

Lord Vinki rode his riding pha across the grey slate plains towards Telephassa City. Already feeling sluggish as the red sun sank behind pink clouds behind the Moon Mountains.

Beautiful granite outcrops with snow on the peaks that mirrored the moons reflective light.

The icy glaciers amongst these mountains contained a bluish ice and they glowed like the moon in the darkness of the night; hence their name, Moon Mountains but Vinki didn't see any beauty in them; he was a lizard needing heated up.

And ahead he saw the towers of Telephassa embedded with gems that twinkling proclaimed, "We are rich citizens."

"Curse all human slaves," he shouted and his House Berserka companions understood, the sun was dying for the day and with it their body heat and their running human bearers would see them as they were, lizards, reptiles, evolutionary backward compared to humans.

Now Vinki must rely upon coelophysis for protection against Mungo's raiders for Vinki had not heard Artebrates had slain Mungo for he had been trading with Peelock and then off to visit his cotton and tea plantations.

Mungo

And then the twenty foot pha stumbled in the greying light in a gopher hole and Vinki walked air and broke both his human femur bones that stuck out of his gold helmet.

And would awake later in darkness.

“Bloody humans,” his last words as he was knocked out.

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“He has been to Peelock’s, look many of the pha are loaded down with goods,” Angus pointing at them.

“Then we will take from him what is ours,” Mungo replied looking down the hillside in bloom with red poppies.

“Will you lead?” Angus asked.

Mungo touched the side of his head, no the stitches were sore and he felt half his scalp missing from Lord Artebrates war club bashing.

“I will go,” Angus Ogg beginning to crawl backwards but Mungo restrained, “It is time for the younger ones, signal them forward or they will never learn fighting skills.”

So Ogg did as bid and soon the red poppies were moving as the young warriors crawled through them.

The Fermanians tired and cold put it down to a night breeze.

And Angus beamed fatherly pride as he saw his son Hamo lead the war party.

And Mungo thanked life Hamo was bright and quick thinking rather than just relying on brute strength like his father did.

Mungo

Ivor Novello was behind Hamo, built like a rock, brown eyed and haired and in his hands a blow pipe and spear but around his chest a bandoleer and two hand guns.

On his neck a diamond torc that had been rubbed with mud so it would not shine under the moon.

Lachie beside him, a small red headed man with a sawn off shotgun and on his back bow and arrows.

He also had muddied his gold wrist bracelets.

Behind him Kern a man who carried a single shot hunting rifle.

He wore a black leather girdle embedded with gems.

Keira was near him, the woman of the group, her flowing hair was kept out of her eyes by a thin gold beaten head band.

In one hand a small axe and in the other an automatic pistol.

And all carried a small shield with a vertical slit for a weapon to be fired through.

These were the young ones sneaking towards cold Vinki and his reptile Berserkas.

They wanted to kill all for it was said lizards drank fermented pee as beer. Lizards were disgusting so deserved to die.

They also had lots of jewellery to be taken off their corpses and explains the wealth on these young warriors; Mungo wasn't paying them!

"Sometimes I think Keira should not be risked," Angus Ogg quietly to Mungo.

Mungo made no reply, his head still hurt, and time enough in the future to settle old scores not forgiven yet.

Mungo

Now Mungo had let Keira join them because she helped him forget Leah, eight years was a long time since Leah had been with him.

It was good the woman was here, she helped make them a family. The nights were lonely without Keira who went from bed to bed making all one.

Except she never visited Angus Ogg.

“Good odds against the Fermanians,” it was Mungo’s joke but Angus didn’t laugh, he was jealous, Keira was on his mind as usual, so he still wished death on Mungo.

But death came to the Fermanians and the coelophysis who were all too sluggish for the night was cold.

A night lapwing rose in protest over the noise of gunfire.

Now Mungo ordered Ono and her lions in.

An arrow hit the lion’s brass body plates and snapped.

And a hunchback sat with Lord Vinki in the Fermanian camp, disguised as a labourer seeking passage to Telephassa and there Leah whom he hoped to take back to Mungo who would reward him with sanctuary.

He also hoped to assassinate Vinki.

“Forward men forward men,” Vinki shouted; he didn’t know what else too shout but didn’t want them following him the other way.

The hunchback decided it was time to get the heck out here.

It looked like the humans were about to kill Vinki anyway.

Mungo

That is when the hunchback on his pha sailed over the palisade walls that were on now on fire.

And Vinki recognised him and mounted a pha to follow suit.

“Save us,” Fermanian Lords and friends of Vinki begged.

“Useless circus acts,” he replied and followed the hunchback.

Then the humans rushed into the camp shooting anything still standing.

Some Lords tried to follow Vinki on pha but where shoot or pulled off and slain on the spot.

“Mercy mercy,” a Fermanian lord pleaded but Hamo shot him close up, he was Angus’s Ogg’s son all right.

And when most of the killing was done the looting began. Any Fermanian or coelophysis moaning was stabbed some more when one was cutting money belts off. Just to make sure the wounded didn’t have any ideas about shooting you and going to paradise for it.

Then trophies were sought, that was worse, some trophies were taken from the wounded.

They lost their heads that night.

“Humans must not forget why the Fermanian rule is coming to an end, because they are an abomination. Let not the humans become the new abomination,” a mazarrat sang and was repeated by many mazarrats in B flat.



Illustration 34: Moon Mountains and poppies

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And Angus Ogg was jealous of Hamo for he had gone with Keira and now sought them.

“Give this gold torc to Mungo, he trusts you,” Angus and Hamo suspected a foul deed for his father’s words were full of acid. And the torc was wrapped in lizard skin.

“Open it not Hamo, it is for Mungo.”

And Keira covered herself with new silken robes once the property of Vinki.

“He is The Wild One,” Hamo.

Mungo

“Tell him you wish to honour him for today’s killings,” Angus meaning the extermination of Fermanians, “you are my son,” Angus reminding that Hamo do what he was told, “Malachi can join him, all lizards can,” for Angus was appealing to Hamo’s hate of lizard.

So the boy went as was bid and as soon as he was gone Angus threw himself upon Keira.

And Hamo came to Mungo and Malachi sitting by a river and he spoke his father’s words to him and unwrapped the skin from the torc and handled the gold, then threw it at Mungo.

“What is gold to me Hamo?” Mungo asked and with a sword flicked the gold torc at Hamo who caught it from reflex for he was human, and valued gold.

With gold, “I could buy land from Peelock and build a house for Keira to live with me in.”

“You don’t need gold for that Hamo, your friends will help you build your house,” Malachi laughed.

But Hamo had fallen dying from poison that the torc was smeared in.

And Mungo roared a death chant and The Elder hearing hurried to Mungo fearing the worse.

“Murderer,” Keira spat at Angus and he laughed and forced himself on her again.

“Who did this?” Malachi asked the dying Hamo.

He did not reply.

Mungo

“I hate you,” Hamo coughed at Malachi who was taken aback.

“Why I am your friend?”

“You are lizard.”

“I am sorry Malachi,” Mungo for he was offended and drew his dagger to pierce Hamo with as if by that act he was cutting out the hate humans had for Fermanians.

But Hamo greeted him with a death rattle.

And Mungo plunged the dagger into Hamo and none knew if Hamo died by the dagger or the poison first.

But dead he was.

And Malachi sickened by hate asked Mungo to kill him also.

And Mungo refused and sat down next to Malachi sickened by all the hate which meant so many brave men being killed.

Then Angus Ogg arrived and was overcome by shock and grief for it was Hamo not Mungo who lay dead.

“You are banished from my side for ever more, take the body of your son and leave,” Mungo and Malachi understood the words and with a sword cut off Hamo’s head.

“When it rots pha hide will cover it as a reminder too would be traitors death awaits them, be gone Angus,” Mungo told the father who dragged his son's body away and he wanted to kill Malachi and Mungo, but feared death so did nothing.

And Keira seeing him threw stones at his back hitting him several times.

Mungo

“The blood of the mazarrat murderer is not on Mungo,” mazarrats sang from rhododendron bushes so proclaiming the fulfilment of the prophecy.

“Murderer,” one mazarrat added but who had she indicated, he who poisoned or he who pierced with the dagger?

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Now the hunchback led Vinki’s pha as he rode towards the Termite Castle Zigaratta, **twenty leagues** distance from Telephassa Termite City and had been tempted to leave the sleeping Vinki as dinosaur food but was afraid of being alone in this wilderness.

He was not Mungo of the lions brought up in the country.

The hunchback was a city loving individual so allowed Vinki to live for company.

And next to Vinki surviving Wonder Lords dozing on their pha also, they who had managed to escape, only the brave Berserkas dying as they attempted to make a stand.

Only **six miles** to reach Ka Zigaratta.

And Malachi saw the pha ride past with Vinki and stood out of the thorn bush and followed them taking short cuts. He hadn’t wanted to be with Mungo as he had been having identity problems; he was a Fermanian who was standing idle as Fermanian prisoners were being executed by John and Cameron.

When ever Mungo stopped dancing to the Unseen Malachi drifted away from Mungo, for it was the Unseen that that kept Malachi as Mungo’s friend.

What was Mungo fighting for, to make humans like John the masters of Fermanians, may the lizard gods protect Malachi then.

Three miles to Ka Zigaratta.

And then Malachi collided into Vinki's friends and was disgusted by their feminisms and they only saw him as an unlucky warrior to get trampled by them.

"Where are your men to protect us?" One asked.

"Humans everywhere," Malachi and went over to the now riderless pha and led it over to the thrown Wonder Lord, bent and pretended to check his neck pulse when he was in fact pressing a thumb deep onto an artery till the pulse stopped.

One less Wonder to poison society and indeed Malachi was having an identity crisis.

He had just killed another of his race.

"We will say he died from accident and you have saved us," the Wonder Lords knowing Malachi would suffer for the death of their friend. Now Malachi was also strong and a handsome warrior and they knew how to use their positions to corrupt young men.

Two miles from Ka Zigaratta and there was only two Wonder Lords left in front of Malachi who rode up the back of the nearest and sunk his sword deep into the side of the man's neck.

One mile to Ka Zigaratta and one Wonder Lord left and behind him a grinning Malachi who thought this game jolly good fun.

He was going home to Telephassa and wondered what changes had occurred, he had heard many of his kind no longer ate humans.

Mungo

And it wasn't due to the Modernist Party of Vinki for the changes, like Vinki he knew about the space ship. The future was for humans, anyone with brains was making friends with humans, trade was possible and were there was brass to be made and Vinki was making it.

And when Malachi thundered across the draw bridge gates at the third wall he was alone.

"Who are you?" A Berserka asked.

"Egalbenathan cousin of Artebrates and centurion over Decurion's and come to collect Artebrates back to the army camp," Malachi lied thinking what Leah was like these days, and these thoughts helped him to remain calm in front of the guards.

(And the hunchback did not wake Vinki up for he knew the Fermanian who had joined them was Malachi and was doing what he did not have the courage to do.

But near Telephassa they separated for the hunchback was fearful he might be next so deliberately took Vinki's pha he was leading and went quickly down a trail leaving the last Wonder Lord to his fate.)

Why Malachi thundered across the draw bridge alone.

