THE INVISIBLE BATON



THRESHOLD 1

The Invisible Baton

My grandfather did not know that one day someone would write about him.

My father did not know that one day someone would search for the meaning of certain choices he made.

I, for a long time, did not even know that a story existed.

I thought only days existed.

Normal days.

Days to get through.

Days made of work, problems, clients, responsibilities, phone calls, trips, promises kept and others left hanging.

Like millions of people in the world.

Great stories are almost always told the wrong way.

They begin at the end.

They show the result.

They flaunt the success.

They turn life into a straight line that leads inevitably from one point to another.

Reality does not work that way.

Reality is a set of invisible passages.

No one sees the moment when a father teaches a lesson without realizing it.

No one sees the moment when a son decides to keep it.

No one sees the moment when a principle crosses one generation and goes searching for another.

And yet it is right there that the stories which last are born.

Not in the spotlight.

In the silence.

For many years I thought that the bond between three generations of my family and Gillette was simply a professional coincidence.

A company.

A job.

A career.

A path like many others.

Then time began to do what it does best.

It connected the dots.

It brought together events that, when they happen, seem isolated.

It built an invisible geometry.

And slowly I understood that the true

protagonist was not the company.

It was continuity.

Because a brand can change.

A market can change.

A product can change.

Even the world can change.

But there are values that cross through everything without asking permission.

Discipline.

The word given.

Responsibility.

The dignity with which one faces work.

The idea that one's own name is worth more than one's own role.

These things do not appear in the balance sheets.

They do not appear in résumés.

They do not produce newspaper headlines.

But they are the invisible foundations on which a life is built.

I remember many people met along the way.

Some extraordinary.

Others forgotten.

Some powerful.

Others fragile.

As the years passed I noticed one thing.

The outer differences were enormous.

The inner differences much less so.

Wherever I went, in whatever country I worked, I always met men and women grappling with the same questions.

How to keep a promise.

How to protect a family.

How to face a loss.

How to remain standing when it would be easier to give up.

How to continue.

Always and only this.

To continue.

Perhaps that is why this story can cross different cultures.

Not because it speaks of a company.

Not because it speaks of me.

But because it speaks of something every human being recognizes.

The inheritance.

Not the economic one.

Not the material one.

The invisible one.

The one that passes from one person to another with no need for signatures.

The one no notary can certify.

The one that shows itself in a decision made in the difficult moment.

In a word kept.

In a sacrifice accepted.

In a renunciation carried out without witnesses.

When I was younger I thought the goal was to arrive.

To obtain.

To conquer.

To win.

Today I am no longer so sure.

Today I believe the true measure of a life is another.

What remains when the noise ends?

What survives when the titles disappear?

What keeps walking when the people are gone?

The answer I found is simple.

What remains is what we passed on.

What remains is what we taught without realizing it.

What remains is the way we treated others.

What remains is what we became.

And the blood remains.

Not biological blood.

Not the blood of kinship.

Blood as moral continuity.

As a thread.

As belonging.

As memory on the move.

This is why this story does not begin with a product.

It does not begin with a brand.

It does not even begin with a person.

It begins with a passage.

An invisible baton that crosses through time.

From one generation to the next.

From one hand to another.

From one name to another.

Three men.

Three eras.

Three different paths.

One single thread.

Three blades.

One blood.

And all the rest comes after.