

ARDUN

BYDANG

by

KIMA SABI

In a very small house, at the end of Ocean Grove, Hillingdon, London. A very loud buzzing sound, accompanied by a groan and the clearing of a throat signalled it was that time to get up! The only problem being it was approximately minus six degrees outside and didn't feel like it was very much warmer in the interior. A closer inspection taken through the tiny sash window confirmed the worst! A very heavy ground frost and tiny white flakes had begun to fall.

Downstairs, curled up in the corner of the sofa was a very fat, lazy ginger cat who raised his head slightly, took a stretch, yawn, then buried his head back down into his armpits and went back to sleep. Damn cat!! The television was now switched on and the small terrace property had become slightly brighter it was 7.45 am Monday morning January 26th. Good Morning Britain was droning on in the background and the smell of coffee and toast wafted around the downstairs living area.

This was the small, but very cosy and tastefully decorated home of Tony Jefferson, a cable TV installation worker, a ginger cat who rarely ever moved off the sofa and Ardun Bydawg, a hard working dog who went everywhere with Tony and I do mean everywhere! To work, to the pub, to the bedroom, the shop, even to the toilet on some occasions if need be! Ardun was Tonys long term companion. Unfortunately for Ardun though if Tony had work, then so did Ardun. He even had his own bright orange workman waistcoat Tony had purchased for him with:-

'ARDUN BYDAWG CABLE TV INSTALLATIONS'

printed on the back which was supposed to help keep him warm and make sure everyone knew that he was part of the team and so upon that introduction off to work they go!

Ardun had been purchased aged nine weeks from one of the lads down the pub and Tony never left him. He had now become a slightly grumpy old boy who was under the assumption of being slightly hard done too and had begun to harbour a growing grudge against the old ginger fat cat, that tended to lie about all day and do very little. Something felt a little different today though? What with the state of the roads and the van taking ages to get through the busy London morning rush hour traffic, Ardun just humphhed the whole journey.

From the skies up above you could hear the usual rumble and shake of the flights coming into London Heathrow airport and Ardun estimating he probably only had 3 or 4 good years ahead of him before these horrible, English, cold, winters made his joints arthritic. Some days had found himself constantly dreaming of being up there on one of those large birds and off into much warmer climates. Tony pulled up outside the gates of this mornings job and left Ardun sitting in the front seat of the van for a change. Well that was a relief! And thats where he stayed all morning occasionally raising his head every now and then. For example, when upon the sight of a sexy looking poodle he swore he had seen somewhere before or wondering what some yapping Jack Russell's problem was at the other end of the street.

When lunchtime came, the weather slightly improved. I say slightly, the sun was now shining but it was still finding it hard to get above freezing! Tony opened the door on Arduns side and said "come on then" to which out he came and they both set off down the road to a small cafe on the corner that did hot takeaway sandwiches and breakfasts. Tony went inside and left Ardun outside, where a small lorry with a drop down loader had mounted the kerb and parked up loading crates into the back from a large electrical appliance store. For some reason Ardun went sniffing around the crates, besides he was

getting bored of hanging around waiting for Tony and his food!

Somehow he had found himself being shut into the back of one of the crates of washing machines and to cut a long story short, before he knew what was going on, was being hauled into the freight terminal at London Heathrow airport and onto the next EL AL 747 flight.

Destination Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv, Israel, set to arrive approximately 5 hours and 5 minutes later. If ever there was a good time to catch up on your sleep then now was as good a time as any!

The City That Never Sleeps (Or So They Say)

Onboard the flight crew had settled the passengers making them feel comfortable. Small luggage was placed in the overhead space and the crew had gone through the safety and emergency what's what procedures. The flight was relatively easy with just a small amount of turbulence whilst in UK air space. Where after the journey became much smoother with no problems. Ardun had settled himself comfortable next to the couple of Zanussi washers that were on route to Élan Arrowitz the owner of an electrical appliance store. Along with another couple of large crates containing large kitchen appliances that he was importing from a UK exporter to his shop in Tel Aviv Israel....It was a nice easy landing down into Tel Aviv.

When Ardun woke he would not know if he were still dreaming of those far away places or dreams had become reality! He would soon realise all his dreams had come true and the best part of that being able to bypass the Israeli checkpoint passport clerks. None of that "Hey, little dog, so what is the purpose of your visit to Tel Aviv?" straight through! Easy peezy, soon to feel a little queasy!

The store was situated in Tel Aviv, the 2nd most inhabited city in Israel. Good job Ardun was a Londoner and used to high volumes of traffic and people.

This place was different to London though. It was on the Mediterranean coast and he was about to become a Tel Avivim (and a father). Economy here was 2nd to Dubai and known as the city that never sleeps "The White City" Ma shalom, Ma shalom, Err what was that mate? Shlomi toff. Err yeah I am good...

Upon the opening of the crates Ardun made a bolt for it.... "Hey crazy dog" but he didn't look back.....He was gone. Out the door and into bright blue skies with a warm breeze and pleasant sunshine. Straight onto Hayarkon Street right by the beach. There were plenty of hotels, car rentals, cafes with bikes parked up outside. Some of the paintwork on the buildings was cracked and crumbling as if the heat at some point had been too much for the buildings to bear or as if the odd store had been hit with flying missiles. Kinda scruffy. Well that was how it appeared today!

By now he was feeling very hungry, thirsty and wondering how he was going to come by his next meal.

Whats that smell??? Some guy wearing a small flat black cap which he would later discover were called yamulkas, threw a lump of something at Ardun. He took the bait and scoffed it down. Tasted ok. He wouldn't think that later when it came out the other end with his backside on fire. He had just ate a falafel. He had eaten kebab left overs before that Tony had given him and they seemed to have a similar sensation when in the tummy! I guess the change of diet and sudden change in the temperature must of made his poor tummy a bit sensitive. It was a drink he really needed.

Taking a good look round, he found himself wondering into the next road. Retsif Herbert Samuel Street and ended up onto the beaches which seemed to spread the whole length of Tel Aviv and well beyond after passing a water fountain on a slight fork in the road. Even though it was kind of nice and warm, suddenly he realised he was lost and the whole place didn't really seem that appealing. Bearing a

striking resemblance to Blackpool, England crossed with Beirut in times of conflict but minus the old tower.

He bumped into a female dog. Her name was Harley and from that moment, she took a shining to Ardun. Well, everyone did! The friendly little European. He spent a bit of time messing about on the beach with Harley. She belonged to a couple of bikers that lived at the other end of Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv. They had all become friends after meeting at the Hostel many years before and had settled in the area. Well to top it all off Ardun only went and left the dark haired Harley with a pup on the way! Not that he knew anything about it at the time.

Ardun thought about the fat, lazy, ginger cat with Tony and wondered what he must have been thinking after realising his long term companion was gone! How was he going to make his way back home? There was no way he was sneaking back into Tel Aviv Freight area at the airport. The security was that tight here you couldn't squeeze a pea past them. It was going to take time but guaranteed he would do it.

There was a small restaurant bar on one of the corners of Hayarkon Street, so he made a beeline towards it and layabout at a side door hoping someone took pity on him I guess.

A young boy came out the back door of the restaurant and shouted to someone inside to come and have a look at this crazy looking dog. He was not like the normal kind of dogs that you expect to see in the streets here. He looked different, a cute looking European, little, black and white thing. With diamond black patches over and beneath

his eyes, as if the fat ginger cat had give him a good punch! Plus crazy pointed ears that made him look like a gremlin.

The boy encouraged him over and immediately gained Arduns trust, popping back into the kitchen restaurant to return with a large ceramic bowl full of water. After that Ardun thought it best to hang around a while until he was sure of what his next move would be in trying to get back home. It was the first time he can remember being away from Tony and he was quite aware this was a long, long way away from him. For a start, he couldn't even understand what the town folks were saying and to top it off, he was starting to feel a little sick. Hopefully it was a little bit of separation anxiety and not that piece of munch the young Hasiddium Jew guy had thrown him earlier!

As luck would have it, the boy somehow managed to coax his father into letting him bring Ardun upstairs to the flat living quarters above the restaurant and began to make a fuss over Ardun. His father was a pushover to be honest and the boy was kind of used to getting his own way most of the time. So here he settled down for what was left of the rest of the day and night. Making the most of this kind, special treatment, plus the added bonus goody bag of food that the boys father came up with at the end of the restaurant shift. Ardun was quite appreciative and careful not to upset any of his new hosts.

Ardun was still wearing the waistcoat that Tony had purchased for his, on the job trips to customers homes and when he stirred the next morning found the young boy and his father looking inside the pc tablet for Ardun Cable TV Installations. They were trying to work out

where he had come from and the computer seemed the most obvious way of searching, being as it seemed the company name was written on his back. Unfortunately, the company was not called Ardun and Tonys sense of humour at making the coat for Ardun had been mistaken as a genuine company name by the friendly people now looking after him and for that reason, they were having no luck on the net! Inside the neck of the jacket was a small white label that read:-

"IF FOUND PLEASE RETURN TO 28 OCEAN GROVE, HILLINGDON, LONDON"

Though they hadn't found it!

The boy went about his day and Ardun tagged along with him. It was getting kinda hot in this waistcoat now but he was not really in the position to remove it as such. The boy took him down onto the beach front where he looked out onto clear blue skies boy this was different to yesterday mornings view out of the freezing cold terrace window and onto the ice. It was eighteen degrees and the beach was relatively quiet with odd walkers and cyclists on the front. Ardun liked the boy. He had taken to his new companion with great ease and trotted along by his side quite comfortably and this was where he stayed for the next three days. The restaurant seemed to come to life on the evenings mostly and this was how he lived, flitting between the beach and the restaurant with the boy. Until Saturday arrived and so did a small truck which appeared to be dropping fruit and vegetables to the restaurant and a couple of other premises, plus a Hotel opposite that was going about its business on the street. Ardun knew that was how he got here in the first place, so figured if he made a good dash for it when no one was watching he could clamber on board and with a bit of luck could be on his way

back home. Maybe arriving back at Tony,s in time for tea! So, as the driver was starting up the engine, on board jumped Ardun.

The truck set off out the street and he settled down once more like he had on board the El AL flight and would just wait until the vehicle stopped once more before he weighed up his options of what to do next. This little truck had come all the way from Egypt and was going to take a long time to make the return journey. It made this trip once a week dropping off produce to the stores, hotels and restaurants in Tel Aviv. Ardun could hear the radio blaring in the front of the truck while the driver who was actually Turkish. His name was Kaan and sang along, or a least tried too, when a tune came on he was familiar with. All Ardun knew was that he wasn't familiar with any of these tunes and to be honest he didn't like any of them very much. There was one where a young girl seemed to be wailing Hallelujah. Ardun thought it would be Hallelujah when she finally shut up!

"SAID, IM WAITING! FOR YOU ITS BEEN SO LONG."

The driver had left Hayarkon Street at 12.30 midday and unfortunately had to take the long route back down to the Suez canal and through the Al Shahid Ahmed Hamdy tunnel road and onto Ras Sedr. The trip took over 10 hours and it was getting on for 11.30pm. Even though the days in this climate for the time of year were considerably a lot warmer than the UK, the nights felt just as cold.

After arriving back into Port, The Turkish guy who Ardun never actually got to meet but was much grateful for the lift, shouted "Kehaflik" to a couple of security guards and off he went. Never for Ardun to have to hear singing again.

Sunday morning the Port was noisy with large freight, small freight, fishing boats and various other vessels coming into dock and leaving the Port. Ardun knew somehow his next ride home was most definitely going to be on one of those larger boats, maybe cargo or container ship that was sitting anchored in the Port.

It had took Ardun 5 days to get out of Tel Aviv, Israel, the Northern Middle East. It had taken me eleven pages!

Once again Ardun knew it was time to continue his route. Be a shame not to have a good look round though first he thought. The Port Faroud or Port Said, seemed a never ending vast ocean. Where the Red Sea, Suez Canal all seemed to come up and meet the Mediterranean Sea. Beautiful bright blue coastline.

Maybe he could visit Luxor or Cairo? Check out a few Pyramids or other ancient Egyptian artefacts? This was an option, until later on in the morning he bumped into a dog on wheels, literally! A dog on wheels! He almost ran Ardun over with his silver machine! His name was Ten No 6 and he had been one of a number of unfortunate victims of a recent bombing that had taken place at the harbour. This had resulted in him losing the use of his back legs! He was lucky really as he was already legging it from the scene of the atrocity when the device went off, so caught the blast from a distance. Someone loved him enough to get him a set of wheels, which

he dragged himself about on quite easily once he had got the hang of it. Almost felt privileged with his new contraption. Ardun realised things weren't so bad after all and grateful for still having his four legs all in perfect working order and tagged along with Ten No 6 for the morning as he had done with the boy in Tel Aviv.

Tell you what though after a couple of hours, he began to like the wheely dog and the way he was speeding around, well, Ardun was thankful he was still able to keep up with him. If only Ten No 6 had a sidecar fitted like those bikers had owned on the beach in Tel Aviv. Ardun could see himself wearing an open faced crash helmet, goggles and feeling the wind in his hair as they zoomed along the front of the Port. Well that was just Ardun daydreaming again but the things they could have got up to together? ***Well the possibilities were endless!***

Ardun also noticed Ten no 6 seemed to have an obsession with picking up used cigarette ends from the road and keeping them in the side of his mouth, like an old man puffing away. Hmm, thought Ardun this most definitely, in my opinion, seems to be the reason he had developed a rather nasty, barking cough.

Though Ardun had never been a greedy dog, which may have been the reason he was in such good shape, his stomach was telling him it was time for something to eat , mainly to keep his energy levels up and for this reason his nose seemed to direct him towards a small Egyptian guy on a narrow strip road who was making some sort of pancake looking breads and filling them with a right tasty smelling selection of meat. So he watched the customers until they decided they had had enough and threw the left overs to one side. Whereupon

he didn't hesitate to take the contents into his mouth and made sure his belly was adequately stuffed for his next long haul journey. These journeys he was undertaking seemed to take forever and he was under the impression he may never get back home to Tony and lazy ginger cat ever again.

Ten No 6 took him on a trek along the Port/coast road which was lined with boats. Along the beach there were a few locals, but it was only seventeen degrees here and there was not much call for any sun-worshippers or tourists today. The waves lapped up and into the rocky roads which they past. Up and on they went until they came into Alexandria. Ten No 6,s hometown.

OCEANS

When Ardun saw the Large container ship sitting at the end of the Port, leaving 16.45 pm Egyptian time. He thought this could be his chance to get off this sea front and back into the familiar London nightlife once more. All he had seen since he got off the Plane a week ago was Oceans.

The container ship was huge. Loading great big steel containers which were heading for Rhodes Island. He wondered what could be stored in those huge crates? They were big enough to carry lorries and cars and the chance of him being spotted amongst this huge transportation vessel was pretty slim.

Ten No 6 lived in Alexandria quite close to the ruins of an ancient amphitheatre. There seemed to be more tourists in Alexandria

than there were in Port Said today or just maybe more people were out for the day with their families taking a look around the Port and ruins to pass the time of day. Ardun didn't have the time of day for becoming a tourist and the only thing on his mind was getting a drink and getting back home!

16.00 hours the ship had began to make its preparations for the long slow trip. Another container ship was sitting waiting to leave also, but that was heading for Paphos Port in Cyprus and Ardun for some reason didn't really fancy the sound of the name of that one which departed 15 minutes prior to the Rhodes ferry.

He made a fuss over Ten No 6, they rubbed noses and Ardun licked his face from left to right and the pair who had been inseparable since meeting finally parted the waves, parted the Oceans.

The distance between Alexandria, Egypt and Rhodes was 419 nautical miles and the ship would be travelling at 10 knots which converted = 11.5 miles an hour land speed. It would take just over one and a half days to reach Rhodes.

The ships crew was manned mainly by Egyptian sea Ferry workers and the sea was at times up and down causing Ardun to have a slight sickly feeling again today. The boat moved in a rather slow fashion and at times seemed as though it were not moving at all. He couldn't wait to get back home and shove the ginger cat off that comfy sofa and tuck into a nice bowl of pedigree chum whilst Tony buttered up some crumpets. Daydreaming again!!

RHODES

January had turned into February and just a little after 9am on Tuesday 3rd, the huge container ship pulled into Central Port, Rhodes. The Port is predominantly very, busy busy with cruise ships, yachts and tourist travel. It is in the East part of the Island. Rhodes has five different Ports and 43 towns and villages. Colossus a giant statue mans the harbours entrance and is one of the seven wonders of the world. At midday today it would reach only 15 degrees and there would be some rainfall. Ardun thought he must be getting closer to home judging by the rain.

Ardun got off the boat and headed into the town. It was going to be lonely again for awhile and he had already begun to miss his friend Ten No 6 dragging himself along beside Ardun. It was more fun running about the place with someone to have a laugh with. This he had realised on the long boat journey over. On the container ship, one of the crew had this nasty grey cat with different coloured legs and ears. The cat looked as if it had been made up of lots of other cats body parts, all sewn together. Nothing seemed to look as if it fitted correctly and his legs looked like they were too large for his body. He was there to see to any rats that may have been wondering around the ship and his job was to dispose of them as thorough as possible. Once he spotted Ardun hiding in the corner, he hissed and bared his teeth. This led Ardun to feel slightly wary of the nasty thing and for this reason found it difficult to sleep for the day and a half journey, being aware that if he did drop off to sleep, the out of shape cat may pounce upon him and cause some sort of long term injury. Ardun didn't fancy being equipped with wheels like Ten No 6 just yet! This must have been the reason Ardun was feeling a little out of sorts, tired and not his usual bouncy, lively self.

The showers of rain were making the day feel a little miserable too. But it did not feel cold. By lunchtime there were a few more people about and the showers of rain were growing further apart. It was not as bright here today as it had been in Tel Aviv a couple of days ago and Ardun was beginning to think he should maybe have stayed with the Israeli boy and his family who had been so kind to him and gave him a home and lovely food. Best not to dwell on the past he thought, it would only hinder his next step to get back home. So set about devising his next couple of days travel plans and hopefully soon finding a decent food menu would be priority on his to do list.

Something had been puzzling Ardun since he arrived here. Why on earth this place was called Rhodes? There did not, at any angle, whichever direction he took, appear to be any roads away from here. Just Oceans all around!

The private yachts in the Port looked glamorous, gleaming as if just polished, bobbing up and down, and waiting for some bikini clad beauty. With some bronzed, muscle man, slapping sunscreen into her skin. Whilst she slurped on some cheap plonk to take the trip. This could be the next lift home Ardun thought? This could be my next trip? Only problem was, this was not tourist season and this lovely looking piece of fibreglass was not going anywhere, not today, not tomorrow or the next day.

A catamaran was at the end of the Port. There were at least 6 people standing in a queue. Plus to the left of Ardun was a young woman with auburn hair, approximately 30 years of age, rocking a small child in a navy blue pushchair, back and forth, that didn't seem to

stop wingeing. There was snot bubbling from his nose and dribbling down and around his mouth, which he rubbed at with the sleeve of his coat as if it was aggravating him. Until she wiped it off with a small white tissue she took from her pocket. This will do, thought Ardun and whilst the foot passengers made their way onto the boat he carefully made a dash onboard and found himself a nice little quiet spot to rest. He suspected another 2 day mission but as luck would have it, found himself being woken by the noise of the passengers. including the wingeing baby, who was still sniffing and crying, leaving the small catamaran as it arrived into Marmaris, Turkey. The journey across the sea having only taken just over an hour.

Ardun was getting fed up with these seaside locations and though his stomach sickness upon the sea crossings had subsided somewhat, made a conscious decision to make sure the next journey would be on land, making a rather quick exit from the boat before being spotted and right into the back of a pickup truck heading into Istanbul. The long route took nine and three quarter hours.

Turkish Tea

It was five hundred and twelve miles and the weather upon arriving into Istanbul today was approximately six degrees. Misty, raining.

Before Ardun knew what was happening the driver parked up the small pickup and called it a day. Lucky for some thought Ardun. The pickup truck was parked up quite close to the main railway station at Istanbul and Ardun having liked the long ride in the pickup fancied his chances with another form of transportation next. Choo choo train,

coming down the track! Ardun climbed onto the high speed Bosphor sleeper train about to depart at 22.00 and took a little sniff about. There were no food facilities, such as a restaurant on here and he was wondering about how long this would take before he was likely to see signs of food. Ardun had not eaten since Port Said and to say he was getting a little hungry was an understatement. The train pulled out of the station and continued throughout the night until 02.52 it pulled into Kapikule where passengers were preparing to have their passports stamped. This was about to be Ardun's longest journey so far the trip was over 2000km and at approximately 11.20 in the morning the train arrived into Veliko Tarnovo the capital of Bulgaria.

Ardun wondered if perhaps by now Tony had gone out and purchased himself a new puppy, thinking that Ardun was never going to be seen again and maybe fearing the worst.

By day two they had seen the back of Romania and into Bucharest. The train arrived and this is where the train stopped leaving any passengers to stay overnight in the city. Day three the sleeper train Ister departed Bucharest Nord. Time of departure 17.35 It had a restaurant. This Ardun knew for sure. He could smell food and was starving. The train pulled into Budapest Keleti 08.50 on the fourth day of travel. Here's where Ardun had enough, jumped off and found himself wandering around Budapest station before being chased by a ticket guard. At 11.15 the doors were open on a Railjet train on route to Munich so once again Ardun jumped the train arriving 18.25. The train came to a halt and Ardun realised this one had come to the end of its journey and was going no further. Well not today! Day 5 of the trains - Munich to Stuttgart on a high speed ICE train which left at 09.46 and arrived destination 12.00. Nearly an hour until a

new connection train destined for Paris would depart at 12.55. This train was a very high speed, double decker, TGV Duplex, which, if on schedule, would arrive in Paris Gare De L'est 16.35. Ardun left the station feeling weak and about to collapse.

After leaving the high speed train he found himself tagging along behind an English speaking couple. This was the only conversation he had understood since becoming lost and thought it best to keep up with them. They walked for approximately ten minutes and stopped outside the Gare du Nord Eurostar station, where trains departed to St Pancras London. If only Ardun knew how close he was to being back in London. At this moment in time, once again, all he wanted was another drink, which led him to lapping up the first puddle of French rainwater. Paris was cloudy, cold but not too cold, just drying out after a little rainfall. Outside the Euro station were several bars and restaurants. As soon as someone left the table outside **Cafe Nord** bar, he jumped up to the leftovers of a ribeye steak and grabbed a piece which a Parisian guy had left on the plate. He scoffed it down like a wild dog. He was so hungry. Even the leftover mussels on the next table floating in a sauce would have done the trick.

Still weak but feeling slightly better, he scanned the area making sure the English were still about. Sure enough they were sipping their drinks still before heading into the station to catch the Paris to London Eurostar train departing at 17.01. He followed closely behind them and as the train was getting ready to pull out he made the, getting to be an expert at this train dashing look easy, before the doors closed and off they sped. It was a fast train, surprisingly quiet. Seemed to be occupied by a large number of business men travelling back and forth from London to Paris and Paris to London. Ardun's ears felt a bit weird on this train. Instead of

travelling overseas, this time they would be travelling beneath it and to be honest it felt a relief not to have sea sickness. Two hours and fifteen minutes later they pulled into St Pancras Station London.

Ardun knew where he was. He had been here before with Tony, to drop his mates off, who went on frequent lads weekends to Europe via the Eurostar. He had in fact been here many of times and for the first time in over two weeks began to feel like he was comfortable and nearly home. It was not like he could ring up Tony and tell him to come and pick him up. When he looked up at the departures board on the Metropolitan line, 19.43, a train heading for Uxbridge was due. This would stop off at Hillingdon approximately fifty minutes later. The walk from the station would take him two more minutes and he would be back and on that cosy sofa.

On Saturday morning 14th February 2015 at approximately 9.15 am, a small, cute, black and white European looking dog with diamond black patches over and beneath his eyes, lying snuggled up next to a very fat, lazy, ginger cat, slowly raised his head up off a very cosy sofa after hearing the sound of the letter box dropping down at the address 28 Ocean Grove, Hillingdon, London. On the mat by the front door lay a medium sized white envelope, containing two air flight tickets for Tony and his new girlfriend Katie. The destination was Amsterdam, March, 2015. "Fancy it Ardun?" said Tony smirking opening the tokens. "No thanks" said Ardun "Im going to Hayes that weekend to meet a sexy poodle. Destination travel time, approximately seven minutes."

THE END