

AYLCEE TARHA

THE WATCHTOWER

FANTASY NOVEL



Éditions Aylcée-Tarha@Aylcée-Tarha Éditions

Book Summary

A dark forest, a secret tower, characters between mists and dawns, explosive worlds, an adventure just beginning: a powerful, deafening atmosphere is foreshadowed.

Mysteries to solve and last-minute ambushes unfold in unusual locations. A flight of love or a consensual shipwreck, which one is fraught with violence?

The Author

I, Aylcée Tarha, have decided to speak directly to adults, parents of young children and teenagers. A storyteller before being a novelist, my imagination is put to the service of liberated writing.

NB:

Defending freedom of expression, I leave it to these parents and readers to decide the content of my works by encouraging them to read them first. You are responsible for their intellectual structure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dualities, a romantic novel
- Clara, a Witch's Love, a fantasy tale
- Clara and the Stone Circle, a fantasy tale
- The Elemental Peoples, a collection of tales
- Lost Stories, a text collection
- Epidamus, a fantasy novel

DEDICATION

'Just out of a desire to tell stories where everyone has the right to a wild imagination, without morals but with a touch of fanciful storytelling under a historical thread where love has its place!

This text can be downloaded FREE of charge directly from my website by adults, parents, family members, friends, etc., who remain solely responsible for opening the minds of their children (specifically, those between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, in their teens).

I am an independent author and editor.

This e-book is in PDF format and protected by copyright certificate No. D58840-21272

(Illustrations from CANVA Pro)

"All rights reserved."

"Any resemblance to facts and characters existing or having existed would be purely fortuitous and could only be the result of pure coincidence."

"The Intellectual and Artistic Property Code authorizes, under the terms of paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article L.122-5, on the one hand, only "copies or reproductions strictly reserved for the private use of the copier and not intended for collective use" and, on the other hand, only analyses and short quotations for the purpose of example and illustration, "any representation or reproduction in whole or in part, made without the consent of the author or his successors in title or

assigns, is unlawful" (paragraph 1 of Article L. 122-4). This representation or reproduction, by any process whatsoever, would therefore constitute an infringement punishable by Articles L. 335-2 et seq. of the Intellectual Property Code."

Prohibition of the right of reproduction (or right of copying) and corresponding legal text, accompanied or not by the following extract:

"All rights reserved"

(The text on pages three and four of this book should be analyzed for each restriction that the reader should consider.)

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form. For further information, contact the publisher.

All rights reserved. This book or portions thereof may not be reproduced in any form, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher, except as provided under the copyright law of the United States of America. For permission requests, write to the publisher, "Attention: Permissions Coordinator," at the address below:

Aylcée Tarha

La Roucoule

1, Chemin de la Bichoune

-F-15400 Menet

ou par e-mail :

aylcee.livres@gmail.com

SUMMARY

Prologue

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Chapter 6

Epilogue

Prologue

Once upon a time, there was a rural country steeped in beautiful, age-old legends, surrounded by vast expanses of forest, vast grain-growing fields, and majestic torrents. The people were divided into three distinct categories: the ruling nobility, the merchant bourgeoisie, and the hardworking populace. The nobles joined forces to wield administrative power, administering taxes and justice; the church was at the center of the state; and the army was vested in powerful families.

The bourgeoisie, or notables, controlled commerce, import-export trade, finance, agriculture, crafts, and culinary arts. Their caste steered the populace through spies and proved highly effective, collaborating closely with the justice system through the enforcement of laws. The masses tried to escape poverty by working hard for a boss, a master, a nobleman: serf, apprentice, worker, employee, team leader, craftsman.

Each step was validated by the sweat of one's brow, by one's moral or mental values, by one's intelligence or speed of execution. There were also special privileges between men and women to climb the ladder more quickly. A perfect example was marriage, or between a nobleman and his lover. Favors were commonly bought: a night for a purse, a status for a piece of real estate.

Each season governed daily life: dozens of activities needed it to move forward, particularly agriculture, livestock farming, seasonal staple food, flour and oil mills, weaving in general, carding, and crafts with all their artistic trades. In short, everything coincided, everything intertwined, everything worked together to ensure everyone found what they needed, a roof over their heads, food, and shelter.

The serfs' meals were based on barley or wheat groats!

Thus, in this landscape largely oriented toward the peasantry, the days and nights embraced a sense of humanity toward each local inhabitant. It was an essentially lively and invigorating ardor thanks to the numerous festivities linked to the spiritual, between pagan rites united with the liberated nature and the church with its heavy, strict dogmas. Men always sought to surpass themselves, to overextend themselves, to elevate themselves.

His role as a man was to become better, to possess unflinching strength, to be unique and epic: a hero in his own right. Women were content to be there to assist them, love them, care for them, beautify their home, bear children, and join their clan. The role of this duo was to unite their vital energies toward an ultimate goal: to make each other happy. The family embodied a whole: each member was ready to die for it!

It was in this climate of legendary heroism that this region, far from trade routes and entirely wooded, was still bathed. The villages huddled together, telling true stories of ancient times around the central hearth. One of them, lively and vibrant, made even the boldest among them tremble: that of the count's castle and its infamous Watchtower!

A bloody tale whose mystery was tangible...

The rumors were numerous, they roamed the woods and far beyond! Gossip was rife, each storyteller adding to it. There was the official narrative, then the unofficial. The first aimed to cover up the affair for political purposes, risking tarnishing the reputation of all the surrounding nobility. The other was full of innuendo, unspeakable secrets buried deep within the perpetrators and their victims.

That day was timeless, between mist and dew, veiled sunshine and light showers. Few, if any, people were outside, and a freshness had taken hold of the land: dry in clear spots, muddy in others, more overcast. The main road wound flat between the trees, serving as a route for carts connecting villages, hamlets, and farms. Few used it in these humid, spongy, cold, and icy temperatures.

A deserted place was nesting, leaning in on itself. This twilight situation did not bode well: a fine rain had appeared, valiant and sticky. On the path bordering the edge of this corner, a feminine form, bent with fatigue and despair, walked painfully. Under her heavy cape, that of penitents, she advanced, holding a staff in each hand. Her feet in clogs made her steps heavier.

Carried slung over her shoulder, a shapeless satchel, soft but seemingly light, and a leather water flask punctuated her rhythm.

All she could see was a misshapen silhouette, squeezed under a large hood. Her patched skirt dragged on the ground, giving her a wretched, pitiful, and shabby look. Dressed entirely in brown, she blended into the greenery, surrounding it. She jumped at every sound she heard. She was afraid, frightened by the sound of wood creaking. She wandered, without a real goal, wandering here and there, escaping any imposed patriarchal judgment.

'I'm in a real mess: I have only one option: to flee straight ahead, and above all, as far away as possible from this narrow life that had been mine until now. I was happy in this cocoon despite everything: these last few years have been completely sad, until these revelations about my birth. Who am I, after all? A

mystery surrounds me, how should I go about getting to the bottom of this family chaos?'

Her thoughts persistently brought her back to her escape from the family home. Her mother, ill, had recently died when her stepfather's son had tried to rape her one evening, entering her room while drunk. She had defended herself and grabbed a poker, striking him violently. Realizing her unfortunate gesture, she immediately fled through the window, carrying a change of clothes, water, cheese, and bread.

'This young man, whom I've always known, this Guitou, was a childhood friend, a schoolmate, a figurehead in this village across the street.' They had become close when her father married his supposed mother. He followed her everywhere but hadn't crossed the line until that night. He had celebrated her entry into the Marquis's stables too much and had knocked on her door, drunk. A real battle had begun, which she had won.

He jumped on her, she defended herself, hit him, and ran away.

Not a single glance from her was cast at the body of this individual. Since then, she trotted along the cross roads at night and hid during the day in very isolated corners. She had only one thought in her rage: to get as far away as possible. She knew what she was risking: beatings with a stick, a whip, or having to marry him. It was not in her plans to marry anyone: her freedom came first!

Suddenly, she heard a noise just behind her. A footstep that had apparently been following her for a short time. She then remembered that she had crossed a crossroads where several roads disappeared into the

countryside. A dull anxiety suddenly seized her, and she turned off onto a random path that led her from the edge to the depths of this wild, abundant nature, filled with brambles, not pruned enough to run just in case.

'I hope I haven't left any traces behind me up here!'

She was moving forward quickly, but in her panic, she didn't see the root right in the middle of the path. She fell with all her weight, stumbling in her tracks on a thick carpet of slippery leaves, scratching herself in the process inside a thorny hedge, and finally falling into a hole where she squeezed through. She held her breath and distinctly heard footsteps: someone was indeed tracking her, she hadn't been dreaming.

'Come to me, my dear Guardian Angels. I need you so much! You have always protected me well, keep my pursuer away from me, whoever he may be. Help me prevent him from finding me, especially if he is sent by Monsieur the Marquis. You know very well that I have only been defending myself. I beg you to hide me under your wings, to put a veil around me, making me invisible. Thank you all. Amen.'

From where she stood, she couldn't tell who he was or what motivated him to be behind her like this. She did, however, know that it was a man, from the way he moved, both light and heavy, depending on the noises he made, unless he had one leg shorter than the other. He was probably lame, given the irregular frequency of his sometimes faltering, disabling strides.

His echo reverberated tirelessly in this enclosed space.

She heard his footsteps gradually diminish in the once-silent forest. Exhausted, she allowed herself a few moments of rest before checking where she lay. By inadvertently ending up there, he had certainly saved

her life, at least for the moment. She regained her breathing and stood up, shaking out her clothes. She immediately felt a sharp pain in her right ankle. That's all she needed!

She swallowed back her tears, angrily wiping her cheeks!

Sitting back down slowly, she scanned her immediate surroundings with a mixture of fear and curiosity. She glimpsed a long tunnel, dug as deep as a man, in front of her. Suddenly frightened, determined not to be intimidated, she grabbed her walking poles for reassurance. She had landed headfirst into this burrow, averaging one meter high, permanently covered by this twining vegetation.

Unable to climb through the gaping hole due to her unfortunate incident, she attempted to take several steps with the help of the stakes. She was in so much pain, it was undeniable, but gritting her teeth courageously, this teenager went inside. Hearing no sound, she wandered as best she could along this terribly dark passage. She thought this would lead her somewhere. She had no choice.

'I know that in every trial that a human being must go through, there is always a positive outcome. I must seek it to find it. Faith is a force that transcends me in the worst moments. I move forward in this darkness that can also become beneficial. My heart is brave; it will be my compass in this ordeal. It will soon become a treasure that will then illuminate my steps until my deliverance is near.'

.....