P&G THIS IS NOT A COMPANY

BUT PERFECTION



FERDINANDO FREGA

THE GILLETTE SAGA · NARRATIVE · VOLUME III

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THE STORIES

The stories that follow are not lessons.
They are not parables. They are not examples.

They are fragments of observed reality.

Each episode is a lens:
the angle changes, the perspective changes, the meaning changes.

Do not expect a tidy narrative.
America is not tidy.

It is made of sudden bursts, contrasts, noise and silence, grandeur, and failure.
And every story brings with it a question few ask and an answer many avoid.

If you are looking for a coherent America, this book will disappoint you.
If you are looking to understand how it really works, you are in the right place.

The journey begins here.

No filters. No excuses. Inside.

THE AMERICAN FLAG

In the United States, the flag is not an object.
It is a presence.

It is not displayed out of folklore or habit, but out of identity.
It is displayed in front of schools, homes, offices, and private gardens.
It does not ask for approval: it affirms belonging.

The first official flag dates to 1776.
Since then, its form has changed, but not its function: to represent a pact.
Thirteen stripes for the original colonies, fifty stars for the states that chose to remain united.

It is not romance.
It is structure.

Respect for the flag is governed by precise rules.
Offending it is not a symbolic gesture: it is a real violation, punishable by law.

In America, the flag is not a symbol.
It is a collective agreement. And whoever breaks the agreement pays.

THE PRIZE TRIP

After many years of working for an American company, an unexpected gift arrived: thirty days in the United States, everything organized, everything covered.

It was not a consolation prize.
It was an evaluation.

In America, they do not thank you with words.
They measure you with numbers. And when the numbers add up, they recognize your value.

That trip was not a privilege.
It was confirmation: I had functioned within the system.

In America, they do not reward you for being good.
They reward you for serving. And when you stop serving, the system does not hold you back.

FAITH AND POWER

Spirituality arises as a human need.
Power arises as a structure.

In the United States, this distinction is clear.
Faith is free, personal, and widespread. Religious power, on the other hand, is organized, economic, and vertical.

Institutions speak of God but manage consensus.
They listen, but do not resolve. They promise comfort but create dependence.

Authentic spirituality lightens.
Power weighs down.

The problem is not believing.
The problem is delegating.

In America, both things coexist:
the freedom to believe and the industry of faith.

Understanding the difference is the only possible salvation.

THE DEPRESSION

Depression is not weakness.
It is a block.

It comes when the environment becomes stronger than the individual. When answers are no longer enough. When smiling becomes a function, not a choice.

In America, I have seen people function perfectly while falling in. Productive, polite, present. Empty.

It is not the work that saves.
It is not success. It is the encounter.

Sometimes all it takes is one voice.
Just one. To tell you: "You made it."

You do not heal because you are strong.
You heal because you are not alone.

THE COPYWRITER

Finding people willing to work on large projects is difficult.
Not for lack of skills. For lack of mental attitude.

In Italy, the project is causing concern.
In the United States, it is being considered.

It is not a talent problem.
It is a responsibility problem.

Those who do not accept the project's scope automatically choose dependence.
This is not a judgment. It is an observation.

One job is not better than another.
But every job reveals the level of ambition of its practitioner.

THE AMERICAN POLICE

The image of American police is often filtered through movies.
The reality is more complex.

The training is brief.
The emphasis is on officer safety. Fear is taught as a method.

The paradox is evident:
the more protection declared, the more real tension.

It is not a weak structure.
It is a structure under pressure.

In America, authority is not questioned.
It is enforced. And precisely because of this, every mistake carries double weight.

THE COURT

Entering an American courthouse is a revealing experience.

The rules are clear.
Violations are treated as facts, not moral faults.

But there is a human space.
Limited. Decisive.

A judge can overturn a fine if he understands the context.
Not out of pity. Out of balance.

The law stands.
Its application may be fair.

In that room I saw something rare:
authority without arrogance. Decision without humiliation.

It was not do-goodism.
It was institutional intelligence.

IT HAD TO CONTINUE

How you live your life, in an absolute sense it is the moment of maximum exaltation, joy, independence, you are finally free.

The advice of others, the criticism, the constraints, the emotional blackmail are of no avail because, when you reach that level where you can see your childhood hair blowing in your face, you rediscover what nature has given you, your great and unique joy, yourself.

The difficulties of the day were combined with those of the night, of every day, and built up all the limitations that we should have experienced as areas of strength to be overcome and not as areas of weakness from being afflicted.

My sister, thirteen months older than me, had passed away a few days earlier, and that morning I decided to go visit her at the cemetery, a narrow place filled with pain and memories, where people often cannot cope with the moment of death, falling into depression.

I found her in the second niche up, it was easy to access to clean the flowers and change the candle, and she looked at me with those lively eyes, as if to say: I have arrived, I am fine here, don't worry.

I let myself go for a moment of tears, when I felt a hand forcefully on my head, pushing me down, just long enough to turn around to understand who it was and to see no one.

This hand accompanied me throughout the journey out of the cemetery, so strong that it forced me to walk back to the house and leave the car parked there.

Forty minutes of walking, and this hand, little by little, eased the pressure on my head, as I got closer to home, I was sweaty, but wrapped up in thoughts of wanting to understand what the message was, and after more than three hours, I came to a conclusion.

Everything would have passed, wealth, poverty, joys, sorrows, life, and death, but our personal spectacle in our lives we would always continue to perform, to leave a memory for posterity.

THE NATO BASE

I told the base officials that I wanted to tell a true story, but they asked me not to name names, as some permits were missing and someone had taken responsibility. I guaranteed everyone anonymity, but I would tell the facts anyway.

It was a recently established NATO military command, a crucial hub from which all the most important orders in the Mediterranean area, concerning the movement of men, equipment, and weapons, were issued. That afternoon, my friend Giovanni, a retired Italian Army Marshal, still employed by SISMI with NATO liaison, invited me to Giugliano to meet some people and have a beer.

The store was crowded, and seeing three women, I quickly approached, drawn by their presence, as is often the case for someone like me, a Calabrian. A few exchanges were enough to make them smile and invite us to sit together. They were all three Americans, beautiful, and they began asking me questions. Without thinking twice, I said I wanted to kidnap all three of them and run away with them to a desert island. They could not stop laughing.

Meanwhile, my friend was chatting with other people, and I remained in good company. The girls asked me if I had ever been to America, and I confirmed that it was my second home. They immediately asked why, and I replied that each of their first homes would be mine. They laughed aloud, amused by my answer.

I then proposed a game: I asked each of them how long it had been since they had been happy. The first one replied "a year," the second "two years," and the third "six months." They were all American citizens, and I said I would love to give them two hours of unforgettable happiness. None of them refused, but they were all curious to find out what it really meant.

They accepted the invitation and we headed to the base commander's office. I did not know exactly where we were, but they spent six hours with me, during which I shared my entire experience in social communication. They kept asking... "And after that?"... and I responded with the calm of someone who knows the answers are in the process itself.

In the end, it was a success. They received much more than they expected, and I simply gave what I had: culture, knowledge, professionalism. Because, I believe, a better person also grows from these small moments of exchange and awareness.

TOP GUN SCHOOL

In the days between Christmas and New Year's, I was left alone at home to rest, and my daughter, always busy with her commitments, was forced to always live away.

The phone rings and I struggle to figure out who it is. It is Mark Tornì, a former colleague of mine, younger than me, who has found success over the years working within the American embassy, as a public relations manager.

He is worried about how I am doing and my health. This request worries me because I do not understand what he is getting at or what his goal is. So, the plan is this: tomorrow morning you arrive in Naples around 12:00 and then I will explain everything to you.

Mark, we have nothing in common to share professionally, especially since you certainly will not pay me a dollar. You will see, this time what I am proposing will make you happy, remembering all the times you supported me at work, when the bosses wanted to fire me.

I arrive in Naples the next day, and he is waiting for me in the car, bound for Gioia del Colle. In the evening, we have a small, frugal meal in the canteen, and then we head to the military base's bar.

He knows everyone, and tries to introduce me to someone, but the best acquaintances, as usual, are always the ones you make on your own. I sit at a table with two young women, American officers, a

lieutenant, and a captain from Texas. We have a pleasant conversation, nothing worthy of note, but they do not reveal anything about their work, especially since there is a briefing the next day at 10:00 to which I am also invited, but they do not know.

We say our goodbyes amicably, and I try to return to the hotel, but Mark has arranged for us to stay in an officers' dormitory. It is an area, a habit, a feeling, typical of non-Italians, but I had already served in the military and knew every detail.

In the morning, I arrive at a hangar where all the guests are present and seated, and I discover we are in the space reserved for the TOP GUN training school. The two girls I met the day before are also present. Each pair of pilots received their flight plan and final instructions, along with the contact details from the control towers and the command codes. Finally, they board their planes, while the liaison sergeant and ground contact records the final procedures and authorizes taxiing and departure on the runway, takeoff, and flight.

A tremendous noise, aboard their F16s and Tornados, you understand that war is a nasty beast that hurts, without considering the casualties that can be incurred. While waiting, I ask to visit the pilot and co-pilot's seats on a parked plane. I realize I am finding a tiny space where I can make important decisions, but it is truly not easy.

Time flies: after 90 minutes, all the planes are back on the ground, and I still have not figured out what I am supposed to do and with whom. Everyone has a meeting scheduled for 5:00 PM in the officers' lounge, where I meet the base commander, who gives me the key points to discuss with the pilots, and I am given some requests that I have 30 minutes to communicate.

I was ready. I began. It was not easy, I was speaking to professionals with multiple academic qualifications, and I only brought a diploma I had earned by giving five liters of wine to Principal Zappia.

But that was life, and I had learned that everyone measures themselves by what they have, never by what they say they have. I told a joke in English to grab their attention, and they all smiled. The character in this story was called Rocco, and I made him Rocky. I did not expect this result.

Immediately afterward, I began my first real communication lesson, impressing upon everyone just two key points: "Decisions and Resolutions." Decisions are linked to one's skills; resolutions are linked to knowledge. There was no feedback, but it did not take long to register success. Their attention was focused on what I was saying. They were great people with great powers, to be used efficiently with all their mental abilities to make harmless choices, considering their ability to find the right rationale.

I said goodbye to everyone, ready to leave the meeting and return to my office, when Mark informed me that the two female officers I had met yesterday, Katrin and Terry, had invited us to dinner and it was not in good taste to refuse.

She also hands me the check for my consulting, and that cheers me up. $5,000, enough to wait a little longer before returning. We meet at 9:30 pm directly at the restaurant where we are the first to arrive, but this gives us the advantage of seeing them enter. Everyone turned to look at them, both men and women, a fantastic, angelic vision of the two women, unforgettably beautiful, uniquely beautiful, never vulgar.

The conversation immediately shifts to wanting to know everything and more about me, typical of women who want to understand, and at a certain point I ask them a question. What does it feel like to pilot? It requires great preparation, diligence, composure under pressure, intuition, instinct, and a lot of love. Why love? Because you raise the control stick, hold it steady, and then you ease it back.

They were two highly intelligent women, to whom my mother would never have entrusted me, they could have done whatever they wanted with a man, only for one reason, there were two: TOP GUN.

AIR FLIGHT

I had arrived in New York a few days earlier, coming from Rome, and after staying in the city center, I was planning on taking another flight to Los Angeles, but check-in at the airport had to be done very early in the morning, and I arrived very sleepy.

Time to check-in or luggage, go through security, get to the gate, and wait for our flight. The national airline accompanying us on this trip was UNITED AIRLINES. It was my first time flying with them, but I was relaxed.

I boarded with priority, I needed to rest, and I immediately accepted position at number 2/b.

At one point I'm awakened by the strong smell of women's perfume, I open my eyes and see the stewardess covering me with the blanket, an angel presumably 35 years old, beautiful, truly magnificent, truly very beautiful, I should have kidnapped her and married her immediately, but I didn't know her family.

And immediately another one arrives and talks to her colleague, and then another, so much so that I wake up and start walking around the plane to see them all: there were ten in total, I should have married them all.

I went to the commander to ask him where he got all these queens, Miss World, they looked like they came from a beauty contest, and he

answered me by asking me where I came from.

Calabria, of course, and he laughed and understood my reactions. It was an interminable journey, I wished it could have lasted much longer, but six hours was noticeably short, even though no one accepted my invitation upon arrival.

I remember we were on the home stretch and Jennifer asked me what I wanted to drink, and I said, tea. She brought a huge mug of tea, smiling like a madwoman, and told me I could curb all the hormonal storms I was having.

The effect of this trip cost me three sleepless nights. I wish I had two stewardesses every night just to make them smile. The advantage of traveling with multiple airlines...

VOCATION AND DESTINY

Being in the military is a state of mind: it means choosing to serve a cause greater than oneself, with dedication and courage. It is not glory that moves us, but the responsibility to defend what unites us, what transcends the individual. Every mission, in war or in everyday life, is an act of community, a sacrifice that becomes strength.

But vocation is not just expressed in the uniform. Sometimes it takes the form of a destiny that seems written elsewhere. The conviction of being reborn, of having lived another life in America, becomes an inner calling, a thread that ties past and present. It is the same drive that drives us to serve: the certainty that something greater exists, that calls us and guides us.

Thus, mission and reincarnation intertwine: two diverse ways of telling the same truth: that life is never ours alone, but part of a larger plan.

NOTES AND FACES OF AMERICA

For centuries, the West repeated the same notes, convinced they were the best. Then the Internet changed everything: the small musicians who seemed great returned to their proper measure, and American music invaded the world. The words and rhythms of the 1950s made billions of dreams, and finally the lyrics were understood. It was not just music: it was a state of mind, a dream that spanned generations, like my fathers in the 1960s.

There was never a real musical battle: the Americans were too strong and did not need to compete. It was a question of style. And the same happened with cinema. Born in England and the United States, it moved from silent films to talking pictures and the major studios, until it conquered the world. Actors came from the theater, the streets, and life's opportunities. Some became rich and famous, but lost freedom and intimacy. Others could not manage the weight of fame.

Music and cinema together constructed a global imagination. They imposed dreams, models, and desires. They demonstrated that America was not just a country, but a universal language made of sounds and images.

WORK

The sector with the highest demand for staff to hire was Nursing, where the healthcare system, with the advent of the innovative Obama decree, had radically changed the hospital-patient relationship.

There were still some limitations on urgent procedures, such as blood transfusions, which remained paid for and the sole responsibility of the patient, but this time the sick could be treated and cured with absolute certainty.

The leader pulls, the manager pushes --- two distinct roles integrated within the same objective, the same execution of projects destined for success.

This was what was happening in my United States of America, and it was never easy to export it; other nations had tried, but had not found valid elements, children of a new culture and education that led to the highest levels of the philosophy of being.

Meanwhile, other markets were waiting for more people, and an unemployment rate of 3.5% made it clear how many spaces were opening every day, every moment.

The U.S. economy added 353,000 new nonfarm jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

The figure was higher than expected compared to what analysts had predicted, who on average had estimated a reading of 185,000,

compared to 333,000 the previous month.

The labor market is also showing significant signs of strength; such strong wage growth will soon lead to renewed inflationary pressures.

WAR & PEACE

The time had come to analyze and seek answers to many questions, aware that people's judgments were often not objective, but merely technically self-interested. A world made up of 208 nations, 7,500 languages and dialects, eight billion people, and if I looked at how many wars there were, I counted only a few.

After the war, the Americans had established NATO, which now comprises thirty-two nations, and no one thought of attacking us. We were incredibly strong. America protected us, it held everyone accountable, and we should not criticize it, but rather recognize its role as a savior, protecting us all. Then, in every nation, there were the usual four annoying protesters, and you found them among minority politicians, journalists, left-wing commentators, all people I would have gladly sent to the frontiers of war.

No one understood why we were free, safe, supported by millions of soldiers, weapons, and technologies, making us strong, and no one challenged us. But all this also guaranteed peace. Seventy-nine years had passed since the last world war, and the worst, bad air had been felt in all that time.

Saying thank you again to these people is never enough. It would be enough for each of us to recognize their role to openly express our deepest gratitude for being alive. Thank you, United States of America, and thank you also to Russia, which, with its crucial role, has helped maintain the balance that allows us to live in peace.

Thank you all for the peace you granted us.

THE NIGHT OF THE OSCARS

My frequent visits to the United States, from 1985 to 2023, for professional reasons and occasionally for pleasure, had given me the opportunity to meet many people, and even to be recognized by others.

My life in Italy was peaceful: family routine, grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning the house, laundry, and I never felt neglected when unexpected visitors arrived.

It was a Saturday morning when a FedEx courier rang the doorbell: two people were delivering a package from the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles. It struck me as odd. My wife, daughter, and I were sitting on the couch, waiting for me to open the package, unaware of what was inside.

When I opened it, I found an envelope containing $5,000, airline tickets, hotel room keys, and an invitation to the Oscars on March 12, 2023. At that moment, the phone rang: it was Mike, an American doctor I had met in California. He told me they were expecting me and told me not to have any nasty surprises.

My wife told me she did not want to fly for 17 hours, and my daughter would not want to leave without her. I could not go alone. I called Gennaro, an Italian friend who worked in the stock market in the United States, for advice. He told me the opportunity was unmissable and that he would have an incredibly beautiful colleague of his accompanying me, who would be perfect for the occasion.

I left for Rome, bought a black tuxedo, complete with everything, and a coat for the cold. I called Gennaro to ask if I should send money for my colleague, but he replied with a smile that I did not need it. "You don't know who I'm sending you!"

I fly from Rome to New York and meet Gennaro with his colleague Debora: tall, blonde, blue-eyed, 36, beautiful, and classy. She has the body of a fashion model, is childless, and very wealthy. Ironically, she had had a Neapolitan boyfriend for five years, and her Italian was surprisingly fluent and charming.

I flew from New York to Los Angeles: Debora did not say much, but she watched me carefully. When we arrived at the hotel, I asked her if she wanted another room, but she said no. She undressed and went to shower, while I went to get some drinks. After two hours, I returned to the room, where I found her already in bed. I sat down on the chair watching her, but I sensed something was wrong, though I still could not figure out what.

At 4:00 PM, we went to lunch. She ordered macaroni with tomato sauce, meatballs, and Brunello di Montalcino, while I chose California shark. When the bill arrived, she insisted on paying, but I refused. She tried to split it, but I decided to take the whole thing: $850.

We returned to the hotel and got ready for the theater. I took a taxi to scout ahead and bought two tickets for $25 per person. Debora, however, revealed to me that she had booked a table for $30,000 per person. Now I understood what was wrong: she was independent, authoritarian, and domineering, but also unreliable.

We sat at the table, and throughout the evening Debora repeatedly hit my leg, asking me which women I liked and putting her hand between her legs. After the Oscars, we went to a bowling alley where she took off her heels, drank beer, and ate hot dogs and chips. She asked me how I could resist her, because with other men she would have already rejected them, but with me everything was different, interesting, new, and exciting. She asked me who I really was.

After escorting her to the hotel, I put her to bed, undressed her, and put her into her nightgown. I left and walked down Melrose Avenue, reflecting on how unforgettable that moment would be. When I returned to the hotel at 8:00 in the morning, Debora was still asleep. I ordered a large breakfast, which arrived with two trolleys and a bottle of champagne. When she woke up, I said to her, "We have two different planes back. Mine leaves at 2:30 PM for Rome, yours at 4:45 PM for New York."

She looked at me in surprise: "Nando, are you leaving me like this? We have not even made love, and you are already gone?"

I replied kindly: "I like you very much, you're irresistible, but I decided to leave you without memories, to prevent you from thinking about me too much. And besides, if I had been poor, things would have been different."

THE CRUISE

The tranquility of family life had become a consolidated routine, with daily routines marking my days: grocery shopping, meal preparation, cleaning, housekeeping. The only moment of change was the silence that had enveloped us every evening, for some time now. Our children had gone their separate ways, some working away, and the house had become a place where time seemed to pass slowly.

One day, I decided to surprise my wife. I told her I had won a two-week cruise, a loyalty prize offered by Harrods in London, an opportunity we could use to celebrate our fortieth wedding anniversary. I had never made such spontaneous decisions, but this time the urge to break away from the routine was too strong.

Our departure was scheduled from Lamezia Terme, arriving in Tampa, Florida, where we would board a Carnival ship that would take us around the Caribbean, visiting Jamaica, Aruba, Curacao, Barbados, and Antigua. When we arrived in Tampa, the taxi took us directly to the boarding gate, but a small mix-up changed everything. Due to a port authorities' error, I was put on a different cruise, the singles cruise, while my wife, who did not speak English and was concerned about my age, remained waiting for me. I called her to reassure her, but my fate was sealed.

The singles cruise turned out to be an unexpected adventure. There were about 1,400 passengers, 80% of them women, and the company assigned me a suite as an apology for the mistake. I could not believe it:

at 68, I was in the middle of a world I had never explored. Despite my age, I still felt the same energy I had once had, and I needed to figure out how to harness it.

I spent time with a Mexican woman named Consuelo, a widow who was trying to cope with the loss of her husband. We spent an evening together, dancing, laughing, and shopping in the boutique shops. Carnival offered unlimited shopping passes, and I took advantage of the opportunity to buy Consuelo several gifts, including a makeup bag, perfume, and beauty products. I could not have imagined that this adventure would lead me to meet so many people and have such an intense experience.

Meanwhile, my wife called me worriedly, but I reassured her by telling her I had taken out insurance for lost luggage. The cruise concluded with a series of encounters, flirtations, and some conversations I will not soon forget. However, eventually, I came back to reality. When I met my wife again, I realized how much she had noticed me. "You look thinner," she said, "have you been eating? What kind of cruise was that?"

The ride home was silent. The trip had changed me, but perhaps not as much as I thought. On the flight home, I decided I would share every detail of that cruise, but deep down I knew that some experiences were meant to remain in the memory, without needing to be shared.

THE SEVENTH CAVALRY

What over the years was a unit of the United States Army established in 1800, used in many notable events and with clear characteristics that made it worthy of belonging.

Their followers wore the blue uniform, inherited from the Northern units of the Civil War, and were always perfectly orderly, where everyone was involved, with rigid rules and subjected to command hierarchies and the classic trumpet that regulated the various actions.

A true military order, with precise rules where those who made mistakes were punished, with the rule of public hanging in front of relatives and friends, in other cases military prison.

War school was studied here and one of the young lieutenants who was the first to emerge in command strategies and military techniques, eventually becoming a General, was a certain Custer.

His army was commonly called the Seventh Cavalry, and its main activity was to control the territory and population of the nearby borders from smuggling, gold theft, and other crimes.

But a certain trade in alcohol, initially tolerated, turned into a terrifying trade in weapons, and the main players in this activity were the American Indians who exchanged it for gold nuggets.

At the head of the largest tribe of Indians was Sitting Bull, a man of brilliant and refined mind, who gave the American army a hard time

when he managed to unite all the Indian tribes, under his command, to make them all fight together in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

It must be said that the SEVENTH CAVALRY had among its characteristics the ability to arrive at military clashes, not accustomed to "Take the good, because evil will come alone." The Seventh Cavalry regiment always fought, because of its power, only to win: all means used were good and were legal.

The Indians had learned this, having learned to know them in the various peripheral battles, and had the idea of never making it clear how many were really interested in the battle, thus maintaining the surprise effect.

When the battle began, the young General Custer had 15 years of military career, and he was allowed to remain at the head of one of the largest armies ever assembled, convinced as he was that he would win by a landslide and bring another victory to Washington, with the possibility that the notoriety would give him the chance to be elected to Parliament, but the reality was different and very atrocious.

The General, after a short and bloody battle, ended up surrounded in a large field with twelve men, one of whom held the standard, and he continually shouted to go on the attack, when at a certain point the Indians decided not to inflict on the remaining men, but killed the General as a form of revenge, for having been challenged.

Subsequently, the American parliament, realizing that the strategy used was not the best, and that it had a negative impact on public opinion, approved new appropriations and structures, returning to the battlefield to negotiate peace, and promising new borders to the Indian

people, who over the years would be confined and free within the reservations, where they still remain today.

The moral of this story, written at 2:06 am, is only one: it is never important to fight, but certainly to win, whatever the cost.

TATANKA

My friend Ann, an American film co-producer, who had had a past at Gillette, at the same time as me, found the opportunity that summer of 1996 to invite me to California to participate in an event concerning her.

She arranged for a car to pick me up at the airport, which drove straight to the hotel, and then to the Studios where Ann was waiting for me.

She was very affectionate, and we reminisced about our work experience, smiling as she remembered my jokes in English, which were not funny, but my gestures were.

The program was noticeably clear: the next day we would have the Grand Gala evening, where I would be provided with a headset for translation, as the American language differs from one geographic area to another and is often incomprehensible, even for the local population.

This evening, I am taking you to eat at a typical local restaurant called Texas. There will be other friends there, but my recommendation is that you do not focus on anyone but talk to everyone.

We arrived at the restaurant, a table for twenty had been reserved, twenty-three types of meat, all grilled, the aromas of which were mind-blowing. I had been distracted for a while, just long enough for the table to be full, and everyone was saying hello, and I followed suit.

Ann, meanwhile, looked at me and smiled, she knew that I would do something soon, it was in my nature, and I could not do anything about it.

I turn to the right of my seat and find a stunning, beautiful lady who emanated a perfume that said, "Take me, I'm here." God had heard my prayers.

On the left, an actor who appeared in fifteen films, it was her husband, but at first, I could not figure out who he was, only to discover later that it was: Kevin Costner, American actor, and director.

Yes, the one from the movie "Dances with Wolves," who had recently won the Oscar for the film and for best actor, and I had seen the video at least twenty times, I was in love with it.

He called me Frega, jokingly, few people know that this word cannot be translated into any of the 185 available languages, and the meaning lies in the man who bears the surname.

His wife, too, was smiling, causing me, after a long time, many sleepless nights, remembering how beautiful she was and having her scent fixed in my nose. In the middle of the table were two long calf bones. I began to climb onto the table with my feet and placed the bones on my head, as if to pretend to be a buffalo, shouting "TATANKA."

This was the word used by the Indians in the film to identify the buffalo, but it was also the name they gave to their leader Sitting Bull.

Costner burst out laughing, everyone burst out laughing, a Calabrian at an American lunch table, playing American buffalo.

It was a 15-minute joke, when Costner took me by the arm and said he wanted me in his next movie.

Ann was crazy, she could not wait, but besides thanking me and declining the offer, he gave me some information about the film that he had not been able to use in the short films.

The world of the Indians, a magical world, everyone who left the place looked at me smiling and said TATANKA, but they still did not know what my potential was.

The next day, around eleven o'clock at night, Ann and I arrived at the Grand Gala, and the usher led us to a table that wasn't ours, it was one of those that had to be paid for, and Ann let me know that the prices were prohibitive: we were guests of Mr. Costner and many were wondering who I was.

He came back again with the offer to have me participate in one of his films, but I was not ready, I thanked him again but refused.

When you turn down an offer from an American twice, you can consider it truly closed, I learned this from Ann after a long time.

The next day, Ann accompanied me to the airport, my plane was waiting for me, she looked me in the face and asked me who I really was, because of this exuberant Calabrian only his deeds remained, but no one would ever forget him, IT WAS NEVER A QUESTION OF MONEY

TWO AMERICAN BROTHERS

Dear Patrizio and Ferdinando, how are you? I hope you are doing well, though I understand the many challenges you face in life and away from home.

We both forgot our family, when we lived happily with our parents, and then death took them both away from us, the pain for dad first, which led me to depression, and the despair for mom, because I know how much you were attached to her too, but no one can make us take them back.

In all of this, we have made trivial mistakes. Instead of bonding more and rebuilding a family group of brothers, we have worried about arguments and battles that have weakened us and will not give us a future.

Here I would like you to take me back as a sister, for the blood that binds us and for the love we have for each other. I am in a relationship with an Italian man, ironically named Ferdinando, and I hope to move to Italy with him soon, taking a trip to Belgium, if you will allow me, for a hot dog.

When it comes to reconstructing a story, as Voltaire said, one should never look at the past, but to the beautiful things to share you have my heart, and that is no small thing. The banality of people cannot be measured, but their intelligence can. It is my duty and promise to be, from now on, the best sister you deserve.

Building a temple for the ancient Egyptians was a source of great honor and pleasure. I ask you, together with me, to build your own inner time, the time that, looking into each other's eyes, will allow us to see Mom and Dad again.

THE AMERICAN DREAM

The concept of the "American Dream" has captivated generations of immigrants, entrepreneurs, and idealists. From Ellis Island to Silicon Valley, the desire for success has driven millions. However, today this dream is more difficult to achieve. Opportunities are no longer equal for all, and American society increasingly displays a divide between those who have made it and those left behind.

On my first trip to America, I met a taxi driver of Indian origin who told me, "America is like a big casino. Some win, but most lose." His words stuck with me. Observing the economic and social reality, I realized that the American dream was more of a promise rather than a guarantee of success.

The American Dream began in the 17th century. European settlers sought religious freedom and new economic opportunities. Over time, this myth evolved, fueled by the success stories of entrepreneurs, actors, and politicians. But the reality is that the social ladder only works for a few, while many struggle to survive.

From an early age, we develop the mental state of dreaming; often we remember them, often not. Sometimes, dreams become premonitions of similar events. Other times, we use the "smorfia," a method of interpreting dreams. The resulting numbers are used in the lottery. Sometimes, this leads to unexpected wins, but often it creates illusions. This is the fault of a popular culture that has now spread to

everyone, cities with low houses, cities with skyscrapers and people of all kinds.

But the true dream always remains deep within us. It is part of us. There are childhood dreams, which we will carry with us throughout our lives. Adult dreams, which will remain only a sweet memory. Those we will not be able to complete, small failures to be transformed into successes.

Today I want to tell you about my dream. I am a fifty-nine-year-old man, a father of three, with a skilled professional history. I have traveled for forty years, speaking five languages and visiting sixty-five countries. I have spent all my money. One day, I found myself poor, with nothing and no money. Furthermore, I have a psychiatric condition. My psychiatrist welcomed me into the home of his wife and daughter.

That morning, I stopped gazing at the sea. I was at my wife's house, where I had been hosted. I felt like a child again: naked and vulnerable. I had to face a journey alone, with two women ready to criticize my mistakes. This situation had become my greatest challenge.

The sea, with its roaring waves, spoke to me. A light breeze blew on my face, almost caressing me. My relatives and friends wondered what I would do. No one knew what I had in mind, and to be honest, not even I. I began writing in my notebook the story of what had happened to me. And then another, and then another. In eighteen months, I wrote a lot. In Italy, publishers charge €1,400-3,000 per book for publication, with no guarantees. Everyone asked how I had done it. Everyone knew I was penniless. But I trusted that all it took was a clever idea to make it

come true. No one would ever refuse to listen. It would always take a little, but with seriousness.

I succeeded. I had achieved my goal: a potential internet reach of four billion people. How much I would earn was a detail I did not care about. I had learned to live on little, but I was aiming for success, not money.

American critics, the ones that matter, had declared, through my books, that they had discovered a new way of telling stories. Untold, new stories, no one could ever copy, because within each story was my time and my present.

I thank everyone for their patience in listening to me, for their time. Thanks to those who believed in me and to those who did not. The latter are the most important. I urgently want to convey a message to them and say: I DID IT.

THE IMPACT ON THE WORLD

The United States is more than just a country: it is an idea, a global brand, a model that permeates every corner of the planet. From music to cinema, from politics to economics, America influences the world with a force that is both admired and contested.

Its foreign policy is perceived as a necessary intervention by some, as interference by others. Its culture is loved and imitated but also criticized for its ability to conform. Its economy drives the global market but generates imbalances that are reflected in the inequalities between people and nations.

During a trip to Europe, a young Frenchman told me, *"We criticize America, but we watch their films, we use their products, we dream about their lives."* This ambivalence hides the secret of American power: being simultaneously desired and rejected, a source of attraction and resistance.

The United States exports its way of life through media and technology. Netflix, YouTube, Facebook: platforms that have redefined the way we communicate, consume, and imagine the future. This soft power has made America a dominant force, capable of shaping mindsets and behaviors, but it has also generated rivalries and conflicts.

America's impact on the world is thus twofold: on the one hand, the promise of freedom, innovation, and success; on the other, the perception of a dominance that risks stifling diversity. It is a wave that

cannot be ignored because it crosses borders and cultures, leaving an indelible mark.

THE TIME

In America, time is not contemplated.
It is used.

It is not circular; it is not memory.
It is function.

Time is used to produce, to move, to shift.
Those who stop to think too much are left behind.

This vision creates efficiency but creates a fracture:
the human being becomes secondary to the result.

American time is unforgiving.
But it rewards those who master it.

ONCE UPON A TIME

Telling stories is an act of survival.

In America, stories are not about remembering the past;
they are about building the future.

It does not matter if they are completely true.
What matters is that they work.

Every family, every city, every individual has a narrative to uphold.
Without history, you do not exist. Without a story, you do not survive.

THE PEOPLE OF THE INVISIBLES

There is an America that does not appear.
It does not make noise. It does not protest.

It is made up of people who work, keep the system afloat, and disappear.
They do not ask for attention. They ask not to be crushed.

They are invisible not because they do not matter,
but because no one is interested in looking at them.

Yet without them, America would collapse.

SCIENCE AND MASTERS

Knowledge, in America, is a tool.
Not a temple.

Science is about solving problems.
Teaching is about developing skills.

The master is not a spiritual guide.
He is a facilitator.

This makes the system fast, but fragile:
when the meaning is missing, only the method remains.

Knowledge without awareness accelerates.
But it does not guide.

A NEW FUTURE

While staying in a small American town, I was arrested for a misunderstanding and spent 30 days in jail. It was a tough time, but during those days I met Mark, a public-school teacher in a disadvantaged community. Mark was an extraordinary man. He provided quality education. Many of his students came from low-income families.

Mark told me about the challenges he faced daily in his work. Lack of resources and overcrowded classrooms made it difficult to provide an adequate education. However, he was not discouraged. He started tutoring and after-school programs. These help students reach their full potential. He believed in the power of education. It was a tool to break the cycle of poverty and offer new opportunities.

During my time in prison, Mark shared with me his dreams and hopes for the future. He wanted all children, without distinction, to have access to an equitable education and to be able to dream big. He told me about his initiatives to engage the community and raise funds for the school. He organized events and campaigns to raise awareness of their problems and seek solutions.

Once I was released from prison, I decided to visit Mark's school and see his work firsthand. I was impressed by the dedication of the teachers and the enthusiasm of the students. Mark had created a welcoming and stimulating environment. Every child felt valued and

supported. His passion for education was contagious and inspired everyone around him.

The success of Mark's initiatives attracted the attention of local and national media. His story was featured in various articles and television programs, making him an example of dedication and commitment. Mark was invited to speak at education conferences and seminars. He wanted to share his experiences and vision with a wider audience.

Despite the many challenges, Mark continued to look to the future with optimism. His determination and passion for education drove him to overcome every obstacle. In a conversation, he told me he dreamed of a world where every child had access to a quality education and could achieve their dreams.

Mark's story is an example of how an individual can be effective through passion, innovation, and dedication. He hoped that more people would adopt a conscious and responsible lifestyle. This would create a better future for future generations. During my time in America, I learned a lot from Mark and his dedication to education. His story inspired me to reflect on how we can all contribute to a more just and sustainable world.

DEDICATION

I met Jessica at a cultural event in Boston. It was a festival celebrating the diversity and creativity of the local community. Jessica was an extraordinary woman, committed to promoting the arts and cultural education. She worked as the director of a cultural center that offered a wide range of educational and artistic programs for all ages.

Jessica revealed that the cultural center blossomed from her dream. She envisioned a haven where voices could flourish and learn from the tapestry of American cultures. The center organized workshops in visual arts, music, theater, and dance, involving local and international artists. Jessica believed that art could change society and individuals.

One day, Jessica invited me to visit the cultural center and participate in one of their workshops. I was struck by the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Every corner of the center was decorated with artwork by workshop participants. I could sense creative energy. Jessica introduced me to some of the artists who worked with the center. Each had a unique and inspiring story to tell.

Jessica not only ran the cultural center but also promoted access to art in schools. She organized art programs in schools, bringing artists and educators directly into the classrooms. At one such program, I watched the children enthusiastically create their own works of art. They also learned new techniques. Jessica believed that art was a fundamental right. She worked to ensure that all children could benefit from it.

The success of Jessica's initiatives attracted the attention of local and national media. Her story was featured in various articles and television programs, making her an example of dedication and commitment to the community. Jessica was invited to conferences and seminars on cultural education and the arts. She wanted to share her experiences and vision with a wider audience.

Despite the many challenges, Jessica continued to look to the future with optimism. Running a cultural center required commitment and perseverance. But her passion and determination pushed her to overcome every obstacle. In a conversation, she told me she dreamed of a world where art was accessible to all. She wanted it to be a means of personal and community growth.

Jessica's story is an example of how an individual can be effective through passion, innovation, and dedication. She hoped that more people would adopt a conscious and responsible lifestyle. In doing so, they would contribute to a better future for future generations. During my time in Boston, I learned a lot from Jessica and her dedication to art and cultural education. Her story inspired me to reflect on how we can all contribute to a more just and sustainable world.

PERFECTION

Perfection does not exist.
But it works.

In the United States, perfection is not a reality:
it is a narrative goal. An operational idea. A model to pursue even knowing it will never be achieved.

America does not promise to be perfect.
It promises to **strive** for perfection.

And that is the difference.

American perfection is not about ethics,
it is not about justice, it is not about fairness.

It is about the system.

A system that must appear efficient even when cruel.
Functional even when unjust. Credible even when contradictory.

Perfection in America is not moral.
It is structural.

It serves to hold everything together:
success and failure, freedom and exclusion, opportunity, and abandonment.

Anyone who enters the system accepts a simple rule:
if it works, you stay. If it does not, you leave.

It is not a sentence.
It is a contract.

American perfection does not save.
Select.

And that is why it fascinates the world.
Because it does not lie about the result, but it keeps quiet about the price.

AFTERWORD

This book is not a conclusion.
It is a position.

He does not defend America.
He does not accuse it. He observes it.

The perfection described here should not be imitated.
It should be understood.

Because every country that chases a model without understanding
it ends up only copying its deformations.

APHORISMS

Perfection is a direction, not a place.

A system can work even without being fair.

Freedom without structure is chaos.
Structure without consciousness is domination.

America does not promise happiness.
It promises opportunity.

EPILOGUE

America is not a myth.
It is not an enemy. It is not an example.

It is a mirror.

It reflects what a society is willing to sacrifice
in exchange for movement, power, speed.

Her contradictions do not weaken her.
They define her.

Understanding them does not mean justifying them.
It means not enduring them.