

Antek “DA traveller” Gordon

There are many influences, wrong choices, and natural twists that brought me to this book.

The starting point was my aunt.

It was late in the evening, one of Those nights I was struggling with my curse, which the majority call life.

That same night the book was born.

On that day, I met up with her, we started talking, and i just broke.

That evening, while I was helpless, in tears, we came up with an idea.

This thought was not a big step for me since I wrote texts for fun for, well ,several years now.

Meanwhile, puzzling and tweaking words had become a sort of second nature.

The same thought stayed stuck for a week or two until the idea disappeared into my unconsciousness.

I resumed my life, the thought of writing a book turned out to be a distant past.

When, on a hot summer afternoon, a few weeks later, I impulsively started to write. I was bored, made me an Irish coffee, got my ass outside, into the blazing sun and wrote through the afternoon.

The first version was an English version, I soon gave up on this...

One thing led to another. Six months later I had written a chapter.

When , a couple of weeks or was it months later, I couldn't go to work due to a severe pain in my ribs. I impulsively, out of boredom, sent the chapter to several publishers.

Four of them didn't even bothered to answer.

The one publisher that answered me was not impressed.

Seeing it now, I understand why...

The woman told me that it was far from a book but that she could put me in touch with someone who was going to help me turn it into a book.

That's how I got to know Ambilicious.

The collaboration has brought this fruit into the world, a fruit nourished by blood, sweat, tears, and an infinite feeling of helplessness.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances and differences of opinion, this cooperation was stopped.

It was hard, for both.

Ambilicious, my apologies.

(www.ambilicious.nl)

I stood with my back against the wall.

Thus the beginning of the end of an era came in sight.

The end of that same chaotic quest.

I combined my band, my work, my chronic illness and my writing.

When the guitarist kicked me out of my band, the Pillars Of Humanity/Helcyon, a project I

started myself, which I worked hard on for seven years. That's when I decided to throw me into the writing process.

Some Eastern and Western philosophy mixed with own experiences, ideas, and disillusions. Inanna,

"It's a mysterious world where Khaos has more order than previously foreseen. This is, I think, a beautiful definition of life, of this planet, of the universe. "

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Hereby I want to thank Tom, Ruben, Stein, Sven, Lisa, Maarten and Michael (FR), Thomas, Mathieu, Tristan, and everyone that I forgot. They're the ones who have supported me in my search for years. Those who always believed in me. It took me 10+ years to bring something on the market, 10+ years where I had a rough, I mean extremely rough time, 10+ years where I could count on them.

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I want to thank my parents for their endless support. Together we have had to overcome two generations of bullshit, which made my past unstable, yet this past that they could not control, along with their unlimited love, made me whom I am today.

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My sister and my little brother...
You're a bunch of arrogant jackasses but I love you.
All is forgiven, not forgotten.

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Msz bubbles... Thank you for coming to my sickbed.
I'll never forget you.

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Papie willy. R.I.P
I have, given the circumstances, done my best.

-
Mamie, my rock, my pride. You will forever be THE example to me.
You were a pearl, you were an angel that enlightened our lives.
You were a hero, a warrior, you were my grandmother.
Thérèse Lenglet (1937-2017)
I don't need any words for you...
Unfortunately, the two of you never saw my book being published.
Georges dejonckère (1935-2017)

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And last but not least...

I thank the majority who never believed in me. The majority that couldn't see beyond the surface, they taught me how to fight; thanks to them, I started believing in myself.

Thank you.

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Sidenote: I chose to change a couple details in translation. Seeing each work of art is only finished when abandoned, this is the final version.

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Chapter 1: The silent scream.

A silent scream pulled me out of my sleep, the glow of the sun made its way through my eyelids. Slowly my body came to life, gently I pulled my hair back into place. Struggling I opened an eye, followed by a loud moan and a blinding flash. The sun radiated its warmth on this freezing planet. The heat desecrated my face. Images started developing themselves, blurry symmetrical shapes appeared. Until my vision got restored. I then gazed at the distance. Mountains exercised their natural power. Proudly reigning over the horizon. A dominating rock formation with excessive cacti within a meaningless void.

The view prevailed over the pain, I was exhausted but forced myself up. A couple of attempts later I stood wobbly but straight. Motivated by a hungry, dehydrated body, I had to find a source of water, anything that would save my miserable life. My only hope turned out to be to follow one of the roads that slandered over and around the mountains. Frightened, I gathered my courage for a seemingly endless road layed ahead of me. Miles and miles that, by the looks of it, led nowhere. The sun gently died while the moon appropriated itself the now darkened sky, undisturbedly illuminating this barren landscape. My other senses took over my orientation, a sharpened hearing, an extremely sensitive step. The crickets sang their battle hymns, the white wolves howled away their sorrow. The landscape came to life. I needed a place to sleep unable to fight or flight, any confrontation would bring down my fragile body.

That's when I noticed three palm trees in the distance. Dancing to the rhythm of life they adorned a small puddle of water; the wind quietly blew them from left to right. My blistered lips screamed for water, my empty stomach for food. I ran as fast as I possibly could, diving straight into the puddle. The water cooled me down, from head to toe. I felt myself relax. That same feeling flowed down my throat, straight into my stomach. I then came out of the water, climbed into the palm trees, picked some leaves, and let myself sink to the bottom. I then ate what I had plucked, after which the night descended upon me. The next morning arrived faster than expected. One final jump, one last sip. It was time to continue exploring the unknown. The path in front of me had been neglected for years, the wind had almost wiped it away. The still visible edges guided me through this sinister drought. I had left a few miles behind me when I noticed a shadow. Adrenaline shot through my veins, taking over my body and all other senses. The courage took away all ailments. With renewed strength my legs carried me towards an unprecedented appearance. It was of no use, the shadow disappeared as quickly as it had appeared.

The effort exhausted me, the heat became unbearable. My last drips of sweat turned out to be a gift straight from heaven. I saw nothing but sand on and around the surrounding mountains. I reached my breaking point; It dawned on me that this trip could be my very last one. Every goddamn second felt like an eternity. Vultures encircled me.

These Silent Hunters; Silent Death.

Quietly they awaited my imminent death, the moment my soul would leave my body.

Prepared to use what remained as food.

Here I lay, about to reward their patience.

The bit of liquid still contained in my body gathered itself behind my eyes. I fell to my knees and pulled myself forward, tearing. My arms were shaking, I had a headache. In a state of despair, I tried to absorb every tear and every drop of sweat; nothing would get lost.

Giving up was not an option!

white grains of sand carried on by the bitter wind floated everywhere. A strong gust of wind forced me to turn my head to the left. It wasn't long after that, when the sand finally pressed down, that I saw the gate appear. Seemingly crafted out of the mountain itself, engraved with ornaments in a, for me, unknown language. It must have been at least 50 meters high and at least 20 meters wide. At the bottom, I read "Si vis Pacem, Para Bellum" When my body suddenly gave up. My limbs felt heavy, I fell to the floor. Closed my eyes for a second there and understood that I needed some shade, some rest, and a whole lot of luck. I saw an opening in the rocks not that far from me, I crawled back up and hurried there as fast as I could.

Thinking about my next step, the best way to get out of here alive my mind wandered.

Staring at the overflying clouds I dreamt about a soft bed, a meal, some potatoes, a fresh head of lettuce. For that, I would have committed a murder.

Above my head, the clouds split. The wind blew harder, a fierce thunderclap echoed through the valley, those same clouds then gave life to a tornado. The tail of it sank straight to the gate, in no time the gate and everything around it got destroyed. There were shards flying everywhere. Frightened, I crawled as deep as I could into the shallow cave.

From the debris a turtle and a hare appeared, the stone gave way to life.

Sucked up by the tornado this mesmerizing work of art came to be after which it entered the eye of the storm.

In front of my eyes, an epic play of darkness and light unfolded in which both halves of the gate fought for their lives until the rivalry stopped. The opposites stared at each other before a symbiosis occurred until. From their ashes, a second, larger tornado developed. Its tail came flying towards me. I hesitated; the fear paralyzed my body. I stared death straight in the eyes. I couldn't do anything, the wind had me in its grasp. I got shot into the air like an arrow. The mountain shrank before it vanished into thin air. The wind carried me up and above the clouds only to crash against the ground a couple of seconds later.

I woke up in a bed filled with hay in a tiny room. River stones radiated simplicity and perfection. Each had its color; its own story. They seduced every one of my senses. To my left stood an oak cupboard filled with old Murderdolls, silver pots and pans. A sunflower brightened it all up. I was so confused...

I looked up and around me. Not a single hole. Nothing except a closed door. I checked my body for bruises, the number of burns was unbelievable. Several questions haunted me, the answers layed outside of these walls.

The door opened. A young, slim woman entered the room. It was only when she approached me that I noticed her yellow dotted portals to the soul. Those portals radiating a natural imperfect harmony; the kind of perfection that was only visible to some. Glossy blond hair sprawled around her long, thin neck. She came walking in with a smile.

"Ah, you're awake," she whispered.

"You were in a bad shape. thank my stepbrother, he found you. My name is Linwhé."

"I am Surion," I spoke with a slight stutter.

"How did I end up here?" I asked.

"My stepbrother picked you up while hunting at the Velnia. He tried to wake you. When he couldn't, he loaded you onto his cart and brought you here."

For once luck was in my favor. I thanked her.

"That is not necessary she said. I'm making lunch, if you manage to get up, you're welcome." I couldn't resist the shine in her eyes. I had to share the table at all costs with this dazzling beauty.

She offered me her hand, her delicate fingers clung onto my blistered hand. She pulled with her full weight while I pushed myself off the bed. Gradually I managed to stand on both feet. Meanwhile, the scent of supper made its way to me.

I staggered up to the table, lowered myself into a chair. There I sat, next to this radiant beauty, about to consume a delicious meal. Linwhé took several plates. She filled them to the brim: some freshly fried chicken, rice, and some blood-red tomatoes. I should have waited, out of politeness. What, at that time, was ridiculously impossible. Like a bloodthirsty hunter, I devoured the chicken, the rice and the tomatoes became my next victims. Nothing on that plate would survive my appetite for destruction. Lost in my thoughts and hunger quenching, I only noticed afterward how Linwhé silently stared at me. Once my plate was empty I raised my head, followed by my eyes that ended straight into hers. My heart sank, a painful silence settled in. Linwhé noticed it as she immediately smiled and asked me if I had had enough.

"Linwhé, where am I?"

"You're in Akuma, located in the Arckas province. The only village that survived the great drought. Where are you from Surion? What brings you to this godforsaken land?"

"I don't know. I remember a village, a world, when I got here. Waking up In the desert. That's all."

"Do you know your village's name?"

No, my memory is playing tricks on me."

"Your memory will come back. I'm sure of that." Linwhé poured the glasses full.

The sun bowed underneath the horizon, the window in the kitchen exposed to us this phenomenal sight. I tried not to stare at her, which she took pleasure from.

"My father is our village elder, the shaman. If you want I could introduce you? He may be able to help." She then added.

"I shall now excuse myself to my room, I am tired and have had an exceptionally long day. Are you sure you will get to your room?" She asked. I nodded.

"Ok then, Have a good night. Surion."

After which she walked towards her room, to stop a bit further and point at a maple made chest.

"If you can't sleep, there's more than enough material to keep you going through the night." She turned around and disappeared. I was also tired and decided to follow her example, put out the candles, and went to sleep.

Days, which felt like weeks, it took before my body healed. Days when Linwhé took care of me without any thought. Every morning she brought me some fresh fruit, every afternoon

she cooked my food. Until I managed to crawl out of bed without any effort. The day I reached the kitchen table completely on my own was the day I decided to go out for a walk. It was time to stretch my legs and simply breathe me some fresh air. From the top of the hill on which the house was built, from where I could see all the surrounding homes. Some houses were enlightened, others showed no sign of life. I decided to follow a narrow dirt road down to the edge of a field. The many kinds of fruit that grew there created an aroma I had never experienced before.

The road split in two; I decided to follow the left. The tenuous road escorted me, I was nothing but a humble visitor. There was a fork that took me to an abandoned laundry room. The long walk had exhausted my fragile body. Had I been overconfident? I sat down at the edge and quietly enjoyed the magical surroundings.

The stars supported the moon; which shone in its full glory, covering the light blue landscape.

Until I, Sometime later, got bored. As usual. So I decided to go back to the house. Not knowing that I had chosen the wrong direction and ended up at the border. There where death, drought, and the desert took their rightful places. I was tired, it was time to crawl back into bed. I made a U-turn. When I arrived, hoping not to disturb Linwhé's peace, I slipped straight to my room.

Before I knew it I was opening my eyes. I then waited until my body was ready to get up, I walked to the kitchen.

Linwhé had prepared me breakfast; she had left a note next to the plate.

"Take some strength, I need to introduce you to someone. Come and meet me when you're done, Linwhé." What a great way to start breakfast, I taught to myself. I don't know if she knew it, expected, or had calculated it but by the time I made my last bite the front door opened.

"Come," she grabbed me by my arm and dragged me outside.

"I'd like to introduce you to a relative." There was an old barn behind the house. The high temperatures caused the hunter green paint to flake, the wood squeaked from underneath. I followed her on the run.

"I'd like to introduce you to Arion," she said enthusiastically before opening the barn.

A black-winged thoroughbred horse appeared. His wings stretched from wall to wall. Proud and strong, the muscles bulged out from under his skin; a model for beauty and raw animal strength.

I took a few steps, gathered my courage, and reached out my hand to stroke him. His blood-red eyes pierced my soul. I tripped. The sudden movement scared him off. He jumped on his hind legs, his front legs clawed in the air, he whinnied loudly.

Linwhé gestured to keep quiet, she asked me to make every movement as noiseless as possible. Once he finally calmed down he permitted us to get closer.

"Put your palm on his head, look into his eyes, into his soul. I know he'll recognize the good in you, just like I do. I know he'll trust you." His muscles softened, the stress and anxiety left his body.

I observed his wings up close, seemingly carved out of the darkest thunderclouds. His feathers were a dazzling natural work of art.

The short, not so pleasant encounter resulted in a wonderful conversation when Linwhé asked me for help. Setting up the saddle was not an easy task to do.

"Today I'd like to introduce you to my father," she said while gesturing me to crawl on Arion's back.

I wasn't sure if I trusted that animal enough. From a distance, I watched Linwhé acrobatically jump on the saddle. I tried to imitate it, in vain.

I fell to the ground, pulled myself up, after which Linwhé reached out to me. Once firmly balanced on his back we stepped outside. Through the gate, Linwhé jumped off Arion's back and closed it, after which she climbed up the saddle again. Her *stepbrother* Atar, who was working in the field below us, waved us goodbye.

Before I understood what was happening we flew above and beyond the clouds, the wind was a Godsmack in this blazing heat, there where legends rose. The thin air found its way deep into my lungs, breathing became difficult.

When Arion unexpectedly swung from left to right before diving downwards, pleasure, freedom and fresh air disappeared into thin air.

I clung on as if my life depended on it, I was a tenacious D...

Gravity had me in its grasp, I let go. During that endless fall, I noticed Arion above me. His collapsed wings and his downwards-facing head cleaved like an arrow through the air.

Occasionally he clapped his wings, which increased his speed. Linwhé seemed to enjoy every bit of it.

Once we fell side by side he stretched his wings to slow down. It was of no use. Linwhé reached out her hand, she missed. The ground came in sight, my chances of survival diminished by the second.

Arion gave one last thrust, I bounced up and felt something soft slide underneath me: one of his dark wings. He caught me and slowed me down.

Relieved that I was still alive, we floated towards the ground.

We landed in the volcano near a small house. Dizzy, I crawled off Arion's back to meet the solid ground underneath my feet, which I could now kiss. I lost my balance, fell to my knees, and threw up. Linwhé jumped back. She waited until my stomach was empty before she came any closer and helped me get up.

"Are you okay? I didn't want to exaggerate," she said worriedly. "This is where my father lives, I'll introduce you."

Once inside she gestured to sit in silence. Her father stood in the middle of the room, surrounded by a pile of pillows. He stood still. With open but dead eyes he stared at the wall while we were waiting for him to emerge from his comatose state.

It took me about five minutes to detect any movement. What started as a slight shiver, several moving fingers, ended with the regaining of control over my entire body. There he stood, an old bearded man, completely disoriented with white eyeballs. His pupils were the last to show up.

Linwhé jumped straight. She walked up to her father and hugged him.

"Linwhé, I'm glad to see you. Who is this young man?"

"This is Surion." Linwhé's father studied me from head to toe, he gave me a worried look.

"Welcome." He walked to the cupboard opposite the entrance, fetched three glasses, and filled each glass with water and herbs.