

Flipside II:
From the Plains of Metamor

By Byron W. Scott

*Running like lemmings straight for the sea
On a wide, easy road, it's the majority
It's so hard to break momentum
And step out of line
It's a lonesome road to walk
It you want to seek life*

*But you'd better start right now
Because we haven't much time
And that opening to life
Is so very hard to find*

*--excerpts from the Songs of Long Road
by C.L. Walker--*

1 Bonnie/Flipside

A Salvador Dali?

It would have been a distinct possibility if not for one vital fact--she was not staring at a canvass. The scene before her was real. And she was a part of the reality.

She was standing on a vast, flat plain; a cream colored, synthetic surface much like formica. It gave off an eerie glow under a cloudless, steel-gray sky. Breaking the smooth, artificial surface was a long, jagged chasm, a gaping crevice that

stretched between horizons. It was wide and dark where it passed in front of her. In the remote distance three pyramid shaped mountains flanked the opposite side of the incredible fissure. Feeling compulsively drawn to the edge of the chasm, she gazed into the absorbing darkness. The billowing blue smoke was utterly deep, fathomless.

It was calling to her. And it was unbearably enticing.

She jumped.

A ticklish pull from her midsection greeted her. But the pleasing, impish feeling soon turned to alarm when the sensation continued to intensify. It spread to every part of her being, gnawing at her, consuming her from the inside.

She attempted to scream but failed to summon so much as a whimper. Terror gripped her and it continued to escalate as her further frantic efforts resulted in nothing more than maddening silence.

Panic-stricken, she awoke with a start.

2 Flipside

It felt good to stretch his limbs.

Even though his thoughts were as thick and cumbersome as the swirling gray fog that surrounded him, he felt physically stronger. He knew his rest had been beneficial.

He breathed deep the crisp, pine scented air and then began to slowly make his way down the steep, wooded slope. When he stepped from the forest into a golden

brown meadow, the stifling mist thinned and a spectacular panorama opened up before his eyes.

It was a stunningly beautiful valley, fifty miles or more across at its widest point. The north side was opened up and veered away in a broad plain a mile or so below him, broken here and there by a low, lonely mountain. The two remaining directions consisted of tall, rugged ranges. The highest peaks were snow covered. The one nearest him was actively volcanic and spouted ominous spurts of smoke.

But the most compelling feature of the valley lay at the foot of the opposite range. It was a sky blue lake that flashed and sparkled in the sunlight. Near one end was a large island, linked to the mainland by three long causeways that reached out like spokes to the north, south, and west.

Where in the blazes am I? He wondered. How did I get here?

As if in answer to his unspoken question came the sound of a strange, grating voice. "Welcome to the Conquest! Before you lay the Valley of Mexico and the island/city of Tenochtitlan; the jewel of the New World!"

Surprised by the voice, the man turned to discover an unusually large parrot eyeing him from a perch in a tree. It was a strikingly beautiful bird, resplendent in its rich, green plume.

"My name is Mochni. Mochni, the parrot. And yours?"

His own name?

What exactly WAS his name? Did he even have one? He was not able to think clearly. There was a disconcerting gap in his continuity that he simply could not access. He could remember nothing before his initial appearance on the mountainside!

"Never mind. It's not really important," the bird consoled. "After all, what's in a name? You are you! Right?"

"I am a wanderer," the man hastily replied, wary of the bird's patronizing manner.

"You are a man of wisdom!" Mochni gleefully responded. "And you have arrived at the most opportune moment! We are about to witness the fall of Tenochtitlan and the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the world!"

The wanderer felt a tug of apprehension as he attempted to fit himself into the time frame.

"Is that truly the Aztec capital in the valley below?" he weakly asked. He wondered why he could remember his History when he couldn't remember his name. He was well versed in the lore of the Aztecs. Could he have actually traveled into the past?

"The Conquest is taking place at this very moment," the parrot wheezed. "You should take advantage of your good fortune and project yourself over the city."

Noting the pitiful look of despair on the wanderer's face, Mochni prodded him. "Go ahead. I know you can do it. Walk the sky! I will be your guide. Give you history from a bird's eye point of view, so to speak. You can trust me."

Stricken by those last words, the wanderer wavered. Could he truly trust the parrot? Mochni's eyes betrayed keen intelligence, but they also cast a sinister glint. And the grating, mocking tone of voice had put him on edge from the very beginning. Still, he couldn't deny that he harbored a compelling desire to see Tenochtitlan up close.

The wanderer's indecisiveness ceased to matter when he discovered that he had already begun to walk the sky. Even though he was standing in the meadow, he was also flying with the parrot. Even though he was a man, and not a bird, still he was soaring through the air, gleefully riding the wind currents down the side of the mountain.

When they reached the valley floor and neared the shoreline of the lake, a giant clamor caught his attention. The water surrounding the city was literally teeming with canoes. There were thousands of them filled with warriors battling one another. From six or seven larger, more cumbersome boats came the flash of fire and the roar of cannon. A full-fledged battle was in progress.

The wanderer watched the desperate, determined fighting along the causeways and at the main gates of the city. And though it was mostly native fighting native, he took special note of the Spaniards fighting bravely on their horses, confident in

their armor. Musket shot pocked the air. The banner of Castile waved gloriously in the breeze.

Blood flowed freely.

"Noche triste, the Night of Sadness, is over," Mochni lamented. "Moctezuma is dead. Disease has swept Mexico. Cortes has returned for the final time and set siege to the city. It will be only a matter of days now until we see the end of this proud Aztec Empire."

Groans and rallying cheers ebbed and flowed as the two of them continued their flight across the water. The rhythms of drums, the blare of horns and conch shells, and the firing of musket and cannon intermingled to rake their senses. But when they reached the city proper, the awesome magnificence of the canals and gardens made the wanderer forget about the human carnage taking place outside the gates.

"Breathtaking, isn't it?" Mochni shuddered with pride. "These ingenious people have reclaimed the land from Lake Texcoco and created the Venice of the New World! In fact, Venice pales in comparison with Tenochtitlan. Just marvel at the accomplishments! Absolutely astounding!"

They swept low over a ball court as they neared the ceremonial center, where the wanderer was swept by the grandeur and dwarfed by the immensity of the enormous pyramids and temples. At the same time, he was repulsed by the repugnant odor of dried blood that emanated from the main structure, the Templo Mayor. The stench was strong enough to overwhelm his sense of smell.

As they commenced to glide above the residential and market areas toward the sister city, Tlatelolco, the wanderer realized that the parrot was still speaking.

"...inspired stone carvings and murals...gardens radiating throughout the island...a paradise...the grand epitome of civilization. The largest city in the world! It was with my advice and influence that they attained such cultural heights, you know..."

But the wanderer was not interested in the bird's commentary, preferring instead to concentrate upon his own disturbing thoughts. He knew that the Aztecs had a thriving, vibrant society. They produced tremendous art and architecture, had an understanding of astronomy and a finely honed calendar. To witness it all first hand was deeply satisfying. And yet at the same time it was utterly distressing because this was their end. The whole city was in a spasmodic state of panic. Within a matter of days it would be reduced to rubble and plunder, the women raped, the surviving men crippled by the conquering horde.

He felt a penetrating shiver and then found himself back on the mountainside, gazing down upon the valley. Mochni was perched on the limb beside him.

"It's a shame, isn't it? Such a tragic shame," the parrot sadly commented. "My proud, powerful empire, my glorious Aztec civilization, over three-hundred years in the making, mind you, brought unmercifully to its knees in a matter of days. Hundreds of thousands of people slaughtered and humiliated, destroyed by a measly one thousand white men."

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

