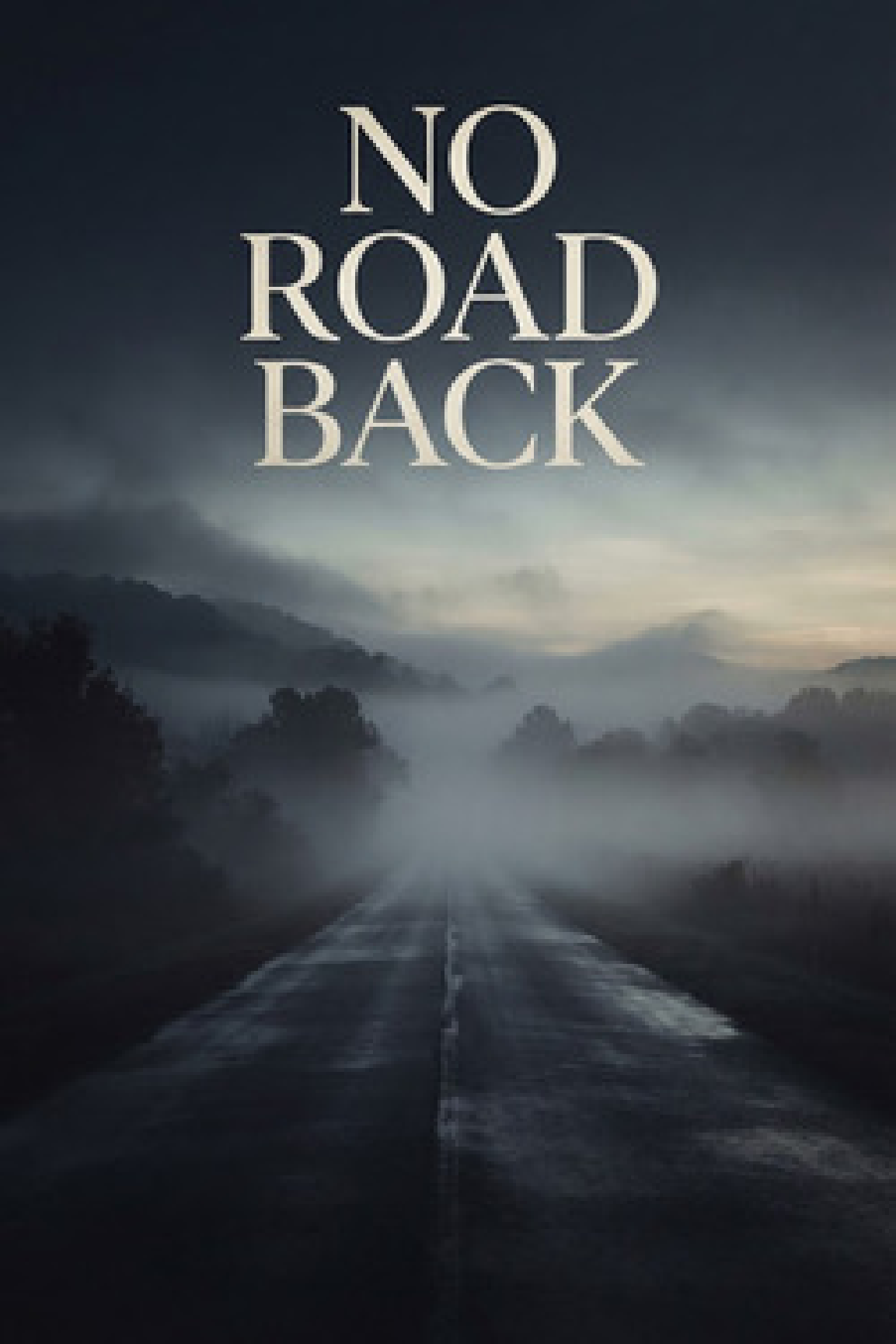

NO
ROAD
BACK

THRESHOLD 4

No Road Back

There are journeys that begin with a departure.

And others that begin with a loss.

This one belongs to the second category.

For a long time I believed that the return was a geographical matter.

To leave a place.

To cross a distance.

To return to the point of departure.

It was a simple definition.

Convenient.

Also wrong.

As the years passed I discovered that some returns lead to no visible place.

Because the place to be reached no longer exists.

Or it never existed.

Or we have changed too much to be able to recognize it.

And yet the need to return remains.

It is one of the deepest longings of the human being.

We want to go back to when things seemed simpler.

Clearer.

More orderly.

We want to return to the people we have lost.

To the missed opportunities.

To the decisions not made.

To the moments when life still seemed open to every possibility.

But time gives nothing back.

It is not its trade.

Time transforms.

It never gives back.

There were years in which I chased impossible returns.

I did it without realizing it.

I tried to recover earlier versions of myself.

The young man.

The professional.

The son.

The man convinced he knew where he was going.

Every attempt ended the same way.

With a disappointment.

Because that person no longer existed.

And it was right that way.

One morning I understood something that changed the way I looked at the past.

I did not really want to go back.

I wanted to recover a feeling.

A certainty.

A familiarity.

A version of the world in which the questions seemed fewer than the answers.

But life does not offer journeys through time.

It offers only transformations.

It was then that I began to look at the return differently.

Not as a movement toward what I had been.

But as an approach toward what I had become.

The difference is enormous.

When we try to go back, we fight against time.

When we accept moving forward, we finally begin to understand it.

Many people spend their existence looking

for a home.

They think it is a place.

A city.

A street.

A nation.

Then comes the day when they discover that home is a state of the soul.

And that no geographical coordinate can guarantee it.

During my life I have crossed many countries.

Many cultures.

Many languages.

Each time I left something behind.

Each time I gathered something else.

Without realizing it I was becoming a living archive of experiences.

A mosaic made of different places.

At a certain point I stopped asking myself:

"Where do I belong?"

And I began to ask myself:

"What do I carry with me?"

The second question was much more useful.

Because belonging changes.

Borders change.

Maps change.

What we carry inside, instead, keeps traveling.

I remember some nights in which the sense of disorientation was stronger than usual.

Nights when everything seemed distant.

The people.

The places.

The certainties.

Even myself.

In those moments the oldest temptation emerged.

To go back.

To undo.

To restore.

To start again from an earlier point.

But each time reality showed me the same truth.

There is no earlier point.

There is only the present point.

And the choice of what to do with it.

Over time I learned to consider the past not as a destination but as a library.

A place to visit.

Not to inhabit.

Because those who live in the past slowly stop inhabiting the present.

And without a present there is no future.

The people I have loved.

The cities I have crossed.

The opportunities I have lost.

The successes.

The defeats.

Everything continued to exist.

But in a different form.

Like pages already written.

To be reread.

Not to be rewritten.

It was a liberation.

Because I finally stopped searching for what could not be recovered.

And I began to invest energy in what could still be built.

Paradoxically it was precisely in that moment that the past stopped haunting me.

When I stopped treating it as a destination.

Something similar happened with people.

Many had left my life.

Some by choice.

Others by necessity.

Others still by the simple work of time.

At first I interpreted those absences as losses.

Then I understood that some presences continued to exist in different ways.

In the lessons left behind.

In the memories.

In the behaviors.

In the decisions that continued to influence me.

This too was a return.

Not of the people.

Of their meaning.

Perhaps maturity consists precisely in this.

To understand that nothing returns in its original form.

But almost everything can continue to live in a new form.

In the end I stopped searching for the road of return.

Because I understood something that no map had ever shown.

I was not returning anywhere.

I was arriving.

Arriving at a version of myself built from all the departures, all the losses, all the encounters, and all the transformations.

And it was then that the paradox resolved itself.

The return I had sought for years did not lead to the past.

It led to me.

This is why speaking of a return from nowhere is exact.

Not because there was no destination.

But because the destination had no address.

It was a place without geography.

Without borders.

Without coordinates.

A place I had crossed my whole life without recognizing it.

The return from nowhere.

The return toward what I had become.