

Chapter 15

The Mountain Saga Episode 3 —
Antenna XXL

Confirmed! I hate the mountains!

Pierre Dac — The schmilblick¹: good for nothing, but it might always come in handy.

Osvaldo Cavandoli — *La Linea*² — Sometimes a single little line says it all.

¹ Coluche, Le Schmilblick (1976, YouTube).

² Osvaldo Cavandoli, La Linea, episode 1 (YouTube).

The mountains: calm, beautiful, wild... So they say? No idea, because getting back from work, I risk my life with every step. So I keep my eyes on the ground to avoid skidding on the icy road. When I look up from the ground, there he is, proud as Punch, perched on the roof of the *drak-car*, welding, halfway between MacGyver and an eight-year-old playing soldiers in a giant's body. I look up at him, low-angle shot:

Me — What are you doing?

Him — AN ANTENNA!!

Me — What for?

Him — To talk to the whole world, from Alaska to North Korea.

Me — Mars too, while you're at it?

Him — To everyone in the world who's got an antenna, like me!

Here we go again! Another absurd invention from *Vik the King* and his brilliant ideas. He's livid with me, because he can't stand me putting up with everything without a murmur. And frankly, he's right!

Unpaid overtime, late wages, irregular hours, cleaning up building sites, working on my days off: it's taking the mickey. But the worst of it is, with no money in the bank, I've no choice. I hang on until payday, like every seasonal worker. The boss knows it and plays on it.

But he's reckoned without the Viking, who builds his megalomaniac phallus for revenge: a giant 20-metre antenna planted 50 metres from the hotel, just to ruin the

view for the guests on the terrace. A whopping great thing, gatecrashing every single one of their holiday snaps. From the valley, it looks like a military base hidden in the forest, ready to attack.

And while his lordship picks up the cosmic signals with his year-3000 satellite dish, I end up in the *drak-car*, with Big Dog, philosophising about the precarious future of the situation.

Me — Looks like he's doing everything to get me fired and out of here as fast as possible.

Big Dog gives me a sympathetic look — Indeed, the police could well turn up, tipped off by Interpol. Expect anything... and above all... the worst!

Sunday Is Showtime!

The journalist — He played his XXL joker... ever so discreetly?

The author — That's it. He's acting out a bad remake of *Back to the Future*³. With my boss in the role of *Narcissus the First, the Flawless*. Me in that of *the Lady of the Fjords*. And him... as *Eeyore*!

The Viking — What rubbish!

The author — You said it! Already, back when you were on the train, I got it full in the face. Acid, that lemon juice in the eye. But this time, you were aiming for both eyes. I ended up wearing safety goggles, even at night! Stuck between two hotheads, one abusive, the other controlling, I was replaying the rear-view mirror remake, extended cut: I kept quiet, gritted my teeth, played for time (like with my parents when they raised their voices). Seen from here, we looked like two people nostalgic for old scratched records. And then we wonder why we put on weight? Well, that's what you get for swallowing everything just to, incidentally, keep your man and your job.

The Viking — Instead of leaving to protect yourself, what's wrong with you?

The author — Only to depend on you? No thanks.

³ Robert Zemeckis, *Back to the Future*, trailer (YouTube).

The Viking — Charming! You held me hostage! You forced me to stay with you, when I'd told you: *let's go, I'll help you.*

The author — By putting me out at -6 °C? Thanks, but I've got enemies for that. And anyway, who's holding who hostage? You chose to buy 20 metres of scrap metal to get back at my boss, when if you'd fronted me a room, you could have left straight away!

The Viking — Obviously! Since we didn't agree, at least the antenna connected me to the rest of the world.

The journalist — True, to get your revenge, it took at least an XXL antenna! (He turns to her.) Actually, I think that's what you suggest to the reader?

The author — Sort of. I suggest they invent a character who builds an outsized object for some harebrained reason*.

The Viking — I refused to stay stuck there, going nowhere!

The author — And meanwhile, I was thinking: *the antenna climbs, the tension rises and that lovely orgasm is about to explode!*

The Hammock and the Hummingbirds

A novel by Karine Baridon



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