

The Colonisation of Tékumel

Some 60,000 years after the Twentieth Century, the planet of Tékumel was discovered by human explorers. It was almost inhabitable; poisonous purple vegetation covered the land; many-legged mucid monsters splashed in tidal pools of stinking slime; quaking seas of mud roiled with vermiform life; brooding, crumpled mountain peaks raked skies filled with clouds of yellow gas. The semi-subterranean Ssú and the insectoid Hlüss were advanced enough technologically to make human conquest difficult at best.

SOURCES

No records exist for this period.

Tékumel, however, lay upon an important interstellar trade route. Mighty weapons cut swathes through the jungles and drove the Ssú and the Hlüss back into reservations. The deadly flora and fauna were poisoned and replaced, the atmosphere was cleared, the planet shifted in its orbit, and the day was made to conform to the standards of Terra, now long lost and far away across the galaxy. Great eternal engines buried deep in the planet's core adjusted its gravity. All of this took over a century to achieve, but in the end Tékumel became a residential planet, some what hotter, perhaps, than one might wish, but the powerful came down from the stars to build villas and palaces, parks and pavilions, and to shed their fatigue beside its lazy seas. Elegant aristocrats and their glittering companions feasted and danced and visited one another through a planet-wide network of underground tube cars. The skies thundered with the mighty ships of interstellar commerce. Tékumel relaxed into being a graceful, somnolent pleasure world, a place to which every lesser man yearned someday to retire.

The allies of man came too; the slender Pé Chói from Procyon, the reptilian Shén from Antares, the stumpy Ahoggyá from Achernar, the Pygmy Folk from Mirach, the little Tinalíya from Algol, the aerial Hláka from Ensis, the clever Urunén from Betelgeuze, the forest-dwelling Páchi Léi from Arturus, and the Swamp Folk from Unukalhai; each race was granted a region in which to settle. Uninvited, certain of man's foes arrived; the vicious amphibian Hlutrgú from Algenubi and the stinking Shunned Ones from Regulus, the aquatic Nyaggá from Alhena and the translucent crystalloid Hókun from Markeb set up secret observation posts in remote areas of Tékumel. The mysterious Mihállí appeared without warning and established themselves in the northern wilds.

In their ancient fastnesses the Ssú and the Hlüss brooded, waited , and bided their time. Patches of the Old Vegetation adapted and flourished in the remotest hinterlands.