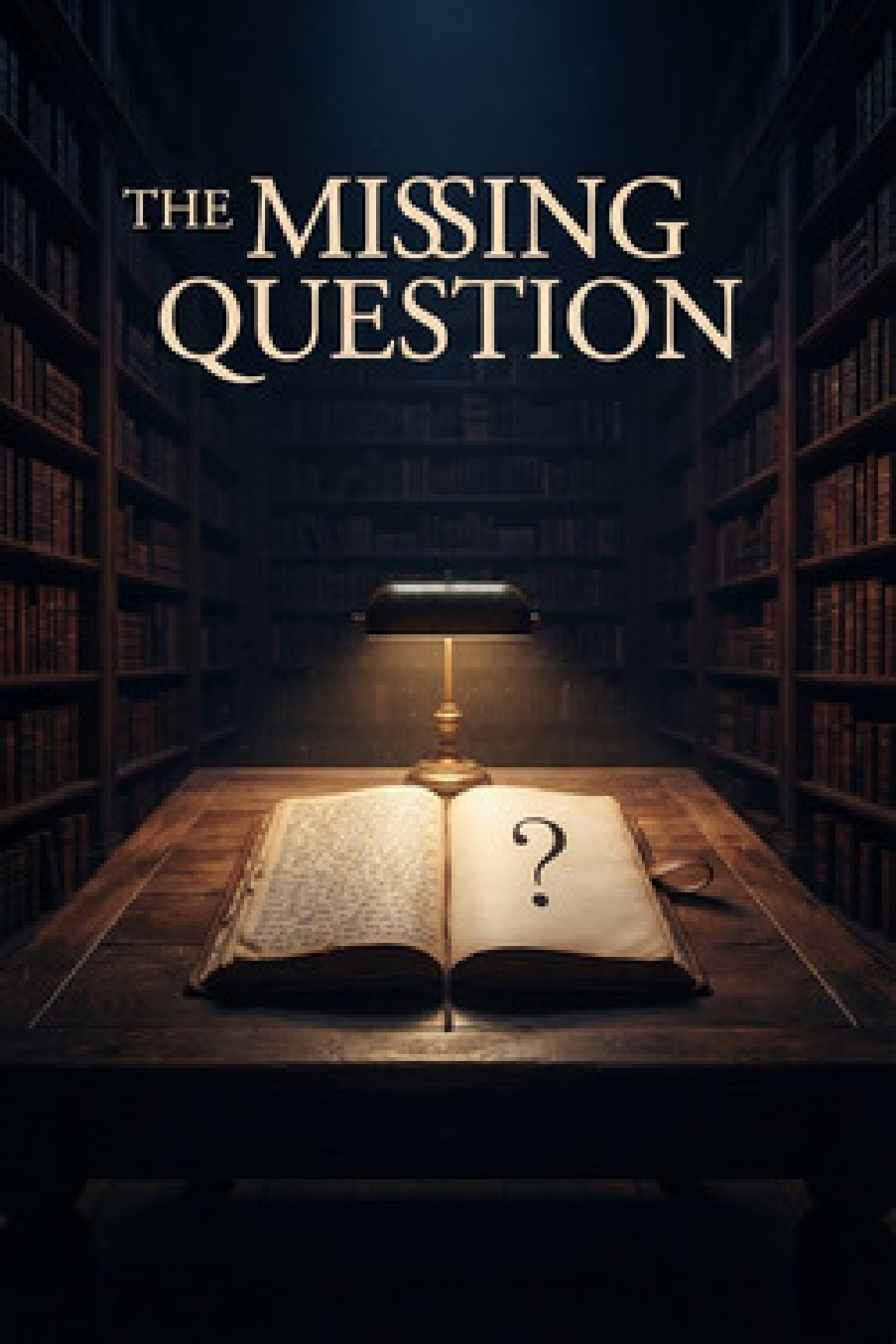
THE MISSING QUESTION
?

THRESHOLD 6

The Missing Question

For much of my life I chased answers.

As almost everyone does.

I wanted to know which was the right decision.

Which was the better road.

What was the meaning of what I was living.

I wanted clarity.

Direction.

Confirmation.

I believed that maturity consisted in accumulating answers.

The more time passed, the more I should have understood how it worked.

The more experience I accumulated, the fewer doubts I would have.

It was an elegant theory.

The problem was that life seemed to ignore it completely.

The years passed.

Experience grew.

Responsibilities increased.

And yet the questions did not diminish.

On the contrary.

They became deeper.

More complex.

More difficult.

It was a destabilizing discovery.

As a boy I imagined adults as people who had understood.

Then I became an adult.

And I discovered that many of us had simply learned to live with uncertainty.

It is not the same thing.

There is an enormous difference between knowing and continuing.

Many continue.

Few truly know.

I remember a period when I searched for answers everywhere.

In books.

In organizations.

In travels.

In the most experienced people.

In spirituality.

In rationality.

In numbers.

I believed there existed, somewhere, an explanation capable of organizing everything.

A formula.

A key.

A system.

But every time I thought I had found it, a new experience came to call it into question.

At first it was frustrating.

Then it became interesting.

Finally it became liberating.

Because I understood something.

Answers have a short life.

The right questions have a long life.

A very long one.

Some accompany us for decades.

Who am I?

What truly matters?

What does it mean to love?

What is worth suffering for?

What remains when everything changes?

They are not questions to be solved.

They are questions to be inhabited.

The difference is substantial.

An answer closes.

A question opens.

And life, after all, prefers openings.

Every time I went through a new experience, I noticed that the value lay not so much in the conclusion reached.

It lay in the question it had generated.

A loss generates a question.

A love generates a question.

An illness generates a question.

A victory generates a question.

Even success generates a question.

Often much more difficult than failure.

Because after obtaining something, an unexpected question appears:

"And now?"

For years I had believed that the meaning of things was hidden in the answers.

Then I began to notice a curious coincidence.

The most interesting people I met were also the least certain.

They were not indecisive.

They were open.

They understood that reality is vaster than one's convictions.

More complex than one's schemes.

Richer than one's conclusions.

This is why they kept asking questions.

Not out of weakness.

Out of intelligence.

Authentic intelligence does not consist in possessing many answers.

It consists in recognizing which questions still deserve to be asked.

Over the course of my life I have visited different countries.

Different cultures.

Different religions.

Different systems.

Each place possessed different answers.

And yet the fundamental questions were almost always identical.

How to live.

How to love.

How to face death.

How to live with time.

How to find a meaning.

This struck me deeply.

Because it showed something universal.

Civilizations change language.

The essential questions do not.

Perhaps this is precisely why fiction survives.

Because it does not offer solutions.

It offers explorations.

A novel does not serve to solve life.

It serves to illuminate a question.

And a good question can accompany a person for years.

Better than many answers.

I remember a day when I found myself reflecting on all the certainties I had abandoned.

They were numerous.

Many had governed long periods of my existence.

Some had been useful.

Others less so.

But all had given way to something more mature.

The awareness that reality is not a tribunal.

It is a conversation.

An infinite conversation between what we know and what we do not know.

Between what we understand and what escapes us.

Between what we have been and what we are becoming.

From that moment I stopped treating doubts as enemies.

I began to consider them travel companions.

Not all doubts deserve attention.

Some are noise.

Some are fear.

Some are simple confusion.

But there are others.

Deeper.

More silent.

More sincere.

The ones that keep returning.

The ones that knock at the door of consciousness year after year.

The ones that ask to be heard.

I have learned to respect them.

Because they often guard something important.

A transformation.

A truth.

A direction.

A part of us still unexplored.

Looking back, I am no longer impressed by people who have an answer for everything.

I am more interested in those who know how to pose an authentic question.

Because an answer can exhaust itself.

A question can generate an entire life.

Perhaps this is one of the most precious lessons that time has left me.

Do not seek only the answer.

Seek the question that generated it.

Because behind every significant conviction.

Behind every real change.

Behind every important choice.

Behind every story that deserves to be told.

There is always an invisible question.

And it is there that the journey begins.

Long before the answer.