

TEUVO VIRÉN

# THE ANCESTOR 2

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Publisher: BoD · Books on Demand, Mannerheimintie 12 B,  
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Print: Libri Plureos GmbH, Friedensallee 273, 22763 Hampuri,  
Saksa

ISBN: 978-952-80-9761-7

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## Preface

Here it is — the tragic lovechild of ChatGPT’s translation and my own delightfully inadequate English skills. It’s probably riddled with mistakes just waiting to be spotted by anyone even slightly better at the language. At the very least, there are surely some bizarre bits that either slipped past me or got lost in translation entirely.

“The Ancestor 2” is a story of Earth’s events in another universe before The Interlude. True to my usual style, this story has neither head nor tail. Finding any logic in this mess requires searching high and low, but then again, spotting impossibilities is a fun pastime on boring evenings.

Teuvo Virén  
29.8. 2025

Eyan:

Apron, Danna, President

Borment, Anilie, Deputy Science Director

Callier, Maat, Sergeant

Guder, Opren, Captain

Jadler, Kuraz, General

Jonc, Vadran, Chief of Police

Keillen, Marci, Interpreter

Kretz, Herman, Minister of the Interior

Li, Cie, Director of Science Program

Perval, Kail, Commander of the Army

Derkada:

Banvik, Lize, Derkada's Ambassador to Eyan

Lond, Ull-Mai, Leader

Yellar, Vicc, Commander of the Army

The president of Eyan, Danna Apron, who had risen to power less than a year ago, was youngish and had recently gone blonde. She tapped her fingers on the moderately large oak table in front of her. She certainly did not like the proposal made by her deputy science director sitting across from her. Frankly, it was outrageous. Unfortunately, the only alternative was even worse.

Anilie Borment waited without so much as a flicker of emotion for the decision of the woman who had bloodlessly ousted the previous leader responsible for leading them into war. A quarter of the Earth's population—three hundred million men and tens of millions of women and children—had died in twenty years. Breaking a few laws wouldn't matter if it ensured peace and prevented an even more destructive conflict with Derkada, the losing side of the war.

— Li?

— If we want a peaceful planet, we cannot allow warmongers to remain, Eyan's science director supported the idea proposed by her closest subordinate.

— Ethically and morally speaking, the plan you just heard is horrific. On the other hand, we have not found another way to achieve our goal.

— What do you think of their idea, Kretz?

— Aggressive men always find a way to rise to the top, or at least close to it. Either as politicians or criminals.

— So?

— I support their proposal. I spent eighteen years on the front lines. Nearly everyone from our neighborhood called to war either died or was seriously injured. I have nightmares every time I manage to fall asleep. I don't want future generations to experience what we did.

— You do realize you're taking a personal risk?

- Of course. I lost my family, so I'm not particularly afraid of being one of the targets. And even if I were, I see no reason to back away from the plan.
- Have you made preliminary calculations? Apron inquired of the other women, touching Herman Kretz's wrist comfortingly.
- Two years for development and at least a few months for vaccination.
- The first part is an estimate, Li pointed out.
- We cannot know exactly how long it will take to develop the method and ensure its success. However, Anilie's estimate is the best we could come up with. We have the equipment and qualified staff. We've studied similar matters before. Still, it's a new method, and we must thoroughly examine the results before proceeding to the next phase.
- I see a major flaw in your plan, Herman Kretz silenced the pair.
- We won the war, Anilie. The Derkadans definitely don't trust us. Definitely not enough to allow us to inject this vaccine into their men. Ouch. I just realized another problem in your plan.
- What?
- If your method works on those past puberty, it will have to be repeated many times. First as the current children grow up, then again for several generations just to be sure. The Derkadans will undoubtedly want to know the vaccine's effects. They'll closely monitor the health of those vaccinated and conduct every test they can think of. Some vaccines will undoubtedly end up in a top-secret laboratory for analysis. The results might spark another war against us.
- I assume you have a solution ready?
- Of course. Gas. Some kind of artificial virus or a suitably chosen host, like the flu virus, would be the perfect solution. We wouldn't need to inform the Derkadan leadership about it. The spreading of this virus across our traditional enemy's territory could be managed



with aircraft monitoring their army. In the cities, it would be replaced by cars.

— What about the hermits and others living far from civilization?

— They are a problem, Cie, Kretz admitted.

— I would guess many of them are part of the target group, so they must be infected.

— Flu viruses are highly contagious, right?

— Yes, the science director answered the interior minister's question.

— In that case, you'll need to calculate a sufficient amount for the entire Derkadan territory. Same goes for our own.

— What about the sea and its islands? Anilie cursed aloud, realizing they had forgotten them in their calculations.

— No area can be left virus-free. One unchecked man might mean the failure of our efforts. Though that may take generations.

— Exceptions cannot be allowed, Li reminded her closest subordinate.

— Either we do it properly, or we forget the whole thing. Danna?

— Are you sure there is no other way?

— Herman's idea is a subtle method, the science director shrugged her bare shoulders.

— We don't need riots once the population realizes our unauthorized genetic modification. We also don't want a new war with Derkada. With a bit of luck, no one will connect the surprising and seemingly random deaths of the men to each other, or at least won't come up with a reason for them.

— At some point, people will start questioning the excessive male mortality.

— True, Herman. As the science director, I can delay the research and possibly steer it in the wrong direction. Even in the worst case, we shouldn't have a chance of getting caught.

— Can the two of you do the whole job alone?

— Yes, Li reassured the president who had asked the question.

- The work would be done faster with a larger team, but that would also multiply the chances of a leak.
- There's no room for that. Where will you draw the line?
- The normal testosterone level for men is 10 — 38 nanomoles per liter, Li explained to Apron.
- The upper limit we've tentatively planned is 75%, or 28.5.
- Isn't that quite low?
- Tens of millions of targets, the science director confirmed.
- Quite a number.
- Much fewer than three hundred million, Anilie, Kretz pointed out.
- The number of men to be treated compared to that is quite reasonable.
- Scientifically speaking, we are tinkering with the foundations of evolution, Danna Apron mused aloud, unsure whether to grant permission for the morally questionable operation.
- It's more about guiding it onto the right path.
- Could you elaborate?
- Evolution has made us like this, Li tried to put her thoughts into words.
- In the past, aggression often meant improving the survival chances of an individual or a small group. Due to our technological advancement, what was once a good trait has become a threat to the survival of our entire species. We have to do something, unless we want to end up as one species on the endless list of extinct ones.
- What if we separated the violent men from the general population?
- And what would we do to them, Anilie? Take them to some remote island and leave them to die there? They must not be allowed to reproduce until we have genetically modified their testosterone levels to be lower. Even if their offspring aren't the same kind of assholes as their fathers, they would still carry the undesirable genetic combination that causes this behavior. Everything could go well

for many generations, but eventually, some descendant's risk would materialize.

— I know. Why do I still feel like we're playing God?

— Can we really fail worse? Kretz scoffed contemptuously.

— Three hundred million dead because of a group of idiots claiming their belief is the only true one. If some supernatural being really existed, you'd think they'd care for their believers and do something to prevent their unnecessary deaths.

— Like appearing to more than one? Performing at least one miracle witnessed by millions?

— Either would do, Cie Li scoffed.

— I think God should be good and do good things, so He wouldn't be the Devil. If He does nothing, He either has no power, which undermines His divinity, or He doesn't care about His believers, which makes you wonder why anyone should worship Him.

— If He doesn't save them in this life, why should we expect Him to take care of them in paradise?

— Exactly, Herman.

— Go to seminary school, both of you, Borment chuckled, recalling the duo's previous theological disputes.

— Then when I see one supernatural being, Kretz promised flippantly.

— Until then, I'll stick to the guidance of my own morals.

— What tells you to participate in the handling of millions of people's inheritance?

— To save millions, if not billions, in the future, Cie. Twenty years ago, I would've refused to even think about it.

— I doubt any of us would have planned something like this back then, Anilie Borment shook her head.

— So none of you oppose the testosterone level restriction?

— We planned it with Anilie, Li reminded the hesitant Danna.

— We wouldn't have even introduced it unless we were ready to carry it out.

- You do realize that if this leaks to the public, you'll be executed and face trial?
- Of course. But we won't reveal your involvement.
- Even if it would lower your sentences?
- What difference does it make if the punishment is five hundred years or four hundred? We'll never walk free if we get caught. With a bit of luck, we'll be executed. As long as you haven't been caught, you might still have a chance to carry out the plan later.
- If we succeed, I could go down in history, Anilie dreamed.
- By revealing your involvement in the testosterone regulation of men?
- That would be the surest way.
- Someone who lost their husband or child would murder you, Kretz pointed out.
- Oops. Maybe I'll just settle for gloating to myself.
- That's for the best. I don't think you'd live more than a month if your tricks were exposed. Except in maximum security prison, where you wouldn't see any other prisoners. No guards either, now that I think about it. Both guards and prisoners would have friends and family they've lost.
- You're the president, Danna, Li turned her gaze to Apron.
- You have to make a decision.
- I know. If I allow the plan to start, can you halt it at any time?
- Yes. However, it will take some time to destroy the evidence.
- If you later want us to continue our research, Borment continued, it will take us some time to get back to the same point. Not as long as the first time, though.
- How are you going to cover up your actions from your subordinates?
- By doing the work on our free time, Li retorted. They had discussed the matter with Anilie, and neither had come up with a way to advance the plan during regular working hours without attracting their subordinates' interest.

- So, you'll really work long hours for two years? the skeptical president inquired.
- Both of us have plenty of unused vacation time. We can work from home as well. It won't attract as much attention as living in the laboratory.
- You're both single, Apron pointed out.
- How do you plan to continue meeting with your friends while handling both your main and side jobs?
- Neither of us is particularly social, Li laughed.
- Our acquaintances are used to us being hard to reach. Besides, we can always say that we're busy with work.
- You're really busy, though. Does anyone have any further objections?
- We must keep our army's leader ignorant of our plan, Kretz said confidently.
- That fool will definitely not watch idly as we weaken our armed forces.
- Revolution?
- We are civilians. If he wants to stage a coup, we can't stop him, Danna. Of course, it's another matter how long he can keep control of the country when the people are almost in the streets.
- That may not happen for quite some time, Li noted.
- People are tired of war, and peace, no matter whose reign it's under, is a relief to them. Eventually, they'll start questioning the legitimacy of military rule, but by then, Perval will have solidified his position.
- So, in other words, we have to continue as before, without raising his suspicions?
- You're the president. His superior. You can't be too agreeable with Perval, or he'll smell an opportunity. Argue with him over small things, just like you've been doing, Li advised Apron.
- Keep him on a short leash, but don't humiliate him. Give in occasionally, especially on trivial matters. Avoid giving him power bit

by bit. Always set a deadline for the validity of any concessions you make.

— Don't give him reason to suspect that we're planning something for his downfall. When speaking about him publicly, slip in phrases that indicate you appreciate his efforts both in war and especially in times of peace, Borment continued as Li took a breath.

— If our plan works, and Perval isn't one of the casualties, we'll need him to stabilize the country during the epidemic.

— Epidemic?

— That's how it looks to the public.

— Can the virus mutate? So that it becomes a danger to women as well?

— They mutate all the time, Herman, the science director reminded Kretz.

— It doesn't matter. The virus we've chosen is just a carrier; it won't affect the gas.

— I hope you're right, Cie. I really don't want to be the subject of genetic modification, Apron smiled wryly.

The twenty-year war had set their knowledge back at least twice as much, except for weapon technology, Cie Li grumbled discontentedly as she watched the pile of equipment Anilie and she had bought from different parts of the city over the past few weeks. The heap had to be transported from the storage cabin to Ani's home. After that, they would begin assembling and testing the entire system.

In theory, this junk pile was all they needed, apart from their own computers, to carry out their plan. The home version they would build in Anilie's guest room wouldn't be able to compete with fully equipped laboratories. However, they were studying a very specific issue and could make use of the research already conducted in the field. For the computationally heavy parts, they could use the high-performance machines at their workplace. Their home machines could handle it too, but much slower.

Maybe it was better not to use the supercomputers after all, the head of research mused. Their subordinates would wonder about the processes and check their purpose out of curiosity. She could probably explain it away, but the workers would remember it if authorities ever asked them about it.

Secrecy, Li reminded herself. They mustn't get caught for their genetic research. They were saving humanity. Few would understand their reasoning, and even fewer would dare say it out loud. No one would defend them.

Two years might be an optimistic estimate. Or pessimistic. After the war ended, a couple of ragtag groups had begun research related to their mission. So it was possible that their work would be useful. In the best case, it would save a significant amount of time.

Blaming the male sex for the ongoing wars was, at least in some ways, an exaggeration. It was true, however, that almost always, the leaders of both sides and the highest members of government during armed conflicts had been men.

A drop in the highest quartile of testosterone levels would, according to their estimates, reduce the probability of violent conflict, a large one, to twenty percent. Unfortunately, beyond that, the curve fell slowly.

— What are you thinking about?

Li glanced at her closest subordinate, who had entered with boxes folded up, and shared her thoughts.

— That's why we came to that number, Anilie Borment smiled and set her items on the table. After folding one box together, she handed it over to Cie.

— Is this enough? The heavier equipment has its own protective cabinets.

Li placed the boxes down and nodded after assessing how many of their necessary items they could fit inside.

— Your neighbors must be wondering about the load.

— So what? As long as I don't cause them disturbance or danger, they can't ask the housing authority to inspect my apartment. And even if they did, none of them have the necessary expertise to figure out the reason behind these acquisitions. Besides, I can always say I'm working from home.

— You do work from home?

— Occasionally. In theory, I could collect my salary without ever leaving my apartment.

— Same here. You pack from this end, and I'll start from the other side, Li instructed her friend.

— Just don't break anything. I really don't want to go around looking for replacement equipment at all sorts of secondhand markets again.

The pile of boxes, filled with items, seemed disturbingly large to the head of research, especially with the protective cabinets that had already been set up. According to the original plan, the items were supposed to be transported in one of their small vehicles, but such a pile wouldn't fit into a personal car.



After weighing the options, Li called a popular rental service to reserve a trailer and set off to pick it up. In the meantime, Anilie would move the items, at least the lighter ones, outside to speed up the loading. After that, they would drive to Ani's place.

Reversing the trailer wasn't Li's favorite task, and it took her a decent amount of time to maneuver it into position in front of the designated entrance.

— It's not too crooked, Borment, who had opened the door, replied to Li's thoughts about trying again, preventing any further attempts by getting out of the car.

— We can get past it from both sides. We were supposed to deliver the load as discreetly as possible. Back-and-forth fiddling is bound to attract attention.

After several trips, Li parked her car by the street and returned to her subordinate, who had opened the boxes and protective cabinets.

— Could you help a bit? If we move these bigger contraptions first, we won't trip over the smaller ones.

— You're planning to put everything on the floor? the amused Cie Li asked while helping Anilie move a rather heavy device to the spot she wanted. After finding space for the other two identical devices in the guest room, the duo arranged the lighter equipment in appropriate places.

— I'm still thinking about the arrangement, Borment pondered. In principle, all the equipment is available, but some of it probably needs to be moved to ensure easy passage and cleaning paths. Reaching should be avoided. The electrical cables need to reach the sockets or splitters.

— Have fun. I'll have time to return the trailer today if I leave now.

— Go ahead. I'll clean off the junk and test them one by one before connecting them to each other.

— What if someone asks where we were?

Many are familiar with the events that transpired long ago in a distant galaxy. However, few know what happened even further away, closer to the present time. No one knows about the events in a parallel universe.

The Great War that had killed a quarter of the Earth's population had come to an end. While the Derkadans focused on dismantling the remnants of the theocracy that had oppressed them for centuries and caused the deaths of three hundred million people—dissolving their army in the process—their former enemy, too, was transitioning back to civilian rule and normal life.

To ensure the peace would last, the Eyan leadership approved a plan to reduce the maximum testosterone levels of all men, hoping the measure would lessen the aggression of their sex. Once the Derkadan leadership also agreed, the plan was implemented on a global scale.

Despite countless tests, something went terribly wrong. A race against time for the future of humanity had begun.

