



*Illustration 136: Turtle soup?*

None thought the caverns lining the rift valley cliffs they had been dragged into would lead them to Tiberius Grant their king.

After a while,

Of course of pure hell.

Their captors were bison men in buffalo robes and their officers wore bison skulls.

Many trophies, heads, some stinking, some fresh bobbed from the hide rumps of the warriors. Agh, white maggots could be seen in the newest ones and a warrior would pluck and eat one.

Lo in the arid desert food was scarce, beside Taggetian maggots are sugary.

Poor Morag swallowed her rising bile so did not scream or faint. “I am Morag Brown a top D.A.,” she told herself repeatedly to keep sane.

And Zane wondered if his head would end up like Hagar’s or those on the hide bottoms of the warriors?

Then Dracon woke up.

And a priest in a bison skull stuffed his wounds full if dried grass and maggots, then poured a

yellow liquid with green mould floating onto them.

He actually saved Dracon's life as the mould was full of penicillin and the herbs acted as new bandages and the grubs ate the rotting flesh.

Don't ask who ate them?



*Illustration 137: Slaves sometimes ended in the furnace when they slipped on careless litter tossed aside.*

Lucky Dracon was a big man, favoured by women, favoured by our new captors as he could dig new tunnels through the rock even if he had to sit in a cart to do it.

Dracon was a valuable slave.

And on we went.

And the corridors at times seemed naturally made, then chisel marks and abandoned sledges and wheeled wagons. Now this puzzled me for Tiberius was credited with giving Tagget the wheel.

They did not know that Philos had brought with him many ideas of Tiberius and that where Tiberius gave liberty of labour through modern technology, The Medic did like wise in the west, north and south but with a twist, the wheel increased production hours for his slaves who worked his wheels that turned turbines.

Rest periods did not exist apart from the changing of a slave gang.

You worked till you died, plenty of snakes to take over and the bison men didn't object, their tribal enemies were decreasing .....but so was the snake race they were part of? And their hay beds would be replaced with mattresses and air conditioned adobe brick walls as The Medic brought in human settlers.

Snakes he would keep in zoos were they belonged.

Then all saw the turtle men again, digging at the dry hot walls with iron picks seeking diamonds, emeralds and other gems The Medic needed to fortify his new empire against the approaching Wayne.

Of course to pay for human home comforts too.

And the many off worlder mercenaries and scroungers.

One wagon for gems, another for turtle men who had died from exhaustion.

And one bison man carried the smiling head of Hagar who knew he was amongst friends, and none saw a piece of pink fungus fall off.

### **Full of the new virus.**

Then the party reached a gigantic underground tavern with many dark pools with turtle folk soaking in them.

As with all snake people the turtle folk had long necks, but had by wearing neck rings mase their necks longer so to lift their human faces high out of the pools to view us better.

### **And Morag was reminded of a nursery tale:**





*Illustration 138: A snake was a snake so to the zoo it went, and the reptiles should be thankful, they were allowed abolutions before being put on public display.*

“What big snout you have wolf?

What big ears you have wolf?

What big teeth you have wolf? All the better to eat you with?”

Lo bison and moon warriors leaned against the walls, not all armed with copper weapons but with modern laser machine guns?

\*

And the netters were fishers of birds that used the winds to soar the skies seeking carrion or prey below in the valleys for the rift was like a river and had tributaries.

So the fate of the sun birds was clear and one thing might keep them from becoming drumsticks was they had been seen to carry people.

\*

Zane smirked, even though many turtle men were armed guards they were not masters here?  
It was obvious who was?

Morag thought she was strolling through a zoo but she still wished for the safety of Earth.

And Zane ignoring his burns thanks to wondrous medicines allowed his boyish excitement to break out walked tall next to Dracon, now strapped on the back of a turtle man; proud to be a human hero, proud to have ventured where no other earthling had gone.

*He was Zne Cameron.*

"I am Yellow Star Bird," Zane mused and Dracon smiled, the boy was learning space image?  
None knew about The Medic just around the corner.....

And Dracon fell asleep and awoke again: swearing, encouraging Zane to copy him.

And the captives were brought to the largest pool ever littered with white, yellow and pink lilies and amongst them a huge turtle man sat on a semi submerged black rock throne.

*Also a copper crown sat ungainly on his large round bald head. It was obvious he was looking*  
our band up and down; as food? Slaves? What?

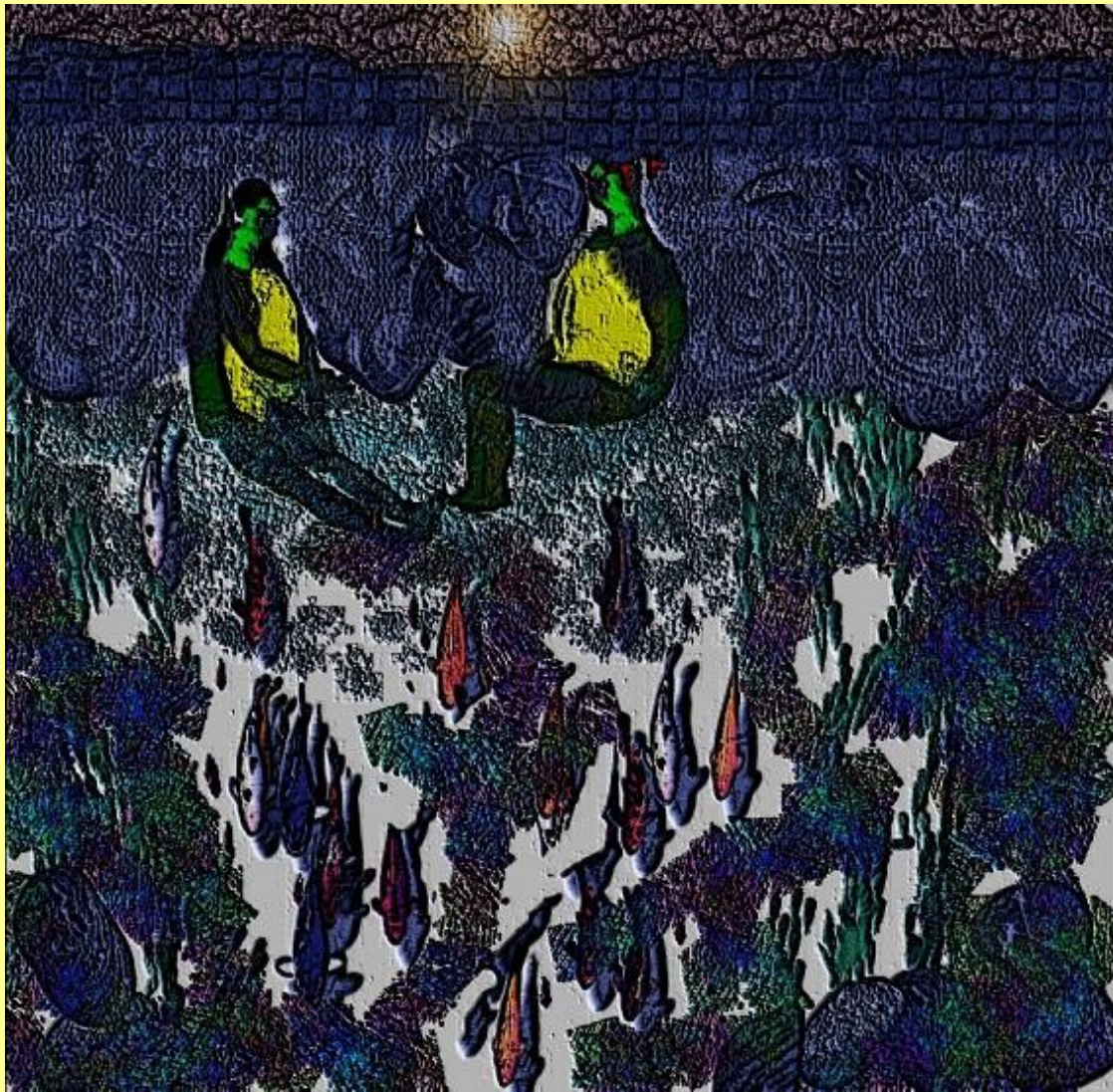
Then he suddenly darted a navy blue tongue and caught a Red Bull Frog and pulled it apart, stuffing legs and arms into his mouth.

*"I am King Formorian, you are enemies of our Emperor Woo, I know all about you," the king grunted snorting yellow spittle.*

"You are not my king, my king is Tiberius Grant no other," Zane shouted so that a colony of  
green fruit bats flew off the ceiling.

A bit of ceiling dropped too and bounced off King Formorian; he was not amused, and  
fulfilled a prophesy that he should move caves.  
This resulted in a guard using the flat of his spear head against Zane's Lumber region of his  
spinal cord.





*Illustration 139: Turtle rock pool deep in the cavern.*

So Zane crumpled as bat droppings settled upon him.

This was an unhealthy place to be in.

“Where does Tiberius find them?” Dracon asked.

Now Morag ignored her guards protests knelt besides Zane mothering him, shec was amazed over her and Zane’s personality changes. Tiberius to her was an adventurer, not her king. A king to her was in the same cast as Wayne Haslam.





*Illustration 140: Fermanian was the greatest of kings and surrounded by his courtiers, little fish and edible frogs.*

Or was that true, she was a little confused these days.

Wayne, a man who took what he wanted by oozing power or by force; he ruled by force.

Tiberius was not this type of king she knew. Taggetians made him king because they saw him as the dragon deliverer who ruled wisely and fought his new people's war.

Whereas Wayne was out for himself and his people to be exploited and the aliens to be exterminated.

See, Wayne knew the meaning of genocide.

Yes, Zane was right; Tiberius was a king amongst men and forgave him for ignoring her lately.

And was glad she had got very close to Tiberius on the long trip out; such lonely trips were made for powerful men and the MORAGs.

Yes, now had a flush of jealousy as she knew Ino had a child from Tiberius; and silently like an unnoticed fly placed a hand over her womb. She was pretty sure she was pregnant; but by whom? And preyed from the heart that it was Tiberius's and that prayer got her close to God for it was from her soul, spirit to spirit.

And if it wasn't the man she hoped it was from? Would she blame God or herself? She had made her bed and must now accept the baneful consequences of her actions.

*Oh Morag, the universes are full of you, complex machines run by strong hormone levels and not by wicked desires, preyed upon by strong men with equally powerful hormone urges.*

*What made you made you loves you very much as we are all Jock Thomson's burns.*

Now seeing the way Zane saw Tiberius did make her feel good. She hoped her king then would be happy with Morgan and knew Morgan could never settle Tiberius down. With a man like Tiberius, one woman was never enough.

She patted her belly.

This was 200126 A.D.: nothing had changed.

Tiberius Grant would hear of a strange world with red seas lit by the light of ten moons and he would be off to see it, either Morgan went or stayed.

The best Morgan and herself could ever hope from Tiberius was his kids and home visits.

But Morgan knew this already, Morag was just learning.

Now Morag looked at what she wore. Gone was her Earthling clothes, now replaced by bright white leather riding shorts, red leggings to protect against orange sand, a GREEN STRING CORSET FOR COOLNESS AND A GOLD HEAD BAND TO KEEP HAIR OUT OF HER EYES.

"Gad, this place is getting to me," she cursed standing up and to prove it Tagget Planet sent a dirty blond bottle fly onto her head; it crawled down her neck nape attracted by sweat and did what flies do best there.



“Bring her to me,” the king noticing her properly for Morag standing struck an imposing figure.

And she fought back as they dragged her into the pool where King Formorian was.

She being a woman of the universes had recognised that look in that king’s eyes.

Patting her tummy had been a mistake for it had focused Formorian’s attention to her birth canal and all that entailed.

Formorian whether a snake or whatever was still a man.

As for Zane and Dracon they carted them off to a cell; but not before Zane slipped their grasp and tried a scene out of Flash Gordon when Dale rescues his woman: except here he got beat up bad.

It wasn’t his day.

It wasn’t Morag’s either, the king had a submerged basket next to him. See he ate fresh food, today it was Red Bull Frog tadpoles.

“Eat,” he ordered Morag.

Now she did what any sensible Earth woman would do *refused*.

So with a nod guards held her mouth open while he put them in; the guards were wondrous machines for they took the effort from Morag of chewing up her food as they worked her mouth for her and got her to swallow too.

These alien snakes thought this a good laugh; they had never seen a human woman with wriggling red tails sticking out of her mouth.

\*

Philos got knowledge, he had heard off worldwide had been captured in the Turtle village of Smet

below the Emerald City.....curiosity got the better of the cat.

Now Philos looked up at the screen where a giant image of Emperor Woo glared down at him.

He had his orders, so Philos kissed dirt with his lips and crawled backwards away TO THE EXIT DOOR TO CARRY OUT ORDERS.

Outside he stood up wiping his mouth hating Woo for degrading him in front of ordinary guards.



*Illustration 141: ON the screen above Woo appeared looking down.*

But still got in his gold plaited miners wagon and it was powered by electricity generated by turtle men running on a huge tread wheel.

At least a hundred of them.

Woo liked this, it showed snakes who was master; humans and see, unlike Tiberius but very much like Hagar, ruled by fear, in fact further than fear, terror.

Now sometimes one of the hundred fell to the bottom where the wheel clearance was eight inches; and worse the wheel was iron but whereas Woo kept the secret of iron foundry to human

henchmen, Tiberius gave it to Taggetians as a gift.

Turtle men were snakes in the eyes of Woo, reptiles; and he liked cobra in hot chilli sauce.

Snake tasted like chicken and Woo had many excellent chefs.

This view was shared by his off worlder mercenaries but they extended it to coupling the beautiful snake women and with genetic trigger and remove and replace cocktails, healthy children were born.

*Here the argument begins if reptile or human is for the television chat shows.*

It was said Woo himself kept a harem of sixty of the most beautiful; he collected from so many bison men wanting advancement at his court who deliberately brought their kin.

It was the way here, Woo was the strongest so had the most desirable women to produce siblings *with his genes*.

But acknowledged them not as his.

The human race must be pure and like Wayne shared a desire to wipe out aliens.

One day these new subjects given the opportunity might revolt for there were at least a thousand mixed race children from Woo and his men.

In a way Woo was pleased, he and his men had created a new race, and to make things smoother to his palate; the little ones called him god, not papa.

This made Woo extremely happy.

Woo was human alright.

\*

With Philos went a hundred sun warriors, bison men for his protection. He knew turtle folk only obeyed because of the short swords and lasers of his sun warriors.

These turtle men loathed him, they said snakes smelt like cat wee and snakes hated them back for turtles had shells on their torso; in fact both were reptilian stock *but try and tell them?*

Real snakes often swam in the pools eating turtle youngsters which meant there was no



difference between Philos and the legless variety of snake.

Cousins, evil things, and Philos had better keep his guard about him for sure!

And when he arrived it was too late to save Morag from Formorian, *if he had come to save her?* And these were not the movies where the heroine is rescued but real life. Ah alas she lay still on the warm sand, her clothes floating besides her.

She was lucky she was not a snake woman.

Lo the turtle folk did three things to snake women.

Raped and ate them or raped and enslaved them.

The real ugly ones they just drowned, just fit for broiling.

Yes sir they ate snake for turtle people were partial to fresh snake meat as the waters nearby were abundant with life.

Although that was beginning to change for Woo's mining activities was poisoning the neighbourhood, affecting the gene pool, harming it.

More aliens dead, cool!

Anyway.....Morag was human, the only humans the turtle king had seen were the off worlder soldiers of the Emperor Woo and here he wasn't sure if Woo was human for the emperor was robed in yellow silks under a face mask of gold.

Now the man Woo had told Formorian he was a god, so Formorian called Woo god Woo when visiting him; after all Woo might send lighting bolts at him.

And thankfully he didn't visit Woo often; Woo was eerie, weird, *a shape shifter*.

We can take it then Formorian hated his god Woo.

And by the by a good turtle woman laid a hundred eggs, and thanks to god Woo they all hatched.

But there was a price to Woo's generosity, he took away sixty of each hatch.

They would not be taught how to read or write, they were destined for menial slave jobs. Why

spend millions on wind farms when treadmills could be worked to run generators

Besides, Woo didn't want too many turtle men about.

And Formorian did not like Woo for many heavily pregnant turtle women disappeared; it was a well known fact snakes liked curried turtle eggs.

So did god Woo who covered them in a Hollandaise sauce instead.

And everyone had a liking for turtle meat; it made a great soup with the entire hot pot ingredient thrown in.

So Formorian put up with god Woo for in the old days it was lucky twenty hatchlings made it too adulthood.

Their god Woo had cleared the tunnels of ants and legless snakes.

And at that moment the clank of black body armour passed by on an upper level, sun warrior armour, Philos was coming.

Yes Formorian hated snakes his cousins for they did not share their secrets with him. To snakes turtle folk were second class, embarrassing throw backs to the beginning of reptile evolution.

Humans it could be argued were the far distant cousins of snakes.

But one thing had made Formorian very happy, he had never seen a naked human woman until now, and he was very pleased with her.

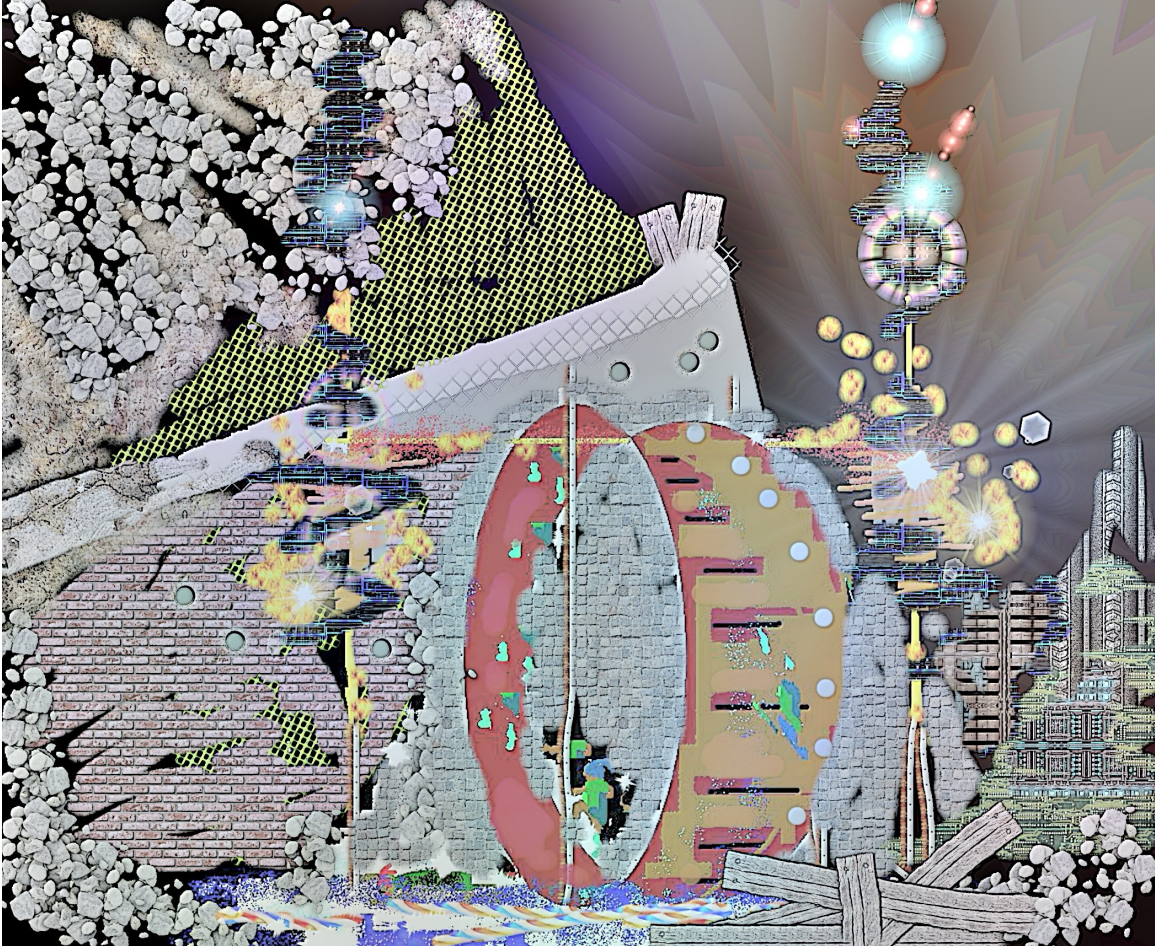
And now he was relaxing in the pool which had another name, because it was nice and warm and relaxing, the coupling or birthing pool.

They had shells, real snakes didn't, and real snakes were humanoid in all respects. Ever tried doing it with a sixty pound mother of pearl shell on your back? Yes the water took away that weight, made them agile and dangerous?

Now Formorian had had a bad idea, inspired from God knows where, but to keep Morag here and couple with her till she bore fruit of their unions, and the child with human traits would teach

turtle folk what god Woo and their snake cousins would not; how to be masters.

He dreamed.



*Illustration 142: Turtle slaves worked giant tread mills to provide Woo with electricity, to the music of the whip!*

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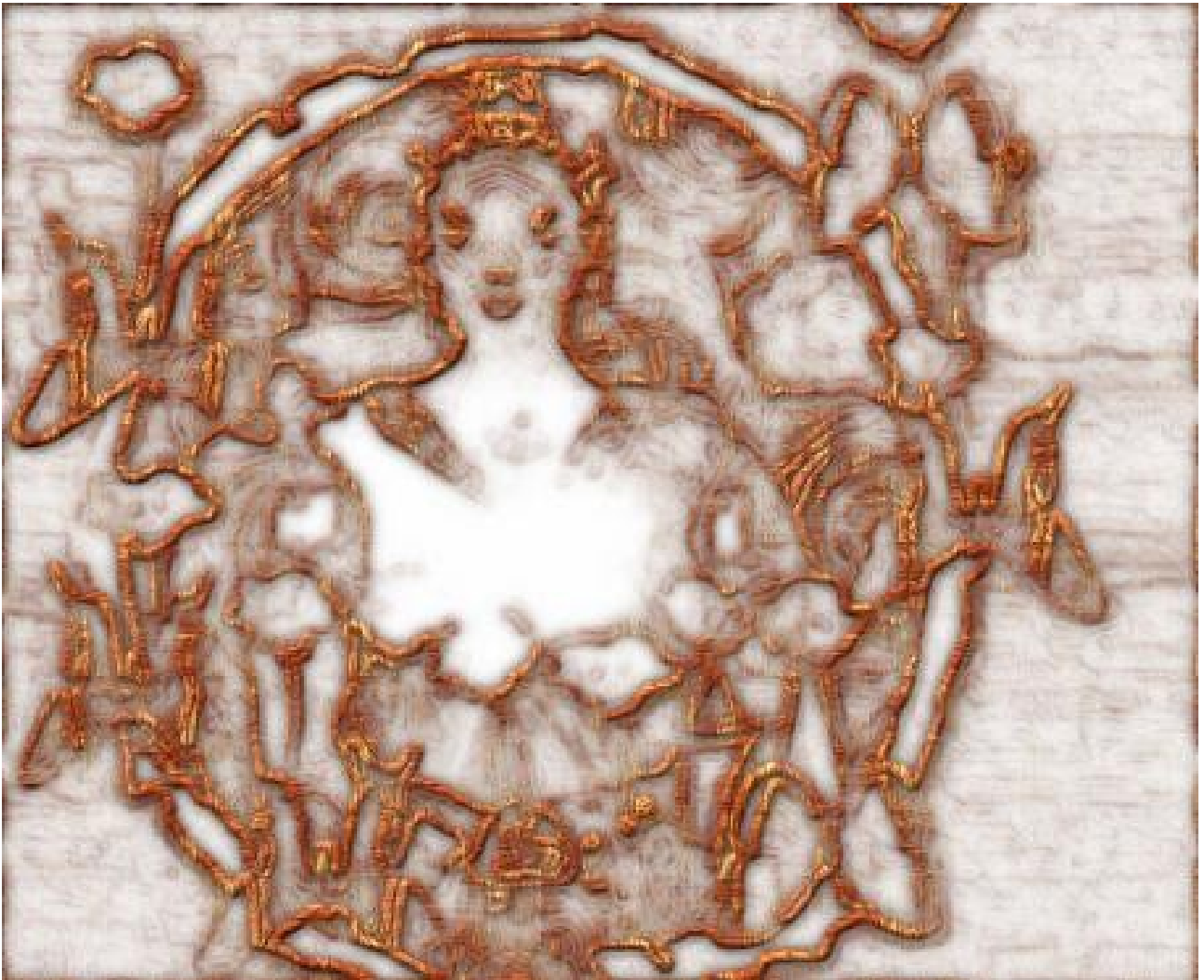
He never asked Morag for her opinion.

He knew she didn't have one, she was a child making machine.

He knew was already of the master race, a man.

He was King Formorian.





*Illustration 143: Woo wanted to be an imortal.*