

The Year of Three

Ferdinando Frega

THE YEAR OF THREE —1993

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Thirty-three years have passed since that year. Three is a number woven into my life, into what I am, into what I do, into my very existence — and to understand it fully I had to wait sixty years: three times twenty, a triangulation, like prayer, like the triangle, like the three blades of mother Gillette.
The number three. Not a derivative — a prime. Which means, all at once, three things: the perfection of man.

That was the year I decided to marry, received a corporate appointment made for me alone, accepted initiation into Freemasonry, witnessed the birth of my children, collected profits three times greater than my colleagues, and matured professionally with growth increments of plus thirty-three percent.
A year worth framing — and I say this today, thirty-three years on.

It was also the year of my first serious encounter with Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, and then with *If* —, written to his son after the boy's early death.
I was profoundly moved, as a man, as a father, as a Freemason. My life afterward was never quite the same.

Rudyard Kipling — writer, poet, Freemason, journalist. Born in India in 1865, exactly one hundred years before me. Gone now for ninety years.

Today I find myself watching what decisions a man of Indian origin will make at the helm of the company that gave my family everything.
I hope, very much, that he too has read *If* —.

Welcome, Mr. President. You are my president as well — because you are the guardian of my mother. For that, I can only thank you.

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