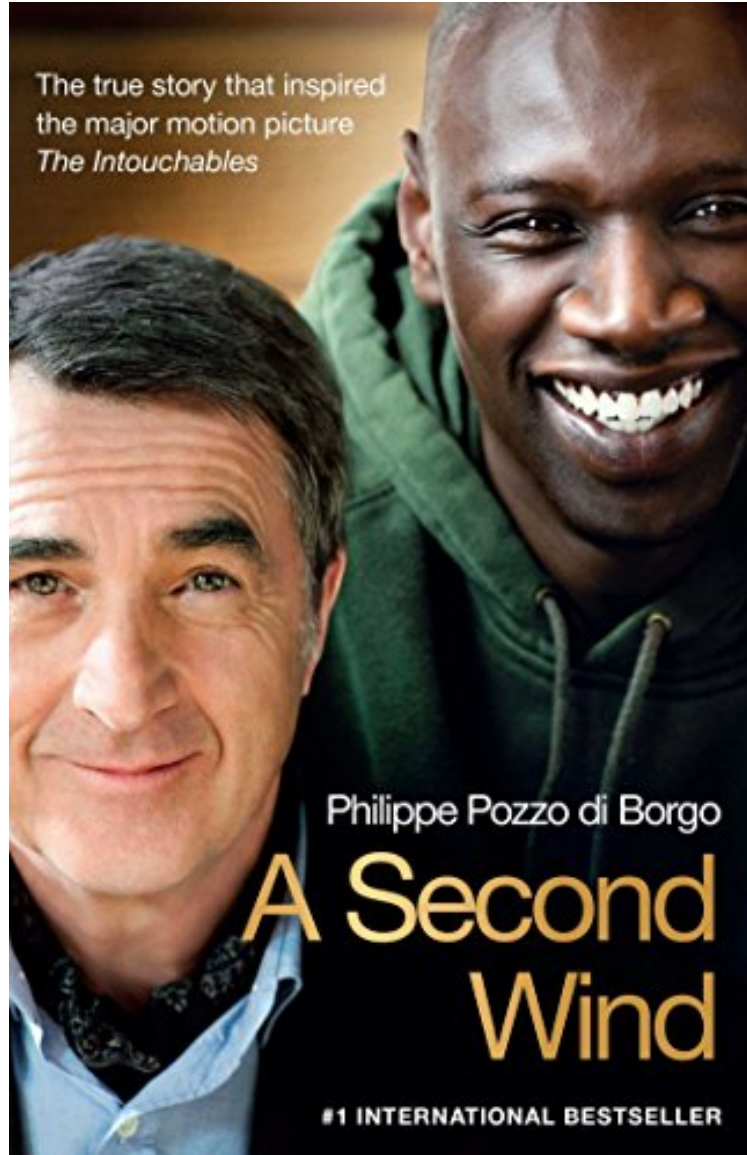


[Pdf free] A Second Wind: A Memoir

A Second Wind: A Memoir

Philippe Pozzo di Borgo

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Philippe Pozzo di Borgo : A Second Wind: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Second Wind: A Memoir:

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating account by a heroBy Bob Pr.I saw the movie, "The Intouchables," and while I thoroughly enjoyed it, I also believed much of it had to be fantasy--that Abdel would not be able to change so much, so rapidly (in a year), and that a variety of other things couldn't be true.So I bought and read

both "A Second Wind" by Phillippe Pozzo ("You Saved My Life" by Abdel Sellou -- reviewed under its title).Both are worthwhile.So is the movie but it's essentially a feel good, inspirational, comedic fairy tale with a bit of reality and with large doses of made-up comedy.Phillippe's book gives you a lot of the similar kind of reality I imagine you'd get from reading the book that served as the basis for movie, "The Diving Bell the Butterfly"-- the story of another French quadraplegic who managed to tell his story just before he died.Phillippe's is just as moving and perhaps more so.We find out how devoted he was to his first wife, Beatrice; that Abdel worked with Phillippe for a year before she died and then for 9 years after. We feel the pain and become astounded by the courage that Phillippe as a quadraplegic shows and so continually demonstrates.What a remarkable man, now devoting himself and many of his resources to others who are disabled.You won't get much of the comedy that the writers/directors suffused "The Intouchables" with.But you will get a first person account from a man with remarkable, admirable courage and empathy.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Engaging Collection of MemoriesBy Sharon KayLoved The Intouchables. A Second Wind is the fascinating autobiography of the main character; the story of a man who becomes completely paralyzed in a bizarre accident, then loses the love of his life. The joy is that he is never self pitying. The book is somewhat disjointed, more a collection of his memories than a chronological retelling of his life.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read!!!By Linda H.This was one of the most inspiring books i have ever read!!! I would highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys stories about the strength of the human spirit!!

Soon to be a major motion pictureThe Upsidestarring Bryan Cranston, Kevin Hart, and Nicole Kidman.Born with wealth and privilege, Philippe Pozzo di Borgo was not generally someone in the habit of asking for help. Then, in 1993, right on the heels of his wifes diagnosis of a terminal illness, a paragliding accident left him a quadriplegic. He was forty-two-years-old and unable to do anythingeven feed himselfwithout the help of another person. Passing his days hidden behind the high walls of his townhouse, after his paralysis Philippe found himself isolated and depressed. The only person who seemed unaffected by Philippes condition was someone who had been marginalized his entire lifeAbdel, the unemployed, outspoken Algerian immigrant who would become his unlikely caretaker. In between dramas and jokes, he sustained Philippes life for the next ten years. A Second Wind, the basis for the upcoming major motion picture The Upside, is the inspiring true story of two men who refused to ask for help, and then wound up helping each other.

About the AuthorPhilippe Pozzo di Borgo spent his childhood in Paris, London, Amsterdam, Trinidad, Morocco, Algeria and Corsica. He now lives in Essaouira, Morocco. A descendent of both the Ducs Pozzo di Borgo and the Marquises de Vogue, he is the former director of Pommery Champagnes (LVMH). His bestselling memoir *Le Second Souffle* (Second Wind) served as the basis for the hit French film, *Intouchables* (Untouchables).Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Memories Unbound THE FAULT LINE running through my bones, through my every breath, may be the day of the accident: on June 23, 1993, I became paralyzed. But then on May 3, 1996, St. Philips Day, Batrice died. So now I have no past, I have no claim to the future, I am just this pain that I feel at every moment. Batrice has been stripped back in the same way, reduced to this ever-present feeling of loss. And yet there is a future, that of our two children, Laetitia and Robert-Jean. Until the accident, I was someone in the world, anxious to leave my mark on events, to make things; since then I have become prey to endless thoughts and, since Batrice died, to endless grief. Shadowy memories emerged from these ruins, vague recollections, which at first the pain of paralysis and of mourning would blur during my caffeine-fueled nights. Searching deep within myself, I found the likenesses of the people Id lost. Then my long, silent vigils started to bring back long-forgotten moments of happiness. My life flowed past me in a stream of images. I couldnt speak for the first few months after the accident because Id had a tracheostomytrach for shortan operation to insert a breathing tube into my windpipe so I could be put on a ventilator. A friend installed a computer and rigged up a set of controls for me under my chin. The alphabet constantly scrolled past on the screen; whenever I stopped the cursor, it would pick out a letter. Slowly these would coalesce to form a word, a sentence, half a page. I loved choosing the right word, the exhausting effort required to type it, the need for precision. Every letter had its own weight, mooring what I wrote like an anchor. I loved the meticulousness of it all. And I had a comrade in arms, Jean-Dominique Bauby, the author of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, who wrote by blinking and died when he reached the last letter. My own words strangle me when I think of anyone who has died alone, without being able to speak or bear witness or feel any hope. Lying on my bed at night, I sleep badly. I am paralyzed, after all. After a while, once the trach tube was removed and I could speak again, they put a tape recorder on my stomach. It stops when it cant hear anythingor when it feels like itand doesnt start again until something new has been said. I never know if Ive been recorded. Often Im stumped for words anyway. Its hard telling a story when youre not sitting at a desk with a piece of paper in front of you and your forehead propped in your left hand, when you cant just let it rip, scribble away and cross things out or start again, when theres only the voice of someone who could be dead and a tape deck irrevocably recording what you say, with no room for second thoughts, no crossings out. The snapshots of a faltering memory Ive lost the thread now. Its dark and I hurt all over. My shoulders hunch up and I feel a shooting pain on the top of the right one, as if Ive been stabbed. I have to stop. My cat, F-sharp, is having a lovely

time clambering all over my body that is quivering and arching backward as if beseeching God for something. Spasming and shaking, suddenly its all too much for me, tears well up. The cat, as usual, is a picture of blithe indifference. It spends the whole night playing around on top of me, as if it needs my convulsive shudders to feel alive. The subcutaneous fire burning continuously from my shoulders to the tips of my fingers and toes is all too liable to blaze up at any moment. From the burning in my body I can tell if its going to be fine tomorrow or rain. I feel scalding, corrosive pain in my hands, my buttocks, down my thighs, around my knees, at the base of my calves. They quarter me, stretching out my arms and legs in the hope it will bring me some relief, but the pain doesnt let up. They call it phantom pain. Phantom my ass! I cry because Im in pain, not because Im sad. I wait for the tears to give me some respite, until Ive cried myself into a stupor. We used to make love at night by candlelight, whispering to each other. Shed fall asleep in the early hours in the crook of my neck. I still talk to her. Sometimes, sick with loneliness, I turn to Flavia, a film student. She has a beaming smile, a sumptuous mouth, a quizzical left eyebrow. When she stands with her back to the window in her flowing, light blue dress, she doesnt realize she might as well be wearing nothing, that her twenty-seven-year-old frame can still arouse a phantom. I let her transcribe everything, I have no decency, she is transparent. The cat comes back to sit on my stomach. When he changes position, my body tenses as if its revolted by him being here and not Batrice. I have to talk about the good times though, I have to forget the suffering. Why not start with the final moments of my life, my foreseeable and sometimes longed-for death that will reunite me with Batrice. I will leave the ones I love to be with the one I have loved so much. Even if her paradise doesnt exist, I trust thats where she will be because she believed in it. Because thats what I want. Freed from all our suffering, well be together there, cocooned in each others arms, our eyes closed for eternity. A rustle of silken wings, Batrices blond hair stirs. Batrice, who art in Heaven, save me. |My Senses I WAS SOMEBODY ONCE. Now Im paralyzed, Ive lost almost all sensation in my body. But even so, somewhere among the excruciating pain, there are still delicious memories of the senses that have abandoned me. Retrieving my shattered bodys experiences, inch by inch, memory by memory, is a form of survival. Working back from my current immobility, putting a chaotic mass of short-lived sensations into some sort of chronological order, helps me to reclaim my past and reconnect my two entirely separate lives.* A FLUSH of confusion sets my whole body aglow. Its only a memory. Even so I feel drowsy, my rational mind is shutting down, I am overwhelmed by far-off sensations, from when I was seven, or perhaps eight, and the dazzling Casablanca sun was beating down My brothers and I were at the Collge Charles de Foucauld, a church school. At recess some of my classmates would play football in the middle of the playground, raising a film of dust that would stick to their arms and legs, and turn their shorts and navy blue shirts milky white. Others, aficionados of a local version of marbles played with apricot stones, would gather by the walls in groups of shopkeepers and players. I was a shopkeeper; Alain my twin brother who was a crack shot was a player. The shopkeeper would place an apricot stone between his legs and the player would try to hit it with his trusty projectile. I took up position by the playground wall, facing the morning sun I loved baking myself to a crisp in the sun and waited for Alain to throw, my half-closed eyes fixed on my stone. I counted to three, then shivered with pleasure. Drowsy from the warm, dusty playground, I drifted off. When I came to, my class had gone back inside; the playground was full of children I didnt recognize. I shot bolt upright in a panic, wrapped my supply of apricot stones in a handkerchief, and ran back as fast as I could, my body on fire. For the first time, I felt a strange warmth between my legs. Was it the shorts rubbing or fear of my horrible schoolmistress? Either way, something was happening down there. I knocked frantically, the schoolmistress barked out a command, I pushed open the door, and then just stood there, motionless.* I FLUSH bright red all over again, alone in my bed, as I remember these first stirrings of desire.* NOT LONG afterward, we were in Holland. My father was working for an Anglo-Dutch oil company. My brothers Reynier and Alain; Valerie, my little sister; Christina, the governess; and I all slept on the first floor. Christina was very beautiful with her red hair and green eyes and freckles, which I kept discovering all over her body, helped by the fact that it was the heyday of the miniskirt. One day she was doing some ironing on the landing. I had been hanging around watching her for ages, when I felt that discomfort under my belt again. I blushed, not daring to look down at my gray flannel English shorts. Oh no, what was Christina doing? Squinting to see what was going on? I was done for. Until she the beautiful, treacherous girl did something extraordinary. She stepped out from behind the ironing board, came toward me, turned round, and bent over as far as she could. Was it really because she needed to pick something up? If Id known how and been able to, I would have taken her there and then. But I just stood there breathlessly, arms dangling, everything else straining skyward. I seemed to look at her bottom for an eternity. Years later I saw some photos of her. I didnt find her such a beauty that time, with her gappy teeth, double chin, and bony knees. Everything is a matter of perspective* AT NIGHT I take deep breaths to try to free myself from the pain that alienates me from everything. Images come into my mind so concrete and simple, I find them very beautiful but the pain doesnt abate.* I WAS fifteen and I wanted to impress my friends, so I went into the drug store. When it was my turn, I said, Can I have a packet, my voice fell to a whisper, of condoms? The female chemist asked me to repeat myself. Trapped, already bright red in the face, I asked her again. In a gently ironic tone, she then inquired, Small, medium, or large? I ran out the door. Naturally she was talking about the size of the packet.* A LAUGH bubbles up in my throat and is answered by a spasm, which knocks the tape recorder off my chest. I have to start again, rebuild my world. I call Abdel, my caregiver. He puts the tape recorder back in

position, and my strange, muffled voice sets it in motion. The voice I have now not only sounds completely different to my voice, but also changes constantly, as if my identity has gone to pieces like my body. My chest muscles dont work anymore, so I cant convey intonation or punctuation; the tape only registers the bare information of whatever words I have enough breath to utter.* I WAS seventeen, and we were on a skiing holiday. Alain already had his squeeze. We spent our time on the slopes with boys, and with girls, and Id never blushed so much in my life as when I was with the latter. One night after supper we all crowded in by the fire, drinking wine, singing, playing guitar. I was next to a girl. She leaned over at one point and rested her head on my shoulder. A friend of Alains girlfriend, she was older than me and had been born in Vietnam to a French colonial family. She had slanting eyes and olive skin. She laughed, then moved closer. I could smell her spicy scent now. I tried to shrink into the fireplace, but that didnt change anything. I could feel desire burning in me; I wanted her. When it was time for bed and she led me to the only single room and to a little bed by the wall, I followed without a backward glance. Id been dreaming of that moment for years, it felt like. She unceremoniously took off her clothes and lay on top of me. I must have seemed awkward because she smiled, then burst out laughing: You havent taken off your pants! She helped me. We were together for a few months.* EVEN NOW that Im paralyzed, my inert senses can still play tricks on me, as they did early on during my time at Kerpape, a rehabilitation center on the Brittany coast. For my first outing, Batrice pushed my new wheelchair to a little caf by the sea and sat opposite me. Over her shoulder, windsurfers leaped the waves. The sky was gray. My neck felt clammy with sweat, but it was so lovely having Batrices face close to mine, I didnt want to break the spell. How could she still have that look of young love in her eyes as she gazed at the shadow of the man she had fallen for? After a while, I broke into a hacking cough. Batrice became worried and took me back to the rehab center. The nurse diagnosed a lung infection, so I was returned to intensive care at the hospital in Lorient for the second time. My throat was opened up by another trach, an array of bottles decanted their poisons into me, while Batrice sat by my bed. The veins in my left arm couldnt cope after a while, so they bandaged it up to the elbow in cotton wool soaked in alcohol. I soon felt drunk. My room didnt have a window, but I guessed it was nighttime. There was no nurse in sight. The red, green, and white lights of the machines blinked on and off. I was drifting farther and farther away, when suddenly a wildly pleasurable sensation came over me. I hadnt felt intense desire for Batrice for a year. Images of our bodies together raced through my mind. Suddenly the lights came on in a blinding flash of neon. Batrice was bending over me. Shed understood immediately what was happening when she saw my eyelids fluttering. I asked her to tell the doctor. Laughing, she ran out into the corridor. The doctor came back with her, an irritated look on his face. He examined the object of these mad giggles. Negative. Phantom stirrings. Go back to sleep, my angel.