

Mungo

Lessons

“Rapist, dung head, barbarian, bully, a bad day when he was sired,” the hunchback comforting Leah in the flyer leaving Mungo behind.

“I should have killed him long ago,” Malachi grunted rubbing his skull, “the next time I will hang him from a tree and cut him into pieces and make him eat them.”

And only Leah with silent lips looked into the ferns understanding Mungo was none of these, he was a curious handsome boy needing some lessons on decency that was all.

Besides all he had done was look and there wasn't anything wrong with men having improper thoughts, they did all the time and she was used to manly ways; no doubt they had these thoughts when they slept and even before they were born?

“You had better bath when we get back, your Lord and Master will want his Number One Comforter tonight and he wants the snake dance and don't worry about the python, it's well fed this time,” the hunchback reassured Leah.

”On the fool that forgot to feed it so dance well child, Artebrates is honouring Wonder Lord Vinki's birthday,” Malachi and Leah shivered, she didn't like Vinki who was cruel, rough and made her do perverse acts.

“And what is unnatural any more?” She asked silently and both lizard men seeing her lips read her thoughts felt pity for an instant, she was Leah, a Comforter and it was her job to please by giving.

Mungo

And as Mungo ran through the ferns he roared many times and Leah looked down from the flying machine and saw him break cover often and wondered if he was truly The Wild One, the deliverer of slaves and perhaps he was?

And Mungo becoming frustrated thought of going to visit Sasha but changed his mind, she was bringing up a litter of cubs and they weren't his.

Instead excited over meeting the wonderful girl thing again he danced to what sang in his heart, Sasha besides was a long way off.

"He is insane," Malachi observed high above heading for Telephassa City.

And Mungo stopped leaping in mid air and felt guilt for he still loved Sasha and knew he had thought wrong of her, she was lion thing and he a man thing with more wisdom than beast so should know better.

"A roar of pain, maybe a yellow cobra lurking in the grass, let's see if he is dead," the hunchback taking the image analyser from Leah.

And saw Mungo running for Sasha.

"Your experiments going well?" Malachi asked.

"One successful self fertilisation," the hunchback looking at Mungo.

Then looked at the girl, she was to be the next guinea pig.

And Leah smiled a beautiful innocent smile back.

"I cannot," the hunchback and kept looking over the side, Leah was like a child to him, been associating too long with her, become a friend perhaps?

Mungo

“Artebrates would never allow it, she’s his favourite,” Malachi lied thinking he was protective.

Anything that could stop the infertile rate amongst their kind rising was welcome experiments.

And was Vinki’s idea to use Leah, a perversion if any; Leah was made from the vats and was as close to a Fermanian lizard so to experiment on would not risk any lizard folk; she was expendable.

“Its dangerous, hormones and heart failure, go blame the makers of the fast reactors, it’s their fault our race has a low fertility rate, blame King Sess and his war.

What about you Malachi? Want to father your own child? Volunteer to replace Leah, it would be like cloning yourself, as if you were ensuring your own survival after death in another body,” the hunchback inquisitively.

“I am Malachi and there is nothing wrong with me and many an Inn Keeper’s wench has born me eggs that hatched fine young lizards.

“Well I am just an ugly hunchback so don’t know,” the hunchback jealousy.

And over the next four years **time did not stop** for Mungo as cocoons’ became butterflies and Mungo had many encounters with Fermanian lizard men and his own kind so was known by his roar and during this time he caught a Fermanian, and kept him prisoner for four months to learn their tongue and it was Malachi. **pic**

And then the slaves revolted and were crushed and nailed in the forest for their putrefying stench made Fermanians afraid to breath in the cities and Appian Ways.

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And many round ups were held by Cities like Telephassa throughout New Uranus to replace the nailed ones.

And the power with no name knew Mungo was needed.

And the other he caught with Malachi was Leah the speechless girl and her captivity was not as long as Malachi's, only four weeks for she escaped and it was Mungo's fault for he adored her.

It went so, "I have given you much freedom to win your heart, many rabbits to eat and made you a sleeping bed on rhododendrons safe from creepy crawlies and yet you refuse to speak," just before she escaped.

Now Malachi a wise hunter had forbidden Leah to let Mungo know she was dumb and her status in life.

"Only his interest in you keeps us alive," he instructed her so did not teach Mungo the word Comforter.

"He worships the cups he stole from you in the past," and Leah thought Mungo was no different from Vinki until she saw Mungo revered them as relics because they were hers; something special to remind him of her.

"Vinki can go and wash after being with me and he will always be dirty for his mind and spirit is unclean," Leah silently.

And she remembered she had not wanted the job Comforter but she was a product of the vats, and a Comforter was a step up the social ladder and if she refused then back to the vats? She understood FEAR and was a senseable girl.

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And time stops for no one as rats sneak into granaries and Leah began to enjoy her work, it brought rewards as Artebrates Number One. He dotted on her and was kind but she hated it when he offered her out to his friends such as Vinki.

She saw Artebrates like some sort of unofficial husband which she would never have.

“Play the role of chaste virgin for if he ever realises you are a Noble’s bed companion he will treat you as Vinki does and cut my throat to boot,” Malachi advised.

And Leah silently “So what, Mungo is just another man and more moral than her owners who say they have morals and Mungo none, but they are wrong,” *and only her spirit heard her and communed with the Oneness about her, for being down trodden believed there must be more to life? And the Oneness that is the Universal spirit heard her and touched her spirit and she was silent, listening to unspoken words for the spirit communicates by spirit.*

And Malachi beat her to make sure she understood, for she was only a comforter, a slut handed out by her Lord and Master to his friends like some slave girl with no soul because his Fermanian god could never love her?

For that Mungo beat Malachi good and rubbed vinegar root juice into Leah’s welts to make the redness go and Leah joyed over his kind act.

But he threw salt onto Malachi’s.

“That white lioness bitch is jealous of you, string Mungo along to keep us alive,” Malachi but Leah no longer really believed him, Mungo she knew would not her.

Mungo

And Leah by looking at Mungo knew why the lioness was jealous.

“Apart from that salt, he feeds me well so let him paw, our lives are in your hands,”
Malachi also.

Now Leah let Mungo paw but not for Malachi’s reasons but because she was female and a law to herself.

And because of Malachi she urged Mungo to tell her the way to Telephassa from where they were.

“It would take forty days to walk to Telephassa from here,” Mungo, “but it would be quicker by road the lizard men built with slaves, then it is only fourteen. Now come ask me why I would walk forty days rather than fourteen?”

And she could not speak, “So be silent then, it is because of the Fermanian patrols and they have block houses along the road from which the road guards speak to each other.”

And Mungo told her too much for he was still a naïve boy.

For he was besotted and daily took her to bath in a pool. Of course after checking for water snakes and did pretend not to watch but she knew he peeked and was pleased.

And she remembered Malachi’s advice and did pick up a water lily and put it in her hair so would deliberately expose her charms by stretching her arms upwards.

And a lot of her forgot Malachi when she did this and did it out of female ways and she was pleased.



Illustration 5: Malachi would find his tail hung him.

Mungo had swallowed her hock and was about to swallow her float as well.

And often Leah would spit at Malachi silently, “he treats us better than you do our human slaves.”

And Malachi would reply, “He beat me good over you so do what you are told.”

But she thought Malachi a pig for it was not him who was the centre of Mungo’s attention who brought her sweet fruits, and even gave Malachi some, but not as much as Leah’s portion and some were not ripe so were still hard and green, and some bananas were brown and squishy.

But that was OK, they were for Malachi.

Mungo

And when she bathed he began to stand up and eventually approached her and washed her hair and back.

And found her scales were as soft as his skin.

And it was totally different from being owned by Lord Artebrates who handed her about because he owned her as some sort of slave with no rights, then she disliked them touching her; but remembered the Vats.

“Why must I obey Malachi?” She would ask herself often and answer, “Malachi says humans will be extinct soon so better know what side the butter is buttered on my bread?”

For Malachi had promised, “Do as I say and I will ask Artebrates to free you and then you can pick your own to comfort.”

And she felt cheap then for Malachi must have a low opinion of her and all Fermanians would remember her past.

She was tainted and fit only for drunks who would force themselves on her.

No one loved her, it was written in the books a whore belonged to everyone.

But the books were wrong, she belonged to what Mungo danced too and The Elder knew and she thrilled that Mungo loved her for herself.

So Leah played a cat and mouse game with Mungo but never slept with him, part of her had been trained for years to obey: and Malachi had told her to string Mungo along.

And Mungo gave Leah the choicest cuts of meat and Malachi just fat.

Many times cold fat.

Mungo

Just to annoy Malachi a young mazarrat let The Elder know since Mungo's heart seemed closed as it was full of infatuation and was not living up to his calling, 'The Wild One.'

And Mungo made a necklace of lilies and began to bath and was amazed how different he looked without dirt.

"Don't get too involved girl," Malachi warned, "slit both our necks," meaning Mungo and his mother Ono the lioness. For about Mungo's neck was Malachi's missing rib on a necklace plucked out long ago.

And Leah sighed, in the bubbling vats spawned her Fermanian genes floating and so sided with Malachi; Mungo did hate her for being an experimental creation.

And one day in the pool a snake slithered into the water and Leah saw but could not tell Mungo of the danger. So it bit his left ankle and pulled him below the surface.

And Leah ran out of the pool and into the cave where Ono, Mungo's mother was but could not make her understand the danger but knew something was a miss by the girl's frustration so descended to the pool.

"Quick free me," Malachi commanded seeing a chance to escape.

But Malachi had been secured well and his face muscle's shagged when he saw Leah could not free him, and resigning himself to captivity ordered her to escape and bring help back.

Mungo

And both stared into each other's eyes knowing she was going to obey from years of servitude. So Malachi stared her out for he knew she wanted to stay for she was treated well by Mungo.

Now while Leah fled Mungo found he was in the coils of a python and he cut its neck with his short sword and Ono pulled him from the pool or he did have drowned.

And Mungo could not walk for the ankle wound was deep so Ono carried him to the cave and Malachi hearing them knew what had occurred in the pool and offered to stitch Mungo's wounds if they did promise to free him after.

"My hands are torn from that reptile's mouth so cannot work the thorn needle and you have only three fingers mother," meaning Malachi would need to sew.

And the blood from Mungo ran freely across the cave floor and Ono knew Malachi's help was needed.

"We promise," Ono said.

"I promise you freedom," Mungo added when Malachi looked at him, therefore Ono climbed a rhododendron tree outside the cave to cut the vine that stretched down to hold Malachi about his tail, so he just dangled a few inches off the ground; so he would bounce up and down so cursed his own lizard tail and Mungo's ingenuity.

Now Malachi did have a thought to kill Mungo but he was unarmed so took a fire brand from the camp fire and cleaned the wounds.

And Mungo did not scream or faint.

Mungo

And Malachi lingered the hot stick more than he should have and was so impressed with Mungo's pain threshold he gave up torturing his enemy.

Then sewed with these words, "I know many a Fermanian who would have fought me to stop," and remembered Lord Vinki.

And Ono was very close to Malachi and that sobered him up and wished Mungo was a Fermanian for he was brave.

And when Malachi finished Ono put him into a pit and closed it.

"You promised freedom," Malachi shouted.

"First I seek Leah," Ono replied and bounded away. Now Leah was easy to find for Fermanian scent was strong. And Leah climbed a tree but still Ono found her.

"Mungo desires you and that is bad thing for you are not a lion," and Leah understood she might be eaten now and saw Ono did not understand Mungo was man, not lion.

"Come down and I will take you to a Fermanian Road, but never tell Mungo I let you escape for I owe you for bringing me to the pool to save Mungo from drowning."

But Leah did not for she was afraid; *who said the girl was stupid?*

"Mungo will harm any body that hurts me," Leah hoping to bluff Ono the lion away.

"I know lizard woman thing so here is my short sword from my belt that wraps my kilt, come and use it on me if I lie," and Ono withdrew to allow Leah down to get the sword but still she would not for she was afraid of lions.

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Leah was like the monkeys above on a tree branch who would soon hoot and throw ripe fruit down on Ono.

“Listen Leah, I will rub the sword on crushed red thorn berries and that kills quick, we have no medicine like you lizard folk so come down and hold the sword against me, and be quick for I smell dinosaur.”

So Leah seeing a better bargain descended; but in truth she too could hear the flesh eater Tyrannosaurus coming. And Leah marvelled over the strength of the sword and wondered who had made it, it was not Fermanian?

“Human man things beyond the Red Grass Valley,” Ono and crouched down for Leah to ride her back.

“Get on,” Ono as Leah like anyone else was hesitant to get real close to a lion.

They ate people didn’t they?

Then the monstrous flesh eater broke cover and Ono fled and Leah hugged her neck so she would not fall off.

“The danger is past, now what would Malachi do?” Leah asked herself and knew “slit her throat,” but she was not Malachi and this was Mungo’s mother.

“I do not like Mungo,” Leah’s silent voice, “he disgusts me,” and she lied to herself.

Also, “What am I? I am three quarter human and was slime in a vat, an egg bought from a hungry harlot and added to a Fermanian gene. I want to be sick; I am the product of green sludge.”

Mungo

“Who am I to look down upon Mungo, at least he knows his parents, here is Ono,” but Leah was wrong, Ono had been found Mungo floating in a basket and forgotten The Wild One stories.

So Leah believed she had no soul for she was from a vat.

And Leah rode Ono’s back for six days and began to meet the corpses of escaped slaves crucified to trees by Fermanians bounty hunters who just took their scalps as proof.

The nailing bit was done for effect, slaves needed to know who was boss.

And in the distance a Fermanian block house where guards peeked at the jungle through slits in the cabin walls, ready to work the highly polished signal shields high above on posts.

Shields that bounced straight radio waves up to be ducted back to the next block house and then Telephassa City.

“Now give me back my sword and I will tell Mungo a Fermanian patrol found you,” and Leah again thought “What would Malachi do?” But she was not Malachi but a girl.

And the crucified shamed her for the Fermanians were a cruel race.

Now Ono sheathed her sword and was standing on two limbs to do to so when Leah stroked her mane then hugged her out of impulse.

“You are not all bad girl but Mungo is fated to take Sasha the king’s daughter as wife and enough hell will come out of that union without Mungo tangling with a lizard woman thing,” Ono and smiled.

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And Leah let some tears flow for she was fed up being called a lizard woman thing, a play thing of Artebrates and others.

“Made you more human than lizard must have for you to cry so. Don’t worry I never told Mungo what you really are? A Comforter, isn’t you? No different from Sasha and her suitors but she’s royal and you isn’t and she’s lion and you lizard.

Old Ono knows more about jungle tales than Mungo cares too listen. I wont tell him but you had better go now, them guards have seen us,” and Ono bounded away on all fours into giant red ferns.

And time stops for no one under the red moon and Mungo freed Malachi because the lizard man pined for freedom promised and Mungo had stopped teasing Malachi about his tail, since it was an insult and he knew insults hurt from experience growing up a man thing amongst lions.

And began to treat Malachi as a living being not a Fermanian by giving him good meat and fruit to eat, so the Oneness returned to Mungo and Mungo did a magnificent thing when he had taken Malachi to Highway Set, the road home to Telephassa, he shook Malachi’s hand.

And because Mungo had started to treat Malachi decently, the latter had grown fond of his enemy and so saluted Mungo and walked down the road.

“Malachi was his friend,” mazarrat sang and Malachi said “No no no no no,” maybe a hundred times so when he was finished he had been found by a Fermanian patrol.

Mungo

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And Lord Artebrates was happy to have his number one comforter home and Malachi whom he now regarded as FRIEND and Leah wished she was back in the bush where there was no scented baths, but fresh pools and flower perfume, where Artebrates could not give her jewellery and attention, where she had had the freedom to say a silent “No,” and be owned by no one.

But she was back home, and with that freedom gone.

“All female things want that glamour, the softness and gems so they can sparkle and attract us,” Artebrates told the hunchback who said nothing but thought, “Yea, it is nature's way.”

And to show friendship to Malachi, Artebrates had collected all his plucked scales and had them sewn into a green alligator jerkin.

“To protect you from slave arrows,” and Malachi allowed Artebrates to hug him as a Lord and Master publicly claiming an inferior an equal, for Malachi was proving his worth scouting for the army under Artebrates's command hunting rebel slaves, but the crucifixions sickened Malachi, for they polluted the air with bad vapours.

And it was about now Malachi joined Artebrates household as hunter.

And time waits for no one under a lavender sun that could now be seen by the captain of an approaching space ship.

“Mother, why am I called Mungo?”

Mungo

“Because you are beloved,” and the twenty year old smiled never wanting to leave the black lioness, eager for motherly love, proud to walk in front brandishing a solid bronze spear and that the ageing red lion King Red Hide feared him for he was now a fully grown man thing.

And The Elder ahead with his staff and Red Hide roared, “Who does Mungo think he is?”

At this age Mungo killed many Fermanians come to claim glory over his death,

And Mungo often visited Sasha now her cubs had gone that allowed his lion side to dominate and he groomed her.

Sasha was still beautiful.

“You will never make me your first wife Mungo,” Sasha enjoying the smell of wild rose bush nearby for she knew Mungo was now a man and wanting his own kind; even if he didn’t know it.

“I am a man thing.”

“Then why seek me?”

And Mungo stood up, saw a snake slithering towards them and it rattled a warning, and Mungo threw his bronze dagger through its neck so it died.

“I will always protect you Sasha.”

“It’s not protecting I want.”

“Don’t lie Sasha, when I leave others will come courting and the next we meet you will have cubs.”

Mungo

“Maybe yours?”

And Mungo laughed and Sasha hurt for she did really love him but knew he spoke the truth, already she had heard a lion roaring for her, returning with promised spoil from a Fermanian merchant.

“I will have none of them as my king,” Sasha said tearfully and Mungo wiped, then roared a challenge to the new comer who thought twice about visiting Sasha at that time.

And Sasha wished Mungo was not a man thing.

“I must go,” Mungo.

“To seek the Fermanian harlot?”

“She is not a harlot,” and Sasha was confirmed in her mind Mungo sought Leah, the Fermanian comforter who had crawled out of a vat.

So Mungo bent to kiss Sasha but she kept her lips shut and looked the other way to woods where the challenger waited for Mungo to depart.

“If I was more human woman thing, perhaps the answers lie where the metal workers came from,” and Sasha looked at a distant smoke flume, an abandoned nuclear power plant where P53 checkpoint genes waited splicing into her DNA for the insertion of female human chromosomes to give her body her wish..

And a mazarrat peaked out of a bush and she gasped for the face was totally human female.

“What are you?”

And the mazarrat sang about drinking a yellow drink in the old lizard’s man’s

Mungo

house, about how its face changed and how its own kind didn't know it any more but said she was a dwarf human disguised as a mazarrat.

"If only I could?" And Sasha dreamed and saw herself a woman female thing with Mungo her pride king.

"Come with me?" The mazarrat and Sasha followed a dream to be a human female to win Mungo for good.

And Mungo returned to Ono, "Mungo I smell death, we must turn back," Ono warned hurrying to ward him away from the nearing water hole.

"I fear nothing," and Ono knew it was the pride of youth so got in front and growled showing her six inch claws to stop him.

Now Mungo did not like his mother chiding for it made him feel like a naughty boy when he was a man.

"Mother I am full grown."

"The are Fermanians."

Now any remorse over the chiding vanished as he was curious if the Fermanians had heard of him, and if not, why not?

It was indeed the pride of youth, ego and what he danced to saddened!

"I will pass you and see these lizard folk for myself."

And Ono leapt upon him to stop him but Mungo caught her and rolled so she somersaulted into a bush.

"Mother," Mungo running to her fearful of what he had done?

Mungo

“Son, when I move the thorns hurt, pull them from me I beg man thing,” she for she saw him as a man thing now who could better her.

He had come of age and the slave sayings about a Wild One come to lead The People, for that is what humans called themselves against lizards now could be fulfilled.

All knew about Mungo’s wild naked dances to something he felt and many thought him crazy, touched by the gods.

But Ono had heard The Wild One would be reared by beasts and be close to their gods.

A ruler and Ono knew he was fated to be king over Red Hide and was already a King of the Jungle and was saddened for both. For he would make brother fight brother, give judgement of life or death and sacrifice himself for all.

“Have you not heard Red Hide call you man thing?” Ono remembered asking from the past.

“That is because I am ugly and look like a frog.”

“No my son, you are handsome and strong and one day I will tell you about The Wild One,” Ono sighed and knew the time had come since she saw him as a man thing.

“I found you floating in a basket and claimed you as my own, you are not lion but man,” and Mungo saw clearly what bothered him always, his difference from Sasha.

The gossip and taunts of the adolescent lions was true, he was man thing and saw his offspring as hideous beings with fur and orange manes catching Pha antelope by the neck with their claws.

Mungo

Beasts.

That Malachi had spoken true when Malachi had asked, "Why is a man thing a lion?"

"Leah is Fermanian and human," Ono meaning she must feel like a human in a lizard world as he was a man in a lion's world. She was also telling Mungo to get her.

"My world has collapsed," Mungo and saw why he wanted Leah for she was much human even if she had soft scales under her flesh, they felt like his skin, looked like his skin.

Her cubs would look human.

Maybe they wouldn't have soft scales? Maybe have a neck thrill like those dragon lizards that ran on two feet?

And he saw his mother struggling to free herself from the bush and shaming helped her as she told him about The Wild One and a Fermanian investigating the noise hoping for an easy kill appeared.

And saw a dirty human slave kneeling over a black lion with a deer loin cloth.

And she was a girl.

And Mungo smelt her strawberry perfume before seeing her, heard the scraping of gold bracelets and rustle of silk and deer hide boots and knew she was rich.

Now Mungo could speak Fermanian but kept kneeling and turned at the last moment to face the lizard woman who wore gold plates of armour above her long skirt of red velvet.

Mungo

“You must be hot?” Mungo fascinated by what he saw for she was all Fermanian lizard woman.

And the Fermanian huntress did not kill Mungo for he had pushed her laser rifle down and his strength kept it pointing elsewhere.

“Who are you?” She asked fearful of the answer.

“Mungo and you?”

“Carman the Mighty One,” and Carman had heard of the man thing and wanted him mounted on her trophy wall for all to see Carman was a great huntress of humans and to stop the rumours about The Wild One. And was not surprised Mungo did not bow although some royal part expected it; fat chance with Mungo.

“You are what I have heard,” Mungo all coiled muscles and as Ono was now free Carman faced a new threat.

“My mother will not harm you.”

“I will kill you both with sword and spiked shield,” Carman and made an effort to draw out a short sword as she tried to pull a shield from her back.

“No you wont as you interest me,” Mungo stopping her, beginning to paw her to see if a Fermanian woman was like Leah so ignored the hurt he felt in his spirit for his spirit being part of The Oneness knew Mungo was doing wrong. But knew also he was too weak when flesh was concerned.

“Insolent pig,” Carman looking at Ono licking her lips showing lots of teeth.

“No mother, I am not done.”

Mungo

And Carman saw the big black lion squat waiting for the word to eat her.

And Carman regretted ordering her servants to wait behind so she could show all she was The Mighty Carman.

“I like your red eyes, full of spirit,” Mungo and he stroked her hair next to see if it was as soft as Leah’s.

“Was just the same and Sasha’s, no difference,” Mungo amazed.

“Filthy minded pig,” Carman and this made Mungo stop and think, *‘What was wrong with wanting to see what a Fermanian lizard woman thing looked like and then play with her?’*

‘Because that would be by force which is wrong,’ The Oneness answered his spirit and Carman grunted, “The tales you are mad is true,” for she saw he spoke to himself

But at that moment other Fermanians had begun searching for Carman worried.

And one was richly attired for his metal sparkled under the red sun for it was gold and he was Lord Artebrates and behind him Malachi the Hunter.

And in a barrow cage, Moragana the ape with ribbons and The Elder stirred his limbs to stand from a tree to have a good look.

And behind them Mungo saw Leah who had been with the hunchback lizard in his laboratory, and was more human than before as the soft scales under the skin could not be seen and her eyes a solid green and hair long blond twisted through gold bands and she was pleasing to Mungo’s eye.

Mungo

“No scales on the young then,” he meaning his cubs from Leah who being woman understood and blushed.

And Carman took the opportunity to crawl backwards away from this crazy man.

For Fermanians feared the insane and threw them out of their cities and they eventually killed others for they had to eat.

And Leah’s legs and arms were adorned in gold and she wore a short silver kilt while her bosom fully formed showed in the fashion of ancient Cretans and Cavalier women.

And she stood curious wondering how much Mungo had changed, for he was no longer dirty and smelly but seemed bathed and scented with flowers.

Something she had taught him while she was his captive.

“Kill it,” an important lizard man on two legs not Lord Artebrates said to Malachi disgusted seeing Mungo, who to him was a bad copy of civilisation.

“You must forgive me but Wonder Lord Vinki has ordered your death for you are human,” Malachi told Mungo,” and my master Artebrates has agreed with a blink.”

Now Malachi had formed an admiration for this man thing that always outsmarted him, and knew Carman had come to kill Mungo and was sad and knew Mungo would react but how?

“Why must it die?” The girl Leah asked with hand signs of Malachi.

“No one will kill me or my mother,” Mungo replied in grunting lion tongue for Carman’s benefit and then did worse, he winded loudly, picked his nose and, and flecked it at Carman and scratched if plagued with fleas.



Illustration 6: Leah captivated Mungo with her solid green eyes.

And Leah giggled and Carman slapped her lips so that they bled and Mungo slapped Carman so all gaped that the Mighty One Carman had been made to bleed by a man slave.

But Mungo was not a slave, he was a free man, a savage beast.

Now Carman's House Berserkas advanced with shields and throwing axes to slay Mungo but out of the bush came growls and Sasha with many lions and there was stand off.

"He is beast," Carman angry for Mungo flicked nose stuff at her and any opinion she had of him as a handsome wild man to keep as a toy vanished.

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She would chain and subdue him, teach him he was SLAVE.

And Mungo laughed with his hands at his sides for he was still the same mischievous Mungo.

“The girl Leah asks you to lift your left sole for her mark is upon you and if you are her slave and if you are you cannot be killed without her assent,” Malachi translated for he understood Leah’s diplomacy, but still kept two eyes everywhere there was a lion, which is pretty hard thing to do if you have two eyes and there are scores of hungry lions wanting to eat you.

“MMMM, her brand is upon me and painful too it was,” showing the sole of his feet, “but I belong only to mother and what makes me dance and sing naked,” for Mungo knew flesh made flesh ugly and dirty not The Oneness that made and flowers needing insects to have seeds.

And flowers waved in the wind and were glorious to see and so was the flesh glorious for LIFE to see that made it unashamedly.”

Now Carman had had enough and strode forward in front of Malachi not afraid of this lion human thing with bad upbringing and curious to find out more since she had Berserkas.

As for Mungo he knew his wish, he was indeed famous.

And Carman’s red velvet dress now open from her fall and also showed her chest and had many gold body piercings.

Mungo

“Why?” Mungo not understanding why one wants to modify their bodies that have been loaned to them by what he danced too.

“And Mungo saw his body as a survival suit so he could run in and out of thorn bushes while less nimble lions got stuck there; those who followed him in who he had managed to annoy in the past, and more lately Sasha’s challengers,” The Elder.

“So my lovers can admire them,” Carman and so Mungo pulled the one on her lower lip and the mighty empress howled.

And Leah took a diamond studded dagger and faced Mungo for it was her duty to protect Carman.

Malachi raised his spear.

The House Berserkas stared at the lions who stared back, whoever flinched and broke ranks first was dinner on both sides.

But Mungo had slung his sling and the pebble hit Malachi on the skull and he swayed, falling flat on his face.

Then dinner arrived amongst the Berserkas and lions for hell broke out.

Also Artebrates remembered after that a black lion running at him and his shield bearer running away with his shield.

“Nothing more I can remember, Malachi tell me what happened” Artebrates much later many times did ask.

“Mungo felled me and your guards he did horrid things to, so others seeing fled in terror.

Mungo

And the black lion when it leapt did not land on the spears put up for it, but sailed over them and landed behind so attacked raked our bottoms.

This foul trick Mungo taught it and Mungo threw the heads of your slain guards at our faces. I told you he did horrid things; then armed mazarrat came out of the jungle and rained missiles down upon us.

The jungle had gone crazy; why we build block houses to keep it out of our society.

And your slave vat girl, Leah stood above Carman not allowing The Mighty One to crawl like a worm, prepared to give her life for her against Mungo.”

And Artebrates was glad then pondered, “Armed mazarrat, are you drunk?”

“No my Lord and Master,” Malachi but Artebrates only half believed for he was of the master race and arrogant.

“What of the House Berserkas?” Artebrates.

“A white lion more pleasing than any seen before led other lions to attack them so these Berserkas could not help,” Malachi humbly, “but killed four lions.”

“Ah good, four lions we got.”

“Yes my Lord, before they were all killed and eaten.”

And Artebrates was silent before asking, “Why did Mungo not eat Leah?”

“My Lord and Master I never lie to you, as Mungo did not eat me when I was captive, he did not eat the vat girl Leah. When I came too I found Leah tending Carman whom Mungo had stripped of her red dress and given it to the white lioness to wear as a trophy stuck in her gemmed belt that holds up her green velvet kilt.

Mungo

And Mungo promised Carman another opportunity to hunt him if Carman would promise to lie still.

And Carman did my Lord.

See my Lord, Mungo thinks this is a game and is laughing at us,” Malachi.

And Artebrates wondered just how much Malachi lied to him and knew Mungo did not kill Leah, because he was attracted to her, just as he was fascinated to see what Carman was made of.

This Artebrates believed was Mungo’s Achilles’ heel.

His weakness was Leah.

“Mungo did not eat us, he is a man thing,” Malachi.

“Rubbish, those humans who escape eat us,” Artebrates in disbelief Carman had lain still for Mungo.

“My Lord Carman’s executioner is coming for us,” Malachi pleased his Lord was to be punished as well. “Mungo does not eat things that think like him, he is a man thing,” Malachi.

“A man thing reared by a bitch lion Ono,” Artebrates knowing the story staring into his warm red wine, wine to soften his coming agony, not the beer that Malachi drank made from fermented bananas and sometimes had fermented insects in it too.

“I am The Wild One,” Artebrates said, now if Malachi had said this?

And Artebrates remembered Malachi carrying him from the slaughter as Mungo fed his lion friends Fermanian livers on the end of Carman’s personal lance.

Mungo

Malachi he knew was mistaken, Mungo ate Fermanians for they tasted like chicken.

“You will get sick child,” Ono chided for the liver of Fermanians was bitter and not sweet like a humans.

“It is pha liver given me by Sasha to restore battle strength,” Mungo and offered his mother some which she ate and found it juicy and sweet.

“Carman the Mighty One is ready,” the executioner in red cotton from head to tail commanded and Malachi and Artebrates went with him.

And Carman Mighty One sat on her sedan carried by sixteen human slaves.

And all about House Berserkas so Malachi and Artebrates obeyed.

“It is a long way down my friend,” Artebrates said as they climbed a tower.

“As Carman fell so must we,” and Malachi walked off the plank falling heavily thirty feet into brown dust.

Artebrates landed on top of him, why he had gone second.

And both remembered The Elder, “The jungle beasts will protect him.” meaning Mungo.

Then their clothes were stripped as Carman was stripped so her red dress could be Sasha’s trophy.

And Malachi suffered a broken leg was hauled to his feet to be punished now for Lord Artebrates sores.

As two lions had clawed Artebrates his Lord, two stolen cubs from Ono’s litter now full grown came for Malachi; called Abel and Eve.

Mungo

“It is a stupid law, “Artebrates whispered to Malachi, was heard so dragged to stand with friend Malachi as punishment for that.

And Abel and Eve enforced the Fermanian class system and the divine position of royalty and nobility that you must be prepared to die for; or be punished.

“One day I will raise my house flag in revolt,” Artebrates.

Cathbadh

Cathbadh was furious, Carman had scorned him and all he had said was, “Now you believe in a Wild One believe me when I say a human star ship approaches.

“Do you want the same fate as Prince Annunaki’s female cousin ten times removed?” Her reply and Cathbadh fell to the floor for her to wipe her sandals on his red hair. The girl had been garrotted on a public square.

One less possible claimant against Hebat, Carman’s son.

Now Cathbadh promised he did work for her fall, she was evil and had to be destroyed if Telephassa was to be prepared for the star ship’s arrival.

And what Mungo danced naked too already knew about Fermanian ways.

*

And Artebrates now feared what Mungo man thing was capable of and would reach for the soft hands of his Warmer and she would hold his hands and her name was Leah and one night.

“So soft like Mungo’s,” Artebrates and she smiled and wondered if she was truly Fermanian or something escaped from a biology lab?

Mungo

And Artebrates undressed Leah for she did not have Freedom to be her own person.

And he put a ring around her neck so a chain could be attached to it so he could chain her to a post to remind her that he owned her and others too. So much for his ideas of calling Malachi FRIEND.

She was comforter, and lately been thinking which meant she envisaged herself as something higher in station.

“My Lord and Master, Mungo fancies this girl as his own,” Artebrates remembered Malachi and, “Mungo would kill both of them for Leah’s shame,” Malachi was sure of that.

And Malachi looked for mazarrat and saw that human ape Moragana, now shaven of fur and body tattooed after the latest fashions. Mungo did come back and slit their throats when they slept for Leah's shame as no mazarrat or ape could help singing the news.

“Why beloved bodyguard?” Artebrates asked Malachi who was present as he pawed Leah. And Malachi was invited for he was FIEND and to remind Leah of her place, a comforter.

And Artebrates made a musical rhythm from the wrist and ankle amulets found.

“For Mungo gave her the choicest meats and me the fat, I tell you Leah is the first human he has seen in his life, he is besotted my Lord,” Malachi.

Mungo

“And her beauty will give me Mungo’s head on my wall over my fire,” Artebrates and sought comfort and Malachi being lizard didn’t mind, but Leah being much human shamed.

“She is Mungo’s, he will eat us, “this is what disturbed Malachi only.

“This is Telephassa, here I am Lord and Master,” Artebrates.

Then Malachi got up to sharpen his weapons.

Mungo was no longer boy, he had seen a woman, and like all men would kill for a woman.

And a woman of sort called Moragana went ape fashion to the barracks to comfort the drunks there who would throw her coins to do silly things, and she would drink their drink to be able to cross the boundaries of decency.

She was Moragana the stupid ape woman thing, a lot human genned.

And preferred alcohol to fruit.

And blamed Mungo for her present position in society, “If he was my man thing, I did be a respected lady, but he does not love me but that creature of the vats, Leah, so I behave like a fallen woman.”

“It is Moragana’s shame not Mungo’s,” listening mazarrat sang and Moragana rattled their cages in anger.

But the anger was Moragana’s for Fermanian dandies came and tormented the troopers there saying, “What you young men with this ape Moragana? See the lame

Mungo

beggar at the barrack doors? Aye the one who spews gruel down his scales, well she sleeps with him for a copper farthing.”

And the dandies would roar with laughter and the troopers beat poor Moragana who screamed, “This is Mungo’s doing.”

“Moragana likes being beaten,” mazarrat replying in nightingale voices.

And as Malachi rubbed olive oil into his spear head a papyrus book lay upon his table next to uneaten meat.

Malachi was not in the mood for sweetmeat boiled in vinegar for the opened head reminded him of Mungo and the fact he turned the plate round so the brown human eyes in tripe in their sockets, would not haunt him and the slack hanging lips not whisper, “Mungo will avenge me.”

So looked at the barbecued ribs and slices of cold meats and felt ill for he saw in the dinner remains Mungo.

“From this day I eat other things,” and kicked his dinner elsewhere.

A brown rat watching from wooden beams knew dinner was coming and Malachi felt collywobbles for Mungo was coming.

“What have you done to me Mungo?” He and read the papyrus book’s first chapter again.

“Cheap fiction about the man thing reared by lions on the red grass plains. Mungo who swings from giant rhododendron trees to lasso lizard men,” he read the scribe’s words aloud, “to lasso me.”

Mungo

And new books were being written by back street scribes eager to cash in on Lord Artebrates meeting with Mungo.

“Well Master you were ordered to find Mungo and found him, now you must cut scales off in front of Carman for failure, better you than me and something ought to be done about these scribes stirring up nightmares for profit,” Malachi tossing the book away.

Now all across his room’s wall were drawings of Mungo and maps with dates of sightings for Malachi was obsessed.

Anyway: Leah lay on a gold table as Artebrates sought his comfort; he had paid dearly to have her out of the vats.

“Fermanian or human, so long as they are female they can comfort me,” Artebrates reasoned and Leah thought of Mungo who pleased her eye and wished it was he and not Artebrates who she saw as an ugly pig these days.

Then Artebrates sucked hard on his opium pipe and put it down and seeing Leah so well formed, realised it was time she should have life in her belly, and provide him with sons who would join his house guard and be his personal Berserkas; and dreamed of becoming emperor.

And his dreams were spoiled for he heard a roar, a lion’s roar.

And the roar came from the throat of a human.

Mungo

At once Malachi returned to his Lord and Master Artebrates and shut the windows looking across the mangrove swamps circling Telephassa City ignoring the drugged semi naked Artebrates, who he got away from Leah, the tethered goat for the lion.

And while Malachi herded his Lord to safety Leah went in search of the hunchback; and found him at a table in a room lit by a beaker of glow worms.

Hunchback

“Child,” he asked seeing her.

“If I was a child my Lord and Master would treat me as such and not as his comforter,” she with hands.

“It is a cruel world and only the successful are happy, come and have a candy,” he replied knowing she had a sweet tooth for the red and white striped rock.

“Mungo is here,” she told him, “he is coming for me.”

“You are the bait,” that has been decided between Malachi and our master,” he said.

“It is my time to give young,” she told the hunchback.

“Live young and not eggs for rodents to crack open and eat, much expense has been put into you child in the vats,” he softly, “be glad his latest idea has stopped you coming to me,” and he meant in experiments in self fertilisation.

“Will my young be soulless slaves like me?”

“We are all soulless slaves here and I withheld your infertility wine. Child don’t you realise what you are?”

Leah covered her ears.

Mungo

“Bought merchandise, where is your predecessor? Sold to an inn for she could only lay eggs, a failure, your fate child unless; see men pay dearly to hump the likes of you, noble comforters are always the prettiest.

And her eggs are sold for she carries good genes and all her young are beauties, merchandise.

Don’t look at me like that? It isn’t I made our society, blame the gods on Mount Tullos,” he defended.

“But I do see girls more beautiful than me?”

“Aye but they aren’t a Noble's *comforter*,” he said the last word slow so she understood.

“Artebrates loves me,” Leah not wanting to face facts that she might be sold off.

“Our master doesn’t like his nightmares *comforter*,” and the hunchback knew he was being cruel to be kind.

“You mean he doesn’t like the scribes writing he runs from Mungo and returns to Telephassa covered in banana skins and mazarrat thrown down dung,” she was angry.

And he took her hands to silence her, remembering when Artebrates gave him this embryo to nourish in a vat and now Leah was full grown and her round tummy demanded swelling, and some tears fell from his eyes for she was like a child to him, his daughter; but he knew his place in Artebrates household.

“I changed your nappies, didn’t have too but I saw then you were different, something in you what it said on your label, your DNA codes had wisdom, beauty and

Mungo

promise,” and remembered a papyrus book, “The Wild One’s mate is Fermanian but human,” and wished he never read it as he explained himself to Leah.

“Child I value you even if you are a replaceable number,” he said and she sought trust in his eyes and found it absent and remembered Mungo’s freedom and wished for it.

Looked at her hands in his and saw his were lizards and her were human and knew she was different from her own Fermanian race.

“We make your kind with human genes for softness and the next models won’t have scales,” the hunchback knowing her thoughts, “I am Fermanian and disgusted being one but I am one for Mungo broke scales when he used that rifle but for he knows I am one and don’t forget you’re Fermanian,” and he took from a drawer a numbered gold ring.

“What is that?” Knowing.

“For the ring ceremony and I will do it while Artebrates and Malachi watch,” the hunchback holding out the ring and it was numbered, *she was a number*.

And Leah ran from the room knowing she had been bubbles in Cathbadh's oily vats for Fermanian pleasure only.

“The Wild One’s Mungo’s, you won’t be ringed, the mazarrat don’t sing that Mungo’s woman is ringed,” he shouted after her.

And Lord Artebrates found another comforter who would not remind him of Mungo as Malachi got drunk and found a scribe who next day was found amongst water rats on the banks of one of Telephassa’s sewers; revenge was at work.

Mungo

Cathbadh

Cathbadh sighed, the ape Moragana had just left him on her way to tell all what she knew. Cathbadh also knew he was not her first visit.

She had told him she had visited Lord Vinki's.

"So one of the general's secrets is out," he mused hoping fear would make Artebrates act now before Carman dismissed him to the gutter.

Artebrates had slid into a dream world were there was no more butchery and Wild Ones.

He liked his opium.

"My fault gentle friend, I pushed too hard with my warning of the star ship and you don't have pork belly to sell Vinki, just your soul."

And these days Cathbadh stayed in as Moragana had heard Carman cursing his name and star ship and shouted, "If we don't have enough to worry about now we got to worry about humans falling out of the sky," and Cathbadh was blamed.

