



THE LIBRARY AFTER L’ORÉAL

From the L'Oréal experience I understood that I'd been living inside a Gillette format, and it wasn't the same as the real market — and if I ever found myself outside a corporate context, I'd be completely unprepared to face the world.

My father called and invited me to lunch — not at home, we'd meet out, as if it were just work, when really we were spending our best time together, father and son finding each other again. I miss him.

He was curious how I felt after this professional experience — he didn't want the details or the specifics, he'd always been a reserved man, he never asked, he just listened and smiled.

I'd told him I wanted to study — not through school or university, but by going into a library and, day after day, exploring what the books had to say.

He was happy about it and said: culture doesn't only come from experience — remember that history always repeats itself, the same cycles over and over, you just have to read it once and understand how it works.

Few words, no theatrics — it's part of who I am today, too. The irony I get from my mother, a trait actually inherited from my maternal grandfather.

But I'd always have to tailor my language to whoever I was speaking with, because a complicated word often doesn't signal culture at all — it just makes you sound like an ignorant fool who has no idea what the hell he's talking about.

I thought about going to Milan and signing up for a Kaiser management course, but they wanted 3,760,000 lire, and after reading through the syllabus I wasn't convinced it was worth the investment.

I was looking to test myself against other people's knowledge, and I found what to do: A MERCHANDISER COURSE, where I could refine and improve what I already did in practice by grounding it in theory.

I paid 650,000 lire for twenty hours a week of classes — but I'll tell you how it turned out in the next episode.

Just one thought: back then I already sensed that something in me wasn't working, or maybe was working just fine, but I couldn't tell what it was. It was writing, later, that made it all clear.

I was someone nobody expected to exist — and yet, I was somebody.

Ferdinando