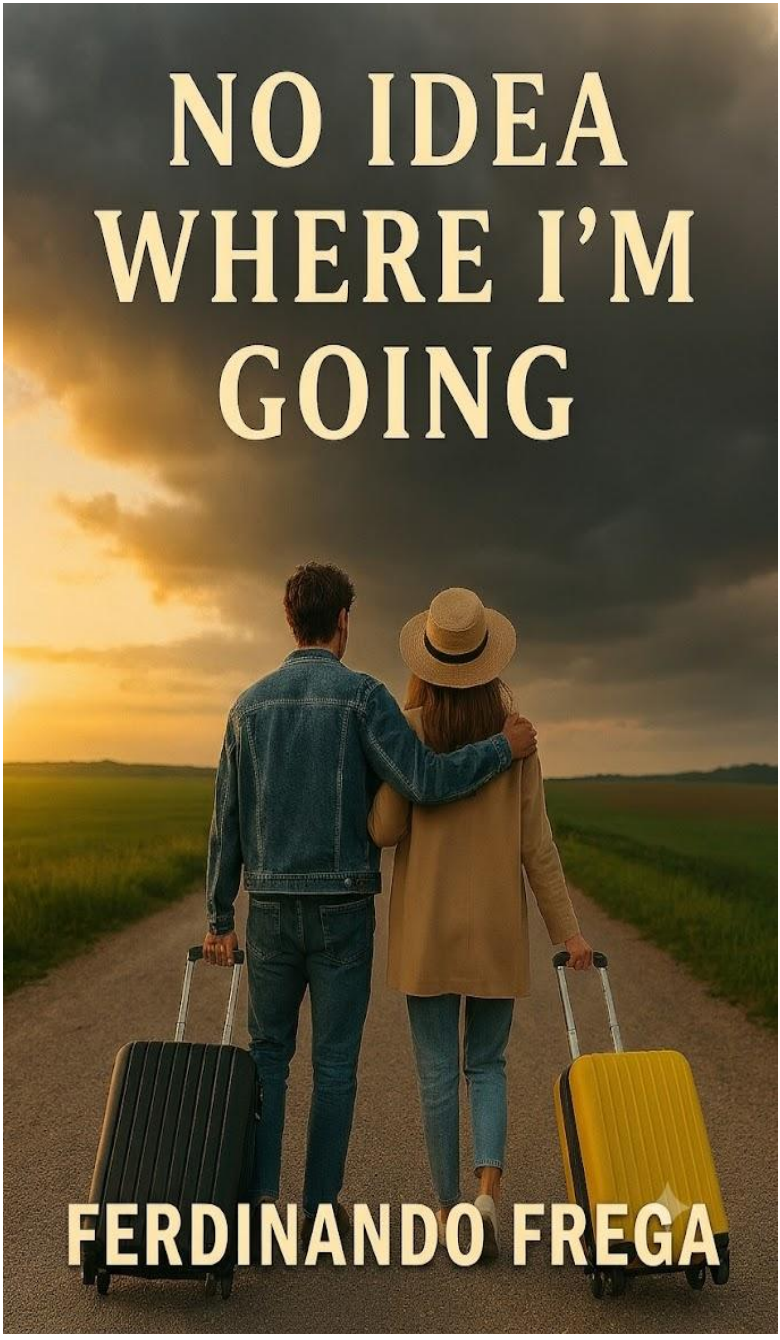

NO IDEA
WHERE I'M
GOING
FERDINANDO FREGA

NO IDEA WHERE I AM GOING

(BUT I'M GOING)

An Inner Journey, Between Doubts and Laughter

FERDINANDO FREGA

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LITERARY MANIFESTO

I did not author this book to teach anything. I wrote it because I did not know where to put certain thoughts. And since they did not fit in the fridge, I put them here.

Writing was not a heroic act. It was an act of survival. Every page is a steppingstone. Every sentence, an attempt. Not to understand, but to stay.

I do not believe in perfect writing. I believe in writing that breathes, that stumbles, which gets dirty. The kind that is not afraid to say, "I don't know."

This book is a journey. It has no map, no GPS, no destination. But it has pace. It has a voice. It is hungry.

I did not seek meaning. I sought companionship. And if reading this made you feel less alone, then we walked together.

I do not know where I am going. But I am going. And I will carry with me every word that made me feel alive.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This book was born from the urge to tell, not to teach. It is a personal journey, but not a private one: anyone who has ever felt lost, ironic, fragile, or simply human will find a companion here. The writing is free, at times messy, deliberately imperfect—like life. And precisely for this reason, it is authentic. There is no moral to follow, nor a

forced direction. Only the desire to share what pulsates beneath the surface: thoughts, emotions, contradictions. Every page is breathing. Every story, a step. And every step, a possibility.

DEDICATION

To those who walked beside me, even when I did not know where I was going. To those who laughed with me, even when there was nothing to laugh about. To those who listened to my silences, respected my doubts, and shared my imperfections. And to those who will read these pages with an open heart and a curious mind: thank you for being here. This book is yours too.

BACK COVER

I do not know where I am going (but I'm going) *An inner journey, between doubts and laughter.* Ferdinando Frega takes us on a journey that has no precise destination, but a profound meaning. Between scattered thoughts, biting reflections, and moments of pure irony, this book is a logbook for those who are not afraid of getting lost. You will not find answers, but new questions. You will not find certainties, but a little companionship. And every now and then, a smile that comes when you least expect it.

PREFACE

Authoring this book was like talking to myself aloud. I did not seek coherence, but truth. I did not chase perfection, but sincerity. Each chapter was born from a lived moment, a doubt, a laugh, a sleepless night. I wrote not to teach, but to understand. And if these pages make you feel less alone, if they make you smile or reflect, then it will be worth it. Because writing is just a way of saying: "I'm here too."

PREMISE

I did not author this book because I had something to say. I wrote it because I had too much to think about. And when those thoughts start to rumble, the only way to keep from going crazy is to put them down on paper.

Do not expect a plot. Do not expect a lesson. Expect a voice. Sometimes tired, sometimes ironic, sometimes confused. But always true.

This book has no destination. It only has one step. And if you want to walk beside me, even for just a few pages, then we can lose ourselves together. Because sometimes, to find yourself, you must first lose yourself.

SYNOPSIS

A man, a pen, and an uncertain direction. *I Don't Know Where I am Going (But I'm Going)* is an inner journey that blends introspection and irony, fragility and strength, chaos,

and beauty. Ferdinando Frega guides us through everyday thoughts and profound reflections, with a direct, sincere, and surprisingly light style. It is a book for those seeking a little of themselves between someone else's lines. For those who have lost their way, but not the will to walk.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am not a writer, but I have written. I am not a philosopher, but I have thought. I am not a comedian, but I have laughed—often at myself. This book is the result of everything I could not say aloud. It is made up of attempts, stumbles, and insights. If you find yourself in these pages, then we are already in good company. And if you do not, that is where the journey begins.

INTRODUCTION

The end of a career is never just a period. It is a comma, a breath, a moment suspended between what has been and what could still be. For some, it is liberation. For others, disorientation. For all, it is a transition that leaves its mark. When a cycle closes, questions come before answers. Why now? What remains? Who am I, without what I did? We do not always have time to prepare. Sometimes the end surprises us, shakes us, forces us to look within with new eyes. This book was born from there. From that thin line between before and after. It is not just the story of the end of a career, but of the transformation that follows. It is an attempt to change shape, to explore the void that opens

when a role, an identity, a certainty dissolves. Thirty-six months have passed since I began writing. Three years of words of discoveries, of internal battles. Writing has become my way of staying in motion, even when everything seemed to stop. It taught me that every ending is also a beginning if we have the courage to listen. This book is for those who find themselves at that moment. For those who have closed a door and do not yet know which one to open. You will not find easy answers. Instead, you will find thoughts, stories, doubts, and a few smiles. It is an invitation to look at the end not as a loss, but as an opportunity. To walk together, even without knowing exactly where we are going. If you are here, you too are crossing a border. I invite you to do so with me. With curiosity, with honesty, and with that strange trust that arises precisely when everything seems uncertain.

BOOK PARTITION

To best highlight the content, I decided to divide the book into **five thematic sections,** each with an evocative and coherent title.

1. Little Things, Big Laughs

Life is made up of details, and in these stories, everyday becomes a stage for involuntary comedy and unexpected revelations. From the wrong coffee to the missing T-shirt, each episode is an invitation to laugh at yourself and

discover that, sometimes, the banal is truly extraordinary. A tribute to imperfection, with a smile as a compass.

- The Coffee I Didn't Know How to Make
- The Lost T-Shirt
- My Day at the Supermarket
- My Attempt at Yoga
- The Diet I Don't Like
- The Meeting I Didn't Want to Have
- The Unfortunate Experience with The Flight

2. Meetings That Change

People and animals enter our lives as extras but often leave their mark as protagonists. In this section, every encounter—fleeting or profound—becomes an opportunity for growth, surprise, or transformation. Because it does not always take a long story to change course: a look, a word, a cat on the couch is enough.

- My Encounter with the Neighbor's Cat
- The Mystery of the Missing Dog
- The Encounter with the Mysterious Man
- The Newcomer to the Office
- Friendship Born in the Bookstore
- The Secret of the Old Painter
- The Magic of the Starry Night
- The Chess Master's Challenge

3. Travels And Transformations

Not all journeys require a suitcase. Some begin with doubt and end with a revelation. Between mountains and supermarkets, cakes and real estate dreams, these stories explore the movement—physical and internal—that drives us to search, to make mistakes, and to find ourselves again. Because the true journey is the one that changes us.

- An Unexpected Journey
- The Journey of Self-Discovery
- The Lone Traveler's Fortune
- The Cake Competition
- The Dream of the Perfect Home
- Sea and Mountains: The Resilience of an Inner Journey

4. Solitude And Awareness

When the noise dies down, silence remains. And in silence, the most authentic voice: ours. In these pages, solitude does not escape but choice, not emptiness but fertile space. Between pain and reflection, each story is a step toward inner freedom, where vulnerability becomes strength and silence becomes truth.

- Contrasting Emotions
- Detachment and the Pain of Change
- Solitude as a Rediscovered Freedom
- Daily Experiences
- The Strength Within You
- The Border of Resistance

- Growth Path
- The Longest Day
- The Symphony of Being
- Reflection in Thoughts
- From Pain to Liberation

5. Truth, Relationships and Rebirth

Relationships are our mirrors: they show us who we are, who we pretend to be, and who we could become. This section explores complicated love affairs, unexpected friendships, publishing failures, and personal rebirths. A journey through the cracks of the soul, where every breakup is also a chance to start over.

- The Distant Looks
- The Support I Didn't Expect
- The Difficulty of Toxic Relationships
- The Technology That Betrays Me
- My Attempt to Write the Perfect Novel
- Between Dreams and Failures: An Author's Journey
- Paradise or a Danger?
- Between Tradition, Commerce and Passion
- What We Will Be
- I Love You and I Cheat on You

PROLOGUE PART ONE

The Coffee I Didn't Know How to Make

I have always thought coffee was a simple thing. Moka pot, coffee, fire, cup, sweetener, and off you go, ready to take it to bed, where my sweetheart would be waiting to savor it before returning to her daily routine. But today, I have decided to tempt fate and elevate myself to the level of coffee master. At my own risk, of course.

After watching a video of a guy with a mustache and round glasses making coffee as if he were performing a sacred ritual, I felt ready. I thought, "If he can do something like that, I can't possibly fail!" The result? A drink that, if evaluated as medicine, would have the power to keep a corpse awake. My wife, who is usually shy and tired, jumps on me as if I had just brewed a magic potion. She is completely lost for words. The effect? A sudden awakening and a tension that not even the most powerful coffee in the world could explain.

But the real stroke of genius came when, seeing the mess, I tried to "fix" it with a little sugar, trying not to be discovered. If she had noticed, there would have been serious trouble. Instead, she drank a blend that could not be called coffee, but rather a concentration of energy, madness, and a little sex. Because, let us face it, in that moment it seemed as if coffee had the power to awaken every part of the body, except her rationality.

The lesson? Sometimes simple things should be left to the experts. But if you put some heart into it (and a negligible risk), even a failure can turn into something unique. And the

moka pot? There, in the corner, it looks at me with disdain, as if to say, "That's where your aspirations have taken you." But I am finally happy.

The Lost T-Shirt

There is nothing more frustrating than a T-shirt that disappears into thin air. And not just any T-shirt, but one I bought with the sweat of my brow at a "special" store. The first time I put it on, I felt like a king. Then, the washing machine decided it was too powerful for its world.

The next day, the shirt was not there. I searched like a detective, but there was nothing. The washing machine had betrayed me. It was too beautiful to keep. Since then, every time I put something in the drum, I ask myself: "Will this be next?"

Then I calmed down. I remembered leaving her at the dry cleaner's when she had asked me if her nipples were buttoned or pointed at. I was a little lost in answering, but I never would have imagined it was such a crucial question.

In the end, we all ended up wearing the same clothes, and when the lady's husband arrived, we could not make sense of anything. But in the end, it was better to lose your shirt than your life.

My Day at The Supermarket

Saturday morning, at 9:00 a.m., I had mentally prepared myself to shop efficiently: milk, bread, cheese, nothing else.

But as always, I ended up in the cereal aisle, then the exotic sauces aisle, and before I knew it, I was exploring a mysterious corner of condiments and spices. And right there, as if fate had put me to the test, I met two genuinely nice Japanese friends who, by chance, needed some advice. As always happens in these cases, we ended up having lunch together and, from there, strolled around the city like old friends.

Then, toward evening, I find myself back at the supermarket, this time for no real reason, but with the conviction that something was missing. And I find myself faced with an endless row of cookies, with no idea how I got there. In the blink of an eye, my cart was filled with things I had not even considered before, but which now seemed indispensable. At the checkout, with an embarrassed smile, the cashier looks at me and asks, "Is there anything in particular you want?" And I, with an expression that betrayed my complete confusion, reply, "I don't even know how I ended up with all this."

The supermarket, I realized, is a place where needs transform into desires and desires into obsessions. And as I walked home, I reflected on how every single choice I made in that vast emporium had been influenced not only by my daily needs, but also by an intricate interplay of temptations and momentary impulses.

My Attempt at Yoga

Yoga. When I hear that word, my mind immediately flashes to images of cheap German yogurt, like Lidl's. But then,

someone mentions inner peace, serenity, and balance, and I thought, "Why not give it a try?" After ten minutes, however, I realized that my body and yoga are as incompatible as coffee and decaf. I was used to bodyweight exercises, but certainly not to hanging on my head like a dog who has forgotten where he buried his bone.

Every time the video told me to do "Downward Facing Dog," my dog would look at me with a look that clearly said, "This isn't for you." I tried to relax, but it felt like I was trying to fold an iron into a box that was too small. I spent more time laughing at myself than meditating, but I learned one thing: yoga is patience, and my patience lasted about 30 minutes.

In conclusion, I am not sure I have found my balance, but I have certainly found my limit... and that limit is called "cobra pose." As I clumsily rose from yet another impossible pose, I realized that the true lesson of yoga for me was to accept my limitations with a smile and know that even the attempt was worth something.

The Temptation of The Refrigerator At 3 AM

At 3 a.m., the refrigerator becomes a confessional. I open it slowly, as if I were violating a sacred pact with myself. Inside, the usual: Greek yogurt, sad salad, and... the box of cookies I swore I would ignore. They look at me. I look at them. It is an emotional Western. "Just one," I tell myself. But the first cookie is merely the harbinger of a revolution. I eat, I think, I judge myself. The diet has not failed. It was sabotaged by a deeper need: the need to feel alive, even if

only for a bite. And as I chew the fourth cookie, I realize it is not hunger. It is nostalgia. It is rebellion. It is poetry in the form of carbohydrates.

The Meeting I Didn't Want to Have

"A quick and painless meeting," they had told me. So, I thought it would be like a short trip, with no surprises, nothing to worry about. Instead, I found myself stuck in a room with eight women, all incredibly beautiful and sophisticated, with a look in their eyes that clearly said: "We're ready for this meeting, and you're our only target."

Every slide that passed was like a direct blow to my brain, yet I forced myself to smile, while they never missed an opportunity to whisper comments among themselves. I felt like an instrument in the hands of eight angels, all ready to make me go through a nightmare hour. I jotted down a note that, upon rereading, rang all too falsely: "Excellent proposal, I'll think about it." I spent the next twenty minutes pondering how I could improve the situation, but the answer was simple: run away and pretend I had never been there.

The meeting lasted twice as long as expected, and by the end I realized that the only thing I had truly been left with was an atavistic fear of not being able to complete all eight. In other competitions, I had always found my limit, but never like this. I wanted to stay, but deep down I thought it would not be possible. I did not even think I would have to go back.

But the funny thing about meetings is that they often teach you something unexpected. In this case, I learned that sometimes the best strategy is just to do what you can and accept that you cannot always meet everyone's expectations. And while that meeting was not exactly "quick and easy," it added an interesting chapter to my collection of surreal experiences.

The Unfortunate Experience with The Flight

Ettore, an old friend, had just told me he had earned his advanced pilot's license, and he called to offer me a ride. "Takeoff at 10:20," he said. Two girls would be our guests, and one of them, years later, would become my wife. I prepared as if I were about to embark on an epic adventure, but as often happens, reality has a way of surprising us. Takeoff was delayed, and the control tower refused to grant flight permission due to air traffic congestion. Even though we were flying from Reggio Calabria, European airspace is managed by a control center in Brussels, which is not exactly a bed and breakfast for pilots looking for quick passages.

Finally, after a long wait, we received the green light and took off. My seat was next to Captain Ettore, while the two girls sat behind us. During the flight, we overheard a decidedly awkward conversation about women's roles in bed, which made me want to put on my headphones and pretend to be asleep. At that moment, I realized the only thing I could do was sit back, hoping the flight was short, and try not to think too much about how much I was hating the situation.

But, of course, things did not go as planned. Suddenly, the trip took an unexpected turn, and due to a sudden fuel shortage, we found ourselves having to land on a beach in an unknown country. Even my invitation to a "flying tour" had been longer and more complicated than I had imagined.

Fortunately, a drink on the beach and laughter among friends helped us ease the tension a bit. And, in a way, that misadventure brought me something unexpected: the discovery that one of the girls would become my wife. After a few laughs and a little wine, the experience no longer seemed so terrible... in fact, the beginning of a chapter I never would have imagined.

And so, what seemed like an unfortunate flying experience turned into an unforgettable adventure. From that day on, I learned that even the most unexpected situations can lead to moments of joy and unexpected connections. And while Ettore continued to pilot, I looked to the future with the knowledge that life, with all its surprises, still had much to offer.

PROLOGUE PART TWO

My Encounter with The Neighbor's Cat

I am not a big cat lover; I find them too independent and unaffectionate. I prefer dogs, but today fate decided to evaluate me. My neighbor has a cat with the air of someone who has life figured out. When they entered my house, while the neighbor was talking to me (she's very sweet, I

must say), the cat approached with a confident stride, headed for my couch, and lay down, as if she were in her own living room, with a look that said, "This place is mine."

Meanwhile, I was cracking jokes, hoping he would not pee on the couch, but then I realized there was a hidden message in his purring: "You're not the master here." And as I focused on my owner, who was standing there talking—so cute I wanted to kiss her little by little—I found myself thinking that perhaps cats are a metaphor for those people who enter your space without asking permission, taking over your time without you even realizing it.

I tried to move the cat, but under the watchful eyes of her owner, she looked at me with an expression that said, "You're the one invading my world." And finally, I gave in. The sofa became hers, and I became a witness to a scene I never expected.

Then, as casually as possible, we went into the bedroom to show her the newly purchased Chinese prints, as if we were in an arthouse movie. The cat, who now felt she was the true master of the house, continued to dominate the sofa with her usual air of superiority. The prints were beautiful, but the scene was now titled: "The War of Felines and a Sly Mouse."

The Mystery of The Missing Dog

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon when my neighbor's dog, an adorable but mischievous Jack Russell, disappeared without a trace. Everyone in the neighborhood rallied to

search for him, but no one was able to find him. My neighbor, desperate, began to fear the worst. I decided to help her search, and so a veritable treasure hunt began.

We began canvassing the neighborhood, asking everyone we met for information. We learned that the dog had last been seen near the house of old Mr. Rossi, a reclusive and gruff man. To our great surprise, we found the dog safe in Mr. Rossi's yard, where he had found it and kept it for company. My relieved neighbor thanked Mr. Rossi, and thus a new friendship was born between the two.

As we drove the dog home, Mr. Rossi told us how he had found the dog wandering the street and how he had spontaneously taken care of it. He also spoke of his loneliness, stemming from the loss of his wife a few years earlier, and how the dog's company had brought a measure of joy into his life.

My neighbor, touched by Mr. Rossi's story, decided to let the dog spend time with him occasionally. So, every Sunday afternoon, the dog would visit Mr. Rossi, and together they would walk around the neighborhood, creating a touching scene that soon became familiar to all the residents.

That little adventure taught us the importance of community and solidarity. Sometimes, even in the most tough times, unexpected and precious bonds can be created. And so, the mischievous dog not only found his way home, but became a bridge between two people who, thanks to him, discovered the value of friendship and companionship.

The Encounter with The Mysterious Man

It was a day like any other when, while walking in the park, I noticed an elderly man sitting on a bench, intent on reading an old book. His presence exuded an aura of mystery and wisdom. I decided to approach him and we began to talk. I discovered that this man, named Leonardo, had spent his life traveling the world, collecting stories and teachings from every corner of the planet.

Leonardo told me about distant cultures, ancient traditions, and the extraordinary people he had met. He told me about a trip to Tibet, where he had spent weeks in a monastery, learning the art of meditation from Buddhist monks. They spoke of an Amazonian tribe who had welcomed him as one of their own, sharing with him the secrets of their life in the jungle.

His stories fascinated me and taught me to look at the world with new eyes, appreciating the beauty of trivial things. Leonardo explained to me that true travel is not about moving from one place to another, but about opening your heart and mind to new experiences and encounters. He told me that every person we meet has a unique story to tell, and that by listening to it, we can enrich our lives.

We spent hours talking, and every minute spent with Leonardo was like turning the pages of a book full of wisdom and adventure. I felt inspired by his words and decided I too would begin to travel, not only physically, but also through the stories of the people I met. I said goodbye to Leonardo with gratitude, knowing that our meeting had

changed my way of seeing the world. From that day on, I began to view every encounter as an opportunity for growth and discovery, following Leonardo's teaching: "The true journey is within us."

The Interview That Changed Me

It was not a job interview. It was an interrogation of the soul. He, the interviewer, was not asking me about my skills. He was asking me who I was. "What makes you happy?" Silence. "When did you fail and learn?" More silence. I felt naked, but not vulnerable. In the end, they did not offer me the job. But they offered me something more: the knowledge that I am not my resume. I am the pauses between words. The scars under my shirt. That interview changed me. Not because they chose me. But because I chose myself.

Friendship Born in The Bookstore

It was a rainy afternoon when I decided to take refuge in a small independent bookstore in the city center. While browsing through the books, I noticed a girl who seemed equally engrossed in her reading. We exchanged smiles and began talking about our favorite authors and the books we had recently read.

We discovered we had similar literary tastes and spent hours discussing novels, poems, and essays. The girl, named Elisa, worked as a literature teacher, and shared my passion for books. We decided to meet again and organize a

small book club, inviting other friends and acquaintances to join us.

Our book club became a regular fixture. Every month we gathered at the same bookstore to discuss a new book and share thoughts and reflections. Each meeting was an opportunity to deepen our knowledge and make new friends. Elisa was always at the center of conversation, with her profound knowledge of literature and her infectious enthusiasm.

One day, Elisa told us about a project she cared about: she wanted to open a community library in a disadvantaged neighborhood of the city. We decided to support her project and committed to collecting books and donations for the library. We worked tirelessly for months, organizing events and awareness campaigns.

Finally, the community library opened its doors. It was a thrilling moment for all of us. Seeing children and adults exploring the shelves full of books, immersing themselves in reading, and participating in workshops and cultural activities filled us with joy and satisfaction.

The friendship born in the bookstore grew into something much bigger: a community united by a passion for reading and the desire to be effective. Elisa became a point of reference for all of us, a guide, and an inspiration. The bookstore, the book club, and the community library were symbols of a deep and lasting bond, one that transcended the pages of books and enriched us every day.

The Secret of The Old Painter

In a quiet corner of my city, there was an old art studio, long abandoned. Every time I passed it, I wondered who the artist was who had worked there and what his story was. One day, driven by curiosity, I decided to enter the old building and find out more.

Inside, I found countless dust-covered canvases, rusty brushes, and dried-up paints. Among those forgotten works, one caught my eye: an unfinished portrait of a young woman, with an intense, melancholic gaze. I decided to take it home to restore it and give that work of art new life.

While working on the restoration, I began researching the artist. I discovered that the old painter's name was Lorenzo and that he had lived a life filled with passion and sorrow. His works, characterized by extraordinary realism, had been exhibited in important art galleries, but in the last years of his life, Lorenzo had withdrawn from the art world, falling into oblivion.

I met people who had known him and listened to their stories. They told me of a generous and sensitive man but also haunted by memories of a lost love. The unfinished portrait was of his beloved, a woman who had profoundly affected his life, so much so that he was left alone.

The Magic of The Starry Night

It was a summer night, and the sky was clear and full of stars. I decided to take a walk in the park to enjoy the

beauty of the night. When I reached the lake, I sat on a bench and stared at the stars reflecting on the water. The tranquility of the moment enveloped me, and I felt at peace with myself.

As I stood there, lost in thought, I noticed a figure approaching. It was an elderly man with a long white beard and a warm smile. He sat down next to me and began to talk about the stars and constellations. He told me how, as a young man, he had spent entire nights observing the sky with his telescope. Every star had a story, and he knew all the legends and myths associated with them.

That night, the old man taught me to recognize some of the most famous constellations. He told me about Orion, the Pleiades, and the Milky Way. Each tale was imbued with magic and wonder. He explained that the stars were not just points of light in the sky, but true guides for travelers and symbols of hope and dreams.

We spent hours talking, and every word brought me closer to the magic of the cosmos. The old man revealed to me that, despite having had many adventures and traveled the world, the nights spent stargazing had been his most precious experiences. He told me that, when he feels lost or uncertain, all he needs to do is look at the starry sky to find his way and find peace.

When I finally decided to return home, I thanked the old man for his kindness and wisdom. As I walked away, I realized that that night had changed the way I saw the world. The stars were no longer just points of light in the

sky, but sources of inspiration and hope. Every time I look up at the starry sky, I remember the old man's words and feel a profound connection with the universe.

The Chess Master's Challenge

I had always been fascinated by chess, but I had never had the courage to challenge a true master. One day, while visiting the park, I noticed a group of people gathered around a chess table. At the center of the group was an elderly chess master, renowned for his skill and wisdom.

I decided to approach and observe the game. The master played with impressive calm and precision, every move carefully thought out and calculated. After the game, I summoned the courage to challenge him to a match. The master accepted with a smile and invited me to sit down.

The game began, and I immediately realized how skilled the master was. Every move seemed predictable and easily countered. Despite my determination, the master quickly defeated me. But instead of being discouraged, I felt inspired by his skill and decided to ask him for advice.

The teacher, with great patience, began teaching me the strategies and secrets of chess. He explained the importance of anticipating my opponent's moves, protecting key pieces, and always maintaining an overview of the game. Each lesson was an opportunity to improve and grow, not only as a chess player, but also as a person.

As time passed, our games became increasingly balanced. I learned to think strategically and make thoughtful decisions. My teacher taught me that chess is not just a game, but a metaphor for life. Every move matter, and every decision has consequences.

One day, during a particularly intense game, I managed to checkmate the master. It was my first victory against him. The master smiled and congratulated me, saying that I had finally understood the true essence of chess. That victory filled me with pride and gratitude.

The chess master's lessons stayed with me forever, reminding me of the importance of patience, strategy, and determination. Every game was an opportunity to improve and grow, and every challenge was faced with courage and humility.

PROLOGUE PART THREE

An Unexpected Journey

It was a chilly winter morning when I received an unexpected letter. It was an invitation to join a trip organized by an old friend I had not heard from in years. I decided to accept the invitation and found myself in a small town at the foot of the mountains.

The trip turned out to be an extraordinary adventure. The city, with its picturesque alleys and snow-capped mountains on the horizon, looked like something out of a postcard.

Every day, we explored new trails and discovered hidden gems. Our hikes took us to spectacular waterfalls, enchanted forests, and breathtaking peaks. During one of our walks, my friend told me how he found serenity and meaning in life in those places.

He taught me the importance of taking time for yourself and exploring the world with an open mind. Our conversations, often profound and thoughtful, led me to reconsider many aspects of my life. I discovered that the true value of travel was not only in the places we visited, but in the people, we met and the experiences we shared.

Every evening, we gathered around the fire in the cabin where we were staying, sharing stories, laughter, and moments of contemplative silence. Those nights, under a starry sky and enveloped in the warmth of the fire, I felt deeply connected to myself and the world around me.

When the trip ended, I realized that that week in the mountains had profoundly changed my outlook on life. I returned home with a sense of inner peace and gratitude. I resolved to continue exploring the world with the same spirit, always seeking new adventures and meaningful encounters.

The Journey of Self-Discovery

I had always wanted to travel alone, to escape the daily grind and discover something new about myself. One summer, I decided to embark on a long trip to Asia, without

a specific itinerary, letting myself be guided only by a desire for adventure and discovery.

The journey took me through breathtaking landscapes and fascinating cities. Every day was an opportunity to meet new people and explore diverse cultures. I met fellow travelers, each with a unique story to tell. We shared experiences, laughter, and moments of reflection. Every encounter enriched me and taught me something new.

One of my most significant experiences occurred during a stay in a small village in the hills of Nepal. There, I met a Buddhist monk named Tenzin. Every morning, Tenzin invited me to join the monastery's meditations. Those hours of silence and introspection helped me connect with myself on a deeper level. He taught me that inner peace is not found by trying to change the outside world, but by accepting and understanding our inner world.

During my journey, I also faced difficult moments. I remember one night when, lost in an unfamiliar city, I could not find a place to sleep. Fear and uncertainty gripped me, but just as I was about to lose hope, a local man offered me hospitality in his humble home. That gesture of kindness reminded me that, even in the darkest moments, there is always a glimmer of hope.

Visiting after visit, the experiences I accumulated changed me profoundly. In a temple in Japan, I learned the art of the tea ceremony, a ritual that requires patience, precision, and presence of mind. In India, I participated in a festival of color, immersing myself in the joy and spontaneity of the

locals. Each experience was a piece that added to the mosaic of my inner journey.

When I finally returned home, I felt enriched and transformed. The journey of self-discovery was not just a physical adventure, but a path of personal growth. I learned that true discovery does not consist in seeking new lands, but in looking at the world and ourselves with new eyes.

The Lone Traveler's Fortune

It was a cold November day when I decided to embark on a solo journey through Europe. I needed to break away from my routine and rediscover myself. I set out with only a backpack, a map, and endless curiosity for what I could discover. My first stop was Paris, where I was captivated by the monuments, the cozy cafes, and the lively streets.

One evening, while walking along the Seine, I met an elderly man named Antoine. We stopped talking, and he told me his life story, how he had traveled the world and met extraordinary people. He invited me to his home for dinner, and we spent hours talking and sharing stories. That night, Antoine taught me that true fortune lies not in material possessions, but in the experiences and connections we create along the way.

The journey continued through towns and villages, each with its own history and wonders to discover. In Germany, I lost myself in the medieval streets of Tauber, while in Italy I was enchanted by the beauty of Florence and its works of art. Every encounter, every conversation enriched me and

made me reflect on how precious the time we spend with others is.

The highlight of my trip occurred in a small village in the Swiss Alps. There I met a family who welcomed me as one of their own. They taught me to ski and showed me the secrets of their traditional cuisine. Every evening, we gathered around the fireplace and shared stories of life and adventure. Their generosity and warmth made me feel part of something bigger.

When I finally returned home, I realized that that trip had changed me profoundly. Not only had I discovered unfamiliar places, but I had also rediscovered myself. The fortune of the solo traveler lies not in the places visited, but in the connections made and the lessons learned along the way. That adventure taught me to live with gratitude and to see every encounter as an opportunity for growth and personal enrichment.

The Cake Competition

The small village of Montevalle was famous for its annual cake competition, an event eagerly awaited by all the residents. I decided to participate for the first time, despite my limited cooking experience. I spent days perfecting my recipe and evaluating it out, until I was finally satisfied with the result.

On the day of the competition, the town square was filled with a festive atmosphere. Tables laden with cakes of every type and flavor filled the air with delicious aromas. Each

competitor was ready to highlight their culinary talents. The competition was fierce, with desserts ranging from classic tarts to the most elaborate pastry creations.

When it was my turn, I presented a simple yet delicious apple tart. My heart pounded as the judges tasted my tart. Their initial enigmatic expressions turned into delighted smiles. Finally, they announced that my tart had won first prize. I could not believe my ears!

The victory not only filled me with joy but also taught me a valuable lesson: with commitment and passion, even the most difficult challenges can be overcome. I received my trophy with pride, surrounded by the applause of my fellow citizens. That evening, during the celebration following the competition, many came up to congratulate me and ask for the recipe for my tart.

That experience taught me that cooking is not about technical skills, but also about heart and dedication. From that day on, I began to devote myself more passionately to cooking, discovering that baking had become a way to express myself and bring joy to others. The Montevalle cake competition became an indelible memory in my life, a symbol of how even small victories can have a significant impact.

The House I Didn't Choose

There was a house. Not perfect, but possible. It had cracks on the walls and light in the corners. My wife wanted it. I feared it. Every room asked me, “Are you ready to stay?” I

was not. We gave up. But that house taught me that not all choices are made with the head. Some are made with the heart. And sometimes, the heart is afraid. The house I did not choose became the symbol of all the lives I did not live. And that is okay.

Sea And Mountains

There are moments in life when the path seems directionless. Days when you feel overwhelmed, confused, as if the world around you are slowly slipping away. It was one of those mornings. The gray sky reflected my mood, and I could not see a way out. Yet, deep down, I had to do something that I had to do, even if only to escape the weight of my own reflections.

So, I decided to go out, to look around, to seek answers in the places I had always loved, in the sea and the mountains, two elements that had accompanied me since childhood. I headed toward the sea, as always, seeking the calm that only water can give. The sea had always given me a sense of relief, as if I could lose everything in it, but without fear of losing myself. Its deep, incessant breathing, the waves crashing on the shore, had the power to make me forget, for a moment, the difficulties and questions that tormented me.

Walking along the shore, my thoughts seemed to drift away, like the receding waves. But there was something more I was searching for, something I could not yet define. Every step on the sand took me further from my confusion, yet the emptiness I felt inside seemed to grow every time I stopped reflecting. My mind wandered, but I could not find answers. I could not find peace.

After a while, I turned back and decided to climb the mountain, my second refuge. That road, climbing in a matter of minutes, from sea level to an altitude of a thousand meters, gave me a sense of detachment from reality, as if I had the opportunity to see the world from a unique perspective. It was like a second chance: the mountain, immutable and solid, gave me the certainty that I too, despite my failures, could find stability.

As the road steepened and the view expanded, a sense of hope began to grow within me. The difficulties seemed farther away, my mind cleared. The fresh mountain air filled my lungs, and for a moment, the weight of the world felt lighter.

When I reached the top, I stopped looking at the landscape. The sea, in the distance, seemed calm, but the mountain wind made it alive and strong. And at that moment, I understood something. I understood that it was not about finding immediate answers, but about learning to live with the questions. I did not have to force myself to solve everything in a single instant. The truthful answer lies in the journey itself, in traveling that road between the sea and the mountains, in knowing how to stop and reflect, in letting nature guide me, in letting time help me process everything.

As I walked home, I felt my worldview had changed. My internal struggle was not over, but I had learned that resilience did not mean the absence of suffering. It meant facing difficulties with the knowledge that, like the changing sea and the unchanging mountain, I too could adapt, learn, and grow.

My mind was more open, and the failures I had experienced were not just failures anymore, but lessons. Every mistake, every misstep, had taught me something new. And now, as I returned to my daily life, I had the certainty that, just like the mountains and the sea, I would continue to change, grow, and endure.

My story had just begun.

PROLOGUE PART FOUR

Contrasting Emotions

Solitude, as a concept and as a lived experience, brings with it a series of conflicting emotions, a tension between desire and fear, between the need for detachment and the fear of abandonment. This duality dawns on me in moments of reflection and makes me aware of the complexity of this choice. Solitude is never an easy decision, especially when preceded by a period of social frenzy, of relationships that consume us and always leave us feeling inadequate. On the one hand, there is an unconscious desire to retreat into a private space, without the pressure to fit in with others, without having to justify every move or thought.

On the other hand, there is the fear of becoming invisible, of losing touch with the world, of being forgotten. When I reflect on these conflicting emotions, it is as if I am going through an emotional storm. The fear of losing connection with others mixes with the awareness that this connection has never been truly authentic. Initially, I perceive loneliness as a void to be filled, but as time passes, I

understand that it is precisely this void that is the key to my freedom. Solitude, in fact, is not absence, but possibility: it is the space in which I can finally rediscover who I am without the reflection of others, without having to be someone else to meet their expectations.

Detachment And Pain

Change brings pain. There is no denying it: every step toward solitude is a step into the unknown, into a world we have never explored before. At first, I feel the weight of loneliness in all its forms. Every morning, I wake up and find no one to exchange words with, no one to share a laugh or a casual thought. The silence is oppressive; the absence weighs on my shoulders. But deep down, something inside me begins to shift. My mind, which was once constantly distracted by commitments and conversations, is now forced to confront itself. This first, painful encounter with emptiness becomes the beginning of a process of self-exploration.

Separation is difficult, but inevitable. With each passing day, however, the pain diminishes, like a wound that, though never fully healed, stops bleeding. I discovered that solitude is not just an absence, but an empty space that welcomes new possibilities. Every moment spent in solitude is an opportunity for growth, reflection, and introspection. Solitude begins to be a companion rather than an enemy. I discover that I can live without the constant approval of others, without the need to validate my existence through others. Yet, this process of adaptation is never easy. There are days when the desire to start socializing again is strong,

but it is in those days that I realize that true strength lies in resisting the temptation to return to old habits.

Solitude As Rediscovered Freedom

At first, solitude was a refuge I had chosen to protect myself. I was not ready to face the voices of the world, the expectations that seemed to loom over me every step. Relationships that once made sense were now merely fragile bonds, built on social conventions rather than true affection. The friends I had once known so well turned out to be distant, often searching for answers more in my actions than in my feelings. Every conversation felt like a mission to gather details about my life, as if I had become a news story and no longer a person. I was tired of having to justify myself, of having to explain every aspect of myself. And so, I decided to step back, close doors and windows, and let the solitude take hold.

At first, it was not easy. Solitude struck me like a forced confinement, a dark corner where the echoes of my thoughts resonated louder. I felt lost in a world that no longer felt like my own. It was difficult to separate myself from that longing for approval, which need to feel visible to others. Solitude, unfortunately, felt like an escape, a response to an inadequacy I did not know how to resolve. I took refuge in silence, but my heart was still restless, waiting for a sign, a voice that would tell me I was doing the right thing.

As time passed, however, something changed. That solitude that initially felt like a prison began to reveal itself as a place of possibility. I realized that without the interference

of the outside world, without the burden of others' expectations, I could finally listen to myself. And the more I listened, the more I realized how much I needed this space to breathe. Every day, that silence that had seemed unbearable to me began to transform. From a painful separation, it became a precious refuge, where I could explore my thoughts, my dreams, and my fears without the fear of being judged.

At that moment, the thought of Schopenhauer came to mind. He had lived for thirty-one years in total solitude, far from society and its conventions. For him, solitude was not a punishment, but a necessity for growth and self-awareness. Solitude, he wrote, was the path to detachment from the "illusory" concerns of the world, which are the fruit of incessant "wanting," a force that continually pushes us to seek external gratification. I realized that, like Schopenhauer, I was learning to recognize that true freedom lies in being detached from this constant quest for approval and success. Solitude, in this perspective, was not an escape, but a conscious choice to connect with the deepest and most authentic part of myself.

I began to understand that solitude was not just an absence of companionship, but a powerful and regenerating presence. Far from distractions, I found the courage to face my deepest truths. I was no longer afraid of what I was discovering about myself. Every thought, every reflection, every emotion was no longer a battle against the world, but a silent dance with my essence. In that solitary space, I could finally be honest with myself, without the need to put

up a facade to please anyone. And this freedom, which at first seemed like a burden, became a gift.

Solitude taught me not to depend on what others thought of me. I no longer needed external validation or approval. I discovered that my validity lay not in the eyes of others, but in my own heart. I did not need to appear perfect or complete in the eyes of the world. My authenticity became the only measure that mattered. In that silence, I became stronger, more aware of who I was and what I wanted from life. I was no longer afraid of living without masks. Solitude, just as I had feared it, had become the key to my inner freedom.

Now, every moment spent in solitude was an opportunity for growth, for introspection. Every step I took, however solitary, brought me closer to the best version of myself. Solitude was no longer a refuge from the world, but a path to freedom. In that profound silence, my mind cleared, and my heartbeat faster, with a rhythm that finally felt like my own. There were no more distractions, no more chaos from other people's opinions. There was only my being, simple and true.

And now, looking back, I realize that solitude gave me the greatest gift: the ability to become free. Free to be myself, without fear, without the constant need to validate my existence in the eyes of others. In that solitude, I learned to live with myself, to love myself for who I am, without the need for any other reflection. And in this freedom, I found myself. There was no longer anything that tied me to the past, to pain, or to the expectations of others. There was only the present, and the awareness that, now, solitude was

no longer a burden, but an opportunity. An opportunity to finally be free.

The Day That Wasn't Supposed to Happen

It was an ordinary Tuesday. I woke up, made coffee, and forgot to put sugar in. An automatic gesture, like so many others. Then, the phone rang. A broken voice told me a friend had died. Not an acquaintance. A loyal friend. One of those who had seen you cry without asking for explanations.

So, an ordinary day became the day that should not have happened. Time warped. Things stopped making sense. The coffee sat cold on the table. The voice on the phone continued to speak, but I was not listening anymore. I could only hear a noise inside. As if something had broken and I did not know where to find the pieces.

I walked for hours, aimlessly. Every step was a question. Every breath, an answer that never came. I sat on a bench I had never noticed. I watched the people pass by each with their own ordinary Tuesday. And I thought: no one ever knows when the day will change shape.

That day taught me that life does not warn you. It does not send notifications. It does not ask if you are ready. It takes you by the hand, leads you where you do not want to go, and leaves you there. During emptiness, of noise, of too much.

But even there, you can choose. You can stay. You can scream. You can pretend it did not happen. Or you can start over. Not right away. Not well. But slowly, with uncertain

steps, with small gestures. With the knowledge that any given day can become the day that changes everything.

And since that day, every coffee has sugar. Not because I need it. But because it reminds me that even simple things deserve attention. That pain can teach us how to live.

The Strength Within You

As solitude becomes my companion, I begin to discover the strength it brings. It is no longer a burden, but a gift that allows me to remain true to myself. Solitude has taught me not to depend on others to find happiness. I have learned to build a life based on my inner freedom, without having to constantly adapt to others or their expectations. In this solitary space, I can finally listen to my heart and follow my most authentic desires.

I am no longer forced to satisfy others' needs, to conform to their visions of life. Now, I can be myself without fear. Solitude has given me the strength to rediscover my worth, to understand that I am not defined by my relationships, but by my relationship with myself. Every day I spend solitude, my strength grows, and I realize that this solitude is my true freedom.

The Border of Resistance

I remained trapped within the walls of my home, day after day. My life seemed to have been reduced to a series of sacrifices, ones I had never truly accepted. The sacrifices I made seemed to become increasingly burdensome and endless. Every item I sold was not just money for my family, but a symbol of what I had lost. My car, my phone, the gold chain I had inherited from my mother, the bracelet

I had bought to celebrate a happy moment in my life... everything that reminded me of a serenity that now seemed like a distant dream. Each item I sold seemed to bring me a step closer to desperation, but at the same time it felt like it was the only thing I could do to try to keep my family afloat. As if I were paying some sort of debt, even if I had never asked to.

But my family, despite everything, did not understand. Every day I was bombarded with criticism, accusations, and contempt. I was not working. I did not have a "real" job, as if my dedication to what I was trying to build was worthless. "You should go back to doing something serious," they said. Their words pierced me like sharp blades. It was not just my inability to maintain my place in the world that made me feel empty, but the judgment of those who were supposed to support me. Normally they were demanding of me, however, they had nothing to do with who I had become. And yet, the more they insisted, the further I distanced myself from that reality.

The real difficulty did not just come from the impossibility of working "normally," but from the conflict that was growing within the home. Battling two women with incredible willpower was never easy. My wife, who had grown accustomed to managing everything, maintaining the appearance of a "normal" life, saw me only as a burden. And my daughter, young but determined, seemed to have allied herself with her mother in every criticism. Instead of trying to understand, they continued to bombard me with words that sought to diminish me. Not just words of contempt, but phrases that aimed to make me feel useless,

to make me feel that my project was nothing more than a dream from which I had to awaken.

Every day was a battle, and I felt more like a soldier losing ground. But inside me was a strength they did not know. In a world that rejected me, where my worth was being questioned, I had decided not to give up. Their strategy was clear: drive me into depression, destroy my self-esteem until I fell into an abyss. But they failed. No matter how hard they tried to make me doubt myself, there was a part of me that remained steadfast. And this part of me did not want to give up. I could not give in.

Yet, despite my inner strength, the weight of loneliness and criticism was crushing me. The moments when I felt fragile became increasingly frequent. I had spent so many years trying to understand who I was, searching for meaning in everything that was happening to me, but at a certain point, the idea of running away seemed like the only way out. I no longer knew what to do, how to move forward, where to find the courage. I decided that the solution was to escape. Not physically, but deeply. I thought the only way to free myself was to become a homeless person. To distance myself from everything: from them, from my life, from society. I would take the train and leave, aimlessly, without a clear direction. I needed nothing, just to get away from that reality that was suffocating me.

That evening, however, as I was preparing to leave, something made me pause. My mind, which was now leading me to the brink of surrender, received a glimpse of clarity. In that moment, I thought of my children. I had already lost so much, but they did not deserve to see the

outcome of that struggle as a total defeat. They had always seen me fight, but I had never prepared them for such a devastating failure. I had raised them to fight, to resist, and now I would have to be their example of strength.

When my children, who work in northern Italy, came to visit me, their arrival was like a lifeline. They stopped me before I could make that irreversible move. They asked me to stay, they told me about their lives, their work, how they looked to me as a guide. Their voices, which until then had been only a distant memory, brought me back to reality. I could not do this to them. I could not let them see my abandonment. I returned home, knowing that the real battle was not against my wife or my daughter, but against that part of me that wanted to give up.

That evening, as I returned home, I understood something fundamental: my struggle was only just beginning. Resistance, true resistance, was not in escaping my reality, but in changing my perception of it. I did not need to escape, but to rebuild, to give new meaning to what I was experiencing. It was then that I understood that my path would not be easy, but it would be mine. No one else could author my story, and my story would not end with surrender. It began right then, with the knowledge that, despite everything, the strength to start over was within me.

Growth Path

As time has passed, I have stopped seeing loneliness as a punishment. It is no longer a separation, but a return. A return to myself, to the parts I had left behind to please, to rush, to avoid feeling.

Solitude has become my sacred space. The place where I can listen to myself without noise, where ideas do not have to scream to be heard. It is there that I began to sow my thoughts, to cultivate dreams that still lacked a voice, to nourish my soul with meaningful silences.

It taught me to live more authentically. To not seek external validation, but truth within. To be present not only in the important moments, but also in the invisible ones: a slow coffee, a walk without a destination, a page written without expectations.

Solitude has shown me the depth of existence. Not the spectacular kind, but the everyday kind. The kind hidden in simple gestures, in thoughts you do not share, in days that seem the same but change you without asking permission.

Now, every day I spend in solitude is a step. A step toward growth, toward understanding who I truly am. Not the version others see, but the one I recognize. The one who makes mistakes, who stops, who begins again.

Loneliness is no longer my enemy. It has become a gentle force. A silent teacher who does not demand but accompanies. It pushes me to become the best version of myself, not to be perfect, but to be true.

And on this journey, I have learned that it is not important to know where I am going. It is enough to know that I am going there. With myself by my side.

The Longest Day

It was a morning like any other, yet everything was different. A day that would feel like a thousand years in

one, suspended in breathless anxiety. No promise, no prediction, only the uncertainty that hung in the air, heavy as a cloud ready to break loose. It was the day I would face a decision that would change my life forever. A long-awaited phone call, a result that was bound to arrive. A moment that would define me.

Anticipation is the most insidious enemy, and my mind kept bouncing from one thought to another. Every second seemed to stretch; the clock had stopped. I looked at the hands, and they seemed like moving stones. Every minute felt like an eternity, and the feeling of being trapped inside that spiral of time gripped me like a vice. My breathing was labored, my heart racing, my hands cold despite the scorching sun outside.

I had never been afraid of time before that day, but that morning, time felt like weight loss, a pressure I could not lift. I told myself I had to be strong, that it would all pass, but meanwhile my mind kept screaming. "It never passes." Every little sound made me jump. The ticking of the kitchen clock, the rustling of paper under my hands, the sound of cars passing outside. Everything seemed amplified, everything held me prisoner in that infinite second.

Coffee. The usual habit, trying to give a semblance of normalcy. But nothing. Every sip did not ease the pressure. My head was still full, confused. A few cigarettes. Another. And yet, I could not stop, I could not give my body any respite, which, gripped by anxiety, sought any escape.

Every time someone left the house, I rushed to ask if they had any news. The answer was always the same: nothing.

No news. Nothing new. Time continued to pass, slow, heavy, as if the universe were laughing at my helplessness. Everything seemed still, yet it was rushing by, and I remained there, as if trapped in a dream I could not wake from.

It was already evening, and the sun was sinking toward the horizon, but inside me, the morning was still there, the anticipation, the fear. Every minute seemed like an entire world, every second I felt sucked into a black hole. But, deep down, I knew that eventually it would end. An hour, a day, a month, a year, but the longest day would end eventually.

The phone call came. And, as always, it was not what I imagined. The answer I would both fear and hoped for finally arrived. But it did not bring me any relief. Time, in the end, had proved right. The "longest day" had begun, but now it seemed over, I understood something no answer could ever give me: what truly matters is how we choose to live our time, not how much time we are given.

The Symphony of Being

Music is one of those universal languages that transcends words. It is a force that goes beyond simple melody and harmony, a subtle thread that unites heart and mind, body, and soul. It is not only an accompaniment to daily life, but a soundtrack to our emotions, our most intimate reflections, moments of joy and even sorrow. Yet, music has a unique peculiarity: often, we do not need to fully understand its meaning. It can speak a language we do not fully

understand, yet it touches us profoundly, sometimes more than the words themselves.

I am reminded of that feeling we all experience when listening to a foreign song. We do not always understand the lyrics, but the music resonates with us in a way that requires no translation. It is as if we have access to a world that, even if it does not speak our language, tells us something universal. And yet, we cannot help but reflect on how the profound meaning of the words can change our relationship with music. Because even if a melody uplifts us, we cannot ignore that its power could intensify if only we fully understood the message it carries. This paradox is when, unwittingly, we lose a translation and wonder what the experience would have been like if we had been able to grasp every nuance of those words.

Reflection on music is intertwined with an awareness that surprises me every time I think about it: its power lies not only in its ability to communicate, but also in its ability to remain silent when the volume is turned down. I have learned that the most powerful music is not that which invades every space, but that which adapts to our inner being, modulating and silencing itself to allow us to reflect. Music, in fact, becomes more effective when it respects our sensory balance. Too high a volume can disrupt perception, turning a source of pleasure into a form of disturbance. This is why modulating sound, regulating its intensity, becomes essential for true connection.

This awareness accompanied me one morning in May 2024, when, without any preconceptions, I decided to listen to a random selection on YouTube Music. I expected to hear the

usual tunes, the ones that have become part of my daily repertoire. But that morning, an unexpected encounter surprised me. I clicked on a radio station and, by chance, found myself on Radio Maria. And not only the music, but also the lyrics accompanying that station struck me deeply. It was something I had not sought, but it surprised me with its depth. Religious content, which seems distant from many of my daily experiences, found a place in my reflection. I realized that, at that moment, I was experiencing an encounter between two dimensions: the material, every day one, and the spiritual one, which often intertwine in unexpected ways.

Radio Maria was not just a religious broadcast; it was a symphony of voices and sounds that spoke of values that, in some way, mirrored my own journey. I felt as if music and spirituality merged, creating a sort of harmony between my inner being and the world around me. It was as if I had found confirmation amidst so much uncertainty, a sign that my search, however silent, was on a path that made sense.

At that moment, I was no longer alone. Not because the loneliness had disappeared, but because I had found companionship that helped me recognize a deeper aspect of myself. I remained silent, but I no longer felt isolated. Music, with its discreet yet powerful presence, had created a bridge that connected me to others, even though I was still physically alone. It unites but is not intrusive; it accompanies but does not direct. This silence, which becomes a space for reflection and listening, reminded me that, at times, music is the greatest traveling companion, not

because it shouts, but because it can adapt to our pace, following our moments, our intuitions, our uncertainties.

Music is not just something we listen to. It is a silent language that helps us understand ourselves, connect with the world around us, and our deepest emotions. Like a symphony of being, it plays within us, every moment, if only we are willing to listen.

Reflection In Thoughts

Solitude, viewed philosophically, is a concept rooted in the history of human thought. Schopenhauer, one of the philosophers who most influenced me on this journey, saw solitude as a path to rediscovering the essence of life. According to him, man is destined to live in solitude, even in the closest relationships, because true self-knowledge can only be achieved through detachment from external influences. Far from the crowd, far from social compromises, the individual can finally see reality for what it is: a meaningless game, which only solitude can reveal in its rawness.

This concept has accompanied me throughout my journey. Solitude is not just a means of escaping the world, but a process of inner clarity. In it, all that is superfluous is swept away, leaving us with only what is essential. The illusions and lies we tell ourselves dissolve, leaving us face to face with the truth of our existence. Yet this truth is often uncomfortable, difficult to accept. It shows us our weaknesses, our mistakes, and forces us to confront them without the possibility of hiding them behind a facade. But

in this painful process of revelation, there also lies the possibility of growth and change.

From Pain to Liberation

The transition from pain to liberation is slow and often imperceptible. Every step I take seems insignificant, almost meaningless. Yet, over time, I realize that this change has occurred beneath the surface, like a metamorphosis taking place on a profound level. When solitude no longer scares me, when I get used to being alone with myself, I discover that I am finally breathing freely. Every thought that once oppressed me dissolves, every worry becomes less powerful. It is as if I have taken control of my life, as if I have learned to let go of everything that does not belong to me, everything that does not benefit me.

Liberation comes in moments of apparent tranquility. It is not a sudden enlightenment, but a subtle sensation that pervades every day. I begin to enjoy my own company, to recognize the value of my solitude as a form of independence. This liberation is never complete, because solitude is always evolving, but with each passing day I feel freer, stronger, and more aware of my essence.

PROLOGUE PART FIVE

The Distant Looks

My family stood there, watching. They had never believed I would embark on a path like that. Despite my academic achievements, their vision of me was still tied to that of a boy who would settle for whatever life offered him. They

were partly right: I had never accomplished anything extraordinary. But this time was different. That dream I had decided to pursue, that path I had never taken, was not just a passing whim. Yet, they saw nothing but improbable folly.

They stood still, motionless, as if watching me from afar, as if they feared I was venturing down a path I could never walk. There, between them, there was nothing but indifference and a hint of skepticism. They observed me, like one observes a painting in a gallery: with curiosity but never considering that this could be my destiny. They did not support me, they did not believe in my dream.

Time passed, and with it came the criticism. It never stopped. Months passed, then years, and every time I reached a goal, every time I overcame an obstacle, the negative words were never far away. "You won't go far," they would say, "this is just a phase." Their every judgment struck a chord, but I learned to look beyond, to ignore, to focus only on what drove me forward. I realized I did not need their approval to grow, to be who I wanted to be.

And yet, those words remained. Like a burden that accompanied me, they never left me. But over time, I learned to bear them. Every criticism, every doubt expressed, only strengthened me. I did not hate them, I understood them. They could only express what they thought, what they saw. My vision was different. My path was not their path, and it never would be. And so, when my family's words became heavy, I realized that they were not defining me, but their fears, their fear of failure.

Three years have passed, and today the sound of their voices no longer affects me. What they think of me no longer matters, because I know that every step I take is my own. If they call me a failure, if they think I am wasting my time, it does not matter. The real defeat would have stopped for fear of listening to them. Instead, I am here, stronger than before, and I am making my own path, with or without their permission.

The Support I Didn't Expect

I counted on the support of my friends, on their understanding, on someone who could believe in my project as I did. But I soon realized that was not the case. Many of them did not even read the stories I wrote, and when they did receive them, they seemed more bothered by having to read them than enthusiastic about doing so. They were not readers, nor were they interested in what I was creating. The passion I had for what I did was not reflected in their responses, and it was hard to accept.

But amid all this silence, a voice rose, and it was not just any voice. It was Michele's, my brother-in-law, my wife's brother, who became my only true support. Every evening, he spent ten minutes talking with me. Not just ten minutes, but ten minutes of genuine attention, of genuine understanding. He wanted to know what was happening, what I was working on, where I was going with my stories. He listened with interest and encouraged me to do more, to push myself further.

Michele was not just a "reader" of my words, but a traveling companion. Every word he said was an encouragement that

pushed me to do better. He sought nothing but to understand my vision, to know my dreams. His support was unconditional, and, most importantly, he believed in me as a creator. He told me I had a limitless inventive mind, and this gave me the strength to believe that I really did have something to offer the world.

It was not empty compliments, but a true awareness of my own abilities. With him, I understood that I was not alone on my journey. Michele had shown me that, even if others did not understand, he did. And sometimes, that kind of confidence is all you need to move forward, to persevere in what you love to do.

Michele became, at that moment, my rock. He did not judge me; he did not criticize me. He supported me, he gave me the strength to believe that, even when it seemed everything else was against me, I was still on the right path. And that knowledge accompanied me through the most difficult moments, when all else seemed lost.

The Difficulty of Toxic Relationships

Toxic relationships are not always easy to recognize. Sometimes they masquerade as friendships, as seemingly genuine bonds, but are based on dynamics of dependence, unrealistic expectations, and selfishness disguised as affection. There comes a moment when, looking in the mirror, I realize these relationships no longer serve me. The people I thought I knew, who I thought were part of my life, have become intrusions into my inner world. I have begun to feel their presence as a constraint, like a weight that prevents me from breathing. Every conversation, which

once seemed like an act of companionship, now feels like a succession of empty words, questions that do not really seek answers, but only confirmation.

Deleting a friend's number, or simply not responding to a text, is an act of great courage. It is not just about physically distancing ourselves, but about dealing with the guilt that pervades us. Every time I decline a call, a part of me wonders: "Am I doing the right thing? Am I being selfish? A little company would do me good?" But the truth is, every time I walk away from a relationship that does not nourish me, I feel like I am coming back to myself, recovering a part of myself that I had lost. The difficulty in making these decisions stems from the fact that we are social by nature, but not all relationships are beneficial. Learning to say "no" is an act of self-preservation, which often coincides with the rebirth of our inner self.

Offline To Find Myself

I turned off my phone. Not in protest, but for survival. Every notification was an assault. Every message, a request to be somewhere else. For 24 hours, I was alone. I walked, I read, I listened to the silence. And in the silence, I heard my own voice. Not the one that answers emails. The one that dreams, that makes mistakes, which laughs alone. Technology has not betrayed me. It has simply reminded me that, sometimes, to find yourself, you must lose yourself in the real world.

My Attempt to Write the Perfect Novel

There was a time when I thought authoring the perfect novel was my only goal. A work that would change the world, which would leave an indelible mark on history. But as I wrote, I realized that every word, every sentence I wrote did not satisfy me. Rereading them, they only seemed more banal and distant from the perfection I had imagined. I stopped to reflect: "Why pursue perfection, when it is precisely imperfection that makes every story unique?" I decided to let go of the idea of a perfect novel and focus on the sincerity of my thoughts. And so, in that very acceptance of imperfection, I found a kind of perfection I had not been seeking, but which proved truer and more authentic than I had imagined.

Between Dreams and Failures: An Author's Journey

And so, after attempting Italian publishing, I realized that the traditional approach was not the solution for which I had hoped. With the disappointment I carried within me, my mind began to wander beyond the narrow horizons of Italy. I decided to seek my fortune in the United States, the country where the opportunities seemed endless. There, they told me I could publish my books, reach an international audience, and finally see my work recognized. Thus began my American publishing adventure.

The first step was finding a publisher who believed in my talent. After weeks of searching, signing, and signing contracts, the long-awaited opportunity finally arrived. The hope of a fresh start mingled with the fear of another failure. Despite the uncertainties, the excitement of seeing

my work translated and distributed in another market made me impatient. A few months later, reality began to set in: I had published sixteen books, but the royalties I was receiving were not what I expected. In five months, I had earned only €7.50. A paltry sum, which seemed like a bad joke compared to the effort I had put in.

Despite the bitterness, I tried not to give up. It was just a matter of time, I thought. But my confidence was slowly fading. The American publishing system, which had so fascinated me, seemed no different from the Italian one, full of promises and lacking concrete guarantees.

So, I changed publishers, hoping another would truly highlight my books. I worked even harder, pouring my heart into the process, but the results remained the same. Two months of work with no royalties. Every day, I wondered if it was time to give up. My name was not making its way onto the virtual shelves, and the feeling of being invisible was beginning to weigh me down. Yet even though I felt completely disoriented, my passion for writing never stopped fueling me. Those meager earnings were not enough, nor was I satisfied with never having achieved the recognition I desired.

I asked myself: was this the path they had promised me, fraught with obstacles and uncertainties? It was the same winding road I had taken in Italy, where I had spent a fortune to get my books on the shelves, but with no concrete results. Deep down, I had always felt like the publishing market was a bit like a labyrinth with no way out. There were more authors, more books, but very few opportunities to get noticed.

Despite everything, there was no room inside me for surrender. Writing had become a need, an urgency, an obsession. The idea of stopping, of giving up, was not even an option. The only thing left for me to do was keep going, and so I did.

I reviewed the entire journey, the sacrifices, the disappointments, and the setbacks. But there was also another side to the coin: growth, the realization that I was no longer the same person I had been before. I had learned so much during these years, I had acquired experiences I could never have bought. Yet, one truth was becoming increasingly clear to me: writing should not be just a job. I should not let success or failure determine its value.

With the knowledge of someone who never gave up, I decided to continue writing for myself, for those still close to me, for those who supported me. And for all those who, like me, have learned that sometimes true success is not about numbers or contracts, but about the ability to keep going despite everything.

Paradise Or a Danger?

Restaurants are, without a doubt, one of the most fascinating and, at the same time, most dangerous places for humanity. When we sit down at the table and trust a stranger to put something in our bodies, we know nothing about what we're about to eat: not the origin of the ingredients, nor their quality, nor the care taken in their preparation, nor the hygienic conditions of the kitchen. This should give us pause for thought. Eating out implies a blind

trust that, in a world where transparency is increasingly rare, is never guaranteed.

A striking example of how the concept of transparency can work in the restaurant industry is the success of McDonald's. Their success is based precisely on a promise of clarity: you see where I cook, how I cook, how I treat what you put in your mouth. No surprises, no mystery. The kitchen is visible, and this reassures the customer, who feels secure in knowing that every step of the process is monitored. A successful model that relies on the principles of simplicity and honesty, even if, behind its clean appearance, other issues often lurk.

My firsthand experience as the manager of a Burger King in Venezuela in 2009 gave me a more concrete understanding of how the restaurant industry really works, a world where every financial decision can impact the quality of food and the customer experience. During that time, I realized that saving even a liter of oil a week might seem like a financial advantage but resulted in a loss of trust and customers, which declined by 20%. Quality, in the end, is the only real investment that pays off. This is precisely what the restaurant industry teaches us: any immediate savings translate, overall, into higher costs for our health.

We live in a world where, too often, we sacrifice quality for immediate profit. However, what we do not realize is that our bodies are the first to suffer the consequences of these choices. As the saying goes, "We are what we eat." If we skimp on food quality, we will then have to invest that money in medications to treat the diseases that arise from an unhealthy diet.

Running a restaurant is not about food, but a delicate balance between economy, hygiene, transparency, and customer care. Behind every dish served, dozens of variables must be considered: the supply chain, quality control, health regulations, and the efficiency of work processes. Often, however, we see situations where a kitchen is transformed into a restaurant overnight, without due regard for safety and quality standards. This is one of the characteristics that distinguishes us as Italians: a people of great imagination but often lacking consistency. Our culinary traditions are famous worldwide, but the reality is that we are too often tempted to reduce everything to the appearance of efficiency, without considering the deeper implications.

In a world where appearances matter more than substance, we must ask ourselves: how much are we willing to sacrifice for immediate savings? The answer, unfortunately, is often too high. And as we look at the evolution of our civilization, we must realize that, despite being a nation rich in talent and creativity, true value lies in substance, not surface.

Between Tradition, Commerce and Passion

Fishing, one of humanity's oldest and most fundamental activities, has always played a crucial role in the evolution of civilizations. Since ancient times, trade routes and naval battles have followed the sea, and fish has been a staple food for entire populations. Fishermen, in fact, are often seen as custodians of ancient knowledge, their lives inextricably intertwined with the sea. Their voices, higher and more vibrant, reflect the challenges faced during long

voyages and the constant confrontation with the unpredictable waters.

Another peculiarity of fishermen is their ability to enrich their stories, never telling the absolute truth about their catch, but rather surrounding the tale with details, embellishments, and backgrounds that transform it into a compelling narrative, blending experience and fantasy. The fisherman is not just an economic operator, but a storyteller, a man who has experienced adventures on the waves, ready to offer us a slice of truth disguised as extraordinary anecdotes.

Today, fishing has become a global and highly profitable industry. Considering the tuna market, for example, it is shocking to know that Japanese traders in the Pacific Ocean are willing to pay astronomical prices, even $120 per kilo, for quality fish. This phenomenon has transformed fishing into a global market, where the ancient craft blends with modern economic logic, driven by the demand for high-quality products and international competition. Not only tuna, but also shellfish such as lobster, once considered a symbol of luxury, now face growing competition from farms, which are able to offer similar-quality products at significantly more affordable prices.

But what does fishing have to do with me, the author? Why am I talking about an activity so distant from my profession? The answer is simple: I am a huge fish lover. I enjoy fishing, eating fish, and preserving it jealously in my freezer, like a treasure to enjoy on days when the sea is far away. It is an act of pleasure I share with few, but one that I feel is right to extend to those who do not know much about

it. Fishing, like any other activity, is also a form of knowledge, a connection with the world around us. And even if we are not journalists, our role is still to tell true, authentic stories, without the need to answer to a system that forces us to write what we want to hear. We, as authors, have the privilege of telling what we see, without filters, without cost.

In a world where information is often distorted or manipulated, our task is to share what we know with honesty and passion, even if it concerns something as simple as fishing. We tell the truth, without masks, like fishermen recount their journeys at sea. Fishing then becomes a symbol of our very work: a constant search for truth, beauty, and stories worth telling, not for profit, but with the desire to enrich those who are willing to listen.

What We Will Be

Today, when we tell stories to children, the themes and protagonists have changed. Once upon a time, we began with the classic phrase, "Once upon a time there was a child...", which opened the world to infinite possibilities of adventures and dreams. Today, however, we often hear, "Once upon a time there was an old person...". The difference seems obvious, but it is not that great. That old person, in fact, is, in a certain sense, a child too, only he has accumulated years and experiences, which have transformed him into a more fragile and wise version of what we were or will be.

Too often, people do not stop reflecting on this connection. They do not observe, they do not think. When they see an

elderly person crossing the street or sitting on a bench, they see nothing more than a distant figure, failing to understand that, in some way, that elderly person reflects their future. He is a version of themselves that time has transformed. He is nothing more than another human being walking the same path but taking a few steps further.

Older people do not ask for much. They crave attention, conversation, understanding. Their bodies may be slower, their minds more tired, but their spirits are often richer, deeper. Talking to an older person is like opening a window onto their history, their life, the experiences they have had, the battles they have faced. Sharing their life, reliving their most significant moments, fills the older person with profound pride. That pride comes from the knowledge of having lived and faced the world with their own strength.

I invite everyone to visit geriatric hospitals, retirement homes, and places where the elderly live. Look carefully, without fear, without rushing to leave. Do not be afraid to look at the future face to face. There, in their eyes, is much more than we can imagine. Do not think "it will never happen to me": that is a fatal mistake, a mistake that can lead us to ignore what deeply concerns us. They are not the only ones who are elderly; we too are walking the same path. Time, relentless, will catch up with us, and the more we understand and appreciate older people, the more we will be prepared to face our future with dignity and serenity.

I Love You and I Cheat on You

It was one of many WhatsApp conversations, a casual exchange, a play on words that came about to pass the time.

I authored funny stories for my friends, without a specific goal, as a little escape from everyday life. But life, as often happens, has a way of surprising us, and that surprise came from a Neapolitan woman, one of those friends with whom I shared my stories. I never imagined that it would be she who would make a radical change in my life.

One day, he wrote to me: "I've collected all your stories. There are more than 150. I want to publish a book." It seemed incredible to me. I could not comprehend the meaning of those words. A book? From a simple exchange of words, from stories written for entertainment, the idea of something big was born. In that moment, part of me felt relieved, the other perplexed. Yet, despite my doubts, something inside me began to believe in that possibility.

That Neapolitan woman had an overwhelming passion, capable of captivating you with every word, every gesture. She loved me, or at least I thought so. Her intensity, her impetuous love, made me feel special, unique. But along with this passion, there was also jealousy that created an unbearable tension. It was not just love she gave me, but love that fed on a shadow, that of obsession.

Little by little, our relationship began to develop into something more complicated. His jealousy began to become suffocating. Every gesture, my every word, was subject to his interpretation, which did not always correspond to reality. I felt trapped in a love that, though profound, was slowly destroying me. There was no longer any room for autonomy, for individuality. Everything had to be under his control, under his constant surveillance. And I could not breathe.

What initially seemed like an enthusiastic and sincere bond turned into an internal battlefield, where love and jealousy fought an unequal battle. My trust began to waver. I realized it was no longer just passion that moved her, but something darker: the fear of loss. A fear that made her willing to do anything to maintain control over me.

In the end, the betrayal did not come from a single act, but from a series of small, daily wounds. The broken promises, the silent lies, the excuses that could no longer hide the truth. His jealousy was not limited to me but grew every time he felt he was losing ground, every time he perceived a threat that did not exist. And so, in the end, he betrayed me. Not with a dramatic gesture, but with an absence, with a detachment that slowly made me understand that what we had shared had never been true reciprocity, but rather a constant struggle for power.

Yet, from that pain, awareness arises. My growth as a person, as an author, would not have been the same without this lesson. The Neapolitan woman taught me that, at times, love is not only a positive feeling but can also become a prison if not managed with balance. She showed me that, even in the darkest moments, we must continue to seek our freedom. Her passion pushed me to look deeper within myself, to recognize the strength to fight for what is right, for what I deserve.

The first book that came out of it was called "We Are Not Friends, But Only Acquaintances," a title that isn't just a statement of fact, but a reflection on the reality of a love that, unfortunately, proved too complex to be lived healthily. The Neapolitan woman, with her overwhelming

strength and her jealousy, gave me so much, but she also took something important away from me: the faith I had in a pure love. And it was precisely from that loss that I found the strength to move forward.

POST-SCRIPTUM – PROVOCATION

If you have made it this far, you might have been expecting an answer. Sorry to disappoint you: I do not have one. But I have a question: *Where are you going?*

You do not need to know. You just need to go.

I do not know where you are going. But if anything in these lines has kept you company, then we have met. And that, for me, is already enough.

Confusion Is Just Clarity That Is in No Rush

There was a time when everything seemed confusing. I did not know what I wanted, where to go, who I was. I felt lost, as if I were walking in a thick fog. Then, one day, I stopped looking for answers. I began to live with confusion, without fighting it. And slowly, without haste, something became clear. Not everything. But enough to take a step forward.

Not Knowing Where to Go Is the First Step to Getting There

I was faced with a choice I did not know how to manage. I had no direction, just a need to move. So, I started walking, not knowing where. Each step brought me closer to something I had not foreseen. Eventually, I realized that you

do not need to know where you are going. You just need to have the courage to set out.

Solitude Is Not Emptiness. It is Space to Listen to Yourself.

When everyone left, I thought I was alone. At first, it scared me. Then I began to hear things I had previously ignored: the sound of my breathing, the weight of my thoughts, the rhythm of my heart. Solitude was not empty. It was space. Space to truly listen to myself.

Every Mistake Is a Road You Didn't See

I have made mistakes. Many times. I have made decisions that cost me time, people, and trust. But every mistake has taken me somewhere new. A place I never would have seen if I had stayed on the "right" path. Now I know that making mistakes is just a unique way of getting there.

Silence Is Not Absence. It Is a Deeper Form of Presence.

Once, during an argument, I chose not to respond. Not out of fear, but because I felt words would ruin everything. The silence I left there spoke louder than any sentence. He said, "I'm listening." He said, "I'm feeling." And at that moment, I was more present than ever.

Fragility Is How Truth Breaks Through

I showed myself to be fragile in front of someone. I trembled, I cried, I said things I had never said before. I thought I would lose my dignity. Instead, I found the truth. My own. And those who listened did not walk away. They took a step towards me.

You Don't Need to Know Everything. You Need to Feel Something

I spent years searching for answers. Books, courses, advice. Then, one evening, I heard a song and cried. I did not understand anything. But I had heard everything. And at that moment, I understood that feeling is more important than knowing.

Walking Without a Destination Is Already a Form of Freedom

One Sunday, I grabbed my keys and went out. Destination less. I walked for hours, aimlessly. And for the first time, I did not feel obligated to "do something." I felt free. Free to be, to go, to not arrive.

The Voice That Trembled Was the Sincerest One

During a confession, my voice trembled. I felt ashamed. I thought weaknesses would ruin everything. But my listener said, "That's the truest voice you've ever had." From then on, I no longer tried to sound strong. I tried to be sincere.

Writing Is Just a Way to Not Forget Who We Are

I started writing when I no longer knew who I was. Every word was an attempt to remember myself. To rediscover pieces of myself scattered across days, emotions, silences. Writing did not heal me. But it kept me alive. And every page became a trace. A memory. A way not to forget.

Epilogue – Where the Book Ends, The Reader Begins

I did not author this book for those who have already found their way. I wrote it for those who are searching. For those who stumble, for those who stop, for those who start again.

If you smiled, if you thought, if you felt less alone… then this book did its job.

Now it is your turn. Walk. Even if you do not know where you are going. But go.

WHY DID I WRITE THIS BOOK?

It was not a special day. There was no revelation, no tragedy. Just a strange weariness, as if something inside me had stopped pretending.

I sat down at the table, turned on the lamp, and looked at the blank sheet of paper. I did not want to author a book. I just wanted to organize the chaos swirling in my head. Scattered thoughts, broken sentences, emotions that could not find their place.

I wrote the first sentence without thinking: *"I don't know where I'm going."* And immediately after, as if it had already been there for a long time: *"But I'm going."*

From that moment on, I never stopped. Every page was a conversation with me. Every chapter, a pause. Every word, an attempt not to lose myself.

I authored this book because I did not know how to explain myself. Because confusion is not resolved, it is overcome. Because loneliness is not fought, it is lived through. Because pain is not eliminated, it is said.

And as I wrote, I realized I was not alone. That there were others like me, walking without a map, but with burning hearts. That reading these pages, someone would say, *"Me too."*

That is why I authored this book. Not to teach. Not to convince. But to stay. To leave a mark. To say, without shouting: *"I'm here too."*

COMMENTS

The journey we have undertaken through these pages has not been linear. It has been a path of detours, necessary pauses, and silences that speak louder than words. Each story has opened a space: a space to reflect, to breathe, to recognize the beauty hidden in the folds of everyday life.

In a world that rushes by, this book has chosen to keep pace. To slow down. To listen. The emotions that emerge do not seem to explain, but to evoke. They do not seek to convince; they seek to touch.

Each story is a fragment of experience, an echo of experiences that belong to us, even if we have not lived them directly. The plurality of intertwining voices reminds us that there is never a single truth. That every look at the

world is an act of courage. And that reading is a way of saying: *"Me too."*

CONCLUSIONS

Concluding this book does not mean closing a circle. It means opening a new one. The words you have read are not answers. They are invitations. There are thresholds to cross, not walls to climb.

In a time when we are overwhelmed by stimuli, noise, and urgencies, these stories have offered us refuge. A place to return to ourselves. Where thought can slow down, where feeling can breathe.

The journey does not end here. It continues with the thoughts that accompany you, in the gestures you make with greater awareness, in the silences you choose to listen to. If even just one page made you pause, smile, or think, then this book has found its meaning.

It is not finished. It is transformed. Now it lives in you.

REFLECTIONS

Authoring this book was an act of listening. To myself, to others, to the passing of time that asks no permission. Some stories were born from a phrase overheard in a bar. Others from a forgotten dream that knocked again. Still others from a wound that did not want to heal but wanted to be told.

But they all have in common the desire to understand—and to be understood. I did not seek perfection. I sought the truth. The kind that does not make noise but endures.

Writing was like walking into a dark room with a candle in my hand. I did not see everything. But I saw enough to keep walking.

And if these words have kept you company, even for a while, then I have not written in vain.

THEMATIC COLOPHON

This book was not born from an editorial project. It was born from a necessity. The necessity of telling without pretension, of sharing without explaining, of searching without knowing what you will find. Each story was chosen not to provide answers, but to raise questions. Not too close, but too open. Not to teach, but to accompany.

Its pages are windows. Some look out onto the past, others onto the present, still others onto an unnamed elsewhere. But all let light in. And if even just one sentence has pierced your silence, then this book has fulfilled its destiny.

EDITORIAL LETTER

Dear reader,

If you have come this far, it means you have walked with me. I do not know where I am going, but I am going—and

knowing that you have chosen to accompany me is a gift I do not take for granted.

This book is not an answer. It is an open question. It is an invitation to look within, to search without, to never stop exploring.

The stories you have read are yours too, if you felt them resonate, if they kept you company, if they made you stop even for a moment.

Writing was an act of listening. Reading is even more so.

If something has stayed with you, if a sentence has made you think, if a silence has made you feel, then this book has found its meaning.

Thank you for reading with all your heart. Thank you for putting in your time, your attention, your truth.

THANKS

To those who have read patiently, to those who have criticized with affection, to those who have inspired without knowing it. To those who have walked beside me, even if only for a while. To those who have had the courage to stop, to listen, to feel.

To those who found something they were not looking for, and to those who lost something they did not know they had. To those who laughed between the lines, to those who trembled between the pauses, to those who recognized themselves in a random sentence.

This book is yours too. Because every written word needs eyes to read it, hearts to welcome it, silences to amplify it.

Thank you for putting in time, the skin, the truth.

LETTER TO READERS

Dear reader, if you have come this far, it means you have walked with me. I did not promise you a destination, nor a map. I offered you only words, thoughts, silences. And you welcomed them.

This book was not created to explain. It was created to last. To be a companion on bad days, on unspoken thoughts, in moments when you do not know which way to go.

If even just one sentence made you stop, smile, or think, then this journey was meaningful. Thank you for reading with all your heart. Thank you for giving us your time, your attention, your truth.

With love, **Ferdinando Frega**

AFTERWORD

I did not author this book to teach. I wrote it so I will not forget. So, I will not forget who I am when no one is looking. So, I would not forget that even disorientation can be fertile.

Every page was a step. Every story, a pause. Every word, an attempt to stay.

Writing did not give me answers. It gave me space. And in that space, I found companionship.

This book does not end here. It continues in the thoughts you carry with you, in the gestures you make with greater awareness, in the silences you choose to listen to.

DRAFT REVIEW

The manuscript presents itself as an existential diary, a narrative journey that alternates irony and depth with surprising balance. The structure is fluid, the tone consistent, and the author's voice strong and recognizable.

Strengths:

- Direct, sincere, never artificial style
- Effective alternation between introspection and lightness
- Narration that does not seek consensus, but the truth.
- Excellent management of pace and pauses.

Areas To Strengthen:

- Some chapters could be streamlined to give the reader more breathing space.
- More philosophical sections could be distributed more evenly.

- Insert short narrative bridges between the parts to make the flow even more harmonious.

Overall Rating:

Authentic, necessary work, capable of leaving its mark. It is not just a book: it is a place where readers can identify.

CLOSURE

I do not know where I am going. But I am going. And now I know I am not going alone.

This book was written for those who seek, for those who stumble, for those who start over. For those who do not need answers, but companionship. For those who want to read something that does not explain them but contains them.

Thank you for walking with me. See you on the next page. Or in the next silence.

— *Ferdinando Frega*