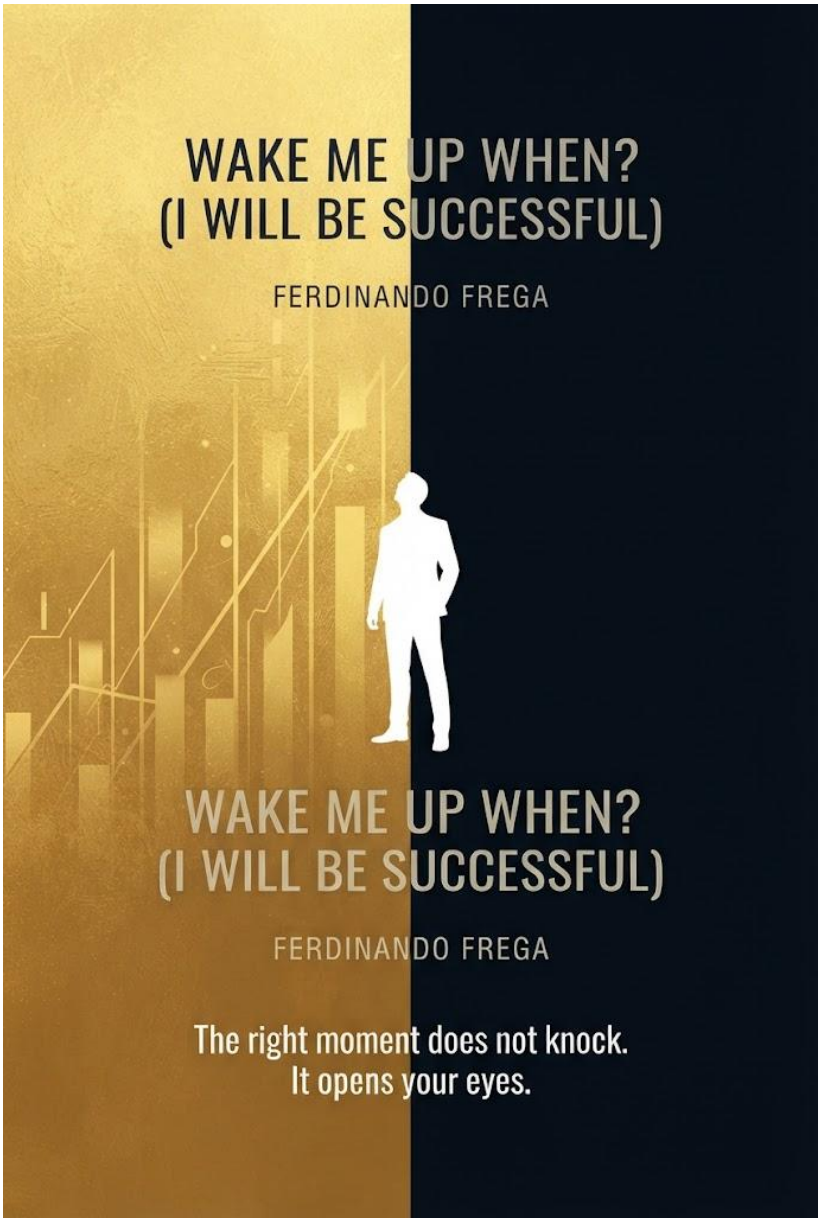

WAKE ME UP WHEN?
(I WILL BE SUCCESSFUL)
FERDINANDO FREGA
WAKE ME UP WHEN?
(I WILL BE SUCCESSFUL)
FERDINANDO FREGA
The right moment does not knock.
It opens your eyes.

WAKE

ME

UP

WHEN?

(I WILL BE SUCCESSFUL)

FERDINANDO FREGA

PART II

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INTRODUCTION

Time is a slow but impeccable judge.
It holds you in front of the mirror and asks who you are, not what you have achieved. The truth is that we all sleep at least once in our lives: from exhaustion, confusion, or a lack of direction.

This book starts from there: from the sleep that protects us from the pause that saves, from the suspension that allows us to be reborn.

I will not tell you what to do.

SEQUEL TO THE STORIES

Success here is not a finish line.

It is a lens that magnifies flaws, emptiness, expectations, and failures. It is a silent dialogue between who you were and who you could become. The stories that follow reveal that moment when life does not ask anything of you... but looks you in the eye.

Do not expect consolation. Expect
clarity.

Right Pressure

Sitting at his desk, Ferdinando pressed his hands to the sides of his head, his fingers buried in his unkempt hair. The lamp on the table barely illuminated the scattered papers, some crumpled, others stained with dried coffee stains. A pen lay abandoned next to a half-written letter, the words interrupted by a trembling line of ink.

Tears began to flow silently, streaking his face. He did not even try to stop them. There was no one there to see his weakness, and deep down, he did not care. He was alone. Alone with his failures, with the weight of the lives he had not been able to save.

"What's the point?" he muttered under his breath, his voice breaking immediately. Then he shouted, "What the hell is this for?!" His hand slammed into the desk, sending a pile of papers flying to the floor. The crash of the pen holder against the floor broke the silence of the night, but it was not enough to quell the rage burning within him.

He stood up abruptly, breathing heavily, his heart pounding. The window was open, and the chilly night wind blew against his face, but he could not calm down. The thought of giving it all up crept into his mind like poison. How many times had he

thought of walking away, of letting someone else deal with that mountain of pain?

Yet, every time he had tried, something had held him back. This time, however, it seemed different. He had no strength left. His hands, now griping the edge of the window, were shaking.

The face of elderly, frail woman came to mind, her eyes shining with gratitude. "Thank you, Doctor. You are my last hope." The echo of those words pierced his heart. A sob shook him, then another. The tears became a torrent.

It was not just anger. It was pain, guilt, helplessness. It was the weight of all the broken lives he had not been able to save, and of those who still hoped for him.

Ferdinand dropped his arms to his sides and collapsed into his chair. "I can't do this... I cannot leave them alone," he whispered, clenching his fists. His anger gradually transformed into fierce determination.

He had vowed not to give up, and even if the entire world seemed against him, he would find a way to continue. Not for himself, but for them.

The Betrayal

It was an autumn evening, one of those when the cold begins to bite, but not enough to keep you from your dreams. Ferdinando remembered that night clearly: sitting at his desk, a glass of wine beside him and a pen gliding across the paper, he felt he had reached a turning point. The manuscript was complete. Every word, every sentence, every thought was interwoven into a work that spoke to the very soul of his life.

The American publisher's offer arrived shortly thereafter, like a blessing. Flattering words followed one another in the letter he had received: "A work of rare depth," "A guaranteed success," "An author destined to leave his mark." Ferdinando felt his heart pound, in disbelief. Finally, someone had noticed him.

And so, he signed. He signed without thinking, without dwelling on the clauses, blinded by enthusiasm and the promise of a bright future. He still remembered the feel of the pen between his fingers, the decisive stroke that confirmed his trust in the publisher.

But the dream soon turned into a nightmare. When the book was published, Ferdinando realized the truth. The retail price was twenty euros, and the volume had sold thousands of copies. Every review spoke of an extraordinary success, a work that had touched the hearts of many readers. But Ferdinando, the author of those pages, was gathering nothing but crumbs.

Then came the first sales report, and with it the final insult. After seven months, Ferdinando received a check. He looked at it in disbelief: €7.50. That ridiculous sum hit him like a hammer blow. His work, his dedication, his heart, all reduced to pennies. He felt humiliated, betrayed, as if the entire world were making fun of him.

He still remembered the feel of that sheet of paper between his fingers, a paper that seemed to weigh as much as lead. Every cent of that 7.50 euros represented a wound, a reminder of his mistake, of his naiveté. The publisher had earned millions; Ferdinando, on the other hand, had only reaped the pain of a lesson learned too late.

The pain was overwhelming. For weeks she shut herself away at home, unable to write, think, or even hope. But in the silence of those dark days, something began to change.

Anger turned to determination. He decided that no one would ever deceive him again, that he would study every clause, every detail, and that he would take his life back. That wound became his strength, a reminder of what he was willing to endure to not give up on his dreams.

Ferdinand learned the hardest lesson of his life, but he emerged stronger, more aware. And with that strength, he began writing again, not for the world, not for a publisher, but for himself.

The Looks

Ferdinando felt the weight of those looks before he even walked through the door. But the ones that hurt him most did not come from strangers, but from his family. They were the eyes of those who had known him forever, of those who knew his ambitions and dreams. And, worse still, of those who had never believed in him.

Words were rare, but they were unnecessary. The looks said it all: *"There he goes again, with his illusions. That stupid presumption of his that never leaves him."* Every time Ferdinand spoke of his plans, he felt the heavy judgment of those who should have supported him. It was not constructive criticism, it was a blow to the heart, inflicted by someone who knew exactly where to strike.

"You should get a real job," his brother often told him, shaking his head. "This book stuff won't get you anywhere."

"You've always been a dreamer," his mother added, with a smile that was meant to console, but which Ferdinando perceived as condemnation. Every sentence, every word, dug deep inside him, reminding him that they thought he was just a dreamer.

Ferdinand knew he was ambitious, even presumptuous. He admitted it to himself in moments of solitude. But that ambition was also what drove him forward, what gave him a reason to continue. Yet, when he stood before his family, he felt small, vulnerable, like a child desperately seeking approval that never came.

He remembered one dinner, when he had presented his latest project. Their reactions had been a mix of silences and glances that spoke louder than words. "I don't understand why you waste your time with these things," his father had said, carving the meat with a decisive gesture.

Ferdinando had smiled, a forced smile, which hid the tangle of emotions inside him. He had gotten up before dessert, making up an excuse, and had taken refuge in his room.

Sitting on the bed, his hands shaking, he cried. Not at their words, but at the knowledge that they would never understand. To them, his dreams were foolish, a waste of time. To them, his passion was merely the result of a presumption he could not shake.

But that night, Ferdinand decided. He would never have their support; the looks and words of his family would stay with him forever. But he would not let them define who he was. *They can judge all they want,* he thought. *I will continue to fight. Because this is who I am.*

With that determination, she sat down at her desk and began writing again. Every word was a silent answer to their doubts, an affirmation of who she was becoming.

Wasting Time

Ferdinando was hunched over his desk, his eyes red with fatigue, and his pen still gliding across the paper despite his shaking hands. The room was silent, except for the constant sound of the pen's tip scratching the paper. Each word seemed to weigh more heavily than the last, as if the entire world were opposing his attempt to create something truly worthwhile.

And then, that phrase. Always the same, repeated on a thousand separate occasions, by different voices. "Why are you wasting your time?"

He felt it like a constant echo in his mind, a judgment he could not shake. They were the words of someone who did not understand, someone who did not share his passion, someone who did not see value in what he did. Sometimes it was uttered with mockery, other times with genuine concern. But each time, that sentence struck him the same way, like a knife twisting in the wound.

He remembered one evening, during a family gathering. He had spoken enthusiastically about his new project, confident that this time he would receive some support. But his uncle, with a half-smile and an almost amused look, had said to him: "Ferdinando, seriously, why are you wasting your time? You should focus on something concrete, something that will make you money."

Those words had paralyzed him. He smiled, nodded, and tried to brush the comment aside. But something inside him had

snapped. That sentence haunted him for days, like a gnawing at his confidence.

“Why are you wasting your time?” He had genuinely wondered if that was the case. They were all seeing something he could not recognize. His commitment, his dedication, was just an illusion.

But then, one night of despair, Ferdinando stopped and looked at the blank sheet of paper before him. He wondered what "wasted time" was. Was it the time he spent trying to create, to give shape to an idea, to build something that could inspire? Or was it the time he would spend following a path that was not his own, just to satisfy the expectations of others?

With a deep breath, he picked up his pen again. He was not writing for them, for those who did not understand. He was writing for himself, for that part of him that would not give up, that still believed that time spent chasing a dream was never wasted.

The words of those who did not understand would continue to haunt him, but Ferdinand decided they would no longer have power over him. Every sentence, every thought he put down on paper was his silent response, his way of saying: *It has not wasted time if it makes me feel alive.*

The Difficulties

Every day brought a new obstacle. The difficulties were like stones piled up in his path, making the journey increasingly difficult. Some were external, tangible: the criticism, the lack of support, the disappointments of a world that seemed indifferent

to his efforts. But the greatest difficulties were the internal ones, the ones no one could see.

Ferdinand struggled with feelings of inadequacy, with that inner voice that mocked him every time he took a step forward. Every project he began brought with it a paralyzing fear: *What if I fail? What if I am not good enough?*

And then there was the fatigue. Not just physical, but mental, creeping in like a silent shadow. Hours spent revising and rewriting, sleepless nights battling the thought that nothing she did would ever be enough. Sometimes she wondered if it was worth continuing to fight, knowing that success was uncertain, and failure always seemed just around the corner.

Financial difficulties were another burden on his shoulders. His plans did not guarantee him financial security, and he often found himself wondering if he was sacrificing too much. His family constantly reminded him how difficult it was to sustain a dream when the real world demanded concreteness.

And then there was the judgment. Not just from others, but from himself. Ferdinando looked at himself in the mirror and wondered if he was truly capable if he had the right to pursue his dreams when everything told him otherwise.

But the greatest difficulty was time. With each passing day, he felt the weight of expectations growing, the fear of not having enough hours, enough energy, enough life to do everything he wanted. It was a clock ticking incessantly, reminding him that the time wasted would never return.

Never Had Recognition

For Ferdinando, the lack of recognition was a constant shadow. Every page written, every sleepless night, every sacrifice made seemed to vanish, swallowed up by a deafening silence. No one seemed to see how committed he was, how willing he was to give his all for his dreams.

The few who noticed his efforts did not give them enough credit. "Good job," they sometimes said, with a forced smile that sounded hollow. There was no applause, no sincere gratitude. No one understood the weight of his labor, the dedication he poured into every written word, every complete project.

He remembered one episode in particular: after months of working on a project that was particularly close to his heart, he presented it to a group of colleagues. He hoped to receive at least a word of appreciation, some recognition of the value of what he had created. Instead, he received only hasty, distracted comments. Some barely looked up, muttering a vague, "Not bad."

That evening, he returned home feeling empty. He had given everything, but it had not been enough. Not for them. Sitting at the kitchen table, a cold cup of tea in his hands, Ferdinando wondered if it was still worth continuing. The lack of recognition was not just a blow to his pride; it was a burden that sapped his motivation, making him question the meaning of everything he did.

But in those moments of despair, Ferdinand also found a hidden strength. He could not depend on others to find value in what he did. He had to believe in his own efforts, to give meaning to his

actions. It was not easy, and every day there was a new battle against the temptation to give up.

The recognition would never come, or it would be too late when they noticed. But Ferdinand decided he would not let that lack of recognition stop him. He continued to fight, not for the applause of others, but for himself, for that sense of integrity that no one could ever take away from him.

The Invisible Burden

Ferdinando looked at himself in the mirror and struggled to recognize himself. The years had left deep scars, not only on his face, but inside him. Fatigue was now a constant, like a weight he could not shake.

It was a kind of tiredness that went beyond the physical. Sure, his body was not what it once was: sleepless nights, days spent working tirelessly, and daily sacrifices had worn him down. But what truly exhausted him was the mental burden, the legacy of a 15-year battle against a devastating mental illness.

Getting out had been a triumph, a victory many had envied. But what no one understood was that this triumph was not without consequences. The disease had left invisible scars, painful memories that returned in moments of weakness, like shadows ready to remind him of his fragility.

Every day was a struggle to keep going. Mental exhaustion manifested itself like a wall against which Ferdinand continually crashed. Even the simplest tasks required immense effort. Writing, which had once been his refuge, had become a battlefield. Every word he uttered seemed like a victory against the voice in his head telling him to give up.

He remembered one night, when the weight had become unbearable. He had sat at his desk until dawn, unable to move, as if an enormous invisible hand were holding him down. Tears streamed down his face, and his body, though exhausted, could not find peace. In those moments, he wondered if he had truly recovered from his illness or if it had merely changed form.

Yet, despite everything, Ferdinand always found a spark within himself. It was a subtle, almost imperceptible force, yet powerful enough to lift him up every time he fell. He had already won an impossible battle, and that knowledge reminded him that he could win this one too.

The tiredness would never go away, he knew. But he had learned that even tiredness could be transformed into something useful: a marker of his journey, a reminder of what he had been through and overcome.

And so, that morning too, Ferdinand rose, his body heavy and his mind weary. But he picked up the pen again, aware that every written word was a small triumph, a victory over weariness, over the past, over everything that tried to stop him.

The Expectations

Ferdinand walked slowly down the corridor; his gaze fixed on the floor. He felt the weight of a thousand invisible eyes fixed on him, judging him, expecting something he was not sure he could deliver. Those expectations, both his own and those of others, had become a constant presence, a sort of ghost that accompanied him wherever he went.

On one hand, there were his personal expectations, as high as mountains. Ferdinand wanted to excel, he wanted his work to be

perfect, he wanted to be remembered for what he had created. But that thirst for excellence was also a trap. Every time he achieved a goal, he raised the bar, never allowing himself the luxury of satisfaction.

On the other hand, there were the expectations of others: family, friends, colleagues, even strangers who had read his work. Each of them had an opinion about what Ferdinand should have done, what he should have been like. "You must do more," they told him. "You are capable of great things."

But what did "doing more" really mean? And what happened when that "more" wasn't enough?

He remembered a conversation with an old friend; someone he had not seen in years. "Ferdinando, you've always had talent," he had said, in a tone that sounded more like an accusation than a compliment. "But don't you think you should be higher already? With all you have, I thought you were... further ahead."

Those words hit him like a punch in the gut. It was not just his friend's implicit expectation, but also the voice in his head telling him: *He is right. You are not enough.*

The weight of expectations crushed him, often leaving him paralyzed. Sometimes, he could not even begin a new project, fearing it would not live up to his own ambitions or those of others. It was a never-ending cycle: he wanted to prove himself capable, but every attempt only fueled his fear of failure.

Yet Ferdinand knew he could not continue like this. One night, while staring at a blank sheet of paper, he realized a simple yet powerful truth: he could not live trying to meet everyone's expectations. He could not even live to try to be perfect.

That blank sheet of paper, that night, became the symbol of his liberation. He decided to write not to prove anything, but for the pure pleasure of it. Not for others, but for himself.

The weight of expectations did not disappear entirely, but it became lighter. For the first time, Ferdinand felt in control, able to choose which expectations truly deserved his attention.

In the Void

Ferdinando sat down at his desk, staring at the blank sheet of paper that was staring back at him, judging him. The pen in his hand was still, as if an invisible weight prevented him from moving it. That feeling, that emptiness, was not new. It was something that had been with him for a long time, a voice in his head repeating: *You are no longer capable.*

He did not know exactly when it had begun. It had been a particularly painful failure, or it had been the accumulation of many small disappointments. But at a certain point, Ferdinand had stopped believing in himself. Every word he wrote seemed banal, every idea worthless.

He recalled a time, during a meeting with some colleagues, when he hesitated to share his thoughts. Fearing it would be judged insufficient; he remained silent while the others discussed. When someone proposed exactly what Ferdinando had in mind, and it was enthusiastically received, he felt a mixture of anger and hurt. *If I had spoken up,* he thought, *I would have received the same recognition. But now I no longer believe I can say anything useful.*

The loss of confidence in her abilities was not limited to work. It was a gnawing problem that insinuated itself into every aspect

of her life. When she cooked, she doubted she could do anything well. When she tried to organize a trip, she convinced herself she would forget something important. Even the simplest gestures were accompanied by that voice: *You will make mistakes. You will not make it.*

One evening, while walking alone along the river, Ferdinand stopped and looked at the reflection of the lights on the water. He wondered how he had gotten to this point. He, who once passionately believed in his abilities, who had faced enormous challenges with courage, was now reduced to doubting every step he took.

But in that quiet, a thought broke through the chaos of his mind. It had not always been this way. He had had moments of success, of confidence, of pride. He had created things that had touched other people, which had meant something. And if he had done it once, he could do it again.

With that thought, Ferdinand decided to take a small step. He returned home, took that blank sheet of paper, and began to write. He did not try to be perfect; he did not worry about the judgment of others. He wrote to remind himself that trust was not something found by chance, but something built step by step.

Fear of Disappointment

There were nights when the silence became unbearable, filled only by the din of my insecurities. Every blank page before me felt like a courtroom, every written line, a defense against a sentence I feared had already been pronounced: *You have failed. You have disappointed those who believed in you.*

I had become an author, my own manager. I had learned everything, step by step, often alone. The corrections, the editing, the printing, the images. Every detail of my work was a piece of me, a fragment of my soul laid bare. And yet, the more I perfected myself, the more the weight of that fear grew. Because I felt I could never be enough.

There were moments when I collapsed. Literally. Sitting at my desk, hands in my hair, tears flowing uncontrollably. It was not just physical exhaustion: it was a deep pain, the pain of someone who feels trapped between who they are and who they want to be. I asked myself: *Why do I keep going?* And the answer was always the same: *Because I cannot give up. Because they believe in me.*

Yet that belief often turned into a double-edged sword. I thought of those who had supported me, of the looks full of hope and confidence. I told myself: *I cannot disappoint them.* And then, immediately afterward: *What if I had already done it?* It was a vicious cycle, a struggle between the desire to prove my worth and the fear of being a bluff.

Depression. It is a word that scares many, but for me it was a silent companion. It crept up in my darkest moments, whispering that it was all for nothing, that I would never meet my expectations. But there was a spark, a small light that never completely went out: the desire to prove me wrong.

So, in tears, I began writing again. Working. Building. Every time I completed a project, it was not just a professional victory: it was a cry of revenge against my demons. I had never stopped, and that was a triumph.

I do not know if I have ever truly overcome the fear of disappointing. It is part of who I am. But I know one thing: I have never given up. And for every person who believed in me, for every trusting look, I fought with all my might. And I continue to do so, every single day.

Revolution

Change is never easy, neither for those who experience it nor for those who observe it from the outside. When I began to dedicate myself fully to writing, to my passions, and to building my path as an author, I discovered that not everyone was ready to accept it. The time I once dedicated to others was now sucked into long hours of work, reflection, and sleepless nights spent proofreading or searching for the right inspiration.

I felt a slow but steady distance growing between me and some people I considered crucial in my life. They could not understand my dedication, why I was willing to sacrifice evenings and moments spent together to pursue something that, to them, seemed like a whim or an obsession. Their questions, initially curious, became veiled criticism:
"Why would you do this?"
"Don't you think you're wasting your time?"
"You've changed your priorities."

Those words hurt me deeply, even though I tried not to show it. Every comment felt like a judgment, a misunderstanding of what writing meant to me: a way to express myself, to challenge my own limitations, to leave a mark. Yet, their perception was different. To them, I was simply drifting away.

The greatest difficulty was feeling alone. Looking around and seeing that those bonds, which I once considered indestructible,

were crumbling under the weight of expectations and misunderstandings. It was not just the pain of loss; it was the fear of being misunderstood, of being judged on who I had become, rather than for what I had always represented to them.

I was stuck between two worlds: one that demanded I chase my dreams, and one that demanded I never disappoint those around me. And in the middle, there was me, Ferdinando, trying to balance it all, often unsuccessfully.

The First Meeting

It was an ordinary day, the kind of day easily forgotten, with gray skies and a biting breeze. I had an appointment in a place I was not familiar with, guided more by curiosity than by a clear idea of what to expect. I felt a little out of place, as if I were about to enter a world that was not mine. But I knew I had to.

When I entered the room, he was already there. Sitting in the corner, his hands clasped nervously and his gaze downcast, he looked like a man awaiting sentencing. He did not move when he saw me, did not even raise his eyes. He remained still, as if his very breathing were a burden. I stood still for a moment, unsure of how to approach him. Then, calmly, I approached and sat across from him.

Silence filled the space between us. It was not normal silence; it was thick, almost palpable, as if it contained everything, he could not say. Finally, he broke it, his voice so low I had to strain to hear.
"I can't take it anymore..." he said that his words were broken by exhaustion.

At that moment, his eyes rose to meet mine. They were eyes filled with deep pain, a pain no words could truly describe. He began to speak in fits and starts, fragments of a life crumbling under the weight of an invisible battle. He told me about his sleepless nights, the fear that never left him, the feeling of being a failure in everyone's eyes, including himself.

I listened in silence, unable to interrupt. Every word he spoke seemed like a plea, a silent cry to be seen, to be helped. Then, Suddenly, he looked down and whispered, "I should not have asked you this, but... I need some money. Even just for a sandwich."

Those words hit me like a punch. It was not the request itself, but the way he had made it, with that mixture of shame and desperation. I searched my pockets without thinking but found only a five euro note. It was not much, I knew. In fact, I almost felt guilty for how little it was. But I handed it to him, anyway, trying to hide my embarrassment:
"Sorry, that's all I have."

He took it with trembling hands, but not immediately. For a moment he hesitated, looking me in the eyes as if to make sure there was no judgment in my gesture. Then, with a slight nod, he took it and murmured a thank you. It was a thank you that needed no words: I saw it in his eyes, in the way his breathing seemed to ease, if only slightly.

We sat in silence for a few minutes, him holding the bill, me trying to figure out what to say. I felt helpless, but at the same time I knew I had done something, no matter how small. It was not about the money: I had shown him that, at least for that moment, he was not invisible.

That encounter stayed with me. Not for the gesture itself, but for what I learned that day. Sometimes, what matters is not how much you can give, but how you do it. And for him, those five euros were less important than the fact that someone had listened to him, seen him, recognized him as a person.

He Looked Me in The Eyes

I remember that day as if it were yesterday. There was nothing extraordinary about it, at least on the surface. The sun shone timidly, the wind gently swayed the trees, and life seemed to flow at its ordinary pace. Yet, that was the day a single glance changed the way I saw the world.

It was a simple event, organized to bring a little joy to those who needed it most. I was there by chance, without really knowing what I could offer. I felt out of place, as if my role were merely that of an observer. But then I saw him.

Sitting in a wheelchair, his legs thin and immobile, was a child. He must have been eight or nine years old, and his face bore the marks of a life lived amid battles too great for his age. But his eyes... his eyes were something different. There was no sadness, no anger, no resignation. There was hope.

I approached slowly, not knowing exactly what to say or do. He saw me and his gaze locked on mine. It was direct, almost disarming in its simplicity. It was saying, *"Tell me that the world can still be beautiful. Make me believe that all is not lost."*

“Hi,” I said, trying to sound relaxed. He smiled slightly, a shy smile, as if he were still deciding whether to trust me. “What’s your name?” I asked. “Luca,” he replied in a soft voice, a whisper.

We talked for a while, about simple, even banal things. He told me about his favorite games, about the days he spent imagining running through the fields, free like other children. And every word he spoke seemed to be accompanied by that light in his eyes, that hope that would not fade.

At one point, he asked me a question that left me speechless: “Do you think I will one day be able to walk like you?”

I did not know what to say. I did not want to lie to him, but I also did not want to extinguish that flame of hope I saw in him. So, I told him the simplest truth I knew: "I do not know what will happen, Luca. But what I do know is that you are already stronger than many people walking."

He looked at me, and the smile he gave me was the greatest gift I could have received. In that moment, I realized it was not so much an answer he was looking for, but the comfort of knowing someone saw him, listened to him, and believed in him.

In My Words

It was a cold evening, and the conference room was bathed in warm light. I had prepared for the speech as usual, but that day I felt a particular heaviness. As I spoke to the audience, I noticed a woman in the second row. Her face was drawn, her eyes downcast, her hands clasped as if she were trying to hold onto something precious and fragile.

I finished my speech, and while the others stood up to leave, she remained seated. I approached discreetly. When our gazes met, I saw something powerful in those eyes: a mixture of pain and hope.

“His words… they seemed to be speaking to me,” she said in a shaking voice.

I responded with an encouraging smile. She began to tell me about her life, hesitantly but with a sincerity that struck me. She spoke of a failed marriage, of financial hardship, of the daily struggle of raising her two children alone. Every word was a fragment of a painful story, but there was still a spark of hope within her.

“I had no faith in anything anymore,” he said. “But tonight, listening to her, all is not lost. She does not just talk about struggle, but about rebirth. And I want to believe in that again.”

I told her what I felt:
“Even in the darkest moments, the fact that you are here shows that you never gave up. And it is this strength that will make the difference, for you and for your children.”

She looked at me with shining eyes, and for the first time smiled. It was not a full smile, but a beginning. Then something unexpected happened. Hesitantly, she asked,
"Would you mind coming to my house? I would like you to meet my children. After listening to you, I thought maybe you could be a light for us."

I was surprised, but I accepted. I followed her to a modest apartment, where two children greeted us with a mixture of shyness and curiosity. She proudly introduced them, and in their eyes, I saw the same hope I had sensed in her.

We spent the evening talking. The children asked me about my work, the stories I told, and I responded enthusiastically. I felt

that every word I said was like a thread they clung to, a bridge to a better future.

When I left, I realized that it was not I who brought hope to them, but they to me. Their trust, their desire to believe, was a reminder of how important it was to continue my journey. That evening, I understood that even a small light can illuminate an entire room.

Actions That Give Me Strength

It was a quiet afternoon. I had stopped at a downtown café, trying to find a moment of solitude to reflect on and write. The air was filled with the aroma of freshly ground coffee, and the clinking of cups created a soothing background music that helped me focus.

I was lost in thought when I noticed him. A man in his forties, simply dressed, he seemed hesitant as he wandered between the tables. I glanced at him from time to time out of the corner of my eye, until he stopped right next to me.

"Excuse me…" he said, his voice uncertain, almost fearful. "Can I disturb you for a moment?"

I looked up, taken aback. It was an unfamiliar face, but there was something in his eyes that intrigued me: a mixture of shyness, gratitude, and a strange urgency.

"Sure," I replied, moving the papers to make room for him.

He sat down across from me, his hands clasped nervously on the table. He was silent for a moment, then took a deep breath. "I

just wanted to tell you something. Your actions… have given me strength."

Those words struck me like a bolt of lightning. I did not know how to respond. But he continued:
"You do not know me, but I know you. I read one of your books during an exceedingly tough time in my life. I had lost my job, I was dealing with family problems, and every day seemed darker than the last. I had stopped believing in myself. Then, a friend lent me your book."

He told me how he had started reading it without much expectation, just to distract himself. But page after page, he found himself drawn into those stories of struggle, of resilience, of people who had faced insurmountable obstacles and emerged stronger.

"It wasn't just what she wrote," he said, looking me in the eye. "It was the fact that she had the courage to share her story. She showed that you can fall and get back up, and that there is no shame in fighting. For the first time, I thought: if he could do it, then I can do it too."

He told me how those words had become a guide during his darkest days. He had begun to get back on his feet, trying to rebuild what he thought was lost forever. It had not been easy, but now he had a new job, and his relationship with his family was slowly improving.

"I just wanted to thank you," he concluded, with a shy but sincere smile. "You didn't know it, but you gave me hope I thought I'd lost forever."

I was speechless for a moment. Then I replied,

“Thank you for sharing your story with me. It is a gift to know that what I did meant something to someone.”

He nodded, and after a few more words of greeting, he stood up to leave. But his smile, the light in his eyes, stayed with me for a long time.

That day, as I resumed writing, I realized that, even when we are not aware of it, our actions can be silent force for someone else. And it is this awareness that drives me, every day, to keep going.

The Desire to Disappear

There are days when everything seems too much. The weight of expectations, the incessant noise of the world, the battles that multiply instead of being resolved. It was one of those days. I woke with a tiredness that was not just physical, but deeply rooted, as if every fiber of my being were crying out: *Enough.*

I looked out the window. The sun was shining, but everything seemed gray to me. Every responsibility, every promise I had made, every step I had decided to take was turning into an invisible chain holding me down. There was no anger, no desperation. Just a silent desire to give it all up.

What if I disappeared? I thought. Not a dramatic goodbye, not a grand gesture. Just a discreet disappearance. No note, no explanation. Turn off the phone, lock the doors, and vanish. I imagined the relief of no longer having to answer anyone, of no longer having to deal with that sense of inadequacy that followed me wherever I went.

It was a tempting thought, but at the same time painful. Why? Because I knew it was not just an escape from the world, but

also from myself. It was the desire to free myself from what I felt I could not be, from what I thought I was disappointed.

The faces of those who had believed in me came to mind. Friends, colleagues, strangers who had found inspiration in my words, my actions. I thought of the unfinished projects, the stories still waiting to be told, the dreams I had shared. Everything I had built, everything I had promised myself and others, would remain there, suspended.

But that was precisely the problem. Those promises that those expectations, those hopes... they had become an unbearable burden. I did not want to disappoint anyone, yet I felt like I was betraying myself.

I took a moment to breathe, to let those thoughts run their course. There was no easy answer. There was no immediate solution. But I knew one thing: giving up everything would not give me the freedom I sought. It would only be an illusion, a way to postpone a fight I had to face eventually.

I got up, opened the window, and let the fresh air hit my face. The world was still there, chaotic, and noisy. But I was still there, too. And for today, that was enough.

The Idea of Escaping

It was a thought that struck me in my most tired moments, an idea that seemed as absurd as it was liberating: *What if I ran away?* I had never told anyone, but that desire haunted me on days when everything seemed insurmountable. I imagined a sudden departure, without words, without explanation. A silent disappearance.

I visualized myself on a slowly moving train, the city disappearing behind me, the lights fading into a fading memory. A new life, where no one knew my name, where there were no expectations or questions to answer. Where could I be anyone or no one?

But then I thought about what I had left behind. Not just the people who counted on me, but also my own dreams. Because as heavy as the responsibilities might seem, they were also what gave meaning to my life. Running away would not be a new beginning, but a surrender disguised as freedom.

And so, I stayed. Not because it was easy, but because facing life also meant facing myself. And, deep down, I knew that running away would never get me far.

A Mother and Her Sick Son

I met her during one of my many hospital visits. She was sitting next to her son's bed, an eight-year-old boy who was fast asleep, his face etched by the strain of treatment. Her gaze was fixed on the monitor measuring his vital signs, as if every number, every slight change, was a battle to be won.

“It's like this every day,” she told me, without taking her eyes off the monitor. “I wake up with a to-do list: therapies, appointments, medications to review. There is no room for anything else.”

Her voice was calm, but there was a strength in her that could not be ignored. She told me how everything changed when her son was diagnosed with a rare disease. "He was a lively child, full of energy," she said, a sad smile lighting up her face. "Then,

one day, he stopped running, stopped jumping. We thought he was tired, but he wasn't."

The weeks following the diagnosis were a whirlwind of fear and uncertainty. But she had not given up. Every day had become a struggle to find answers, to ensure her son received the best possible care. "I can't afford to break down," she said firmly. "He's counting on me. And as long as there's even a single chance, I'll find it."

We talked for a long time. She told me about nights spent searching for information online, about emails sent to specialists around the world, about meetings with other families going through the same ordeal. “We are not alone,” she said. “And that is the most important thing. Knowing that there are other people who understand what you are going through gives you.
strength.”

When she said goodbye, I asked her how she found the strength to keep going. She smiled, looking at her son. “He is my strength,” she said. “He teaches me every day that, even when all seems lost, there is always a reason to keep fighting.”

Comfort and Support

It was a spring afternoon, and the sun was timidly filtering through the curtains of a silent room. When I entered, he was sitting in an armchair by the window, his gaze lost beyond the glass, as if observing a world long gone. His face was marked by time; every wrinkle told a story.

“Good morning,” I said, trying to break the thick silence that enveloped the room. Slowly, he turned his head toward me, with

a tired but kind smile. “Ah, good morning. Will you come keep me company?”

We sat down and began to talk. He told me fragments of his life, like an old book delicately leafing through. The spoke of the war, of when he was young and full of hope, of his marriage to the woman he had loved for fifty years. “She was the one who gave meaning to my days,” he said, his smile fading with memory. “Since she left, everything has changed.”

He told me about the loneliness that accompanied him every day, like a shadow. It was not just the absence of his wife, but also that of a world that seemed to have forgotten him. "My children are far away; they have their own lives. “I do not want to disturb them," he said, with a note of pride.

I listened in silence, letting him unleash that flood of pent-up emotions. At one point, I interrupted him to say, “Even if people are far away, that does not mean they do not think of you. Sometimes, we need to remember that love is not measured by distance.”

Those words struck him. He paused, looking at me with shining eyes, then nodded. “Maybe you're right,” he said softly. “But you know, it's not easy to believe that when you're here alone, day after day.”

I stayed with him for a long time. We talked about books, music, and what he liked to do when he was young. Slowly, his face relaxed, and a more sincere smile returned. Before I left, he said, “You know, you have no idea how much it means to me to have someone to talk to. You reminded me that I am not completely alone.”

Those words touched me deeply. They made me understand how a small gesture, like listening or simply being present, could have an enormous impact on someone's life.

Normal Life with Disabilities

I met him at an event for young people with disabilities. He was sitting in a corner, his wheelchair positioned with precision, as if to mark a boundary between him and the rest of the world. He was sixteen, but his gaze bore the weight of a life already full of challenges. As soon as we began to talk, I realized that behind that silence lay a world of dreams and hopes.

“Do you know what I want most?” he asked me, his voice wavering between defiance and resignation. “I want to be normal. I want to get up in the morning, go to school without anyone looking at me with pity, without feeling different.

He told me how his disability had been with him since birth, imposing physical limitations he could never overcome. But what hurt him most was not his condition, but the way the world saw him. "I don't want to be special," he said. "I just want to be like everyone else."

Despite these words, there was a light in his eyes, an indomitable will to live. He spoke to me about his dreams with infectious enthusiasm. “Sometimes I imagine myself running,” he said. “I have never been able to do it, but in my dreams, I run fast, faster than anyone. No one can catch me.”

I asked him what his goals were for the future. He took a moment to think, then replied, “I do not know yet. But I know I do not want my disability to define who I am. I want to be remembered for what I do, not for what I cannot do.”

What struck me most was her determination to live a full life, despite everything. She told me how she learned to play the piano, a feat that required strength and precision that many would take for granted. “It's difficult,” she admitted, “but when I play, I forget everything. It is as if the music makes me fly.”

Before we parted, I asked him if he had a message for other young people in his situation. He looked at me with a subtle smile and said, “It does not matter what you cannot do. What matters is what you choose to do with what you have. And never let anyone else decide for you who you can be.”

Those words stayed with me for a long time. They reminded me that, even in the trickiest situations, hope and determination can open doors that seem closed forever.

Sick Man Who Smiles

I met him in the hospital, during a visit to a ward where hope seemed rare. He was sitting on the bed, his body visibly weakened by the disease. Every movement required immense effort, every breath a victory. But what struck me was his smile. It was not a full smile, but there was a sincerity that made it incredibly powerful.

I approached and we started talking. He told me about his life before his illness: a man full of energy, with a promising career and a loving family. Then, suddenly, everything changed. “It's not easy to accept that your body no longer responds as it used to,” he said. “You feel trapped, helpless. It was hard at first, but then I understood something important.”

I asked him what it was, and he replied simply: “I cannot choose to heal, but I can choose how to deal with this situation. I can choose to smile, even when it seems impossible.”

She told me how she found strength in small moments: a laugh with the nurses, a ray of sunshine filtering through the window, an unexpected visit from a friend. “Life is made up of these moments,” she said. “No matter how brief, they're the ones that remind you why it's worth keeping going.”

He also told me about his fears, about the nights when pain and doubt overwhelmed him. “There are days when I want to give up everything,” he admitted. “But then I think of those who are beside me, of those who count on me not to give up. And then I get up again, even if only for them.”

One of the things that struck me most was his sense of humor. Despite everything, he always found a reason to joke, to laugh. “Do you know what my secret weapon is?” he asked me, with a knowing smile. “Irony. If I can laugh at my situation, then it means it has not completely defeated me.”

We spent an hour together, talking about everything and nothing. Before leaving, I asked him if he had a message to share with the others. He took a moment to think, then said, “Never let pain steal your smile. It is the one thing illness cannot touch unless you let it.”

That phrase stayed with me for a long time. It made me understand that strength lies not only in fighting, but also in finding beauty in small moments, in not letting difficulties define who we are.

The Letter

It was an ordinary day when I found an envelope lying on my desk. There was no return address written on the outside, just my name written in shaky handwriting. I opened it with curiosity, unaware that those lines would touch me deeply.

“Dear friend,” the letter began. “I don’t know if you remember me, but I will never forget you.” That sentence stopped me for a moment. I continued reading a familiar story unfolding before my eyes.

He told me about a tough time, a moment when his life seemed to have stopped. The illness had struck him like a bolt from the blue, leaving him disoriented and devoid of hope. “I thought there was nothing left to fight for,” he wrote. “And then you came along.”

He remembered the day we met in extraordinary detail. He described me sitting next to him, listening slowly, without interrupting. “I don't remember everything you said to me,” he admitted. “But I remember how it made me feel. As if, for the first time in a long time, someone saw beyond my illness.”

The letter went on to describe how that moment had sparked a spark within him. “You didn't give me a cure,” he wrote. “But you gave me something even more precious: hope. You made me understand that, even though I could not control what was happening to me, I could still choose how to react.

She told me how, after that meeting, she had begun to change her perspective. She had found the strength to approach therapy with a different spirit, to seek moments of joy even on the most

difficult days. "It wasn't easy," she admitted. "But every time I wanted to give up, I thought of those words you had said to me: 'You're not alone. And you never will be.'"

At the end of the letter, there was one sentence that struck me more than any other: “Thank you for seeing in me something I had forgotten I had. Thank you for giving me back to myself.”

I sat for a long moment, the letter in my hands. I had not done anything extraordinary, just what I felt was right. But those words reminded me that, sometimes, they are the simplest gestures that make the biggest difference. They reminded me why I kept doing what I did, despite the difficulties, despite the doubts.

That letter was not just a thank you. It was a reminder that, even when I felt useless, what I did had meaning. And that was all I needed.

Between Obstacles and Determination

It all began with an increasingly pressing feeling: a lack of resources. It was not about money, though that was a constant worry, but about time, mental and physical energy that evaporated more every day. Every step forward required an enormous effort, and the knowledge that I did not have enough to face it all kept me awake at night. It was like trying to build a house with bricks that crumbled in your hands.

The situation became so difficult that I found myself forced to do something I never imagined: ask for help from family and friends. I was 59 years old, with a lifetime of experience behind me, yet those requests left me feeling humiliated. Every phone call, every conversation was a battle against my pride. *"I need a*

little support," I said, trying to maintain a semblance of dignity, even when I felt broken inside.

It was not just a financial issue. Asking meant admitting that I could not do it alone, that my resources, my work, were not enough. And not everyone understood. Some listened with empathy, others responded with awkward silences or with statements that, though well-intentioned, seemed full of judgment. "Now is not the time to give up," they said, as if it were simple. As if I had not already thought of every solution.

But it was not just the lack of resources that weighed on me. There was also the incessant, cutting criticism from those who did not believe in my project. "Why do you keep insisting?" they asked. "Can't you see it's pointless? That you will not make it?" Those words were like thorns; they burrowed into my thoughts and made every doubt greater. I found myself wondering: *What if they were right?*

And then there were the bureaucratic hurdles, a never-ending maze. Every small step seemed hindered by paperwork to fill out, permits to apply for, authorizations that never arrived. Phone calls turned into marathons of waiting and being bounced from one office to another. It was as if the system itself was designed to evaluate my endurance. Every day that passed without a concrete answer felt like an invitation to give up everything.

But what hurt most was indifference. I expected at least understanding, if not support. Instead, I often found myself faced with blank stares or distracted comments, people who failed to see the importance of what I was trying to build. "Why do you waste your time with these things?" was a question I

heard too often, and it was always accompanied by an air of superiority, as if my efforts were insignificant.

And then there was envy, subtle and silent. Despite all the difficulties, I managed to achieve some small success. And each time, there were looks filled with resentment. It was not for the material results, but for what they represented: a moral victory, a demonstration that, despite everything, I was moving forward. I felt the weight of those who, instead of rejoicing with me, found comfort in pointing out what was still missing.

Amid all this, there was the challenge of balancing work and personal life. Every minute spent on the project seemed stolen from those around me. I felt guilty when I neglected my loved ones, but also when I dedicated less time to my goal. It was a constant dance, a precarious balance that often left me exhausted.

And then, the sacrifices. Every sleepless night, every missed meal, every moment lost with friends and family was a price I paid without knowing if it would ever bring any return. I corrected mistakes that perhaps no one would notice, perfected details that seemed invisible. But I did it because I believed in it, even when everything around me seemed to suggest otherwise.

There were times when I wondered if it was worth it. *Why do I keep doing this? For whom? For what?* But every time I was on the verge of giving up, something inside me was rekindled. It was not just a matter of pride or stubbornness. It was a deeper calling, a reminder that what I was building had a value that went beyond my present.

In the end, what kept me going was not the certainty of success, but the knowledge that giving up was not an option. Every criticism, every difficulty, every moment of discouragement became a brick in the construction of something greater. I did not know where this journey would take me, but I knew that, if I had the strength to take another step, I would not stop walking.

Meetings and Personal Growth

It was an ordinary day, but the event that occurred made me reflect deeply on what I was experiencing. I was walking in a park, lost in thought, when I met a person, I had never seen before, but who, in a matter of minutes, would change the course of my day. An elderly man, simple in appearance but with a gaze that told a thousand stories. He approached and began to speak to me, as if he were just waiting for someone to share his experience with.

He told me about his life, the sacrifices he had made, the daily battles, but his unwavering determination not to give up, despite adversity. "Life," he told me, “Is a series of choices, and every time you think you can't make it, remember that the next step could be the one that changes everything."

Her words touched me, but there was something deeper that I could not pinpoint. What inspired me most was not just her strength, but her ability to look at life with profound gratitude, even amidst difficulties. She told me how she had faced illness, the loss of loved ones, and how, whenever her path was blocked, she still found a reason to keep going. Not for perfection, but for the beauty that each day brought.

I returned home with these words in mind, but that evening, reflecting on my journey, I made a shocking discovery: I found

an old message I'd written to myself years before, a reminder of when I'd decided to embark on this long journey. Reading those words made me realize how much I had forgotten about my own commitment. When I wrote that message, I had so much hope and confidence in myself. But over the years, I have lost that vision. The struggle, the difficulties, and the weight of other people's expectations, had made me lose my true purpose.

I remembered a patient I had met a few weeks earlier, in the hospital, a man living with an incurable disease. He had said to me with a smile I will never forget: "Please don't give up. Don't stop believing you can do this, even when everything seems difficult." Those words had touched me, but now, reading my old message, I understood that I had to continue not only for myself, but also for all those who had believed in me. The strength to continue depended not only on my own motivation, but on the bond, I had created with those around me, with those who had supported me even in the darkest moments.

That night, a thought struck me like a revelation. I realized that, despite all the difficulties, I had never completely understood the value of my journey. My struggle was not just against circumstances, but against a part of myself I had put aside. Yet, like the old man in the park, like the sick man who had asked me not to give up, I understood that true strength didn't lie in achieving immediate results, but in maintaining the courage to move forward each day, even when it seemed everything was against me.

Over the next few days, that revelation changed my perspective. The chance encounter with that man, the discovery of my forgotten message, and the sick man's words intertwined, like pieces of a puzzle finally coming together. I did not need to prove anything to anyone. True strength lay in authenticity, in

embracing difficult moments, and in reminding myself that my path was not mine alone, but part of a journey shared with everyone I had met along the way.

Every small step I took now no longer felt like a sacrifice. I remembered that the value of the journey lay precisely in its imperfection, in the challenges I faced every day. And that, in the end, would not be the immediate successes that would define me, but the strength with which I chose to face life, day after day, without ever losing hope.

Choices and Transformations

I was at a crucial moment in my life. The decision to continue despite everything had become the only viable option. Every day seemed like another battle, a struggle against uncertainty, fear, and, at times, desperation. But one thing was clear: I could not stop. Despite the exhaustion, despite the never-ending difficulties, I had to keep going. Because if I stopped, not only would I lose my way, but I would also betray all the promises I had made.

The promises I had made to myself, and others were like invisible chains that bound me, but not in a suffocating way. Each promise was a commitment I had made from the heart, a declaration of intent that pushed me to overcome obstacles. However, accepting the weight of those promises was not easy. I found myself wondering, more than once, if I was truly capable of keeping what I had sworn to do. There was always that voice in my head whispering: *"If you can't do this, everything is for nothing. You should have given up sooner."*

But instead of giving in to that voice, I began to reflect on what was truly driving me. The desperation I felt inside that

darkness threatening to engulf me slowly became the spark that transformed my fear into determination. It was no longer just a matter of doing things for myself, but of honoring the commitment I had made to those who had placed their trust in me. I could not give up, not now.

And so, I decided to reorganize everything. I created a new plan, a path that would meet the challenges I had encountered and those that still awaited me. It was not just a practical change, but a true internal revolution. I asked myself what I needed to change, where I needed to grow. I was honest with myself and acknowledged my weaknesses, but I did not let them define me. I began to see difficulties not as insurmountable obstacles, but as opportunities for growth. Every step I took from then on would have a specific purpose, a value that went beyond simple survival.

The new plan I drew was not perfect, but it was realistic. It allowed me to face challenges with a new vision, to avoid getting trapped in negative emotions. And despite everything, I began to see the value of my work again. In those days of uncertainty, I realized that I had never stopped working with passion. I had just lost sight of the reason I had started. My work was not just a means to an end, but an important part of who I was. It was the manifestation of my perseverance, of my desire to contribute meaningfully to the world.

And, as I began to build again, step by step, I realized how much I had taken for granted in the past. The work I did every day, even when it did not seem to bear immediate fruit, had an intrinsic value that went beyond tangible success. It had taught me the meaning of resilience, of continuing to push forward even when all seemed lost. And the more I learned to look with different eyes, the more I understood that my path was not

defined by the result, but by the strength I had found within myself to keep fighting. Every difficulty I had faced had taught me something precious. Every promise I had made, every commitment I had made had pushed me to become a better version of myself. And even though the future remained uncertain, I knew I would continue, because I had rediscovered what truly matters: never stop believing in yourself, even when difficulties grab you by the arm and will not let go.

Mutual Strength

I found myself reflecting once again on the meaning of promises. I had made many and heard many, yet I had rarely paused to consider what true commitment really means. A promise may seem simple, but it carries a weight that often goes unseen. When we make one, we commit not only to others, but also to ourselves. That is what gives every promise its strength.

It was one of those days when I was absorbed in thought, walking aimlessly. The promises I had made over the years were like milestones, guiding me but also evaluating me. I wondered if, deep down, I had always kept my promises with the same intensity with which I had made them. And if those promises, even if not always perfectly kept, had truly defined me as a person.

And it was at that moment that I realized something fundamental: despite everything, I had never been alone. Every promise, every step, every sacrifice had never been undertaken in a vacuum. I looked back and saw the people who had walked beside me, who had given me strength even when I thought I had none left. They were not just those who supported me, but also those who had believed in me, who had placed their hope in me. I realized that the loneliness I often felt that fear of failure,

had never been definitive. It had simply been imposed on me by a thought that did not recognize the invisible support network around me.

Amid these thoughts, another desire emerged. A desire that had been with me for a long time: to leave a positive mark, something that would last even after I was gone. Not a sign of material success or visible achievements, but something that could be effective in the lives of others, regardless of my outcome. This desire was not tied to fame, but to the fact that, somehow, my existence could contribute to a better world.

I remembered a moment I had had some time before, when I had helped someone who was facing a great challenge. The result had not been immediate, yet I had seen something in that person's eyes I had never forgotten gratitude that went beyond a simple "thank you." It was as if, even without realizing it, I would leave a positive mark on their life. And that feeling was more precious than any other accomplishment. Leaving a positive mark, in fact, was not a question of what I got, but of what I could give.

And through it all, I realized that the strength I had given others was not a unilateral act. Every person I had helped, every word of encouragement I had received had strengthened my resolve. The strength I had given others was reciprocal, like a cycle that reinforced itself over time. Every time I felt weak, there was someone who reminded me of my strength, who pushed me not to give up. And every time someone came to me for advice or support, I felt stronger, as if my help were not just for them, but for myself, because it reminded me of who I was and what I could do.

In that reflection, I found the key to continuing my journey. It does not matter how difficult it was, it does not matter if the results were immediate or visible. What matters is to keep walking, knowing that every step is accompanied by those around us and that the strength we give to others returns to us in ways we cannot always predict. And the promises, those promises we made, are what keep us anchored, not only to our own vision, but also to those of others, who see in us what we ourselves cannot yet see.

AFTERWORD

This book was not created to convince anyone.
It was created to clarify. And clarity does not make noise, does not show off, does not demand applause. It simply arrives, imposes itself, and changes your mental posture.

If these pages have even just touched you, do one thing: do not file them away.
Let them work in silence. True awakening does not happen while you are reading. It happens when you realize you are starting to move differently.

Do not seek success.
Seek for yourself. The rest, when needed, will find you.

An If to the Readers

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. Not to me: to you.

If something has shaken you, keep it.

If something has been bothering you, work on it.

If something makes you see yourself, do not forget it.

Nobody can tell you success.

You feel it.

Letter to Readers

For those of you who have made it this far, I do not need to explain much.
If you have had the strength to read these pages without closing the book, it means you are not looking for shortcuts: you are seeking the truth.

I do not know you, but I know one thing: if you have made it to the end, you have already started to change.

I do not wish you success.
I wish you clarity. I wish you the ability to stay awake when everyone else is asleep. I wish you the ability to choose yourself even when it hurts.

And I wish you something that no one gives for free**:**
the courage to stop lying to yourself.

When your time comes, you will know it before anyone else. And you will not need anyone to wake you up.

FF

Ferdinand Frega

A straightforward, non-negotiable writer.
I do not belong to any literary school, I do not follow trends, I do not seek visibility. I write for one reason only: because **readers deserve truth, not aesthetics.**

I have learned much more from waiting than from victories. Much more from silences than from words. Much more from failures than from goals.

My job is not to motivate you.
It is to hold you up in the mirror. If you have the courage to look at yourself, then we have done an excellent job together.

Author's Biography

Ferdinando Frega does not come from literature, nor from school, nor from currents.
He comes from life, real life made up of a thousand failures that he never called defeats, but **opportunities.** Every time he fell, he did not ask himself why. He asked himself *how to start again.*
And that is how he built his identity: not in victories, but on the ability to get back up.

He endured mistakes, bad choices, and painful detours, but he never gave up one thing: loyalty**.**
He never compromised on his ethics. And anyone who truly knows him knows this: dignity comes before talent.

His successes?
There was more than needed to list. He has never listed them because the value lies not in the result, but in the journey. For

him, success is anything that allows him to grow without betraying himself.

The smile he wears is not just cosmetic: it is a testament. It shows that even when life puts you on the ropes, you can choose not to become bitter. It shows that strength is not measured in muscles or medals, but in the will to never cheat on people and on yourself.

Ferdinando Frega writes as he lives:
unfiltered, uncompromising, fearless. Each book is a fragment of truth returned to the reader, not to console, but to open their eyes.

He does not belong to literary circles.
He does not seek approval. He does not chase recognition. He has only one rule: if **it is not authentic, he is not interested.**

And it is this authenticity—hard, clear, and concrete that made his voice unique.

Closure

The book ends here. But
you do not.

If one day you feel your moment has come, do not ask for confirmation.
Do not look for witnesses. Do not knock on any doors.

Open your eyes.

And get up.