watching,” the vanishing mazarrats taking everything the dead owned, her bow, copper sword, bronze helmet, one red garter, brown loin cloth and silver breast cups.

She no longer needed them.

And The Elder climbed down, an amazing feat for he was riddled with age as a green snake from bushes entered the burial hollow.

“Big fish eat little fish,” The Elder and walked away.

And none heard Angus get told never come to John’s house in daylight any more.

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“I don’t eat them any more, they should be free like birds or in my cage,” Conn said and the hunchback looked into his eyes, “*Didn’t the papyrus books say one would be wise?*”

Neither Leah nor himself took any notice of the firework display outside. Carman was celebrating the hunchback’s scientific success, a woman with a pouch could protect

Mungo

her young better than laying free range eggs, the death rate among the new born would drop, and their race was now guaranteed survival against mammals now.

They were about to evolve into marsupials.

A pity none listened to Cathbadh and his talk about a star ship that would make them follow the Tasmanian Tiger and Dodo.

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“Join me Malachi,” Mungo holding up a hand to his friend who refused. Once he had danced with Mungo and been possessed by something and was afraid. Let whatever that lived in all with no name be content possessing Mungo.

And Mungo threw off his cod piece and danced naked, unashamed for the no name spirit was not interested in flesh but his spirit.

But then knowledge set in that his parts could be seen by Malachi and he wanted to cover them and he was no longer innocent. He was a murderer among many names that now stuck to him and he grieved and his spirit pained.

“At least he don’t need the harpist like this,” Malachi and looked down the canyon towards John Wrexham’s ranch and was satisfied he saw empty crosses, Mungo had been obeyed.

And didn’t see John and Cameron Black standing with Peelock and both leaders held papyrus sheets signed with their signatures.

John Wrexham didn’t want mustard fever breaking out in his lands and Peelock knew it.

Mungo

And Malachi was wrong about the harpist, he should have been watching Mungo who wasn't dancing, but on his knees holding his temples, something was roaring in his head telling him to use the bomb, humans in a star ship were coming, this planet was meant for humans, the Fermanian way was over for they were more of an abomination than the humans.

They were dinosaurs that had escaped extinction but time had caught them up for **time stops for no one.**

And when Mungo neared, Malachi saw a resignation in his eyes and mistakenly put it down to a peaceful soul.

Anyway: There was a smacking sound as Angus Ogg drove a dagger up to its hilt in a lizard's stomach. He was one of many lizards tied to cacti hidden from Malachi's view.

"Is he The Wild One father?" Hamo pulling his dagger out of another lizard and wiping it clean on the next before plunging it home there.

"Even if he was, his work is done, we are up to Telephassa's third wall and don't forget the scribes say he must die for all of us," Angus eyeing the last few hanging lizards.

"But they are lizard scribes so why they say that?" Hamo protested.

"So, they believe in The Wild One too, that's what makes it so easy destroying these lizards, the fight is already out of them," and he swung round to get maximum power behind his dagger and put the weapon out the other side of the lizard.

Mungo

But Hamo wasn't happy, his father wasn't a great hunter any more, he was a crazy killing what he hated most, lizards.

"What about Malachi, I like him," Hamo asked.

"He's a stinking lizard."

Cathbadh

"You were my greatest pupil and your success is an attribute to me," Cathbadh told the hunchback who couldn't care as he was going to pull the laser trigger anyway.

First he would start below the knees just to see Cathbadh crawl about like an insect.

"I am glad I am leaving so hurry and do your dirty work," Cathbadh and turned his back on his assassin cursing himself for not getting the cloned hand back from the hunchback.

"Look at me," the hunchback didn't want cheated, "this is for what you did to Leah my daughter."

At least Cathbadh knew why he was about to die and where the genes for Leah had come from.

Then Artebrates arrived like a bad penny again and the hunchback diverted his attention to the door and never saw what dropped from the beams above flooring him.

"Holy Pterodactyl dung," the hunchback screeched as Moragana pulled his hair out.

So Cathbadh walked over and took the laser and fired a stream of light into the hunchback's body.

Mungo

Then walked away and pressed a button to open the door.

“My Lord and Master?” Nannaha asked bursting into the room attracted by the scream and saw the hunchback in a foetal position holding his abdomen.

“Help the little man out to die somewhere else Nannaha,” and Nannaha did so and pushed the hunchback down an open sewer channel in the middle of the road.

The vermin could finish him nice and slow.

As for the secret conversation between Artebrates and Cathbadh, well she had the room bugged and this is what she reported back to Vinki her love of her life. *Perhaps they were soul mates after all?*

“He was an abomination to me,” Artebrates glad his deformed son had been killed after listening to Cathbadh; the reason for the attempted murder was not important, Leah had been a produce of the vats, not a grandchild any general of Telephassa could wish for.

“Bread riots have broken out again,” Artebrates now told Cathbadh.

“The supply of humans has dried up, we must find an alternative food source for our people,” Cathbadh.

“What about grass?”

“Very funny Artebrates,” but the idea stuck in Cathbadh’s head, he had time to shuttle genes into everyone if Carman made it law so all could have a crop grow for grass eating.

“Always Carman, she refuses to believe in my star ship.”

Mungo

“Is there really a human ship?”

“It will be here soon, time is running out for all of us,” Cathbadh.

“If what you say is true then I might as well proclaim for Annunaki’s Legion and war?”

“I have told you the truth, the human captain’s name is John Clinton and unless we are prepared to meet him by force he will condemn us when he sees how we eat his kind, so we better make peace with our human slaves and make them our equals,”
sarcastically

“We are a mighty and fearless race,” Artebrates haughtily.

“If they can fly across space, they will have weapons only our founding ancestors knew of, we are doomed Artebrates.”

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And Angus saw Mungo dancing, alone, naked and full of joy.

“Lizard lover,” and Angus ran at Mungo with drawn bronze sword but stood on a sleeping cobra for he wasn’t looking where he put his feet.

And looked into Mungo’s eyes and screamed as he got bit and covered his own eyes and cut his cheeks in this effort.

Angus Ogg had seen love, it was shining out of Mungo’s eyes and all the filth in Angus had tuned to shame.

He just couldn’t look into those eyes and was torn to bits by the knowledge he wanted to commit murder.

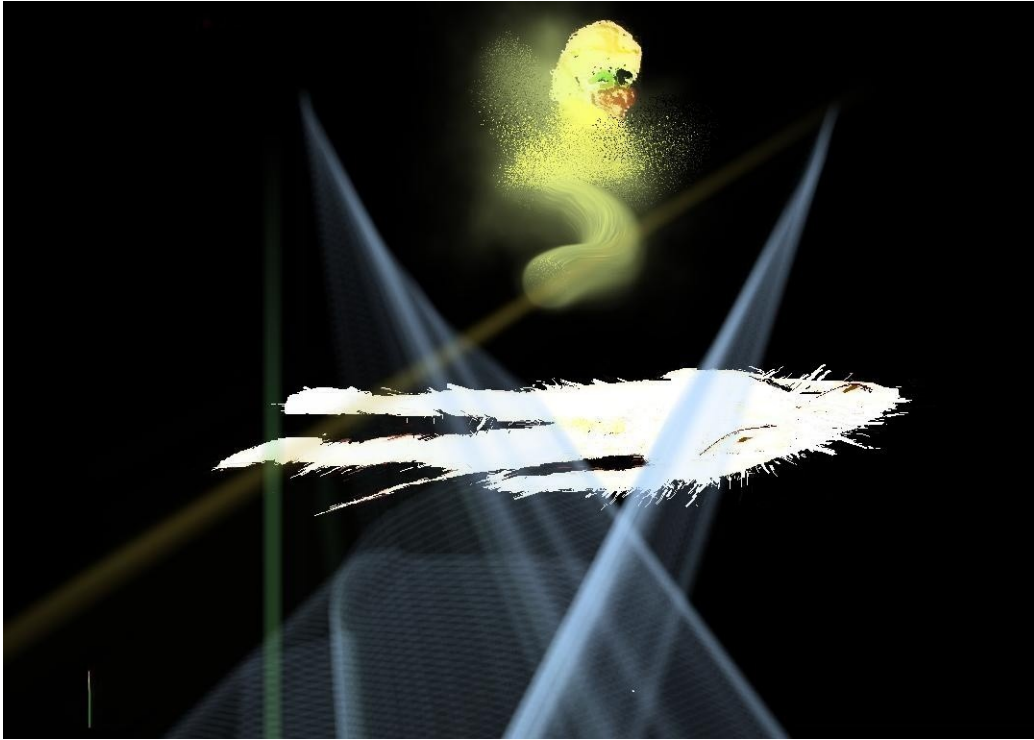


Illustration 30: And the rest of Sasha became a rug for the winter

“And the Unseen sent a serpent to guard Mungo,” a mazarrat sang so all mazarrats knew what had happened.

And Angus fled and Mungo did not follow but danced on for because he had repented The Unseen pitied him and remembered how Mungo could dance so had possessed..

“Even with the buffalo mask I know who you are Angus for the hate you bear me is in your eyes but I forgive you for it is your choice to hate or love me as Malachi does,” and returned to dancing.

Mungo

Now I The Elder witnessed and went and told Malachi who would have stuck his copper sword in Angus's back without warning and twisted till all bubbled out for Angus did not deserve an honourable frontal death, the way a warrior dies.

"Mungo has granted life, don't break his word so the broken word befalls you as blood of a murderer Malachi," and saw Malachi pained to kill Angus, "just make sure you are always with Angus when Mungo dances and think Malachi, how does Mungo tell Hamo, Angus's son whom he loves as a son that he executed his father?

Mungo in his present state of mind will hate you Malachi, his true friend."

And Angus Ogg was not interfered with as he lay in a bunk house waiting for the venom to kill him and did not know the snake had empty venom sacks for it had recently killed many rats.

But no sleep came for he kept feeling for his heart beat to see if he was alive.

