

Angelos Michalopoulos

BEWITCHING SOFA TRIUMPHS
(LIVING BETWEEN THE QUESTIONS OF THE ABYSS
AND THE ANSWERS OF THE SUMMIT)

ATHENS 2017

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Onelilo, 2006 | 978-960-930140-4 |
| My box of smiles, 2012..... | 978-960-93-3828-8 |
| I am the child of my soul, 2013..... | 978-960-93-4812-6 |
| Unclenching, the fist discovered a caress inside it, 2014..... | 978-618-81397-0-1 |
| The man who has only one truth in him, 2015..... | 978-618-81397-3-2 |
| Living a sorrow away from happiness, 2015 | 978-618-81397-5-6 |
| Basking in the wrong kind of sunshine, 2015 | 978-618-81397-7-0 |
| The dream that dared to become a man, 2015 | 978-618-81397-2-5 |
| Invisible souls, unhappy happinesses, 2015 | 978-618-82378-0-3 |
| Two truths and a wall in between, 2015 | 978-618-82378-3-4 |
| Invitation to an emotional revolution, 2016 | 978-618-82378-4-1 |
| Smaller than zero and larger than infinity, (Living under a sky that wants to have only blue clouds in it), 2017..... | 978-618-82378-9-6 |
| You put up the dice and I'll put up the love (Living between a hug and a shove), 2017..... | 978-618-5308-01-8 |

© Angelos Michalopoulos, 2017.

This publication (work, material, book) may not be reproduced, transmitted or copied in part or in whole, by any means and in any form, nor may it be translated, adapted, adjusted, converted, or otherwise circulated or communicated to the public in any way or by any means, in accordance with the provisions of L. 2121/1993 and the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, without the prior written approval of the author.

The reproduction of the typesetting and layout, the cover and the overall aesthetic appearance of this book by photocopying, electronic or any other methods for purposes of exploitation is strictly prohibited according to article 51 of L. 2121/1993.

www.angelosm.com
email: onelilo@angelosm.com

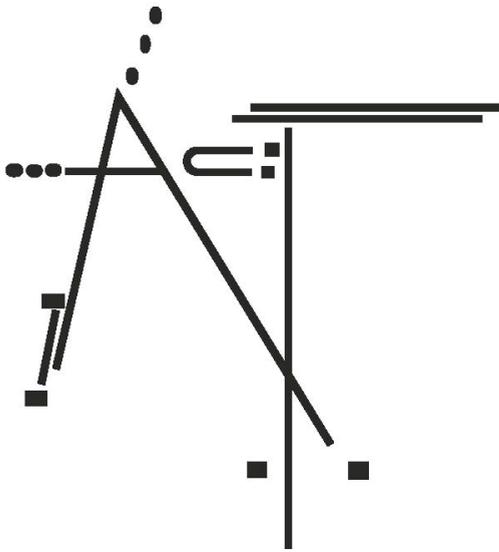
Printed by Nota All About Print, www.notadd.gr

ISBN: 978-618-5308-02-5

CHARACTERS:

DANIEL
DOROTHEA
ANNE
PHILLIP
MANTHOS

To those who refuse to live in a world where minds rule
and hearts have hidden inside everything they can't feel.





Five climbers, three men and two women, trying to climb a very high mountain, the toughest climb they have attempted in their life, have camped for the night before they set off for the summit.

ANNE: “Closed due to possible defeat”.

DOROTHEA: What?

ANNE: That’s what’s written on the beautiful multicolored sign the two most pessimistic thoughts running around inside me right now have nailed over the door of the shelter I’ve worked so hard to build in my mind. The damn thing has locked me out for the first time in my life.

MANTHOS: Can a star bound for the sky lose its way tonight?

PHILLIP: Sure, the same way a truth bound for the mouth can lose its way.

DOROTHEA: Don’t worry. Tonight our truths are ready to ripple like flags on the highest bastion of our souls.

DANIEL: Shh... Stop that. Stop talking just to please your ears. Don’t worry, your ego can hear you clearly. Stop talking for a while and listen to what the shyest optimism

that lives inside you has to say. Should I tell you what mine is saying? “Believe again in your beliefs. Let them dream again on your behalf. Let them build you a self-confidence from scratch. Let them build it, though, the way she wants to be made, not the way you want. And for God’s sake, let the grownups deal with the permanent winter that lives in their misery and their pessimism, and come with me, come take me by the hand and let’s walk to the darkest spot of your character, where the first day of Spring has been trying to dawn for some time now”.

PHILLIP: Come on, allow us to let our passion say something foolish, our optimism to embellish, even if they don’t really mean it. Let us believe, even if it’s only for a few minutes, that the first moment of Spring is conceived during the darkest minute of winter’s coldest night.

ANNE: Dear God, please give my optimism the key to my courage if you won’t entrust me with it anymore. Night, shield me from all that my light has been trying for days to show me. Happiness, protect me from everything I want to trample in my life, before I fall to my knees and propose to make it mine forever. Enthusiasm of mine, please remove all the steps before me that want to take me in any other direction except forwards. I can no longer tolerate seeing them standing an embarrassment away, ready to get into a huge fight with me.

DOROTHEA: Please, don’t turn your head around to hear what your next defeat has been shouting at you for some time. Keep your eyes fixed on the future. Listen, to win a battle, you just have to be more humble than arrogant. To win a major battle, you must toss all your arrogance in the trash.

DANIEL: Most arrogant people I know ended up being arrogant because they never realized how much happier they could be if they were humble.

MANTHOS: Listen. It's almost midnight. We'll have to go into battle in a short while. As far as I can see, our consciences just completed their daily patrols around our brains. So the field is now clear for any emotion of ours that wants to talk to us directly, to express its opinion without fearing the consequences. So, shove back into your lungs the first silence that will dare sit in the middle of your mouth to stop any word from getting out and let's all together draw out of our hearts whatever we've long held captive in them.

ANNE: What can I tell you guys? For some time now I've been making a night out of two fears that have decided they can't get the pleasure they once did out of frightening me, two wings out of the two most fearful "maybes" I found looking through the drawers where my cowardice kept the dreams she dreamt long ago on my behalf, a conscience out of the most generous sheer drop my self-criticism gave me as a gift the day I graduated from my innocence, and a dawn out of the most frightened piece of courage my future gave me, keeping the rest for itself.

Victory, victory, victory! I'm sick and tired of this victory! I'm sick and tired of all these wild beasts that get so much pleasure out of permanently living in my heart! I can no longer stand seeing my ego throw them a new promise that I will win every so often, so they can devour it and leave me alone for a few hours. My God, look at everything I do to keep them satisfied all the time! I've become a drunkard who needs to guzzle down his next victory, hoping it might help him forget who he really is. I need, I really need this victory, you hear? I really need it... How have I ended up, every time I look at my future, feeling that, no matter how hard I try, I cannot find a battle to take part in and so have to eventually invent one myself? And it doesn't have to be a major battle, as long as I can record it in the book I record my victories and my defeats as one more triumph.

MANTHOS: You just described someone's bio.

PHILLIP: What do you mean?

MANTHOS: You know, a bio, someone's history. The book in which he has recorded his victories in large, bold letters and his defeats in faint pencil, so that time can erase them as quickly as possible.

ANNE: Who knows? In the end, our conscience might be a small note book each of us keeps inside him, in which our victories and defeats have recorded every battle in our life the way they experienced it.

DANIEL: I'm pretty sure that if any of those people who admire us, the people who consider us brave warriors or invisible heroes, heard us now, they would be quite shocked.

DOROTHEA: Yes, because faced with the mountain, faced with this daunting challenge, faced with the stress we feel, we see the sheen we cover ourselves with to look more impressive peel off and move a few feet away from us. Then suddenly it turns around, looks at us sternly and spits in our face, before it stops pretending what we've forced it to pretend for years and instantly becomes as blurry as it can get.

ANNE: It's not just us. The people around us do it too... Don't forget that those around us add an extra layer of varnish to those we have applied ourselves, so they can feel better about who they are.

DANIEL: So we end up being shinier rather than true...

ANNE: More phony than shiny...

DOROTHEA: Anyway. Let me go on. Faced with this great risk our feet are shaking, right?

DANIEL: Right.

ANNE: Sure...

PHILLIP: What are you talking about...

DOROTHEA: Right now we are all alone, experiencing one of those moments in one's life when the public image we have built to protect ourselves from the attacks of our inner ugliness has dropped its weapons and has abandoned us, because it cannot find a reason to defend us any longer. Right now, even our reality has abandoned us, leaving us alone to stare wide-eyed at the next minute of our life without knowing what to say to it. Our public image has grabbed all the rhapsodies long composed by the echo of the applause we received, all the beautiful red carpets our vanity laid down for us so we won't come into contact with the ground the masses tread, all the admiring glances the people around us gave us each time they couldn't grasp the fact that we look more like them than they would wish and, finally, all the burly exclamation points occasionally placed in the mouths of our admirers by man's need to idolize whatever he cannot understand.

It grabbed them like a young thief who snatches the purse of a woman crossing the street and then disappears. As a result, it has left behind this incredible hue, this intense and liberating hue one's life takes on when he loses something and, once it's gone, realizes that he didn't need it as much as he thought after all. What's interesting is that it happens every time he manages to get rid of all the tricks he learned to use over time to look more attractive, more brave, more of a winner than he actually is and decides that, for the first time in a long while, he can stand being alone with the part of his character that was born to hate his lies.

MANTHOS: Face it! Our life itself is taking our clothes off one by one, leaving us naked, completely naked before our own worth. We are all naked right now, staring our next mistake in the eyes. We are all one step, just *one* wrong

step away from the most humiliating defeat of our life. I am talking about that step which we have allowed to hurl us from triumph into the abyss in seconds with just one move. This is the risk that forces us to face our true worth. And while we've surrounded ourselves with the shoddy arguments our public image doesn't stop contriving to make us look stronger and more handsome, with every minute that goes by, we end up feeling phonier. Not knowing how to use it to ensure victory, we disgustedly throw it to the ground and step on it before we move on. It's a great moment when someone realizes that he doesn't need to beautify his public image to feel more beautiful! Right now, though, tightly embracing our self-confidence, we don't know what we should do to hide from our true worth, which will soon rush madly right at us from our future and lift us upright, to announce what it believes about each one of us.

DANIEL: You're right. It is vanity that spreads the beautiful red carpets on which egos like so much to put on their dazzling parades. It will be the truth, however, that will bend down when the pointless festivities end to roll them up and move them away.

PHILLIP: All those moments in my life when my self-worth, appearing out of the person I always wanted to be, ran to me, bent down and whispered in my ear what it believed about me so that my shortcomings couldn't hear, were both very beautiful and very painful.

ANNE: I feel that the only refuge that always stood loyally by my side was my own soul. She was the only one that kept her door open every minute of my life, when all the other shelters I had built on my own to protect myself from my future had locked me out. It's incredible, but every time I reach a point of being so afraid that I cannot figure out what I'm not frightened of anymore, I end up making a false promise to my self-confidence. Do you know what I promise her? That this will be the last time I will be afraid for the

same reason. I haven't kept that promise once. So, in a panic, I run to thrust as deep as I can in my soul, because having stayed so long outside of it, even I believed that I was someone else, someone whose good qualities were twice their normal size, while her shortcomings were half that.

DOROTHEA: You won't stop being afraid if you don't force yourself to understand out of which parts of your character you've made your fear.

MANTHOS: Especially if you expect your past to teach you who you will become and your future to explain to you why you won't ever be again who you once were.

DANIEL: Do you think this is the price the heart demands to protect us from the attacks of reality itself?

MANTHOS: My heart always welcomed me inside her, I always found her door open. But as soon as I crossed her doorsill, she sat me down to teach me all over again who I really am.

ANNE: Who she thinks you are.

MANTHOS: That's right.

ANNE: Ah, I see all the ugly facades I have put on in my life smiling at me tonight with the most sarcastic smile they could find in my past...

DANIEL: Yeah, sure. The major experiences in our life like to dive into our self-confidence and bring out a huge smile, which they affix on our mouth with two of our biggest fears.

DOROTHEA: I always felt that the biggest truths in our life could only go through doors that opened inwards.

PHILLIP: Why?

DOROTHEA: Because when trying to open them I had to take the first step into my new reality.

PHILLIP: And?

DOROTHEA: Nobody likes to have the door slammed in her face by the reality she experiences.

MANTHOS: Let's face it, friends. We survive on the tips our self-confidence leaves us.

DANIEL: We might even be the tip our self-confidence leaves to the next fight during which we won't face an ordinary opponent, but our own self-worth.

ANNE: Has there ever been a sheer drop that didn't want to gape its voracious maw wide open and gulp down anyone standing on its edge?

DANIEL: Don't you think that every time you reach the edge of a sheer drop, you're not defying the height, but rather your own self? At that moment, you are challenging yourself to tell you who you really are.

PHILLIP: My greatest fear right now has already started answering the questions I don't even know how to begin asking it. I feel as if my sweat refuses to believe in me anymore. It no longer believes in what I want to accomplish in the next few hours and demands to talk to me before I start out, so it can try to convince me not to. I'm no longer sure if my sweat wants to work for me anymore. I don't know. It took me a long time to finally figure out that happiness begins where apathy ends. And you know why? Because a man's future begins where his worst self ends.

MANTHOS: I hope that's true today, for your own good.

ANNE: I'll be damned if I know why I get so much pleasure every time when, without a specific reason, I get into the Trojan horse I will soon send to conquer my self-worth. Knowing that every fight I take part in is another opportunity to ask myself what I am worth, why should I be so scared to ask myself that question? Why do I always find cheap excuses to avoid asking? And when once in a while I manage to, I immediately look for ways to cover my ears so I won't hear the answer!

DOROTHEA: I'm not sure if this will help you, but every time I unwound out of my soul's pockets a finish line I had crossed in my life, I found at its end the part of my self-worth I had never managed to communicate with.

ANNE: What do you mean?

DOROTHEA: Once we take the last few steps and cross the finish line at the end of a race, we find again before us that part of ours we pledged to the starting line, to let us take part in it in the first place.

ANNE: Will I be able to bear finding out what I am worth? Damned peak, how the hell did you manage to get down here to steal my courage without me even noticing?

PHILLIP: I, again, believe that just before every race's start, the finish line goes around and hands out a piece of itself to every competitor, so that when he falters some time later, he can grasp it in his palm and draw some optimism and courage from it.

DANIEL: Come, come. We shouldn't get dizzy tonight, endlessly whirling around the meaning of our life, unable to find the courage to stand still and introduce ourselves to it.

MANTHOS: The race, this damned test, has found a way to plunge inside me and, like a skilled spear fisherman at

sea managed to grasp the biggest darkness I have in me and raised it right in front of my face to make me panic. Every major challenge I faced in my life could in the first few minutes plunge inside me, grab all the darknesses whose existence I pretended I ignored, and pull them out, just to make sure I had not forgotten how big they are.

DOROTHEA: Whichever one of us is trying to figure out in what spot of his character his honesty is hiding at will have to wait for a few hours, until the part of the night which the agony he feels has grabbed from the spot of the earth where the darkness is densest and full-bodied ends. It's time we stopped wearing this agony like a heavy coat that will protect us from the cold. Face it! The cold right now is not coming from the mountain, nor from the atmosphere around us, it's coming from inside us. The fiercest cold in the world... the fiercest...

So let's plea with the part of the reality we experience that believes it has managed to steal the dawn right out of every day of our lives. Let's embrace it and walk arm in arm to the next minute in which we cannot see a single "possibly", "perhaps" or "maybe tomorrow" staring at us, no matter how long we spend searching around. If you haven't figured it out yet, I am talking about the only time when we can see the meaning of our life without being seen by it.

DANIEL: Wow. Beware of those days that have forgotten to include a dawn in them...

PHILLIP: I'm telling you. The meaning of my life has been waiting for years to meet me...

ANNE: An enormous smile is born the moment you introduce the meaning of your life to your self-confidence.