

The Rune Circle

JACQUES VAN DE BAAN

'The truth is hidden behind the simplicity of deceit'

Summary The Rune Circle

The world is shocked by large oil fields running dry causing a global oil crisis. The cause of this appears to be intentionally introduced uncontrollable synthetic bacteria.

While searching for the truth, the main character, Jeffrey Newman, cryptologist for the National Security Agency, stumbles across a company that has developed an alternative fuel that renders oil into an unnecessary energy source.

A mysterious Celtic druid sets out a track with a rune circle. Clyde Ferguson, expert in synthetic biology, assists Jeffrey with finding a solution for the bacteria, but they run into an unexpected opponent who wants to seize power at a global level.

This book contains many surprising facts, unknown to many. The oil spill with the drilling rig Deep Water Horizon in the Mexican Gulf appears to be connected with many facts that will shock the Americans. In this book, the truth is uncovered and substantiated with the sources of information. Also the invention of the alternative fuel is based on truth. To avoid missing large sums of taxes, governments currently boycott this inexpensive, emission-free fuel.

An amazing and interesting book that has the potential to raise a good deal of dust.

Number of pages: 336

Chapter 1

Fellah's cry reflected off the walls. It was a manifestation of a burning pain that contained a dreadful despair.

It did not scare Abdelhamid Mugallad.

Not anymore. It had become common to him.

Yet, the groaning cut him to the bone. Every time it hurt him more. He wished no one to have Fellah's pain and certainly not Fellah whom he loved passionately. She was the light of his eyes and the sun of his life.

He walked to Fellah's bed and bent over her. Affectionately, he stroked her cheek with his hand and carefully kissed her cracked lips.

She opened her eyes and Abdel looked into two gleaming pools filled with pain

"I cannot bear this," she said softly. "My bones burn like hot lava."

Silently, Adel looked her in the eyes. He felt the pain when he realized that she should not be suffering. If he would have enough money, she probably could be cured. Paget's disease of bone caused an accelerated breakdown of Fellah's bones. From her medical specialist he had learned that normally, the growth and breakdown of bones balance each other, but this disease disturbed this balance because of an overactivity of osteoclasts.

Abdel worked in the mess room of Zakum Development Company, usually called ZADCO, that exploited the large Zakum oilfield. His job generated insufficient financial means to provide for a proper treatment for Fellah.

But today this was going to change!

With a smile on his face he thought about the opportunity that was offered to him to give Fellah the necessary treatments. He vividly recalled the encounter with the gruff Saudi three weeks ago. The mysterious man knew much about him and also about Fellah's condition. Abdel would not have to do much to get enough money to cover all the cost of the medical treatment [for Fellah]. Besides he would receive a large deposit on his bank account. His conscience only briefly restrained him from taking the bait and today it was going to happen. According to the Saudi he would do a favour to the world with his deed, but the consequences of that deed were unknown to him.

He bent over his wife once more and kissed his wife's cracked lips again. "Keep it up, my desert rose. Today I am going to earn your recovery."

"Is that really true, Abdel?" She whispered.

He noticed the hope sparkling in her eyes and nodded. "Yes, it is really true. Our future begins today."

He kissed her once more and left the room. In the kitchen he took a box with small bottles from the fridge. Somewhat suspiciously he looked at the small bottles. They were just regular bottles for soft drinks and filled with a dark red liquid. They carried a label for cassis drink. The liquid was viscous and was not carbonated, but no one would notice that. Abdel shook his head. He didn't understand why nine simple bottles would bring him such a significant reward.

Abdel walked over to the cupboard and took the nine labels that he had received together with the bottles. The labels were ten by ten centimeter and showed a strange symbol. He didn't understand a bit of it: three dragon heads coming together in the middle. Weird.

He stopped thinking about it and stuck the labels in his pocket. Carefully, he put the box with the bottles in his car, got in and drove to the suburb of Abu Dhabi where ZADCO was located.

Half an hour later he arrived at the cold storage and found his way to this day's supply that was made ready for delivery. Today, the vending machines by the derricks of the Zakum oilfield were to be filled up. He felt tense when he put the crates and boxes into the cargo van. Abdel looked around if no one was paying attention to him. He then quickly took the box with the nine bottles and placed it between the other boxes with soft drinks.

It scared him when his manager walked out of the storage and walked up to him. It was an unpleasant man who always barked at everyone.

"Abdel, everything loaded?" he asked.

"Yes sir. I am about to leave," Abdel answered.

The man nodded. "You have to hurry since I expect delays by the check points. There is a warning for terrorist attacks, so they will be strict today."

It alarmed Abdel. This was exactly something he didn't want today.

"Terrorist attacks?" he asked. "That is a while ago that we got a warning for that."

"That's right, but we have to deal with it, so you better hurry. If you are back on time, I will have another job for you," his manager responded.

Abdel nodded. "I will," he mumbled. He stepped in and drove away. He felt the tension increase; knowing that the inspection would be more intense.

After forty five minutes, the first Zakum check point appeared. Abdel noticed that the inspections were more intense indeed. Four cars were waiting at the gates. Soldiers walked around the cars and even the undercarriages of the vehicles were inspected.

Quietly, he slowed down and joined the waiting cars. Abdel noticed that the driver of the first car had to step out and was thoroughly searched. He started sweating, swallowed slowly and watched how the vehicles were searched. Ten minutes later it was his turn. With a beating heart he rolled down his window.

“Good morning, sirs,” he said, pretending to be casual. “What a suspicion this early morning. Something wrong here?”

“Time will tell,” the security guard answered. There is a warning for terrorist attacks so we have to be very careful today.”

“A good idea,” Abdel answered. “You can’t be too careful nowadays.”

“What are you here for?” the guard asked.

“I am here to fill up the vending machines for the soft drinks,” Abdel answered.

The guard nodded.

“What location”, he then asked.

“At the derricks.”

“The derricks?” responded the guard while he rubbed his chin. “That is a critical location.”

“Why is that? I never heard that vending machines are critical,” Abdel responded.

“Maybe not your soft drinks, but for sure the locations of the derricks. They are most important of this oilfield,” the guard said.

“Oh well,” Abdel said light-heartedly. “I don’t know anything about oil – only about soft drinks.”

The guard grinned. “Please, step out and show me your cargo. I want to search you, too.”

“Is that really needed? Abdel asked. “I am here on a daily basis.”

“Stop whining and step out,” the guard said.

“With a sigh Abdel stepped out and with the guard he walked to the backdoor of his van.

“Go ahead,” he said. “Only soft drinks, as you can see.”

“The guard climbed into the van and looked at the crates with soft drinks. He picked up some bottles from the crate and scrutinized them.

“This doesn’t look like dynamite, does it? Abdel said sarcastically.

“I have seen weird things before” the guard answered. He pointed to the closed box with the nine bottles with liquid. Abdel stiffened.

“What is that?” the guard asked.

“Nine bottles with cassis drink,” Abdel answered.

“Cassis drink?” the guard responded suspiciously. “We never have cassis drink in our vending machines.”

Abdel was startled. The guard was right and he had not thought about that.

“I had to take this along as per request of the project manager.” Abdel made it up on the spot.

The guard looked at him. “Strange. Coca Cola or Sprite isn’t good enough anymore?”

“Good question, but I don’t know either,” Abdel responded. “We just don’t ignore a request from the project manager.”

The guard took a bottle from the box and looked at the label. Behind them a car honked and the guard looked up. Eight cars were already waiting behind them. With a sigh he put the bottle back.

“Oh well, so be it. Just go ahead,” he said to Abdel. Inaudibly, Abdel sighed, closed the doors of his van and drove to the first oil derrick. The search had made him sweat and with a deep sigh he let the tension go. The unknown Saudi had warned him that this job was not without danger, but only now it had become really clear to him. He thought about Fellaah. It encouraged him to continue resolutely. All risks were acceptable to let his desert rose bloom.

Abdel parked his cargo van by the side entrance of the building right beside the derrick and stepped out. He waved at some of the men who left the building and whistling he opened the back door of his van. He took a bottle from the box and swapped it for a bottle of coke. He then locked the door and walked to the entrance of the mess room. Since it was too early for a break yet, there were not many people in the mess room. Routinely, he filled up the

vending machine. He looked around. No one was paying attention to him. Abdel grabbed the bottle of cassis and walked into the hallway towards the oil derrick.

After twenty meters, he had to go through a door that led to the control room. Carefully he peeked through the window if anyone was looking. The five men in the room were focused on their screens and had no eye for the hallway. He bent down and walked under the window further into the hallway. After ten meter there was another door and from the instructions from the Saudi he knew that this one led to the heart of the derrick.

Nervous, he looked around once more. He was the only one in the hallway. Quickly he opened the door and stepped into the room. It was a long room filled with pipes, valves, and tanks. Abdel tried to remember the instructions and looked around for a blue tank in the middle of the room. He quickly walked through the long room. When he noticed the tank, he grumbled of satisfaction. Standing in front of the tank, he looked around for a ladder that he could use to climb on top of the 3-meter high tank.

There was no ladder.

Hesitating, he scratched his head and looked at the tank again. He walked to the side of the tank and cautiously felt the pipes beside it if they were warm. They were not. In order to free his hands, he carefully took the bottle between his teeth. Using the pipes, he slowly climbed up and squatted down on top of the tank.

Then the door was opened. Abdel frightened. Quickly he fell down flat on the tank. His teeth hurt when the bottle hit his arm, but he was relieved that it did not brake against the tank.

With a pounding heart he remained lying.

He heard the two men talk. They were speaking about overpressure in a tank. Apparently, they only came in to check up on that. Abdel heard them walk by and started sweating when he heard that one of the two climbed up somewhere.

When the man had found the problem, he yelled, and it seemed that a valve was adjusted.

With his eyes closed because of the tension, Abdel listened to the conversation and was relieved when he heard that they left the room again. He needed a few minutes to recover from the shock. Then Abdel sat on his knees and looked at the top of the tank. With a smile of satisfaction he noticed the lid he was looking for. He moved towards the heavy metal lid and with some difficulty, he managed to open it. Curiously, he looked into the tank and saw foaming water. The Saudi was right in what he had told him.

To keep a balanced pressure, the oil that was pumped up was replaced by water. The water was also used to the oil away from places that are difficult to access. This water would end up deep underground in the large oil field and apparently it was the Saudi's purpose to get the liquid from the bottle there as well, even though Abdel didn't understand why. Carefully, Abdel took the bottle and unscrewed the lid. He suppressed his curiosity to smell and poured the bottle into the tank. He closed the lid and climbed down hurriedly. From his pocket he took a label and stuck it on the pipe that ran to the tank. He took the empty bottle with him. The Saudi had been clear to him about that. He should leave no trace behind and he would only receive his reward upon returning the empty bottles to the Saudi.

He walked into the mess room again and grabbed the empty crate that was still beside the vending machine. The men who already sat there when he arrived, were still there and looked surprised.

"Where do you come from?" one of them asked. "Weren't you here already thirty minutes ago?"

Abdel noticed their surprised looks and began to sweat again.

"That's right. I just had a chat in the control room. A good friend of mine is working there at the moment." He responded.

The men nodded understandingly and turned around again.

Relieved, Abdel walked outside and stepped into his vehicle. For a moment he rested his head against the back of the chair and took a long breath. This job had cost him a lot of energy.

He started the engine and drove to the next derrick. Today, he had to drop off a fresh supply at twenty three derricks, but only at nine of them, scattered over the area, he had to pour the unknown liquid in the tanks. By now he was happy that there was extra security today as it offered him an excuse for his manager for being later than usual. It would cost him much extra time to empty the bottles in the tanks.

At one of the derricks he had wait well over thirty minutes since men were working in the tank room. Yet, in general it went fine and around three o'clock in the afternoon he had emptied eight bottles in the tanks and eight stickers had been stuck on the pipes besides the tanks. He started to feel more relaxed and cheerfully thought about the opportunities for a better life after receiving his rewards.

But at the ninth tank it went wrong.

He had just emptied the last bottle in the tank and climbed down when two mechanics entered the room. Surprised to see him climb down, they stopped talking.

“What are you doing?” one of them asked. “Who are you?” the other one wanted to know.

Abdel did not answer. He realized that excuses did not work at this moment. There simply was no reason that he had climbed on top of a tank.

The last part he jumped down and ran toward the two men that began to yell. With force Abdel pushed them aside and ran out of the room, into the hallway, toward the mess room. The men in the mess room looked surprised at him, but as fast as he could he ran outside to his van. Panting, he started the engine and with sand flying everywhere he headed for the exit that was fortunately close by.

Yet, it was too far away to escape.

The two men in the tank room had immediately called the security and all gates were instantly closed.

When Abdel arrived at the gate, he noticed that the barriers were down. Four guards with their guns ready had squatted down beside the barriers.

With anguish and sorrow Abdel thought about Fellaah. What would become of her if he wouldn't make it? Tears welled up in his eyes. Tears of anger that fate could be so cruel. Tears of fear because of Fellaah, the apple of his eye. Tears of regret for his decision to listen to the Saudi.

But now it was too late.

He thought again about Fellaah and determined not to leave her, he approached the barriers at full speed. The four guards started shooting and Abdel ducked to avoid the bullets. His windscreen shattered when bullets hit it. Screaming of fear, Abdel held on to his steering wheel and the van struck the barrier.

It worked.

The barriers rendered the car into an invaluable wreck, but it survived the crash and Abdel was unharmed as well.

The adrenaline made him scream hysterically and incredibly relieved he repositioned behind his wheel. At high speed he left the gate behind.

Then he felt a pain as if a hot needle was pushed in his back and his screaming turned into an anxious groan when he realized he was hit by a bullet.

Abdel felt a second needle deeply pushed into his back and his car began to swirl. Black spots appeared before his eyes and in a reflex he stepped on the brakes but he had already lost control. Spinning, the car got off the road and ended up in a ditch. Like a doll, Abdel was thrown out of the car and came down in the sand, five meter from his car. He was completely conscious and resigned he noticed how blood flowed from his body and colored the desert sand even redder than it already was.

Abdel closed his eyes and began to cry when he thought about Fellaah.

Fellaah.

His desert rose would never bloom again.

What would become of her?

When someone kicked him in the side he opened his eyes. A guard looked him in the face with piercing eyes.

“What have you done in the tank room?” he yelled.

“You don’t want to know that,” Abdel responded hoarsely.

“Tell me! Maybe we’ll help you then!” the man yelled again.

By now four other men had arrived and surrounded him. One of them was a civilian, Abdel noticed. The man squatted and looked at him gravely.

“Did you throw something in the tank?” the man asked softly.

“Abdel did not respond immediately and smiled for a moment.

“Please, tell me,” the man urged. “It cannot be reversed anyway, so you can you tell me now.”

With glowing eyes, Abdel looked him in the face and tried to say something, but he felt a burning pain in his lungs. Blood bubbled between his lips.

“Take care of Fellaah,” he whispered.

Friendly, the man nodded. “I will do that, but tell me what you’ve done.”

Slowly, using his elbows, Abdel pushed himself up and looked at the man. With his last strength he whispered his answer.

“I have changed the world forever.”

