

Dave Rand

1-603-501-9271

[dave@daverand.com](mailto:dave@daverand.com)

[www.daverand.com](http://www.daverand.com)

[www.theboomhouse.com](http://www.theboomhouse.com)

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## **The Boom House**

by Dave Rand

# **PART ONE**

## **Outside**

# Chapter 1

Evolved

These transitions were always so painful. The falling was not, there was no feeling to it at all. Space was not cold, the sun was brilliant, but had no sear. There was no heat from this rapid passage through air just a blinding enveloping glow. The pale blue fields of stratus ice did not sting its skin, for it had no skin. Falling below these high clouds, it drifted through the thick nimbus billows of wet steam. The royal blue thunderheads looked majestic and beautiful but held no feeling of moisture or charge. They were only vivid moving pictures. The bright points and fogged galaxy stars soon faded and surrendered to amber twilight, surrounding it, and surrounding this world.

It continued its glide to the surface. It was night. There were small clusters of lights down there but Its aim was to a dark watery place between them. Falling from the void to this crust was like a dream, all of them dreamed, all living things had dreams. It was the next passage that would be so searingly painful. So real. Vexatious enough to bring some of these beings to an earthly madness.

It came in over the lake traveling by heart, although it had none. The grip of the cold water started at first just from memory, wrapping around its warm mind like the cold hands of a drowned sailor. The hard and painful part was coming now and the knowing of it made it worse. The splash telegraphed some noise to a small child asleep in a camp on the far edge of the lake, awakened for a moment to the gush of flying water but quickly falling back to dreams of fishing and worms, and forgetfulness. The crickets fired two

blanks, silence, silence, but then cricked on. It descended to the bottom, one hundred feet down, and sliced the clay into thick clouds rolling slowly in on themselves, a natural pattern. What would happen next was not natural and not of this earth, not for a very long time.

The swirling patterns of mud in water began to take on intelligence and purpose. The dancing silt lost randomness and gained structure pulling back on itself like evolving storm fronts being tugged back in time. Their thick cumulous clouds began rolling toward their origin clawing and dragging the bottom with them. Kelp, weeds, roots began leaning inwards, stretching out of their footings and tearing at what skinned them, ripping, popping, and snapping out from the lake bed. A claw emerged. Made of small twisters. It ripped through the clay, searching. All things of this earth could be transformed but to be efficient it selected the ones that were closest in design and distance to what it needed. It had to do this to leave the pain behind as quickly as possible. It had to follow the screaming orders of its excavated instinct to run from agony .

Catfish were perfect for the nervous system and that had to form first. This was the part from which the greatest burn would spring. Seventy or so perfect specimens were furiously trying to swim away from the pull but the only locomotion for them was backwards, their whiskers bent tight across their faces, their eyes bulged with effort, tiny capillaries bursting in their retinas. Blinding them instantly. It was too powerful and so alien. Their wiggles soon became paralytic twitches as their bodies began to slowly unravel. The chorus of high pitched squeals traveling under the lake, bounced off the shores and returned in waves of echoes...leaving only silence above the water and the smallest vibrations in the fog. Their pain would be equally intense to its pain but it knew none of this would be remembered by these borrowed water creatures and it tried desperately to hold on to that distraction, but its pain demanded an audience and it demanded it NOW!

There was no way around making the neural bits form first, they tried for as long as they could remember. They eventually surrendered to the idea that it was necessary for proper passage, and yielded that even they still knew so little. So as each fiber was born for the brain, un-spun like optic yarn off the spinning bodies of the catfish, the molten current flowed down each branching fiber with no concern of how it ignited a ferocious burn at the

center of its awareness. Each turn, each new brain cell woke up with the ferocity of a newborn soul. Its screams had no outlet yet, just a mere few bubbles as there was no structure for the releasing howl that so it hungered for. It was gagged and this was crucial, as it needed to form in as much silence as possible. This night would bare no sounds from the bottom of lake Ambajejus (Amba Jesus) and the residents of Millinocket could have no clue that they would awake to a different kind of day. This was a town of hunters and weapons and it needed that, but it was not the one to be hunted.

The evolution continued in silence and bubbles. It's skin was forming simultaneously as a reaction to the cold water against the bloody red body mass, spreading over it like frost on glass with nerve fibers branching their way underneath and spreading the intensity of the pain as they sought fresh territory to awaken.

It was now being fed from a parade of struggling catfish of all sizes.

An event never recorded in the genes of these fish, it was new to their instinct, It was a fresh terror for them and they reacted with a fresh panic. A few elements were taken from the scales of curiously passing rainbow trout not invited in whole to this event, but needed in smaller parts. As their scales tore from their flesh they shot into the dark waters and away to heal.

A man was forming and his clothes were now weaving from fibers re-spun from the substances that composed the fibers of the bottom flora. Thousands of invisible looms were silently weaving and smoothing tiny filaments into cloth.

These events shed little light pops and bursts of luminescence that were imperceptible at the surface. Color was taken from this light to color the clothing. Borrowing color from light was a stealth and defensive tool for many species and from that application was born this wonder. It needed to be very colorful in parts of its clothing and it needed to be completely real to all eyes beholding it. Buttons and badges and bars of many hues began to form on the pockets and sleeves. Some minerals alchemically arranged themselves into gold and self molded into the shapes of medallions and badges that grew from below woven ribbons and pins as if pre-attached. The being began to rise now, slowly, very very slowly, like a whisper from the lake.

The small ripple that formed as the surface tension clicked free around the top of the hat, glided down over the wide brim sliding small water falls from the edge that trickled back down to reunite with the lake's surface. Like water on oil, the hat was left dry. As its skin met the air it felt cool and soothing the way things feel new and fresh after the pain has moved on. Over the mouth the lips parted and the being took its first new crisp breath, a slow deep blue breath. It was no baby, it was adult, and perfectly formed and clothed with a powerful need for earth's air to start its earthly cycles. The water hissed quickly from the clothing's material as it met the night air leaving it bone dry instantly, chilling the being. It shivered for a moment and then began birthing a new warmth as the engines of metabolism engaged, converting for the first time this body's own resolve to heat.

Like a match strike, one grand spark charged and swirled a tiny cascade through the virgin brain cells, building rapidly on each revolution as every new neuron joined in a repeating overlapping and rolling chorus of electricity. Building, cresting, roaring into one bolt that flashed down its spine and burst into the heart blasting its cavities awake and loading them with blood. The charge raced to the fingertips heaving its chest forward, arms away and back in a thrusting crucified pose. Its large monkey fists popped open like great buds, its mouth gaping like the fish it was born from, sucking more and more air and expelling locomotions of swirling steam into the night. It rose completely now out of the water as if by wronged gravity and gently glided along leaving a small diminishing wake on the glassy surface of the lake disturbing the reflected starlight of its origin. It began to catch its breath and the attention of another creature. A bright silver owl with black holes for eyes, its head turned to track the being's glide over the water. In a rush of feathers and wind it launched itself into the night.

Soon the being would be launching into the same night's darkness but it needed something first.

