

# SDF

## THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

by Lupe Gehrenbeck  
*Paris, September 2008*

### A BAR IN THE CITY...

**AN ANGEL ENTERS, WEARING AN OVERCOAT AND A HELMET. THE ANGEL ARRIVES AT THE BAR TIRED. AS THE ANGEL TAKES OFF ITS HELMET AND OVERCOAT WE REALIZE THAT IT'S A TRANSVESTITE.**

Yeah... I know... you all thought I was a man... (TO THE BARTENDER) Ramón, bring me a Cuba Libre, please! I'm running low on fuel and I've come from very far...(LOOKING DIRECTLY AT THE PEOPLE WHO STARE AT HER WITH CURIOSITY) Rum is what we angels drink, didn't you know? As you elevate your temperature goes down... it's a thing of the heavens... and the rum restores the heat...and after the fourth one, it even makes the pain in my wings disappear, when I'm just so exhausted, can you imagine what it's like to be a guardian angel in a world where people don't believe in guardian angels? Exhausting. It's hard work, literally, guarding the souls of the skeptical, lonesome, and abandoned... in these days where information circulates at such a rate it's difficult to be informed, did you know that a 10 year old child costs 16.50 euros in Benin? Have you heard about the mass brutalities that are committed everyday along the many kilometers of border that separate the first world from the third... as if one weren't a consequence of the other, as if hunger were a crime? The world is upside down, that's why I'm so dizzy...That's why there's so many people who would rather fly and never look down, did you know that there are 15 million marijuana consumers, in the United States alone? Can you understand why it's still considered an illegal drug? The world is upside down, a hypocritical world, which is why I prefer to free lance. How else could I? If the Pope insists that abortion and divorce are a crime in God's eyes or that the use of condoms is sinful...What kind of angel could work for that sort of Pope... in the dark hallways of the Vatican filled with such intrigue and power? .... It's like right out of a movie.

Walter Schiavone, who's not a Pope but a Napolitano gangster made himself a house identical to Tony Montana's, the one from the movie... while Roberto Saviano, the author of Gomorra, is hiding out and escaping from death threats made to him by the mafia, what comes first reality or fiction? Who says angels don't exist? ... If in the sixties people were already trying to stop the world and step down...What's left for the rest of us now when people are even talking about the end of the world as if it were certain? Put yourself in the care of saints, and keep your guardian angel close. I've been an angel since the Vietnam War, and I can tell you that things have gotten worse; at least during those days The Beatles were inventing music, Woodstock was happening and free love. But... what happened to all those people, where are they now? They are now telling lies in newspapers, about Latin American Revolutions,

making a living off people's misfortunes, talking from the comfort of their antiquated socialist parties' credibility. In the world they built it's difficult to separate right from left, the greed is the same, the intolerance and arrogance, injustice, all the same, right from left... I'm telling you... and I see everything from above, in a 360 degree angle, a panoramic view of the world, the material we're working with is reaching its terminal phase, like right out of a Coppola... But nobody thinks about that, nobody gives me any credit because they're things nobody sees. But try to imagine for just a second the work and effort it took the angels who worked in Apocalypse Now. What happens is that when people receive a favor, they forget to give thanks. It's easier for them to believe that everything turned out the way they wanted to because they deserved it. And that's why the pay in this job is so bad.

And people go about their lives as if it were entitled to it, as if destiny actually existed. But... (IN SECRET)...for example, do you see that gentleman sitting over there? Well, just when he was entering the bar, a tile fell off the roof, and who was who stopped the tile? ... And this other guy sitting over there alone, why do you think he arrived 10 minutes ago and not an hour ago as he had intended? I blew out the tires on the bus so that he would arrive after that woman, who was sitting over there in that table, I don't know if you remember her, a tall woman, slim and in her 40s, very attractive, wearing a fitted dress and showing her cleavage, do you remember her? The woman who left here all smiling and batting her eyelashes, holding on to the arm of that hot guy, 10 years younger than her... she's the wife of that man from 10 minutes ago. And it's not that I'm for or against adultery; I just care about this young man's heart who's just coming here to relax and drink his coffee, what's the point? What he doesn't know won't hurt him....

And that one sitting over there, all alone, so full of himself, needing no one, they call him Silkman, "the man of silk" its extremely hard work following Silkman around. You got to have nerves of steel. It's very slippery following the footsteps of such a skilled pickpocket. Even among pickpockets, when you mention Silkman's name, they open way for you. Nobody can outdo him. Working with him you never get a minutes rest not even on your free time. Look over there at that man in the next table, he's so amused with all the mini skirts passing him by, poor him, literally poor, he's unable to detect the slight movement his wallet makes as it slowly leaves his pocket, along with his entire month's pay and his children's food. So in the best interest of this man's financial and household situation I try to interrupt Silkman's professional skill, while never forgetting that Silkman is my client... So I have to distract that one over there with the flannel shirt, do you see him? Sitting at the bar... you would think he was a hippie, or at least a lumberjack. Well he's actually an undercover cop who looks like he's on TV and who's had his eye on Silkman for months, and is waiting for him to make a mistake to catch him red handed. Now do you see the level of complexity here?

And this is what happens on my free time, when I come to a bar, just like you guys, looking to relax a bit. Nooo! This is a job for high endurance people. That's why many of you think that angels are men and the paintings and saints cards and statues and beliefs are filled with male angels. But you're all wrong, when it comes to endurance, we are made of steal; we continue in love "even after all that he's done to you"; we buy creams just in case they would leave us for another; and when we get wrinkles or cellulite, well then we buy more cream, we endure; creams with collagen,

with spring water, gyms and balanced diets, we endure; if its necessary, botox, surgery, the years go by and we don't cut back our consumption of lipstick, frills, hairstyles and dyes, we endure! We work hard, just to leave our paycheck in the store, so we exert our right to dream, imagine, desire... and our wish to be desired.

Nonetheless, in spite of everything that I've learned and have seen in my life, I'm unable to favor a woman and leave aside my responsibility to a man. I take care of everybody equally, without discriminating, because justice moves in mysterious ways. On the other hand, you also have to take into consideration the level of diversion, it's a lot more entertaining taking care of a pickpocket than a little old lady who never leaves her home, who never curses, and who doesn't even owe anybody anything. Silkman makes me sweat and on top of everything, he flirts with the girl on the left. And the girl on the left smiles to him, innocently. But her boyfriend knows that the girl on the left isn't one bit innocent and she's ready to bite... and that's when I intervene and the wine glass spills all over Silkman's white shirt who then has to run to the bathroom to try to get rid of the stain. At that moment he stops stealing, right before the man in the flannel shirt almost catches him. Just in time for the young man who is in love with the girl on the left, has time to pay and leave with his girl on the left, until they're confronted with another seductive Silkman in another bar where another guardian angel will amend another's wrongdoings and... that's how they lived happily ever after, for the rest of their days, because the world is filled with angels.

This job has a lot of variety. On the one hand you avoid accidents when you stop the tile from falling; while on the other hand, you make the wine spill over the shirt. It's true that sometimes I find myself obligated to take drastic measures. If there's no other way, you throw the crook down the stairs when he's about to steal from the woman who was walking to the pharmacy with the exact amount of money she needed to buy medicine for her sick mother. That's how he broke seven bones. It seems like the work of the devil but it's actually a matter of angels. In this life you have to judge things lightly. But I don't want you to feel that I am threatening you or asking you to thank me, in spite of all the things that I've done for each and everyone of you. I'm sure that if you knew, you would not pay me back with a Cuba Libre but you would offer me champagne! You would have a bed ready for me in your home or pay my rent. Because the welfare system that Angels receive, isn't enough for us to live on. Specially, since you only think about your guardian angel when you're in trouble... After you win the battle, you don't even offer us a glass of water. I don't want luxury; I just want equal rights, a few days of vacation, social security, and a pension fund... Or do you actually think we don't care about our future?

But until our work is made public knowledge, we continue to work in silence as if it we're going through menopause, tip toeing around the issue as if it were a sin, having no right to complain when people think it's the work of the devil, like that drastic measure I was forced to take before, the ones I was telling you before. We can't advertise nor market our work. Therefore, the least we can worry about is our complete disappearance. Because when there's not a single person left who believes in us, we'll disappear completely, like a lot of other good things: close family ties, time for chatting, streets for walking... and if you think religion helps, you're very wrong; what it does is scare people away, with such doomful and seperatist preaching, with so many lies and so many old inventions. That's why many of us angels work

free lance. Why complicate life with cults and churches? This business needs no scientific basis, everybody likes to be hugged, kissed, taken care of...

That's why we're here, an army of angels doing good without judging who we help, what their class is, what they've done, where they studied or even if they studied; what their dad's name is, how much they have in the bank or what car they have; their age, where they live, where they were born, if they're a man or a woman ... or whether they prefer men or women... Without distinctions, all points of view are accepted, among angels, everybody is equal. And there are many mortals who are also interested in knowing what other people think, and nourish themselves with other people's point of view. Those are the healthiest mortals. That's where, as a matter of fact, many angels come from. From people who are interested in and show respect towards others. When that is so, it is considered an indicator of social wellbeing among us angels, who are experts in the human condition. Forget psychiatrists! without a doubt, nothing compares to an angel's comprehension! To begin with, angels don't charge a consultation fee, so we can take care of clients without bank accounts nor fixed address; immigrants without papers as well as presidential candidates; pickpockets as bankers... Furthermore, you don't even have to tell us anything because we can guess it just for you. We are used to dealing with people from all beliefs and backgrounds: from the darkest and most atrocious to the purest and good. We don't place judgements or make preferences among our clients. We work night and day, with a smile on our giving face, that's where paintings never get it wrong. We even take care of animals. We have no geographical limitation, and our area of action extends throughout the five continents, from north to south, rich to poor. Having clientele in Paris doesn't stop us from having one in Hanoi or Senegal... That's why it's so exhausting. Because between heaven and earth a lot of things are happening, there's so many people, so much world, all mixed up, plural, complex, messy, and all that flying from one place to the next, because there are some people who still give themselves the right to exclude and segregate those who are different from them... people who believe their reason is above all else... people who think they have the right to kill others...

... and that's where our innocence is lost, and nobody dares admit they believe angels exist, because nobody wants to look foolish. Only children, before they're three years old, look up at the sky, and wave at us. Then it's only a matter of time for them to fall in love with somebody who doesn't love them back... or to die for expensive shoes, when they don't even have a job... and then they say all Our Fathers, make sacrifices, light candles to the saints, gods, angels, and whatever other celestial beings, just to see if the man they love leaves his woman and finally realizes that he's actually in love with her, forget about soap operas! And if the man ends up leaving his wife and starts going out with our friend the secretary, who had raised her voice to the heavens with her pleas and promises, she thinks that things worked out just how she wanted them thanks to her colorist who made her a blonde, or the plastic surgeon who increased her bra size, or she finally could buy the shoes because they put them on sale, and that's how a lot of them think they find jobs, apartments and love. As if any of that would ever have been possible without angels in the sky.

But if they're able to believe that some diet is going to make them look like a model in a magazine, or that there's a pill that can make them happy, how can they not believe in angels? It's so much easier!! Ever since you were little you've been seeing

us everywhere and you've even learned to pray to us before you go to sleep... What happens to children when they become adults? What happens to angels that become demons? By the look of things, in hell they're paying a lot better and the party goes on. And to tell you the truth: I've never heard of a demon complaining. Probably because there's no limits or morals in hell.

It's hard enough being from heaven when condemned to live on earth where nobody can see you. It's not easy living in a world that you don't belong to, where nobody recognizes your merit.... We exist in spite of the fact that everybody says no. We are the invisible service that makes everything possible but that nobody appreciates. As invisible as the mexican who prepares the best japanese sushi that you can find in the most expensive restaurants in New York, Paris, or London. What can you do? You thank the waiter and you congratulate the asian who's on display in the sushi bar. It's obvious, but nobody's willing to pay a fortune to eat a sushi prepared by a mexican immigrant who is small and hairy, and has no papers.

Because angels are not the only victims of human blindness. There are many invisible people in the world: Gina, my client on avenue A of New York city, became invisible to Bill's eyes. Although she outdoes herself over her lentils and puts cloves in her hair, Bill looks at her less and less. And she lights candles to Saint Marcos, to calm that man's cholera when he drinks so much alcohol that he ruthlessly beats her... but if he doesn't drink, Bill is so good to Gina, that Gina never disagree with him, as he never likes it when people disagree with him. And that's why she never told him the truth about her name being Josefina, and that she was born in Peru, not in Italy, which is why Gina believes in San Marcos de Leon and trusts that San Marcos is going to do his job, and this explains the mystery of why Gina still lives with a man who beats her.

The mysteries among couples are so many... I never ask. (HURT, RESENTED) I just take care of her. But she, even had the nerve to call me a slut! Where does all this doubt come from?... I only distracted him from beating her. Any angel would have done the same. But jealousy never leads to comprehension. And she had drank from the same bottle as Bill. She pushed me with such cruelty that I crashed into a bird... the pigeon who then fell on the good Mrs. Thompson's head, who was innocently walking with her grocery bags on second Street. What a fright, how upsetting! The poor woman couldn't find an explanation for what had happened, so she began to unload all the curses and insults she kne, to the sky... all of them flying up on me, as if it were that hard to believe that it was just an accident between an angel and a pigeon... That tore me apart. And without even being able to get mad at Gina, because I'm a *Guardian Angel from heaven so bright, watching beside me to lead me aright, fold thy wings round me, and guard me with love, softly sing songs to me of heaven above, amen*, I am the sweet company, who never leaves her alone, allways there, night and day... for God sake, at least give me another Armagnac, because I'm hurt.

I know that drowning my sorrows in alcohol is an idiots' medicine, not an angels. But try to understand, put yourselves in my position: imagine you are doing so much good to anyone without caring to who, when or where, you could end up becoming a guardian angel! The only thing you need is something like a sixth sense, which is the sense you get after smell, sound, taste, sight, and touch: the sense of humanity, the

sixth. For example, (CHOOSING ONE PERSON FROM THE PUBLIC) do you see that man in the back? (EXTREMELY NERVOUS, ASHAMED) Please, don't all look at the same time!! Could you be a little more discreet? (IN SECRET) Well that man with those bright eyes and brilliant gaze, who looks so awake, is asleep. I know it's hard to believe but you know looks are deceiving. That man, who looks like he's so in control, is lost. How is it possible that he hasn't noticed that there's a person out there who is only willing to live because of his lips. How can he be so blind to live without an open sky? Who says angels don't fall in love? Angels are all people in love. I'm willing to cut my wings off if it's necessary, just to wake him up. Snow white woke up with so much less...

I'm conscious of the severity in cutting off my wings, it's worse than deserting the military, or taking off the nun habit... Cutting off your wings, can never be considered an uncontainable act, a moment of unstoppable passion. No. Because you have to cut your wings many times, one after the other, until they eventually stop growing. It's a decision that you question, a gesture that is irreversible, a definitive change in your way of life, from angel to mortal, you're submitted to the celestial jury... you always pay for love... It's a lot what you risk. You can easily end up living your days as a chicken in some farm or as a rat in the subway... Because that's where chickens and rats come from, in case you didn't know. They're angels in punishment. That's why there's so many of them and they seem to be never ending. And although there are few punished angels who escape from the violence of the chicken processors or the rat fumigation campaigns in cities, the one's who escape could with some difficulty ascend to the category of pigeons, and while they have less cornices to spend their afternoons on because they're all being filled with bloody spikes, at least they're free, they have wings, they can fly, always careful not to bump into an angel, of course. And if they act like a white dove they can even reach the state of cupid, dwarfs in diapers, throwing arows right and left, whether it's in your best interest or not, that's why there's so many divorces, because the little brats don't have the criteria and that's why guardian angels have so much work afterwards, with all this uncertainty in love spread all over the world. If you become a cupid, your legs, arms and assets (REFERING TO HER CURVES), and wings could grow... and listo! You become an angel again.

There are very few who actually achieve this. That's why I beg you to keep quiet about this, because this crazy afternoon at the bar, could cost me a lot and I don't want to end up a chicken or a pigeon. Surely there's somebody here who could give me a mint one of those that'll let me say that I drank two when I really drank six.... To erase the signs of the Armagnac, before taking flight.

SHE COMES CLOSE TO THE MAN THAT SHE HAD PICKED. SHE LOOKS AT HIM INTENSELY AND SAYS WITH A VERY SWEET AND LOVING VOICE:

*Devina I am going with your caresas sobos among roundvitas... I am there allways you feelmas, enteringso and I myself lovesing in fleshtes... no saying more... pull, bit, for my delightus gusting spreaded... you, the most carestes of mascos men, himeras the smell of your penasis, yamora, kissiste, always, forever.*

SHE GOES NEAR HIM AND DISCREETLY WHISPERS IN HIS EAR:

... I would you gornis me with your plema of susficios... sucridos...

SHE KISSES HIM.

All beings in love are angels... although nobody can understand our tongue.

SHE EXITS.

**THE END.**

*Lupe Gehrenbeck*