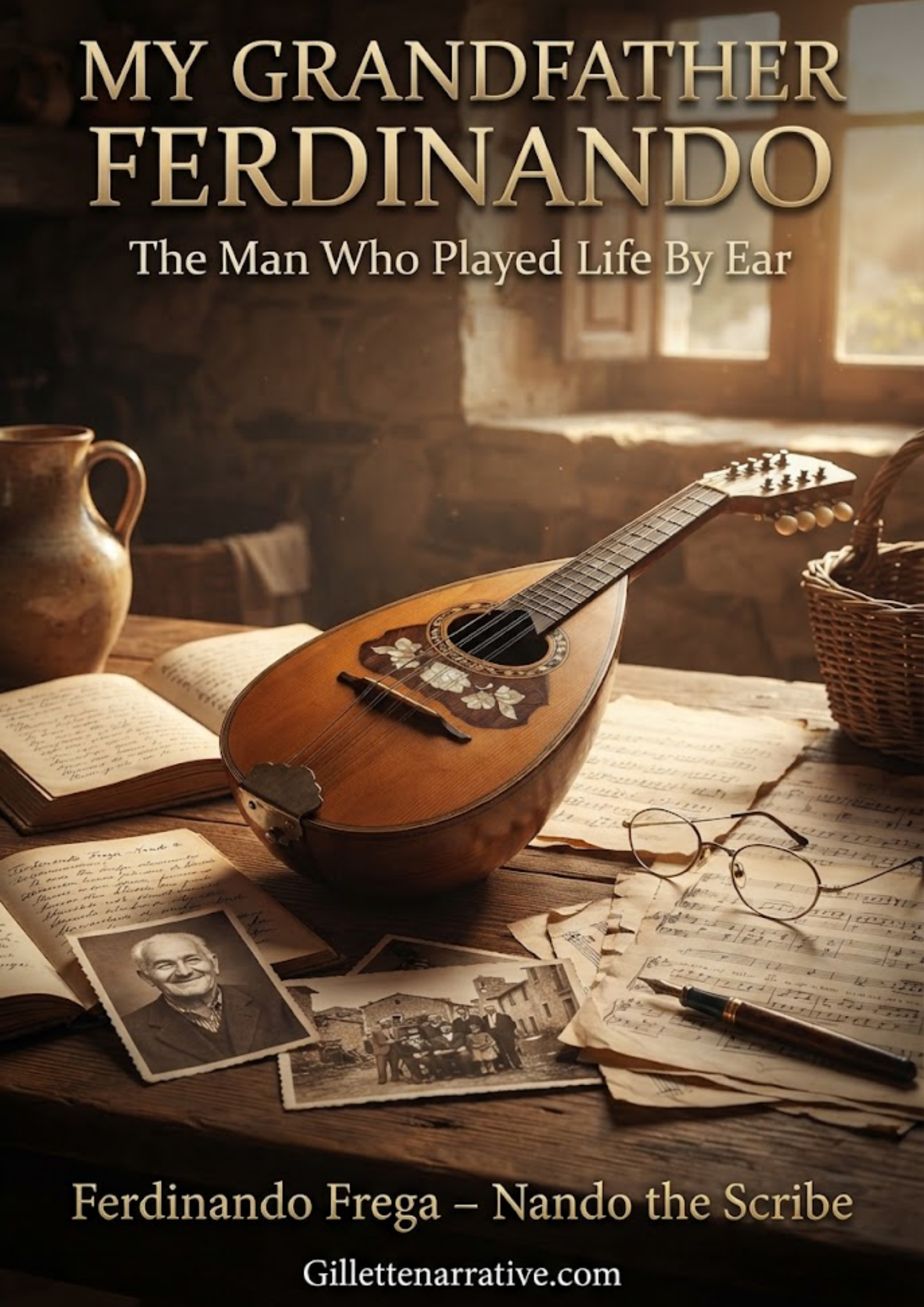
MY GRANDFATHER FERDINANDO

The Man Who Played Life By Ear



Ferdinando Frega – Nando the Scribe

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I had been sitting at my desk since morning — a way of doing what I wanted, not what I had to. A way of staying happy inside a world whose timing of permanence had not yet been determined.

Between reading a book, an article on the web, a phone call from a friend, the postman ringing, and my wife inviting me to the car to bring in the grocery bags — there are many call centers interested in calling me. And I surprise them, because I shift their request onto motivation. When I tell them I am poor, they feel sorry for me. The women would like to do something for me — but they don't know I was educated to take without selling. A university lesson from a man with only a diploma.

And in the middle of all this there is music — the music of New York, Manhattan, Anglophone — then moving to the music of my years, and concluding with the classics: Mozart, Chopin, Vivaldi, and Beethoven. Then finding peace with the compositions of Maestro Ennio Morricone.

It was inside one of these pieces that I encountered the mandolin today — my grandfather's favorite instrument. He received one at the age of six and learned to play it by ear for over ninety years, without studying music or buying courses on Amazon. His only passion was the serenades he performed for women — including those made to order.

A life, that of the Frega family, where the raw material has never been money — only the pleasure of doing what we were born to do: not to be forgotten.

Nando

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