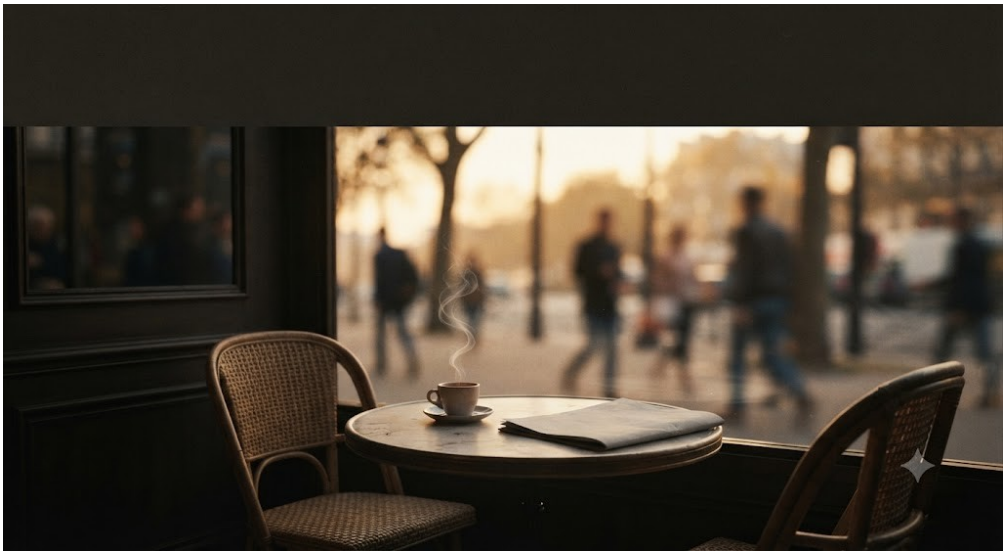


BIC CALLS FROM PARIS, FRANCE

From +33 — Nando the Scribe

gillettenarrative.com



That summer afternoon, I had decided to head for the mountains.

Back in the city, the temperature had reached 42 degrees Celsius. Saudi Calabria was reminding us what desert heat felt like. We had not yet been admitted into OPEC, Italy still refused to let us go, and Brussels kept presenting a different bill every day, each one requiring a new sacrifice.

Unable to stop myself from reflecting on how I spent my days, I smiled at the recent events that had unfolded and thought about how fragile humanity could be inside stories, inside thoughts, and while rereading the messages stored on my phone.

Only a few days had passed since the entire board of BIC France had left my city. Chanel departed shortly afterward, and less than twenty-four hours later she sent me a message on Telegram.

It read:

"The woman at the hotel gave me your phone number. Women always exchange these little courtesies with one another. I was truly happy to meet you, and I appreciated the fact that you did not do what most men usually do. You paid attention to my mind and not only to my body.

But speaking honestly as a woman, I believe this is not the end. It is not a promise; it is much more than that. And women never give up on impossible things.

Talk to you soon.

Kisses,

Chanel."

I was about to put my phone away and disappear into nature when another call arrived.

The country code was the same as always.

+33. France.

Chanel wanted to speak with me.

I did not answer immediately.

In fact, I only answered on her fourth attempt, each call arriving almost exactly five minutes after the previous one.

I wanted to understand how urgent and important the matter really was, and this was the only strategy that allowed me to measure it properly.

It was one of the secrets Mother Gillette had taught me.

Never offer your full availability.

Do not make yourself too easy to reach.

Become something valuable, almost a precious object.

Only then will your value increase, and only then will people regard you in the proper way.

Eventually, the moment arrived to answer.

She sounded irritated and immediately asked where I had disappeared to.

It was important.

It was urgent.

We needed another meeting.

But this time, she said, it would be at the highest level.

"Who is it?" I asked. "The Pope from the Vatican?"

"No," she replied with a laugh. "You are always the same."

The remark almost suggested that she had already come to know me.

Then she continued.

"The family that holds the largest shareholding in BIC wants to meet you. And strangely enough, even for me, they are all women. No men."

"Will you come to Paris?"

"I need to see how much the available camel costs," I replied. "Besides, you know I live on very little."

"I knew you would come for only one reason," she answered.

"Reading your books, I realized that you never say no to women. It is a matter of elegance, style, and class. Anyone who reads your work can find that."

"Please do not make me blush," I said. "Especially because over the phone you would never notice it. And when exactly would you like me to come?"

"Whenever you want. No appointment is necessary. They will meet you inside a café on the Champs-Élysées. You may order whatever you wish to drink."

"I will make arrangements and let you know soon."

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

After the call ended, I spent a long time thinking.

Yet no thought could ever reach the reality contained inside the improvisation of extraordinary women.

Ferdinando

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