



Chapter 0. Before the word

Sometimes it doesn't start at the moment when something happens.

Sometimes the beginning comes much earlier — quietly, almost imperceptibly: in the gaze that lingered on the empty window, in the longer silence after the usual question, in the feeling that the day is going on, but something inside you has already stopped.

The world outside rarely changes dramatically.

Houses remain in their places. People speak in familiar voices. The morning begins in the same way as yesterday.

But sometimes one simple thought can get deeper in a whole day.

Sometimes one sheet of paper knows more about a person than everyone around.

That morning, no one knew that ordinary schoolwork would become a door to where not everyone dared to look.



Chapter 1. Path to school

The morning was colder than it seemed from the window.

The light was just beginning to slowly spread between high-rise buildings, touching roofs, old antennas, wires wet after the night and still dark asphalt. The city woke up reluctantly, as if it had not yet decided whether to start a new day. In some windows, the light was already on — warm, yellow, alive. Others were still silent, behind the curtains of which someone slept in the last minutes before the alarm clock.

The boy stood at the door of the apartment for a few seconds longer than usual.

The backpack was lying on his shoulder, one hand was already touching the cold handle of the door, but for some reason he was in no hurry to get out. The smell of morning tea, a slight noise from the kitchen, muffled sounds of ordinary life, which repeated itself almost the same every day, were still felt in the apartment.

He closed the door quietly.

The entrance was greeted with twilight and the familiar smell of old walls, paint, dust and cold concrete. Somewhere below, a door creaked, someone slowly descended the stairs to the floor below. On the wall near the elevator there was still an old trace of an announcement that had been torn off long ago, but a rectangle of cleaner paint remained, as if a memory of something unnecessary.

The stairs were cold even through the soles of the shoes.

Every step was too clear.

Outside, the air was even fresher. It smelled of dampness, night, metal and morning calm, which lasts only a short time until the city is finally filled with sounds.

Ahead was a familiar road to school.

The same route he had taken hundreds of times: a narrow sidewalk, an old fence, a shop on the corner, a few trees that had almost lost their leaves. The asphalt shone in places after the night moisture. The sky was reflected in the puddles, still pale, without real color.

There was a tree near the crossing.

A bird sat on its upper branch.

Small, almost imperceptible, if not for the voice.

She sang briefly, lightly, as if she didn't know what fear was at all. Her sound was clear and strangely alive in the silence of the morning.

The boy stopped.

Just for a few seconds.

The bird was not afraid of heights. I didn't think if her voice sounded right. I didn't ask permission to sing.

She just was.

Sometimes freedom looked just like that — small, easy, and completely indifferent to everything that people called limits.

He stared at her until a car drove by, leaving behind a brief tire noise on the wet road.

The bird didn't fly.

She only turned her head a little, as if she had noticed him, and then continued to sing again.

The school was already visible ahead.

The gray façade of the building looked the same as yesterday, and the day before yesterday, and dozens of days before that. The windows reflected the morning light, and students were already gathering at the entrance. Someone laughed, someone stood silently, someone was in a hurry, as if they were afraid of being late even for a minute.

Other people's voices mixed into one even noise.

Sometimes this noise resembled the sea - not because it was beautiful, but because individual words were lost in it.

He slowly came closer.

The fence near the schoolyard was wet with morning moisture. There were still small drops on the metal, which trembled at the slightest movement of air.

Somewhere far away, a dog barked.

Someone abruptly closed the car door.

A plane flew over the roofs of the houses, or maybe just the wind created a similar sound for a moment - on such mornings it was sometimes difficult to immediately understand.

He looked up.

The sky remained calm.

But even in the calm sky lately, there has always been something that everyone has long ceased to trust.

At the entrance to the school, two boys were standing and arguing about something. Someone nearby was laughing at someone's joke.

Everything looked absolutely familiar.

That is why this day was no different from others.

For now.

He didn't know yet that one ordinary lesson, one piece of paper, and one simple phrase would stay with him longer than this day itself.

Sometimes the most important thing begins completely mundane.

No music.No warning.Without a single sign that could be noticed in advance.

Only the door of the school slowly opened in front of him, letting in the familiar noise of the corridors, the smell of paint, paper, and another morning that was about to become ordinary.



Chapter 2. Essay Assignments

«To die will be an awfully big adventure.»

— J. M. Barrie

The class was already living with its usual morning noise.

Someone else had time to tell the story he started at the break. Someone was looking through the messages on the phone, someone was nervously flipping through the notebook, as if at the last minute it was possible to remember everything that had been forgotten during the night. Chairs creaked on the floor, somewhere they laughed softly, somewhere they argued about something so mundane that in a few minutes no one would be able to repeat what exactly it was about.

Outside the window, the light became brighter.

Morning had finally entered the city, but there was still that strange half-asleep atmosphere in the classroom, when thoughts do not keep up with words.

The boy sat down in his seat by the window.

The table was cold to the touch. On its surface there were small scratches, old pen marks, other people's initials that someone had once left out of boredom or the desire to prove that even a tree remembers people longer than it seems.

There are still a few fragments of the last lesson on the board: an unfinished date, part of a word, erased chalk.

The classroom door opened.

The teacher came in calmly, as usual. In his hands - a magazine, several sheets, a pen.

The noise began to subside almost automatically.

Not because everyone wanted to listen instantly, but because years of the same movements had already taught the class to react even without a command.

The teacher put the magazine on the table and looked at the class briefly.

— Today we are writing an essay.

Someone immediately had a heavy exhalation. Someone smiled softly, because the essay always sounded easier than the test.

"The subject is simple," she said, taking the chalk.

A word slowly appeared on the board.

Death

The classroom was quiet for a few seconds.

It was as if even those who had just whispered lost their usual rhythm for a moment.

The word on the board looked strange.

Too short for how much content it contained.

Too calm for how much fear it could carry.

The teacher stepped aside a little.

— Write not a definition, not a textbook. Write how you understand it.

In the classroom, the familiar noise of opening pens, unfolding sheets, short sighs before the first words began.

The boy looked at a blank sheet.

The empty white rectangle seemed larger than usual.

It was as if the sheet was waiting not just for a text, but for something that had long been somewhere deeper than words.

He picked up the pen.

He brought it to the paper.

But he didn't write anything.

The same bird was still sitting outside the window.

Now it was almost inaudible through the pane of glass, but he could see it moving between the branches.

And suddenly he thought that death must also be like silence behind glass: you see movement, but the sound no longer reaches.

In class, someone has already written the second line.

Some even the third.

And his leaf remained clean.

The word on the board did not disappear.

It seems to have become bigger.

Not because it was scary.

But because everyone understood it in their own way, but almost no one spoke about it out loud.

He looked down at the paper again.

And only then did he write the first word.

Slowly.

Caution.

As if it depended on which direction all subsequent thoughts would go.



Chapter 3. Leaf: the first drop

«The life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.»

— Marcus Tullius Cicero

The first word appeared on the paper slowly.

So slowly, as if the pen itself wasn't sure if it was worth leaving.

The ink lay flat, in a thin dark line that immediately made the white sheet look different. Before that, he was just a blank slate, no different from hundreds of others. Now there was already a point in it from which it was possible to either go forward or stop.

The boy stared at what he had written for a few seconds.

Sometimes the first word is heavier than all the subsequent ones.

Not because it is difficult to come up with it, but because after it it is no longer possible to pretend that there is nothing inside.

The usual noise of the lesson continued to live in the classroom.

The creak of a chair is somewhere in the second row. Someone coughed softly. At the teacher's desk, they turned the page of the magazine. A car drove by outside the window, and a short reflection of light slid over the window.

Everything was ordinary.

Even too ordinary.

And this made the word "**death**" on the board look even stranger - as if it accidentally got here from another world.

He lowered his eyes to the leaf.

The written word no longer seemed enough.

I wanted to continue, but my thoughts did not line up evenly. They came in fragments: other people's voices, the nightly news, the siren, the darkness in the room, the familiar feeling when you lie at night and listen to the sound somewhere far away, after which all the sounds change.

He drew another line with his pen.

Second line.

Then he stopped.

For some reason, right now, the paper seemed too honest.

People could not be persuaded. It was possible to answer briefly. Smile when you don't want anything. Saying "everything is fine", even if nothing inside has been so easy for a long time.

The sheet could not answer in this way.

He was silent, but accepted only what was real.

Outside the window, the bird has already taken off.

The branch on which she was sitting swayed a little more from the slight movement of the air.

And this little thing suddenly seemed important.

Even after a short flight, something remains to move for a few more seconds.

Maybe it's the same with people.

Maybe, even when someone is no longer around, something from his presence fluctuates in the world for a long time: a voice, a habit, a phrase, a random glance left in the memory of another person.

He wrote a few more words.

Now the line didn't seem so empty anymore.

But the more ink remained on the paper, the stronger the strange feeling arose: as if he was not writing an essay for the lesson, but something that had been waiting for its moment for a long time.

Somewhere ahead, someone asked for a spare pen.

Someone quietly asked the topic.

The teacher calmly walked between the rows, sometimes lingering her gaze on the notebooks.

When she passed by, the boy automatically covered the writing with his palm.

Not because there was something forbidden there.

It's just that some thoughts look strange when someone else sees them.

On the board, the word still remained the same.

Death

Short. Clear. No explanation.

And suddenly he thought: perhaps it is not this word itself that causes fear, but the fact that there is always another question next to it, which people rarely say out loud:

And what will be left after me?

This thought came abruptly.

So abruptly that he even stopped writing.

The pen froze over the paper.

Because the answer did not appear.

Not yet.



Chapter 4. Age is just a number

“Age is just a number, and it does not define your potential. Unfortunately, many use this fact as an excuse for their laziness. True progress comes when we stop making excuses and take responsibility for our actions.” — Stas Kozosvyst

The pen remained motionless over the paper for a few more seconds.

The question that had just appeared in my head did not disappear:

And what will be left after me?

It was strangely uncomfortable.

Not because of the word *“after”*, but because the answer always rested on the present.

What can you leave behind if you are constantly reminded that you are not yet old enough for most things?

There was a short laugh in the classroom again.

Someone somewhere behind must have written something ironic or just found a way to get around the seriousness of the topic with a joke. This almost always happened: when people became uncomfortable, they looked for ease even where there was none.

The boy turned his head slightly towards the window.

In the yard, the wind moved the bare branches of the tree.

The same tree near which the bird sat in the morning.

It looked almost empty now.

And suddenly, this emptiness seemed like one familiar thing: the way sometimes adults look at children as if they have nothing inside yet, except for time that will fix everything someday.

As if the very fact of fewer years lived automatically means less weight of thoughts.

Shallower depth.

Less ability to understand something.

He had heard these things in various forms for a long time.

"When you grow up, you will understand."

"It's too early."

"It's too early for you to think about it."

"Become an adult first."

It was as if there was a direct law between the thought and the number in the passport.

But the number itself does not create anything.

She does not add intelligence. It does not guarantee courage. It does not give the ability to see more.

Some are many years old, but nothing has grown inside them for a long time.

And someone learns to see the cracks of the world earlier, even if no one admits it.

He looked at the word "**death**" on the blackboard and thought that even this topic often belonged only to adults—at least that's how the world behaves.

As if a child should write only about the sun, books, nature or future profession.

As if there are topics that are allowed to be accessed only after a certain date of birth.

But fear does not come after eighteen.

Losses too.

Alarm does not check documents.

The siren does not ask how old you are.

He looked at his piece of paper again.

Now the white space no longer seemed empty. A few lines were beginning to hold the thought, but something was still missing.

Something more precise.

Truer.

He wrote a new line.

Slowly.

As if each word had its own weight:

Age is just a number, but people often build a wall out of it, which they are afraid to look behind themselves.

After that, he stopped.

The sentence turned out to be simple, but there was something close to what had been inside for a long time.

It always seemed strange to him how easily people accept boundaries if these boundaries are voiced confidently.

Someone said that it was too early — and this already sounds like a law.

Someone said that it was impossible - and many immediately agree.

As if another person's word can cross out a real action.

At the next desk, they turned the page.

Someone had already finished writing.

Someone was nervously looking at the clock.

The time of the lesson moved as usual, but inside it seemed to open up another space — quieter, deeper, without school noise.

And it was there that the thought suddenly became even clearer:

Perhaps the problem is not that the world sets boundaries.

The problem is that too many people begin to believe that these boundaries are real.

He lowered his pen.

Outside the window, the sun became a little brighter.

The light touched the edge of the desk, the sheet, and the fingers.

And for a moment everything looked so calm that it was hard to believe: sometimes the greatest resistance begins in such silence.



Chapter 5. Emotions are not treated with the word "good"

"The word 'happy' would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness."

— Carl Jung

The classroom was getting quieter.

That initial noise, with which the lesson always began, gradually dissolved into the smooth rustle of pens, pages and short movements, when someone changed his position, leaned his elbow on the desk or tried to formulate a thought faster.

The teacher was sitting at the table and looking through something in the magazine.

The clock above the blackboard moved almost imperceptibly, but every minute sounded with a short click of the hand, which became strangely expressive in the silence.

The boy looked at his leaf.

It already had a few lines on it, but each new sentence seemed to require more than just words.

Because when you write about things that you really feel, the text suddenly ceases to be a task.

It becomes a mirror.

And the mirror sometimes shows more than you want to see.

He thought about how often people ask:

"Is everything okay?"

This question sounds so common that it almost lost weight.

It is said in the corridors, at home, between lessons, in messages, not even always waiting for an answer.

And almost always the answer is the same:

"Well, it's okay."

Briefly.

Fast.

Convenient.

As if the word "good" can close any state if you say it calmly enough.

But the strangeness was that sometimes even when you say this word, nothing changes inside.

The word sounds right.

But it doesn't work.

Because some things are not cleaned up by the answer.

They do not disappear from the fact that they were called shorter.

Anxiety does not weaken with proper intonation.

Fatigue does not dissolve from smiling.

And even if everything around looks normal - a desk, a classroom, a window, a teacher's voice, an ordinary day - this does not mean that everything inside is also in place.

He drew a new line with his pen:

Emotions don't go away just because they've been given a convenient name.

The sentence seemed correct.

Not beautiful.

Not complicated.

Just honest.

Ahead, someone had already put down the pen and leaned on the back of the chair, looking out the window, as if the text did not require anything else.

But his own leaf seemed to be just beginning to open.

He remembered how sometimes the most difficult moments look completely invisible to others.

A person can sit next to him, answer, even laugh, but inside he has long been unable to hear what seemed ordinary yesterday.

You can speak in an even voice.

You can complete tasks.

You can even look calm.

And at the same time, to feel how thoughts become heavier for no apparent reason.

That is why words sometimes seem too weak.

Especially the ones that people use as a universal patch.

Good.

One word that should explain everything.

As if it is enough to say it - and the condition will become easier.

But true emotions don't take orders.

They do not obey simple formulations.

They can be silent.

They can hide.

But they remain.

Outside the window, the sun was already touching the upper branches of the tree.

The light has become warmer.

The class looked almost peaceful.

And it was at such moments that the most surprising thing was how much the internal state could not coincide with what others see.

He looked at the word "**death**" on the board again.

Now it no longer frightened.

Rather, it was a reminder that some topics always do not begin with the end, but with how a person learns to be silent about what he feels.

Sometimes silence lasts longer than any answer.



Chapter 6. Depression in the child's body

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

— Leonard Cohen

There is a strange injustice in the way people imagine childhood.

As if it were necessarily an easy time.

As if if a person is not old enough, then his thoughts cannot yet be heavy.

It's as if age automatically protects against inner darkness.

In books, childhood often smells of summer, sun, warm evenings, bicycles, laughter and the feeling that there is an endless expanse of time ahead.

In reality, everything does not always look so even.

Sometimes, even in childhood, fatigue appears, which is difficult to explain.

Not physical.

Not the one that goes away after sleep.

Other.

Quiet, but stubborn.

It's as if something inside is gradually getting heavier for no apparent reason.

The boy sat motionless, looking at his leaf.

There were already lines, but each of them revealed another thought, which was previously more convenient not to touch.

In the classroom, someone quietly asked for a washer.

A chair creaked somewhere.

The teacher took a few steps between the rows, but her presence was now felt somewhere far away, as if through a thick layer of air.

Because sometimes the outside world stays close, but it is perceived as if a little muffled.

It's as if the sound comes with a delay.

It is as if there is an invisible glass between you and everything else.

He thought that perhaps the hardest thing is when you yourself cannot explain exactly why it suddenly becomes empty.

As if the day was normal.

Nothing catastrophic happened.

The same lesson, the same walls, the same people.

But inside something no longer reacts the way it used to.

Things that once gave ease no longer give it right away.

Laughter sounds, but does not linger.

Joy comes shorter.

Fatigue is longer.

He wrote a new line:

Sometimes the most difficult thing is to explain why sadness appeared without permission.

The sentence turned out to be simple.

But there was something precise about him.

This is exactly what everything often looked like: without an abrupt beginning, without an obvious moment, after which you can say - this is where everything changed.

It's just that one day you notice that silence has become more commonplace.

That thoughts often linger somewhere deeper.

That even the morning is sometimes perceived not as the beginning, but as another segment that needs to be passed.

A shadow of a cloud flew outside the window.

The light on the desk became dimmer for a second.

And for some reason, this brief eclipse exactly coincided with what was felt inside.

It was as if he had agreed to be silent for a moment even for a day.

He ran his finger along the edge of the sheet.

The paper was dry, cold and very real.

Unlike thoughts, which sometimes seemed too vague to explain even to yourself.

Perhaps that is why people often do not talk about this out loud.

Because how do you describe a condition that does not have a clear form?

How to explain fatigue if you yourself do not understand where it grows from?

Especially when everything looks normal from the outside.

Especially when everyone is used to seeing childhood as simple.

He looked at the class.

Someone wrote quickly.

Someone has already looked at what has been written.

A regular lesson.

An ordinary day.

And only his own thoughts for some reason became deeper than a simple school sheet allowed.

Suddenly, another feeling appeared:

Maybe it's not that the darkness is strong.

Maybe sometimes it just comes before people have time to come up with the right name for it.



Chapter 7. Other people's eyes

"Care about what other people think and you will always be their prisoner."

— Lao Tzu

There are things that a person begins to do even before he notices it.

For example, you can automatically think about what it looks like from the outside.

Not in the mirror.

But in someone else's imagination.

As if there is always an invisible second glance nearby, which evaluates even when no one directly says anything.

The boy sat slightly bent over the sheet, but the thought had long since moved away from the essay itself.

She moved on.

Into the space where almost every action for some reason passes through an internal question:

And what does it look like?

Say something out loud. Be silent. Look out the window longer than usual. Do not laugh where others are laughing.

Even simple silence sometimes seems noticeable if there is too much of someone else's presence around.

And it's surprisingly exhausting.

Because while one part of you just lives, the other seems to be constantly checking whether it looks right enough.

He drew a new line with his pen:

Why should I think about how I am seen, if even I myself do not always understand myself until the very end?

After that, he stopped.

The sentences were longer than the previous ones.

But that's exactly why it sounded honest.

Outside the window, the tree hardly moved.

The wind has subsided.

The light became smoother, and the glass no longer reflected the class as much as a few minutes ago.

Now there was more sky in the window.

And in this simple detail, something was suddenly felt right: the sky does not change itself because of who looks at it.

It just exists.

Perhaps this is what has always surprised me the most — how easily nature exists without constant self-control, and how difficult it is for a person.

Someone in the classroom laughed softly.

Someone whispered a short phrase that was almost impossible to make out.

And even these sounds sometimes made the brain automatically check: is it about me or not?

Although most often not.

People are much more busy with themselves than they seem.

But the inner feeling often behaves differently.

It's as if the whole world is looking more closely than it really is.

He thought about how many decisions people postpone just because they are afraid of looking strange.

Wrong to answer. Wrong to start. Wrong to make mistakes. Not being yourself like that.

Sometimes someone else's opinion is not even voiced, but it already affects more than reality.

It's like an invisible frame that you carry inside yourself.

He wrote another line:

Someone else's gaze is often heavier, not because it is strong, but because we ourselves allow it to become important.

Now the sheet already looked different.

The words began to connect with each other not as a school essay, but as a text that suddenly turned out to be closer to itself than expected.

The teacher again walked between the rows.

This time it's slower.

Her steps were even, almost silent.

As she passed by, the boy again covered the writing with his hand a little.

Not because of fear.

Rather, because of the strange feeling that some thoughts should still remain only between him and the paper.

Because as soon as words become visible to others, they already sound different.

Outside the window, a bird suddenly flew again.

This time quickly, almost barely noticeable.

And this short trajectory seemed very accurate for some reason:

She flew without a pause, without looking, without checking who was watching.

As if the movement itself was more important than any observation.

And this simple thing suddenly sounded in my head almost like an answer:

Perhaps freedom begins exactly where you stop living in someone else's imaginary mirror.



Chapter 8. School pressure

“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

— Albert Einstein

There are places where noise exists even in silence.

School was just such a place.

Even when the lesson went quietly, even when everyone sat silently over the task, even when only the distant movement of the city was heard outside the window, there was still something that could not be called complete silence.

Perhaps because the building itself has long been accustomed to accumulating votes.

Hundreds of days, hundreds of steps, hundreds of identical calls, hundreds of answers that someone once spoke with confidence, and someone just to sit down faster.

The walls have been absorbing it for years.

Sometimes it seemed that even when the classroom was empty, there was still an invisible background in the air of someone's phrases, sighs, haste, fear of evaluation, other people's

comparisons, random jokes and brief moments when someone thought they were being seen too closely at the moment.

The boy sat over a piece of paper, but now his attention was increasingly taken away from words.

Because school knows how to take attention even when a person is trying to concentrate.

Not through the lesson.

Because of the general feeling of the system's constant presence.

The grade here always exists even before it is given.

It seems to be hanging somewhere nearby.

In the pause before the answer. In the way the teacher looks when he calls to the blackboard. In the way others react to the mistake. In the way they compare even silently.

School knows how to make even an ordinary minute more difficult if a person has already learned to expect pressure from him.

Outside the window, the light became even smoother. The sun rose higher, and there was now a thin streak of heat on the windowsill.

But in the classroom, the air still remained a little thick.

Someone turned the page in front.

Someone had already finished writing and sat motionless, as if they were afraid that the teacher would say something else now.

Someone, on the contrary, looked at a blank sheet of paper with such an expression as if there was a task much larger than an ordinary essay.

Sometimes the school surprisingly increases the weight of even simple things.

Not because they are really complicated.

But because everything here is tied to the result.

Not just to write.

And write correctly.

Not just to answer.

And to answer in such a way that it meets expectations.

Sometimes even a thought begins to sound not the way it was born, but the way it is safer to say it.

The boy looked at the blackboard.

The word "**Death**" was still there.

Short, even, written in white chalk.

And it was strange that even such a topic within the school suddenly began to be felt as part of the system: lines, structure, volume, grade.

As if even the deepest should be talked about within the margin of the sheet.

He wrote a new line:

Sometimes school teaches not only knowledge, but also how to hide true thoughts behind safe words.

After that, he stopped for a moment.

The sentences seemed heavier than the previous ones.

But more truthful.

Because really, not all thoughts here sounded equally easy.

Some automatically underwent internal verification even before they hit the paper.

Is it worth writing like this? Does it sound normal? Isn't it too strange? Will it be understood correctly?

And even if no one directly presses, the very habit of thinking within the assessment remains.

This was a special form of school pressure: not always external, often internal.

It's as if the system has been around for so long that part of its voice begins to sound inside you.

He looked up.

On the board, just below the topic, there was a barely noticeable trace of the old erased formula from the previous lesson.

This also seemed symbolic.

The school always superimposes the new on top of the old, but the old never disappears completely.

It's the same with people.

Words once spoken by accident sometimes stay longer than formal lessons.

"I could have done better."

"Why not?"

"You need to try harder."

Even when these phrases have not been heard for a long time, they sometimes continue to exist inside, like a barely visible trace of chalk after erasure.

In the corridor outside the door, someone ran.

The footsteps were fast, almost loud.

Then everything calmed down again.

And this brief external pause suddenly made the class even quieter.

It was as if everyone had heard their own thoughts more deeply at the same time.

He looked at his leaf.

The text already occupied most of the page.

And surprisingly, the more I wrote, the less it resembled an ordinary homework or class assignment.

It's as if a piece of paper is no longer just a part of the lesson.

It began to become a space where, for the first time, you can not squeeze your thought into the correct form.

And there was something almost dangerous about this simple opportunity.

Because as soon as a person begins to honestly formulate himself, he can no longer completely return to the old silence.

He looked at the word "Death" again.

And for the first time I thought that, perhaps, the school is under pressure not only with rules.

Perhaps the biggest pressure is that here you are constantly learning to be visible, even when you want to stay with only your thoughts.



Chapter 9. War is the biggest wound

"In war, there are no unwounded soldiers."

— José Narosky

There are sounds that a person does not forget even when it is quiet around.

Not because they sound all the time.

But because after the first time, the brain begins to wait for them even in silence.

This is how war changes space: it enters not only the news, not only the maps, not just the headlines — it enters the way a person listens to the world.

Even if it's calm outside the window now.

Even if the lesson continues normally.

Even if someone next to you is laughing, someone is turning the page, and the chalk is still holding on to the board.

One distant sound, similar to something incomprehensible, is enough, and the body itself tenses up before the thought.

The boy was sitting in the classroom, looking at what was written, but his thoughts suddenly pushed the lesson aside.

Because the word "death" in a country where the sky sometimes speaks with missiles always sounds different.

Not as an abstraction.

Not as a philosophical topic.

But as something that has long ceased to be just a book concept.

He remembered waking up earlier than the siren one night.

Not from the sound.

From a strange inner jolt, it was as if the body itself felt that something had changed somewhere in the air.

The room was almost completely dark then.

Only the faint light of the lantern from the street passed through the curtains and left a thin streak on the floor.

Everything around looked familiar: the table, the chair, the wardrobe, the edge of the blanket.

But it was in this habituality that there was already something tense.

It was as if the air had become heavier.

Then came the sound.

Distant.

Deaf.

One after which, for a few seconds, the brain still does not want to admit what it heard.

And only then comes the understanding: this is not an accident.

Not a door.

Not a car.

Not something domestic.

This again the sky reminds us that even the night does not guarantee peace.

He then lay motionless and stared into the darkness.

And the strangest thing was not in the fear itself.

But in how quickly the fear becomes familiar.

It is as if a person is gradually learning not to be surprised by something that he should never have been used to.

In class, someone quietly asked for another sheet.

The teacher answered briefly, almost in a whisper.

Everything looked peaceful.

That is why war sometimes feels even stranger: it exists even where it is not visible now.

Like a shadow that does not lie on the floor, but somewhere in memory.

He wrote a new line:

War is when even silence ceases to be completely safe.

The pen slid slowly.

The words lay down evenly, but after them he did not move for a long time.

Because the truth was that war hurts not only with an explosion.

It hurts with the expectation of an explosion.

It hurts with the way people start looking at the sky...

The way children learn to distinguish sounds even before they have time to grow up...

The way the word "*anxiety*" becomes a normal part of the day.

He remembered the morning messages.

Quick news. Names of cities. Numbers. Directions.

Sometimes it seems that the numbers in the news are too dry for how much pain is behind them.

One missile. Two drones. Three explosions.

But behind every number, there is always someone's apartment, someone's corridor, someone's kitchen, someone's frightened look at night.

Someone's life, which a minute ago was still ordinary.

Outside the classroom window, a plane slowly flew by, or perhaps just a stronger gust of wind created a familiar noise between the roofs.

And even this short sound caused several students to automatically raise their eyes.

That's what war does.

It enters the reflex.

In the movement of the head.

In a short silence.

At the moment when the heart is already changing the rhythm before understanding.

The boy looked at the word "**Death**" on the board again.

Now it no longer seemed abstract at all.

Because in a country where night sometimes sounds louder than day, death is no longer a distant topic.

It becomes part of the general air.

And perhaps that is why the greatest wound of war is not only in destruction.

The biggest wound is that even after silence, a person does not believe in silence completely for a long time.



Chapter 10. First day of alarm

"The sound of war is not always explosions. Sometimes it is waiting."

— Stas Kozosvyst

The first time is always remembered differently.

Not because he was the scariest.

Because it is then that the brain does not yet know how to properly deal with fear.

He doesn't have a habit yet.

It still does not know how to automatically distinguish when the sound is really close, and when it only passes somewhere far away.

That day, it all started normally.

Even too ordinary.

The morning went smoothly: the schoolyard, a few familiar voices, the corridor, the smell of paint, wet jackets and paper. On the board, someone has not yet managed to erase part of the homework from the previous lesson. There was a light in the window that did not promise anything unusual.

That is why the sound of the siren at first seemed alien.

As if it did not belong to this day.

Not this city.

Not at this moment.

It began somewhere far away—subtly, almost uncertainly, like a sound that had not yet decided whether it would get louder.

For a few seconds in the classroom, no one said anything.

Because the first reaction is always the same: the brain checks if it is really what it seems.

The teacher raised her head.

Someone at the door also froze.

The siren became clearer.

Equal.

Viscous.

Such that passes through walls, through windows, through any other noise.

At this point, the class was no longer just a class.

It instantly became a place where everyone started listening to the same thing.

Even those who had just whispered fell silent.

Phones on several desks lit up almost simultaneously.

Notifications.

Notifications.

Short words that needed no explanation.

Air raid siren.

The boy stared at the screen for only a second.

But even that was enough to feel something shrinking inside.

Not abruptly.

Faster for sure.

Like a mechanism that has already started without permission.

Footsteps were heard in the corridor.

Faster than usual.

Somewhere the door slammed.

The teacher stood up.

Her voice was calm, even too calm:

"Let's go down."

For some reason, this calmness sounded worse than panic.

Because when a person speaks exactly in a situation where everyone already understands the seriousness, it means that everything has long become familiar enough for even fear to learn to endure without further ado.

The students began to get up.

The chairs moved unevenly on the floor, somewhere abruptly, somewhere too slowly.

No one ran.

But everyone was moving faster than usual.

In the corridor, the air immediately became different.

More people, more steps, more short voices.

But at the same time, there is a strange mufflement.

It was as if each sound was now passing through another layer of tension.

The boy walked along with the others down the stairs.

The concrete walls of the basement always looked the same, but that day they suddenly began to look different.

Not because they have changed.

But because for the first time it became clear: even school has a place where everyone temporarily becomes just people waiting.

No grades.

No lessons.

Without the usual roles.

It was cooler in the basement.

The light of the lamps made the faces paler.

Someone immediately sat down on a bench.

Someone was left standing against the wall.

Someone was looking at the phone.

Someone tried to joke more quietly than usual, as if they themselves did not believe that the joke sounded appropriate now.

The siren was still ongoing.

She could hardly be heard directly, but she remained somewhere above it all—in the knowledge that something was moving somewhere in the sky right now, and no one down here could control it.

He looked at the concrete floor.

On a small crack near the wall.

On someone else's backpack next to it.

On the hand of a guy who nervously twisted the pen between his fingers.

At such moments, the world narrows surprisingly to the details.

It is as if the brain itself is looking for something small, concrete, so as not to think about the big thing.

And that's when a very simple thought comes to mind for the first time:

Fear doesn't always scream.

Sometimes he just sits next to him and is silent with everyone.

A few minutes later, someone received a message:

"It's already over.

These words sounded almost quietly.

But after them, the air immediately became different.

It was as if everyone had taken a little deeper breath at the same time.

Going back upstairs was also ordinary.

The same stairs.

Same walls.

Same class.

But after the first siren, even the familiar door already looks a little different.

Because now a person knows that an ordinary day can be interrupted at any minute.

And this makes ordinariness never sound the same completely again.



Chapter 11. Empty Street

"Memory is the diary that we all carry about with us."

— Oscar Wilde

After the alarm, the city always looked different.

Even if nothing has changed outwardly.

The same houses stood in their places. The same roads stretched between blocks. The same trees moved in the wind.

But the air after the siren had a different density.

It was as if the sound had already disappeared, but its trace still remained between the walls, in the windows, in the looks of people who were returning to ordinary life as if the word "*ordinary*" itself now sounded a little conventional.

After school, the boy walked home slower than usual.

Not because of fatigue.

Rather, because of the strange feeling, as if after an alarm, the city needs a few minutes to learn to sound again.

There were few people on the street.

It is as if part of the city has not yet decided whether to completely return outside.

Cars passed less often.

Somewhere far away, a dog barked.

One woman quickly crossed the road, holding her phone to her ear.

There were two people standing at the bus stop, but even they were silent.

This silence was not complete.

She just had a different character - wary.

It was as if every sound was now passing through another internal filter.

The boy looked ahead, but the thought suddenly went elsewhere.

Not today.

On a night he remembered all too clearly.

Lviv.

The room was strange then, but already familiar enough to sleep without light.

The window was closed, the curtains were half-drawn, and only the faint city light came through the fabric, leaving an uneven streak on the wall.

It was too late.

The type of night when the city seems to be sleeping, but cannot be completely silent: somewhere a car passes by, somewhere the door clicks far away, somewhere water passes through the pipes.

He was almost asleep when he heard the first sound.

At first, it was very far away.

Not an explosion.

Not a siren.

Something else.

Something that is difficult to explain to a person who did not listen to the night during the war.

Because there are sounds that, even before understanding, already make the body tense.

He raised his head.

He lay motionless for a few seconds.

Then he heard a siren.

It did not start abruptly - it seemed to gradually enter space, stretching over the city until it became the main sound of the night.

Everything in the room remained dark.

But after the siren, the darkness always becomes different.

He instinctively pressed himself tighter against the bed.

So much as if the mattress could give extra protection.

As if the very surface under the body is able to make a person less visible to the sky.

Fingers gripped the edge of the blanket.

I didn't want to move at all.

Not because of fatigue.

Because of that strange sensation when any movement seems superfluous, as if the calmness of the body alone can change something.

Then came the first explosion.

Distant, but clear enough not to confuse it with anything else.

The window shook faintly.

A second of silence.

Then another sound.

This time, closer is not an explosion, but a sharp short blow, similar to an air defense shot somewhere in the night space.

Another one.

It will.

He lay completely motionless.

He looked into the darkness.

And listened.

It is hearing that becomes the main thing at such moments.

The eyes see almost nothing.

But each new sound already builds a picture in your head: somewhere over the city, something is intercepted, something flies further, and you can't do anything but wait for what the next sound will be.

Another explosion.

Now he is deaf.

As if somewhere further away.

But the heart does not know how to measure distance accurately.

For him, the mere fact that the sky is not empty now is enough.

The room was still cold.

But the cold has already mixed with another sensation - the one that does not allow you to take a deep breath right away.

He didn't even notice that he had been breathing shorter all this time.

Superficially.

It was as if the body itself was afraid to make an extra sound.

It was only when the siren lasted longer and the explosions began to sound less frequently, that the first feeling appeared that the voltage wave was receding a little.

Does not disappear.

Just takes a step back.

On the street, in the present day, he heard the sound of a car again.

Returned to today's street.

The city was still standing in front of him after the alarm.

Almost empty.

Almost calm.

But now this silence had a night behind it again, in which even the bed seemed to be the only point to hold onto.

And, perhaps, that is why, after the war, even an ordinary empty street sometimes seems more than just quiet.

And one that remembers more than it shows.



Chapter 12. Night: Rocket in the Sky

“Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise.”

— Victor Hugo

The night always seems longer when the sky is not silent.

Especially when the city is almost asleep, when the houses around are dark, when most of the windows have gone out, and it seems that the world should finally become simple at least for a few hours.

But it is at such hours that a sound sometimes comes, which immediately changes everything.

Not by volume.

The very fact of its appearance.

That night, the boy was already lying in bed.

The blanket was stretched almost to the shoulders, the room was semi-dark, and the shadow on the ceiling barely moved from the light of the lantern outside the window.

It was so quiet that even trifles could be heard: how a switch clicked somewhere in the apartment, how water went out in the pipes, how someone turned over behind the wall in a dream.

Such sounds are usually soothing.

Because they mean: life next to you goes on as usual.

But then comes another sound.

Distant, elongated, almost metallic.

It doesn't look like a car or an airplane in the usual sense.

Something else.

Something that always sounds unnatural in the air.

He opened his eyes.

For a few seconds, I just stared into the darkness.

It was as if the ear was checking whether it really was.

And it was at this moment that a short movement of light appeared through the edge of the curtain.

A thin line.

Ambulance.

Almost unnaturally flat.

A light in the sky that shouldn't have been there.

He climbed a little higher, but only enough to see the edge of the window.

The movement in the sky lasted only seconds.

But they were enough to understand: this is not an accidental glare.

Something was flying.

Far away.

High.

And at the same time, it is too realistic.

At such moments, space shrinks strangely.

The room gets smaller.

The bed is lower.

Curtains are thinner.

Even the walls no longer seem completely solid.

Because when something passes in the sky, a person suddenly feels very clearly how thin the line is between an ordinary night and what can happen in a few seconds.

Then, somewhere in the distance, the first dull thud sounded.

Not harsh.

Rather heavy.

It was as if the air itself shuddered.

The glass shook faintly.

And again there was a short pause.

It is the pauses that frighten no less than the sound itself.

Because they always have questions:

Is that all — or not yet?

He squeezed the edge of the quilt tighter.

And again, almost instinctively, he snuggled closer to the bed.

As if lower means safer.

Although the mind has long known that logic does not fully work at such moments.

The second sound came a little later.

Sharper.

Somewhere further away, but clear enough for the heart to react faster again.

Then a short shot of air defense.

Another one.

In the night air, they sound different - short, dry, without the echo of an ordinary day.

It is as if the sky itself responds for a moment.

He lay motionless.

Not because of panic.

Rather, because of the form of fear when the body itself decides not to make unnecessary movements.

Because any action seems superfluous.

Any sound from yourself is superfluous.

Only hearing works too clearly.

At such moments, a person even hears his own heart.

Every hit.

Every second between the external sound and the internal expectation.

Somewhere nearby, a few blocks away or further away, others may have been awake.

Perhaps someone was lying in the dark in the same way.

Perhaps someone was standing near the corridor.

Perhaps somewhere there was no longer the same silence that seemed ordinary a few minutes ago.

This is what scared me the most:

you don't see the full picture.

You only hear individual fragments.

And each of them leaves more imagination than fact.

When the explosions became rarer, and the sky regained its silence, the night did not become the same as before.

Because after each such moment, even silence sounds a little different.

It is as if the memory of sound already remains in it.

He stared at the ceiling for a long time.

Not because I didn't want to sleep.

But because the dream after the sky, which just spoke with rockets, always comes more slowly.



Chapter 13. Hurting jokes

"Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind."

— Rudyard Kipling

There are words that disappear immediately after they are spoken.

And there are those that stay longer than the very moment in which they sounded.

Sometimes it's even surprising how much a short phrase can survive a whole day.

Especially if it is said as if in jest.

Because a joke has a strange power: it allows you to say almost anything, leaving the person the right to smile later and pretend that nothing serious has happened.

That is why some things hurt more when pronounced with a smile.

After the lesson, the class returned to its usual rhythm again.

The corridors were filled with voices, movements, footsteps, the smell of food from the dining room, short fragments of other people's conversations, which mingled with each other so that not a single phrase lasted long.

School noise is always like a river: it flows non-stop, changes direction, but never completely subsides.

The boy was standing by the window in the corridor.

In the courtyard, several students had already gone outside, although the air remained cold.

The sun was higher than in the morning, but it still gave almost no heat.

Nearby, several guys were talking about something of their own.

Quickly, in fragments, jumping from topic to topic.

One phrase sounded suddenly.

Briefly.

With a smile.

Almost by the way.

The laughter after her was also short.

As if it really didn't mean anything.

But sometimes the brain works strangely with words: it can miss dozens of sounds and suddenly catch on just one.

For the one who did not ask to stay.

The boy did not even immediately understand why this particular phrase was delayed.

After all, there was nothing special about it.

No overt rudeness.

No direct hit.

Just intonation.

Just a way of saying.

Just that invisible layer, in which there is always more than in the words themselves.

And it was because of this that she sounded longer than she should have.

Because sometimes it is not the content that hurts.

It hurts how you suddenly feel inside this content.

It's as if you become too visible for a second.

Even if others have long moved on to the next topic.

He looked out the window, but he could hardly see the yard.

Because one brief thought has already gone further:

Why do words spoken easily sometimes weigh so much?

Perhaps because people often pronounce them without understanding where they then fall.

For the one who said, it's just a sound.

For the one who heard, sometimes another small crack.

And small cracks also accumulate.

Not immediately.

Slowly.

Almost imperceptibly.

Like water that has been passing through a stone for years.

He remembered how many times similar things had sounded before.

Not necessarily offensive.

Just as if by the way.

Sometimes even about what a person in himself has not yet had time to explain.

That is why some jokes hurt not at the moment.

And later.

When it's quiet.

When you return to them in your thoughts.

When the intonation sounds more accurate again than during the conversation itself.

He thought that perhaps this was the strangeness of human communication:

People often don't remember what they said.

But they remember very well what they heard.

Especially if there is already a place inside where fatigue has already accumulated.

He leaned his hand on the cold windowsill.

The glass was cool.

Outside, everything looked completely peaceful: a few trees, a sports field, shadows from the fence.

The world outwardly did not change because of one phrase.

But the internal state sometimes changes even from less.

And perhaps that is why some people only begin to speak more cautiously when they themselves have once heard something that has remained with them for a long time.

The bell rang again in the corridor.

Loud, sharp, familiar.

He cut the thought in the same way as a knife cuts a thread.

People immediately moved towards the classrooms.

The noise came back again.

And only a short phrase still remained somewhere inside, as if proving a simple thing:

Sometimes the deepest traces are left not by war, not by night, not by a siren.

Sometimes it's just a few words spoken without weight.



Chapter 14. The shadow does not destroy

“One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.” — Carl Jung

The shadow never comes suddenly.

She does not open the door.

Do not speak.

Doesn't ask permission to stay.

It just appears at the moment when the light changes direction somewhere - and suddenly you see next to you something that has always been there, but previously did not have a shape.

This is how inner pain works.

It rarely starts as a disaster.

More often — as a small dot.

Like a word that hurt a little.

Like a night that doesn't end for a long time.

Like silence after the news.

Like the feeling that even among people, sometimes you stay one step aside.

Another lesson had been going on in the classroom for a long time, but the boy almost did not hear the teacher's voice.

Not because he didn't want to listen.

It's just that sometimes it gets louder inside than outside.

The pen lay between his fingers.

There was a notebook in front of him.

Open.

Clean edge of the page.

A few sentences written.

And then there was an empty place where thoughts rested as if paper suddenly became heavier than words.

The light from the window fell from the side.

And on the desk lay the shadow of his hand.

Clear.

Dark.

Slightly elongated due to the angle of the sun.

He stared at her longer than necessary.

Because suddenly a simple thought appeared:

The shadow never invents a new shape.

It repeats what already exists.

If you raise your hand, it also rises.

If you squeeze your fingers, it also shrinks.

If you freeze, it freezes.

And maybe the inner pain works the same way.

He does not create a new person.

It simply follows the contours of what is already inside.

If there is a lot of silence in a person, the shadow is also silent.

If there is a lot of fear, it grows faster.

If there are a lot of thoughts that have not been said, it becomes thicker.

The boy slowly ran his finger along the edge of the page.

The paper was a little rough.

Plain sheet.

But sometimes it is ordinary things that hold you tighter than any words.

He thought about all the moments that people usually call trivia.

Phrase in the hallway.

A glance that someone gave by accident.

Someone else's silence where you wanted an answer.

News read before bedtime.

Night sound in the sky.

A random memory.

A laugh that didn't sound evil, but somehow left a mark.

Separately, all this is small.

Together - already weight.

And it is this weight that sometimes makes it feel as if another space appears inside.

Darker.

Deeper.

A place where words do not disappear for longer.

The teacher was explaining something near the blackboard.

The chalk slid slowly.

Part of the class listened.

Some of them did not.

Life on the outside went absolutely normally.

This is what sometimes surprises the most: how inner complexity can coexist with a completely ordinary day.

Someone laughs.

Someone asks for a pen.

Someone looks out the window.

And next to it, in someone's head, a completely different dialogue has been going on for a long time.

He looked at the shadow of his hand again.

The sun shifted a little higher and the shape became shorter.

As if even a shadow depends on time.

And then another thought came:

Perhaps the pain also depends on time, but does not disappear completely.

It only changes the length.

It may seem larger in the morning.

During the day, it is shorter.

At night, it was long again.

But it does not disappear completely as long as the light that creates it exists.

That is, as long as the memory itself exists.

Because forgetting completely is not always a victory.

Sometimes memory is needed so as not to lose yourself.

Even if it is heavy.

Especially if it is severe.

He wrote slowly:

The shadow does not destroy, it repeats the form of the one who created it.

After this line, I looked at the text for a long time.

It was as if he was checking whether this was really his opinion, or if she had just been waiting for the right moment for a long time.

Because sometimes sentences come as if they already existed before — just somewhere deeper, where the words didn't yet have a sound.

A car drove past the school outside the window.

The light has changed slightly.

For a second, the shadow on the desk disappeared almost completely.

And this is what also seemed strange:

A different angle of light is enough, and the shadow is already different.

But the subject remains the same.

So, maybe it's not just about the darkness.

Maybe it's just how the light falls on you.

What words sound next to each other.

What kind of people are nearby.

What a day today.

What a night it was yesterday.

What thoughts have you been carrying around for so long that you have already stopped noticing their weight.

Because sometimes a person thinks that he has long been used to it.

But in fact, I just learned to wear.

And these are different things.

Getting used to it does not mean stopping feeling.

Sometimes it only means learning to hide.

Even from yourself.

Someone in the class laughed.

A book fell somewhere.

Someone whispered for a washer.

Everything looked so normal that this normality itself began to seem strange.

It is as if the world does not know how much is invisible inside each person now.

How much silence.

There are so many internal things that will not make it into any lesson, or magazine, or grade.

And, perhaps, this is why people sometimes make mistakes about each other.

Because they only see the form.

And the shadow always remains lower, on the side, where few people look closely.

He slowly closed the notebook.

Not completely.

Only half.

It was as if he had left his mind a little more room to breathe.

And for the first time that day, I felt not relieved.

Something else.

It's as if a shadow, when you finally name it, ceases to be completely formless.

She's still around.

But no longer completely alien.



Chapter 15. Leaf: the first drop

"Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart."

— William Wordsworth

Sometimes the hardest thing is not to say something big.

The hardest thing is to write the first line.

Because as long as the thought remains inside, it can still be anything.

Fuzzy.

Unfinished.

Wrong.

Silence allows it to be out of shape.

But as soon as the word touches the paper, it already exists.

It can no longer be made unwritten so easily.

That is why a white sheet is sometimes more frightening than an empty room.

In front of the boy lay the same leaf.

A regular school sheet.

Thin.

Slightly uneven at the edge.

There was already a date in the upper corner.

In the middle is the topic.

Below are a few lines written slowly, as if every word had been tested before staying here.

And still it was not enough.

There was more empty space than text.

It was as if the paper itself was silently waiting for something real to be enough.

In the classroom there was that familiar noise that had long ceased to be separate sounds.

Creaking of the handle.

The cough is somewhere behind.

Turning page.

Chalk that briefly touched the board.

All this created a background, but did not enter the mind completely.

Because when a person is really trying to get something important out of himself, the outside world seems to be pushed back one step.

He stared at the sheet longer than necessary.

It was as if there was another invisible border between the hand and the paper.

Not the fear of writing incorrectly.

Rather, the fear of writing honestly.

Because honesty on paper is sometimes more dangerous than silence.

A word spoken out loud can get lost among other sounds.

And the word left on the page already has a memory.

It remains.

Even if you reread it later and want to pretend that someone else wrote it.

He touched the bottom line with his pen.

Briefly.

No movement.

The ink has not yet fallen.

And it was at this moment that a strange thought came:

A person almost never notices when exactly one inner border passes into another.

When a thought becomes a word.

When a feeling becomes a sentence.

When what was chaos suddenly gets grammar.

The first movement was almost slower than breathing.

Letter.

Then the second.

Then another.

Black line on white background.

Nothing big.

Just text.

But at that moment, he felt that the sheet was no longer empty outside, but inside.

Because each new word took something out of my head and brought it here.

It was as if part of the internal pressure was taking on a shape that can be seen.

He wrote:

Sometimes death does not seem like the end, but a pause in which everything finally stops screaming.

After this line, the handle stopped.

He reread what he had written.

Not because he doubted.

Rather, because the sentence sounded deeper than expected.

Because sometimes the first honest line sounds like you yourself didn't know that this is what has been living inside for a long time.

The light outside the window has changed slightly.

A new strip of sun fell on the desk.

And the ink on the fresh line began to shine.

A small detail, but it was she who suddenly made the text very real.

As if the paper had already accepted this sentence and now it would not give it back.

He thought about how strangely human consciousness works.

Inside, everything may seem too complicated.

Too heavy.

Too chaotic.

But once you give it one line, one paragraph, one point, the chaos is no longer limitless.

It doesn't go away.

But it becomes limited to the page frame.

Maybe that's why people write.

Not to explain everything.

And to fit at least something within the limits that can be held with your hands.

In class, someone asked for a spare sheet.

Someone said quietly that he didn't have time.

The teacher walked between the rows.

Her steps were calm.

As if all this time she did not even suspect how many different texts are now being born not on paper, but deeper.

Because everyone has the same theme.

But the internal text is always different.

Sometimes even dangerously different.

He looked at the written line again.

And suddenly he felt: the first word had already done the hardest.

Now the sheet was no longer so frightening.

Because the first drop has already fallen.

And after the first one, others always fall more easily.

Even if they are heavier.

Even if they are darker.

Even if some of them leave more on paper than we would like to leave.

He slowly moved the handle lower.

A new line was waiting.

And now the silence was no longer empty.

It became a working one.

One in which something continues to be born.



Chapter 16. Leaf: second drop

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

— Leonard Cohen

After the first sentence, the paper no longer seemed empty.

But in a strange way, this is what made the next line heavier.

Because the first one can always be written half-cautiously.

Semi-protected.

It's like checking the water before going deeper.

The second requires more.

He seems to be asking:

"Okay. Now tell me even more honestly."

The pen remained above the sheet.

The ink on the tip hardly moved.

The class continued to live at its own pace: someone was already writing quickly, someone was turning the page, somewhere the paper was quietly rustling, someone behind even sighed faintly from fatigue.

But these sounds again became the background.

Because when the thought reaches the place where it hurts more, the outside world decreases.

It is as if everything around moves away, leaving a person and one small space in front of him: a sheet, a pen, a few centimeters of white field and what will either be written or will be hidden inside again.

He looked at the previous line.

The black letters have already dried up a little.

They looked calmer than they sounded in their heads a few minutes ago.

Perhaps this also had a strange property of writing: paper always looks calmer than what is put into it.

Even the heaviest words on a white background often seem quieter than the sensations from which they were born.

That is why people can sometimes read something scary in a calm voice.

Because the form soothes even where the content still hurts.

He touched the handle of the page again.

And this time he started without a long pause.

As if the thought had been waiting for this very moment for a long time.

Emotions do not disappear when someone says "everything is fine". Sometimes it sounds like an attempt to close a door where there have been no walls inside for a long time.

He stopped.

I looked at what was written.

This sentence was different.

There was already more directness in it.

Less protection.

And that is why it sounded almost alien - as if it was written not now, but extracted from some older inner layer, which had no way out for a long time.

The words "*everything is fine*" suddenly caused dozens of different moments.

So short that they are almost not worth a separate memory.

But together they made up a whole chain.

When asked automatically.

When they answer automatically.

When words become just a habit and not an attempt to really see a person.

"How are you?"

Sometimes this short diagram saves you from explanations.

But sometimes it also erases everything that remains unnamed inside.

Because not every condition can be put into a short "normal".

Not every fatigue can be explained right away.

Not every inner emptiness is generally wanted to be translated into words.

Especially if you yourself do not fully understand its form.

He thought about how strange apathy felt in a child's body.

When outwardly you are still expected to be light.

Movement.

Quick reaction.

Laughter.

As if youth automatically guarantees inner lightness.

But the body does not ask for a passport from the state inside.

Sadness does not test age.

Fatigue too.

Sometimes this is why it is most difficult to explain something to people who only see the shell.

Because outside you are still sitting at your desk.

You write.

You listen to the call.

You go home.

And inside there has long been another layer - quieter, heavier, less noticeable.

Perhaps it is because of this that people often do not notice how someone next to them begins to slowly lose colors in emotions.

Not abruptly.

Not dramatic.

It's just that one day the laughter already sounds shorter.

A day later, the answer comes more slowly.

Even later, even good news no longer causes the strength of the reaction that was before.

It's as if emotions don't disappear completely.

They only become muffled.

Like the sound behind a thick wall.

You can hear that there is something.

But not as close as it should be.

The pen was still in his hand.

And now he noticed that he was already writing more slowly.

As if each next word needs more internal coordination.

Because there is a limit after which the text begins to sound too close to the truth.

And the truth on paper sometimes scares even the author.

Outside the window, the shadow of clouds moved.

The light on the desk has become softer.

For a few seconds, he just watched as the daylight slowly changed the hue of the page.

And he thought:

Perhaps that is why people love daylight so much - it gives the illusion of stability.

Even when it is not inside.

Because the day goes on anyway.

The lesson is still going on.

The clock is still moving.

Even if thoughts stand still at this moment.

Someone in the class laughed.

Someone whispered something.

The teacher checked the time.

Life outside continued to behave as if everyone now only had schoolwork.

And only he knew that for him this leaflet had long ceased to be just a school work.

It became the place where sentences began to pull out more than planned.

And the second drop was already heavier than the first.

Because now paper has taken on more than just an opinion.

And part of what usually remains between words.



Chapter 17. Leaf: the last straw

"Sometimes even to live is an act of courage."

— Lucius Annaeus Seneca

The third line always comes differently from the first and second.

The first one can still be written carefully.

The second one is already tense.

And the third often appears when the internal resistance almost stops fighting.

It's as if the thought has already realized that hiding doesn't work, and now it just comes out as it is.

In front of the boy lay the same sheet.

It already had a few sentences on it.

Small.

But heavy enough to make even white paper start to seem thicker.

There was still a lot of space between the written lines.

And this space strangely pressed harder than the text.

Because every empty centimeter seemed to silently ask:

What's more?

Outside the window, the day went on as if nothing special was happening.

The light became even.

The sun had already risen high enough for the shadows on the desk to almost disappear.

The trees behind the pane moved very weakly.

Even the wind today did not seem to want to make sudden movements.

The classroom was quieter than before.

That special moment of the lesson, when most people were already tired of talking, and there was still time left until the end.

Someone lowered their head lower over the notebook.

Someone was looking at one point.

The teacher was writing something down in a journal.

The pen in her hands moved with short, familiar gestures.

Everything around was ordinary to the point that it was almost annoying.

Because sometimes external normality makes internal tension even more tangible.

It is as if the world is deliberately showing: look, everything works, everything continues, everything is in place.

And inside at this time, something has been on the verge for a long time.

He stared at the bottom edge of the sheet.

And suddenly I thought that sometimes a person accumulates fatigue with not great events.

Not catastrophes.

And very small things that come day after day.

Other people's words.

Other people's expectations.

Silence after hard news.

Night sounds.

Own thoughts that have not gone anywhere.

Trying to be comfortable.

Attempts not to show too much.

Trying to endure another day is completely normal.

And at some point, all this does not explode.

Does not break loudly.

It's just getting cramped inside.

So much so that even breathing seems to require more space than it is.

He wrote slowly:

The most dangerous thing is when you get used to it so much that you simply stop noticing how much you already carry in yourself.

The line turned out to be longer.

The ink pressed a little harder into the paper.

It was as if even my hand pressed harder than before.

He reread what he wrote once.

Then the second.

And suddenly he felt a strange fatigue that was not like physical.

As if after a few sentences, the body spent more than it should have spent in an entire lesson.

This is sometimes the case with honesty.

It tires more than silence.

Because silence does not bring anything out.

And every word of honor is a small weight lift.

A car drove by outside the window.

Its sound briefly passed along the building and disappeared.

After him, the silence became even clearer.

He suddenly felt that even the classroom now looked a little distant.

It was as if everything around had become thinner.

Voices further.

Light further.

The walls are further away.

It is as if a transparent layer has appeared between it and the space, which is not visible, but it exists.

This is how inner exhaustion sometimes comes: not abruptly, but as a slight distance from everything.

It's like you're still here, but a little less completely.

He thought that people are often afraid of severe pain.

But severe pain is at least palpable.

It is worse when equality appears.

When emotions stop fluctuating sharply.

When the day is no longer bad and not good, it's just a day.

When even joy does not penetrate deeply.

When the words "*normal*" do not sound like an answer, but like an empty shell.

In the classroom, the phone rang at someone from the back desks.

Briefly.

Immediately turned off.

Someone laughed softly.

The teacher didn't even look up.

The world lived by its petty mechanics.

And only now did he have a strange feeling, as if this leaflet had already said more than anyone here could suppose.

Because for others, it's just a few sentences.

For him, it is already part of what usually does not work out.

He looked at the bottom edge of the page.

There was still enough space.

But suddenly it became clear: the text is approaching the point after which the words are no longer the main ones.

After which something else begins to move inside.

Not a thought.

Not a phrase.

Not an explanation.

And the feeling of the edge.

Thin.

Quiet.

Almost silent.

Like the last drop that has not yet fallen, but is already hanging on the edge.



Chapter 18. Memories and realities

"We do not remember days, we remember moments."

— Cesare Pavese

Sometimes one line is enough for memory to open a door without warning.

As soon as the last phrase fell on paper, the thought was no longer confined to the class alone.

The desk remained in front of him.

The pen was in his hand.

The teacher was still standing at the table.

Someone was turning the pages.

Someone coughed.

But all of a sudden, it felt like a layer on top of something else.

As if reality has not disappeared, but simply become thinner.

And something else began to appear through her.

Older.

Warmer.

Surprisingly far away.

He suddenly remembered the children's park.

The one where everything once had a simple shape.

Where the most important decision was the choice: a swing or a carousel.

Where the sun always seemed bigger.

Where even time passed differently — without weight.

Yellow sand underfoot.

An iron slide heated by the sun.

Blue paint on the handrails, slightly erased by the hands of hundreds of children.

Laughter that sounded natural then, without control, without internal analysis.

At that time, there was no need to think about how you were seen.

There was no inner observer, which later appears in almost every person.

The one who constantly looks from the side and evaluates.

Back then, life just happened.

Without the second layer.

Without a shadow that comments on every movement.

He remembered the swing.

That moment before the highest point, when it seems that a little more - and your feet will come off the ground completely.

When the air hits your face.

When the seconds at the top seem longer.

And that's when comes the childish feeling that flight is possible.

No explanation.

No physics.

Just because at this moment you want to believe.

In class, the pen moved slightly between the fingers.

He turned his gaze back to the sheet, but the memory did not let go.

Another came for him.

First kindergarten.

Small room.

The smell of plasticine, colored paper, warm milk and those strange children's paints that have their own separate smell is familiar even years later.

Small tables.

Short chairs.

Alien voices of children who then seemed like the whole world.

In childhood, every day has a different weight.

One day can seem like almost a lifetime.

Because there is no repetition habit yet.

Each new place is an event.

Each new person is a different story.

Maybe that's why childhood memories hurt so strangely later.

Because they belong to a time when the inner world did not yet know complexity.

When everything was more direct.

Even the sadness was shorter.

Even fear did not linger for long.

He thought: why are these shots coming right now?

Why does memory choose a park, a kindergarten, exactly those small things that have not been mentioned for a long time?

Perhaps because when a person approaches the inner edge, the brain instinctively looks for places where it was still simple.

As if he wants to show:

look, it was yours too.

Not just darkness.

Not only the sound of sirens.

Not only difficult thoughts.

There was also the sun on a metal swing.

It was the warmth of a small hand in someone else's palm.

There was laughter that didn't need to be controlled.

And all this has not disappeared either.

It just lies deeper.

Sometimes too deep.

A pigeon flew outside the window.

His shadow slid briefly across the glass.

He saw it only out of the corner of his eye.

And this little thing suddenly brought him back to the present moment again.

Because memory always works strangely:

It can take you very far and turn back just as sharply even with one random movement of light.

But even after returning, something remains.

It is as if a thin thread has already been laid between the two realities.

†

Chapter 19. Every window is someone's story

"Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not."

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

When he looked up from the leaf, the first thing he saw was a window.

Large school glass, slightly dusty at the edges.

Behind it are houses.

Ordinary.

Multi-storey.

Gray, beige, in places with dark spots of old rain.

And dozens of windows.

Some are open.

Some are closed.

Some are empty.

Some with curtains.

Some of them shone with the sun so much that it was impossible to look inside.

And it was at this moment that a simple thought came:

Every window now hides someone's life.

One by one, someone eats lunch.

For another, someone sleeps after the night shift.

Somewhere someone is quarrelling.

Somewhere it is silent.

Somewhere someone reads a message that will change the day.

Somewhere the child laughs.

Somewhere someone looks out the same window and thinks about something that no one nearby knows about.

The world from the outside always seems simpler than it really is.

Because the facades are silent.

The walls don't explain anything.

A house can look calm even when people are crying outside one of its windows, and being silent behind the other after the bad news.

Perhaps that is why people so rarely understand each other completely.

Everyone sees the façade.

And history always remains inside.

He stared longer.

Clothes were drying on one balcony.

On the other was an empty box.

On the third, someone left a children's bike.

And even these little things were already proof of life.

Quiet.

Daily.

Inconspicuous.

The world is not made up of big events.

It consists of thousands of little stories that almost never intersect completely.

Sometimes people live next to each other for years and do not know the main thing about each other.

They don't know who is afraid of what.

Who survived what.

Who was silent as many times where he wanted to say more.

Who woke up at night to the sound of an explosion.

Who got tired before they learned to explain it.

A curtain suddenly moved on one of the windows.

Someone was there.

Invisible, but present.

And this small detail suddenly made everything even more real.

Because every movement behind the glass means: another story continues.

Another world exists in parallel.

Another memory is now being formed somewhere.

And maybe that's why the world is so big — not because of cities, not because of roads, not because of countries.

But because of the number of inner lives that exist side by side at the same time.



Chapter 20. "Are you afraid of the dark?"

"Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

— Carl Jung

The question came without a sound.

No one in the class pronounced it.

The teacher continued to explain something.

Someone was turning the page.

Someone has already finished writing.

But inside, between all these sounds, a simple phrase suddenly appeared very clearly:

"Are you afraid of the dark?"

He didn't even immediately understand why it sounded so clear.

It's like someone said it right next to you.

Although no one around looked at him.

Darkness is always strange in that people are afraid of it not because of the very lack of light.

Fear is not born in darkness.

Fear is born in the fact that in it the imagination gets more space.

In light, objects have a shape.

Contours.

Names.

A table is a table.

A wall is a wall.

A door is a door.

But as soon as the light disappears, everything familiar begins to become something else.

The chair may seem like a silhouette.

A jacket is someone else's figure.

Shadow — by movement.

And, perhaps, that is why people are afraid not of the darkness itself, but of the fact that their consciousness in it begins to speak louder.

He remembered the night.

Not specific.

Any.

That moment when the room is already completely dark, when almost nothing can be seen outside the window, when even your own hand seems alien if you bring it before your eyes.

At such moments, the brain sharpens surprisingly.

You hear more.

You notice more.

Even one's own breathing becomes a separate sound.

As if in the dark, a person is suddenly left without the usual external supports.

And therefore he hears himself more strongly.

Perhaps it is because of this that sometimes darkness is more honest than day.

Because there is too much noise during the day.

Tasks.

people.

Movement.

And in the darkness there is only what you cannot cover with anything else.

He looked at his own reflection in the glass.

Because of the daylight, it was faint.

Barely visible.

But enough to suddenly feel a strange distance between yourself and yourself.

It was as if the face in the glass was also asking this question.

"Are you afraid of the dark?"

And for some reason, the answer did not come immediately.

Because an honest answer is never short.

Perhaps he was not afraid of the dark.

But the fact that it is in it that thoughts become clearer.

The fact that there is no distraction in it.

That she does not allow you to escape into trifles.

Darkness does not give grades.

Does not ask age.

Does not compare.

He does not say what you should be.

It simply leaves the person next to their own inner voice.

Sometimes it's enough to make it harder than any outside noise.



Chapter 21. Sometimes darkness is gentler than light

"There is a dark side to every human soul."

— Plato

Light is always considered a symbol of what is right.

Clean.

Safe.

This is how people are taught from childhood.

Turning on the light means removing fear.

To open the curtains means to let life in.

But sometimes it feels the other way around.

Because light makes you see what you don't always have the strength to look at.

During the day, everything has a name.

Face.

Views.

Reactions.

Other people's expectations.

Own place among others.

Light makes everything too definite.

Sometimes even too honest.

In the dark, the boundaries blur.

The contours soften.

The world ceases to be so abrupt.

That is why some nights seem easier than day.

Not because of calm.

And because of the lack of excessive clarity.

Because during the day, a person constantly sees himself through the outside.

Through others.

Through grades.

Through words.

Because of expectations that have not even been voiced, but have been hanging next to each other for a long time.

Darkness doesn't do that.

She does not require looking.

Doesn't force you to answer.

Does not force you to explain.

Sometimes it just allows you to be out of shape.

That is why some thoughts come only at night.

Those that can't stand the noise of the day.

Those who are afraid of other people's voices.

Those that are only born when the city subsides.

He thought that maybe not all darkness was hostile.

Sometimes it is like a blanket for thoughts.

Does not heal.

Does not remove pain.

But at least it doesn't make it louder.

Light often requires power.

Darkness sometimes allows weakness.

And weakness is also a part of a person.

Even if the world likes to pretend that it shouldn't be.



Chapter 22. Everything has an end

"Every beginning has an ending."

— Seneca

Every day ends more imperceptibly than it seems.

At first, the light just changes.

Then the shadows become longer.

Then the windows slowly darken.

And only later do people realize that the day is already closed.

The same thing happens with almost everything.

Conversations.

Habits.

Friendship.

Fear.

Even things that seem endless suddenly turn out to be complete one day.

Sometimes the end comes loudly.

Sometimes there is almost no sound.

The boy stared at the edge of the page.

On the lower border of the leaf.

On that thin white stripe where there was still space.

It's amazing how paper can resemble time.

At first, it seems that there is a lot of space.

That there are enough lines.

What else can be postponed.

That the main sentence is not yet now.

And then suddenly you notice: the bottom edge is already close.

There is less space than there was.

And each new word already has more weight.

Perhaps that is why people so rarely think about the end at the moment when everything is still going on.

Because while the movement is going on, it seems that there is enough time.

What else can you do.

What else is in stock.

But internally, sometimes there comes a moment when you feel the edge even before you see it.

Not physical.

Not external.

Internal.

It's as if something is coming to the limit of form.

And it is within this limit that silence is strangely born.

Not empty.

And filled with what has not yet happened, but is close.

He inhaled slowly.

And for the first time in the entire lesson, I felt that the air sounded almost as clear as a thought.

Because sometimes, before an important internal fracture, even ordinary breathing seems like a separate event.

The light outside the window has become softer.

A car drove somewhere far away.

The class still existed.

But he already had a strange feeling:

As if this day will be remembered not for what happened outside.

But by what began to move inside.



Chapter 23. The Boy on the Roof

"Between what is said and not meant, and what is meant and not said, most of love is lost."

— Khalil Gibran

The roof always changes the city.

From below, it seems large.

Noisy.

Uneven.

Full of details that constantly prevent you from seeing the picture in its entirety.

But as soon as you climb higher, everything suddenly becomes easier.

House lines.

Light in the windows.

Roads stretching in straight lanes.

Cars that look almost toy-like from here.

People who are almost invisible.

It's as if the height removes the excess.

And it leaves only the form.

He stood motionless.

The evening has already begun to change the color of the sky.

The light became softer, a little colder.

The city below still lived with its usual rhythm: somewhere cars were moving, somewhere traffic lights were flashing, somewhere in the distance there was a short dog barking.

And it was all so ordinary that it was almost surprising.

Because inside him everything sounded much louder now.

The wind at altitude is always different.

Not the one between the houses.

Here he does not meet walls.

And therefore it moves more freely.

Colder.

More directly.

He touched the cold edge of the concrete surface with his fingers.

The concrete kept the coolness of the day in itself.

Rough.

Real.

Too real compared to how unreal your own thoughts sounded now.

Sometimes the most dangerous moments have no external drama.

There is no thunder.

There is no shouting.

There are not even words.

There is only a very strange inner silence when a person suddenly feels how much has accumulated without any exact moment when it became difficult.

Not just one reason.

Not just one event.

More than one day.

A slow layer by layer.

Expectations.

Fatigue.

Words.

Nightly News.

Sirens.

Other people's assessments.

Own silence.

An age that others are constantly trying to frame.

As if a number can determine the power of thought.

As if the date of birth has the right to limit the depth of sensations.

He looked ahead.

On the horizon.

To distant lights.

And suddenly I thought that from a height everything seemed less categorical.

Even the problems at the bottom look smaller.

But this is only an optical truth.

Not internal.

Because the internal weight does not decrease from the fact that the city becomes small.

It just echoes differently.

Somewhere below, another window caught fire.

Then the second.

Then the third.

The city gradually turned into night.

And each new light seemed to be a separate proof that life goes on in parallel, regardless of any one internal struggle.

For some reason, this was what hurt and calmed me down at the same time.

Because the world doesn't stop.

But at the same time, there is a strange honesty in this: even the most difficult state does not cancel the movement of time.

He inhaled slowly.

And he felt the cold air pass deeper than before.

It is as if it is the height that makes breathing more accurate.



Chapter 24. And life is not so bad...

"Happiness is not by chance, but by choice."

— Jim Rohn

Sometimes the strongest memories do not come when they are called.

Namely, when a person almost stops specifically remembering something.

They just appear.

One by one.

It is as if the brain suddenly decides to remind itself that there was not only a heavy thing inside.

The smell of summer came first.

Warm asphalt after rain.

That special air that happens only in the evening, when the day has not yet completely gone out, but the heat is already leaving.

Then there was laughter.

Distant, childish, very clean.

A swing that moves back and forth.

Fingers on a cold metal chain.

Legs that push off harder, as if you can reach the sky.

Then there was the first small success.

The moment when something came out that didn't work out for a long time.

When the adults really looked and said not formally, but sincerely:

Okay.

And then this word carried weight.

Because it was earned, not gifted just like that.

Then - mother's hands.

A short warm touch.

A night when it was quiet and safe at home.

When it was raining outside the window, and everything seemed protected inside.

Then there is the voice of the parents.

Council.

Laughter.

A sentence said by accident, but which for some reason remained for a long time.

Memory strangely chooses what to cherish.

Sometimes it leaves not big events at all.

And small details that once didn't even seem important.

Light in the corridor.

The smell of a book.

Someone's look.

First own success.

The first feeling: *I can really create something.*

And it was this thought that came most clearly.

Not someone else's words.

Not grades.

But the actual feeling of creation.

When something is born from an idea.

When the future does not yet have a form, but already has a direction.

And then suddenly, very quietly, it sounded inside:

Life is not so empty if it has already had these moments.

Not perfect.

Not easy.

But not completely dark either.

Because even one true warm memory already contradicts absolute darkness.



Chapter 25. Flying to infinity

"The important thing is not to stop questioning."

— Albert Einstein

Sometimes the line between real thought and imagination becomes almost imperceptible.

Not because one disappears.

But because both begin to flow side by side.

He looked up at the sky.

Dark, but not yet completely nightlike.

There, high up, the first weak points of light were already appearing.

So far away that it was impossible to feel them as something material.

And for some reason, this gave a strange sense of scale.

Human thought is very small compared to the cosmos.

But at the same time, it is she who is able to imagine infinity.

There is something almost absurd about it.

The body has limits.

Time has limits.

The day has an end.

Even the city has an edge.

But the opinion is not.

It can be instantly in childhood, in tomorrow, in Lviv, in the classroom, in the sky, in something that has not even happened yet.

Perhaps that is why it sometimes seems that consciousness is greater than physical form.

That the body is just a temporary shell for something much more complex.

He thought of a quark.

About a tiny particle that exists almost beyond the usual human sense of scale.

Almost nothing.

And at the same time, it is the basis of matter.

How strange: even the smallest can be the foundation of everything.

Maybe it's the same with people.

Even a small act.

A small solution.

A little word.

It can become something that grows something much bigger later.

And it was this thought that for the first time in a long time gave not peace, but direction.

Not an answer.

And the feeling that the answer can still be created.

†

Chapter 26. Quark in the void

"The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible."

— Albert Einstein

At a certain point, when the thought goes too far, the usual human scales stop working.

The house no longer seems big.

The city is too.

Even a country, even a map, even the entire sky overhead suddenly begins to look like just one layer of something much larger, where the human body almost disappears in proportions.

It is then that a strange feeling appears: how small a person is physically - and how limitless he becomes in thought.

He looked into the darkness, and for the first time in a long time, his imagination went not to the people, not to the streets, not to the school classroom.

Deeper.

To the point where matter no longer looks solid.

Because what the hand feels like concrete, wood, paper or its own body is actually almost entirely made up of emptiness.

There are distances between atoms.

Between the nucleus and electrons there is an almost cosmic void when viewed on the scale of particles.

The human body seems continuous only because the nervous system is not able to see this emptiness.

In fact, all that the hand touches is the complex interaction of fields, the repulsion of charged particles, the mathematical arrangement of matter about form.

He thought:

How strange that even one's own heart, which is now beating inside the chest, also consists of almost emptiness.

And at the same time, this emptiness is able to feel pain, love, fear, memory, fatigue, hope.

It is as if the emptiness within matter paradoxically creates the density of life.

The quark is one of those particles that a person never sees directly.

It cannot be pulled out separately like a single stone from the sand.

Because the quark exists only inside a more complex structure — inside protons, neutrons, deeper than the level of familiar ideas.

It cannot be observed as a separate object.

Only because of the consequences.

Only through the mathematical trace.

And in this suddenly there was something very similar to the human inner life.

Because many of the most important things in a person are also impossible to see directly.

There is no fear in sight.

No memory is visible.

Internal fatigue is not visible.

There is no moment when someone stops explaining his condition even to himself.

All this does not exist as an object, but as a consequence.

As it should.

Like a change of voice.

Like a pause before answering.

Like a longer silence.

Like looking out the window that lasts a few seconds longer.

He thought: maybe the human soul also resembles a quark.

Not because it is physical.

Because it cannot be pulled out separately and shown.

There is no point in the body where you can say: this is where she lies.

In the heart? In the brain? In the nervous system? In memory?

Science sees neurons, electrochemical signals, networks of synapses, complex models of consciousness.

Psychology sees behavior, reactions, internal defenses, experiences, traumas, compensation mechanisms.

But even all this together does not give a complete sense of what people call the soul.

Because the soul is not an organ.

And not even just the sum of memories.

Perhaps the soul is the continuity of the inner self, which goes through the change of age, body, pain, knowledge and still remains itself.

The body at the age of seven is different.

At ten, it's different.

At fourteen, it's different.

Cells change.

The brain is being rebuilt.

Hormones change reactions.

The look becomes different.

But something inside still says: it's still me.

What exactly holds this identity?

Not bones.

Not blood.

Not even specific memories, because some of them are erased by the brain.

So, there is something deeper that gathers a person into a single line through the years.

Perhaps this is exactly what the soul is.

Not a religious symbol.

Not a poetic metaphor.

And the inner continuity of existence.

Something that makes a person himself even when almost everything changes.

And then an even stranger question arises:

If a body is a system of particles, if particles are fields, if fields obey probability, then where exactly does personality begin in this structure?

In quantum physics, a particle before observation does not have one exact form of behavior.

It exists as a set of possibilities.

Not "either here or there", but simultaneously as a potential of different states until an interaction occurs.

Superposition.

Human consciousness is surprisingly similar to this in psychology.

Because while the decision has not yet been made, a person also carries several possible self at the same time:

the one who will surrender; the one who will endure; the one who will be silent; the one who will begin to act; someone who does not yet know what he will become.

The brain also holds the superposition of the future for some time.

And only action translates opportunity into reality.



Chapter 27. The soul between the neuron and eternity

"The soul becomes dyed with the color of its thoughts."

— Marcus Aurelius

Psychology never starts with the word "depression".

It starts much quieter.

With an imperceptible change in the color of the day.

From the fact that morning light ceases to cause a reaction.

From the fact that the laughter of others begins to sound a little distant.

From the fact that even good things cease to penetrate as deeply as before.

Not because a person suddenly becomes weak.

But because the psyche has a limit of accumulation.

And when the load lasts for a long time — even without a disaster — it begins to go into saving mode.

Less emotions.

Less reaction.

Less internal spending.

It's like a city during energy saving: the light doesn't disappear completely, but many windows no longer glow as brightly.

That is why apathy is often more frightening than severe pain.

The pain at least proves that the system still reacts with full force.

Apathy is when the internal defenses are so overloaded that they begin to reduce even what used to give warmth.

But the paradox is that even in this state, the soul does not disappear.

It only seems to go deeper.

Like an ocean under ice.

The surface may appear motionless.

Cold.

Almost without life.

But currents are still moving underneath.

Sometimes very strong.

A person's soul may not be an emotion.

Because emotions are variable.

Not a thought.

Because opinions contradict each other.

Not even character.

Because character also breaks down under experience.

Perhaps the soul is the ability to remain internally alive even when outwardly it seems that everything is quiet.

That core that does not disappear even after losses.

Even after the war.

Even after other people's words.

Even after his own exhaustion.

Psychology says: a person is a system of adaptation.

But there is something that is not fully explained by adaptation.

Why does one phrase heard as a child live for years?

Why does the smell of one summer bring back a whole layer of itself?

Why, even years later, is a person able to feel the same as he was in a small park, although the body is already completely different?

Because the soul may not be storing facts.

It preserves the inner continuity of the experience.

And that is why, even when everything around changes, she remembers the direction.

It is she who sometimes does not allow it to finally dissolve, even when logic is already tired.

And that is why even the darkest state is not absolute emptiness.

Because if a person still asks questions, there is still movement in him.

And where there is movement, there is no end.



Chapter 28. Emptiness in the room

"The quieter you become, the more you are able to hear."

— Rumi

The room always knows more about a person than it seems.

Especially in the evening.

When the door is already closed.

When external noise remains somewhere behind the walls.

When the day finally stops requiring a reaction.

That's when the space starts to sound different.

He stood barefoot on the cold floor.

The tiles kept cool longer than the air.

The pajamas touched the ankles a little, the fabric moved with each step.

The room was almost dark—only the faint light from the street penetrated through the edge of the curtain, leaving a thin streak on the floor that crossed the table, the edge of the bed, and reached the wall.

He took a few slow steps.

Without a goal.

Just back and forth.

So sometimes they do not walk with the body, but with the thought.

When the legs move, because it is easier for the brain to think in motion.

A person almost never notices how much silence changes the quality of thought.

During the day, thoughts are broken into pieces:

call, message, words of others, views, movement, responsibility.

And in a room where only your own steps are heard, consciousness begins to work without external obstacles.

And that's when questions arise that seemed to exist during the day.

What is *me*?

Why does a person feel so clearly that he is one being, although contradictory things live inside him at the same time?

The desire to be silent and the desire to be heard.

Fear and curiosity.

Fatigue and ambition.

Heat and cold.

The light part and the dark part.

He stopped at the window.

He put his fingers on the cold glass.

Outside the window, several windows were still lit.

Somewhere someone was also awake.

And for some reason, this simple thought has always been a little reassuring: even in silence, you are never completely alone in the world.

Psychology has long explained that a person has not one line of thinking, but many internal levels.

There is what you say.

There is something you think.

There is something that you feel.

There is something that you don't even understand yet.

That is why sometimes a person is surprised by his own reaction: why does this particular phrase hurt? Why does this music suddenly bring back a whole layer of memory?

Because the brain does not work as a flat text.

It works as a multi-layered space, where one memory can lie next to the smell of childhood, and one sound can lie next to an anxiety that you haven't noticed for years.

And maybe / am not one point.

Perhaps / am a system of internal connections between everything you have experienced.

Not a separate core.

A complex architecture.

Like a city at night: separate windows, separate streets, but all this together makes one map.

He began to walk around the room again.

Slowly.

Barefoot footsteps hardly sounded.

Sometimes this is what the most serious thinking looks like: not at the table, not with a book, but in silence, when a person just walks and gradually comes to things that cannot be heard in the noise.



Chapter 29. White noise

"Silence is sometimes the loudest answer."

— Dalai Lama

There is silence in which it is really quiet.

And there is silence in which the brain suddenly begins to hear more than ever.

There was a faint background sound in the room.

Barely noticeable.

Perhaps long-range ventilation.

Maybe the wires behind the wall.

Perhaps a city that, even at night, is never completely silent.

It is this noise that is called white.

It has no meaning.

It does not carry information.

But in a strange way, it becomes a background against which consciousness begins to hear itself more clearly.

The human brain does not like absolute emptiness.

When the surroundings are too quiet, he begins to create filling himself.

That is why old thoughts come back stronger at night.

That is why a short alarm during the day at night can become a whole internal conversation.

He sat down on the edge of the bed.

The floor remained cold under the bare feet.

His hands lay still.

Look at the floor.

And suddenly a simple but deep thought came:

A person almost never runs away from the world.

Most often, she runs away from too loud contact with herself.

Because external noise is simpler.

It is distracting.

And the internal one requires honesty.

The white noise was almost imperceptible.

But it was against this background that he began to understand one more thing:

Emotion does not always want an explanation.

Sometimes she needs a place.

Not a solution.

Not the phrase "everything will be fine".

It's just a space where it can exist without pressure.

Psychologically, this is one of the most difficult skills: not to fight every internal state at once, but to learn to see it without panic.

Sadness is not always an enemy.

Fear is not always a weakness.

Fatigue is not always a defeat.

Sometimes these are just signals from a system that has held the voltage for too long.

Like a heated lamp.

Like a processor that worked without pause.

And if a person understands this in time, he does not break, but rebuilds.



Chapter 30. A silence that speaks

“The soul usually knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind.”

— Caroline Myss

Silence is not empty - it is one of the greatest illusions that people believe in every day, without even noticing how much meaning is hidden exactly where nothing is said out loud.

In fact, silence very often says more than words, because words almost always go through internal control, through the choice of wording, through conscious or unconscious editing of exactly how a person wants to be heard by others.

When a person speaks, they almost never give a complete version of themselves.

Even if it seems honest.

Even if the intonation sounds calm.

Even if the sentence is simple.

In words, there is always a part of defense, a part of adaptation to the interlocutor, a part of what is not agreed, because sometimes to say completely would be to reveal too much of what is difficult to keep open in front of other people's eyes.

And silence does not require an editor.

It doesn't think about impressions.

It does not choose intonation.

It simply exists as it is, and that is why it sometimes becomes much more honest than any explanation.

He slowly raised his head and stared into the darkness of the room as if he was trying to see his own thought even before it became words, as if the darkness could be a surface on which the inside is reflected more clearly than in a mirror.

The room has almost completely lost its daytime outline.

The light from the street penetrated only in a narrow strip that lay along the edge of the floor, touched the leg of the table, passed over the edge of the bed and disappeared against the wall, leaving other objects in a semi-dark outline.

The cabinet looked almost like a shadow, the chair by the table seemed to be part of the darkness, and the T-shirt left on the back during the day now resembled a shapeless stain, which only occasionally changed its contour from the faint movement of the air.

His bare feet still felt the cold of the floor, although he had already stood in one place for several minutes, and for some reason this coldness was strangely grounding, reminding him that the body was here, in reality, even when the thought had long since gone much further than the room.

A person is interesting because he can be both a person who experiences and someone who observes his own experience.

You think — and at the same time you notice what you think.

You feel — and at the same time analyze why you feel it.

You can be silent — and still have a whole conversation inside that no one will ever hear.

It is this duality of consciousness that sometimes seems almost a miracle: one part of you lives inside the event, the other looks at it as if from the side, fixes, evaluates, remembers.

Even in moments of intense excitement, a quiet observer remains somewhere inside, who seems to calmly state: now you are scared; now you are silent; Now you don't find the answer.

And it is in this, perhaps, that one of the deepest features of the human soul is manifested.

Because the soul - if it really exists as something more than biology - cannot be just a set of emotions, because emotions change too quickly: today fear, tomorrow indifference, the day after tomorrow a brief flash of joy that lasts a few seconds and disappears again.

Nor can it be just memory, because memory is constantly changing its own form: it erases details, rewrites intonations, leaves strange little things, and sometimes removes what seemed most important.

A person often remembers not the main thing, but the accidental: the smell of air, the sound of footsteps, the shade of light on a particular day.

Then what exactly remains the same?

Perhaps the soul is the ability to see yourself internally even when the outside world is silent and nothing else tells you who you should be.

It is no coincidence that the deepest decisions are born not in noise, not in crowds, not in dialogue, but in quiet moments, when there is no one to explain, when no role works anymore, when only honesty to oneself remains.

It is this kind of honesty that is often the most difficult, because you can say almost anything to others, but it is much more difficult to lie to yourself if the room is quiet enough.

He walked over to the table, ran his fingers over the cold wooden surface where there was a pen, a few notebooks, a phone with the screen down, and a sheet of written sentences that seemed like just text during the day, and now for some reason looked almost like a trace of a thought that could no longer be taken back.

A car drove by briefly outside the window, the sound of tires on the asphalt slowly dissolved somewhere between the houses, and after that, the silence became even clearer, as if even a brief outside noise only emphasized how much space the silence now occupies.

He sat down on the edge of the bed, felt the mattress bend slightly under the weight, put his hands on his knees and thought: if you remove everything external now - name, age, grades, other people's roles, expectations, even the story that others have made about you - what will really remain?

Not a surname.

Not status.

Not how you are seen.

Not even the number of years lived.

And something else that does not depend on someone else's language.

And the answer came not as a ready-made sentence, but as a feeling that slowly formed somewhere deeper than words: there will be a direction.

Something where you want to move internally even when you have little strength, even when there are more doubts than confidence, even when the outside world does not guarantee anything.

Because it is the direction that is often the most honest form of the soul.

Not something that has already happened.

Not something that has already been proven.

But something that stubbornly pulls forward even in complete silence.

The room was silent, but this silence had long since ceased to be empty.

It made more sense than many daytime conversations, because during the day words are often born for others, and at night - for the first time truly for yourself.



Chapter 31. Eyes that can't lie

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

— Aristotle

He did not approach the mirror abruptly, without any conscious decision, as if the movement itself arose before the thought, as if the body itself knew that now it was necessary to look to where no answer sounded aloud, but sometimes one short second of silent gaze speaks more than dozens of conversations in which people are used to hiding themselves behind familiar words.

The room remained semi-dark. The light from the street reached here only in a weakened imprint, passing through the curtain in a thin, almost imperceptible layer that made the edge of the mirror slightly lighter than the wall. Because of this, the reflection looked fuzzy at first—only the silhouette, the outline of the shoulders, the neck, the short hair that lay uneven after a long day, as if each strand still retained small traces of movement, wind, the habit of mechanically running the hand over the head when the thought went too far.

He stopped close, almost close.

At first, the gaze slid over the surface of the face without concentration - as it happens when a person does not look at himself, but simply in the direction of the mirror.

But after a few seconds, the focus gathered.

And the first, as always, eyes appeared.

Green.

In the dark, they seemed deeper than during the day.

A darker shade near the pupil, a slightly cold shine from the street light, a subtle stillness of the gaze, which almost always appears when the thought is no longer superficial.

The eyes are surprisingly honest.

That is why people rarely endure their own gaze for a long time.

In someone else's eyes, you can still play a role.

You can control intonation, facial expressions, reaction.

You can even smile at the right moment.

But their own eyes do not accept the game completely.

Because the brain knows all too well what is behind this look right now.

He tilted his head slightly, as if checking to see if his expression would change from the other angle.

Short hair.

Subtle features.

Short stature, which was especially felt in the mirror because of the proportion of the room: the top shelf of the closet seemed even higher than it really was.

And at the same time, there was a strange feeling that all this was just an outer frame, just a shell through which something much more complex is now looking back.

Because a person very rarely feels identical with his face.

Faces are what others see.

And the inner self is almost always felt deeper than features, shape, age or any external characteristic.

That is why the mirror sometimes surprises: you know that it is you, but at the same time you feel that you only see the outer level.

In psychology, this is one of the most interesting things: consciousness almost never perceives itself as just a physical object.

A person lives from the inside, not from the outside.

Therefore, the external image is always a little late from the inner sense of self.

He raised his hand and touched the cold edge of the mirror with his fingers.

The glass was cool, almost indifferently even.

A mirror never adds sympathy.

Does not soften.

Does not edit.

It does not explain, does not support, does not evaluate.

It just returns.

Sometimes it is this emotionlessness that makes him stronger than other people's words.

A car drove by somewhere below the window.

A brief movement of light slid across the ceiling and disappeared.

At that moment, the look in the mirror changed for a second—not because the expression had changed, but because the short outside light suddenly made the eyes even more lively.

And he thought: it's amazing how much life is contained in the eyes.

Not in the voice.

Not in gestures.

Not in features.

It is in the eyes.

Because even when a person is silent, the eyes almost always give out more than they want.

They show fatigue.

Sleepless nights.

Tension.

Delayed thought.

Doubt.

Sometimes even that part of the pain that a person has not yet formulated for himself.

That is why the eyes are so difficult to control.

Facial expressions can still obey.

Words — even more so.

But the gaze almost always lives a little apart.

He stared longer.

And at some point he felt a strange question that comes not in words, but almost with internal pressure:

Who is watching right now?

Body?

The brain?

Memory?

Or something else that doesn't fit into simple biology?

Because if the body is constantly changing — cells are renewed, features mature, height changes, hair is different, voice is different — then why is there still a sense of continuous "me" internally?

The same inner observer was a few years ago.

And now he is also here.

Although the body is already different.

This means that a person feels more than just a body.

There is something that is undergoing changes, but does not disappear itself.

Perhaps this is what people call the soul.

Not as a mystical image.

And as the continuity of the inner observer.

Someone who goes through age, fatigue, fear, experience, but still says: it's still me.

And suddenly one more thing became clear: no other person's opinion sees it completely.

Others only see the surface.

Just a fragment.

Reactions only.

Only the outer part.

And the deepest always remains only inside.

That is why you cannot give your own life under the power of someone else's vision.

Because someone else's gaze never knows the entire structure of a person.

Never sees the full story.

Never feels the entire interior space.

This means that he has no right to become decisive.

The mirror was silent.

And this silence was more honest than much that was said during the day.



Chapter 32. What you realize too late

"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."

— Friedrich Nietzsche

Sometimes the most dangerous thoughts come not when everything is screaming inside, but on the contrary - when there is a strange equality, in which even strong emotions no longer have sharp edges, when the brain seems to get tired of wasting energy on internal vibrations and goes into a cold, almost mathematical mode, where everything begins to look too straightforward, as if any complex issue can be solved with one brief conclusion.

It is at such moments that a person is especially dangerous to himself, because a tired consciousness likes to create the illusion of finality.

She begins to convince that everything is already clear enough.

That there will be few changes.

That the future is predictable.

That the current pain is already an almost accurate model of everything that will come next.

But this is where the brain gets the most wrong.

Because a tired brain does not see time completely.

He only sees the closest fragment.

Only a few meters of darkness in front of him, mistaking them for the whole way.

He was still standing by the mirror, but he was no longer looking directly into his eyes. His gaze shifted a little, somewhere on his own shoulder, on the edge of the reflection, as if even those few seconds of direct contact with himself were heavy enough to make you want to loosen your focus a little.

Outside the window, the city lived at night.

Somewhere far away, the blue glare of the car briefly lit up, then disappeared.

The light from the other house flashed and went out too.

In other people's apartments, someone was still moving, someone was not sleeping, someone, perhaps, was now also standing in his room and thinking about things that no one nearby had heard.

This simple thought suddenly sounded very clear: the world at this moment consists of thousands of separate inner worlds that never fully see each other.

Each window is a different story.

Each person is a separate universe, which outwardly looks just like a silhouette behind glass.

And so it is almost impossible to say exactly who is going through what right now.

It is because of this that human judgments are so crude: we almost always only see the surface.

And the internal volume remains hidden.

He sat down on the edge of the bed and leaned his elbows on his knees.

The room was the same as yesterday, the day before yesterday, a week ago.

Same table.

Same things.

The same closet.

The same pen left on the table.

But it is amazing how the internal state can completely change the geometry of space.

Sometimes the same room seems like a place to relax.

And sometimes it is as if it is too small for all the thoughts that are now in it.

This is how the psyche works: the space is externally unchanged, but the internal space either expands or contracts so much that even the air is felt differently.

Psychologists have long described one important thing:

When a person is in deep internal fatigue, his ability to assess the future is immediately temporarily deformed.

The brain begins to perceive the current state as more stable than it really is.

That is why one difficult night can mistakenly seem final.

That is why a few hours sometimes look false as proof that everything will always be the same.

But the human psyche is paradoxical: sometimes one new day, one new voice, one new decision, one short morning is enough - and the whole inner picture is no longer the same as it seemed at night.

This is not a weakness.

This is a property of consciousness: it changes faster than it seems in a dark moment.

He ran his hand through his hair.

Short hair easily fell into place.

For some reason, this mechanical gesture always grounded a little.

Like a small check: the body is here, the movement is real, time passes.

And it was then that a thought came that made the room seem to become even quieter:

death does not explain anything.

Doesn't fix.

Doesn't make thoughts right.

Does not end the pain beautifully.

It simply takes away all the options that could still appear.

Everything that could be said.

Everything that could be changed.

Everything that hasn't happened yet.

A person in the darkest moment often thinks that he wants to stop the pain.

But the truth is that pain is almost always temporary in its form, even if it seems endless.

The brain is being rebuilt.

The state changes.

The world is moving.

And what today seems like a wall, after a certain time, sometimes becomes just a memory of a period that was difficult but has passed.

That is why the most important rule is not to let one moment take your whole life.

Because one moment is never equal to the whole future.



Chapter 33. Cold clarity

“Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one.”

— Bruce Lee

There is a difference between coldness and internal hardness.

Stiffness is often born from pain.

She wants to sharply cut off everything that hurts.

It makes a person harsh even where it is not necessary.

And cold clarity works differently.

She doesn't break emotions.

It simply stops giving them absolute power.

This is what he began to understand now, sitting in a semi-dark room, where even the clock seemed louder than during the day.

A person should not live under the dictation of random thoughts of other people.

This is one of the grossest mistakes that almost everyone makes at a certain age: overestimating the weight of someone else's reaction.

Someone looked.

Someone said.

Someone appreciated.

Someone laughed.

And the brain instantly begins to build a system of meanings from this, as if someone else's short gesture has the power to determine your real value.

But this is not true.

Because most people don't even realize how little they think about others for longer than a few minutes.

The world is paradoxically less focused on each individual you than it seems in moments of anxiety.

And that's good news.

Because it means: someone else's gaze almost never has the weight that we ourselves give it.

He stood up.

He looked in the mirror again.

Short stature.

Green eyes.

Short hair.

A young face who does not yet know all the future years, but already carries enough thoughts within him to understand: life cannot be built around what others will say.

Because others are always unstable.

Today they support.

Tomorrow they are silent.

The day after tomorrow they are already busy with their own.

And your life remains only for you.

And that is why it always has a higher price than any other person's impression.

You need to be able to be cold not to the world, but to the noise.

To the excess.

To the point that he has no right to go too deep.

Because if you let every random thought inside, it will become impossible to live.

Coldness is not the absence of a heart.

This is the discipline of internal borders.

Ability to say:

That word doesn't define me.

This thought does not control me.

This pressure is not worth my life.

Because your life is always important.

Not someone else's expectations.

Not wanting someone else.

Not even the fear of disappointment.

A person has the right to take care of himself even when the world around him demands more than it is now possible to give.

Sometimes the greatest strength is just to survive one night without letting it become a sentence.

Because the morning almost always thinks differently.



Chapter 34. Day. Everybody's crying and I'm feeling guilty

“To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.”

— Oscar Wilde

At first, there was nothing like silence.

After everything happened, the world did not freeze, as it is often imagined in the minds of the living.

On the contrary, he continued to move, and this was the most difficult.

The day came in the same way as it always comes: the light gradually penetrated the windows, the morning slowly touched the roofs, the first cars appeared on the roads, a dog barked somewhere in the yard, someone opened a store, someone hurried to work, someone carried a bag of bread, someone even laughed, not knowing that in another part of the city for someone this day would be different forever.

And it was this ordinariness of the morning that turned out to be more terrible than any drama.

Because the world does not pause even when the whole inner cosmos is destroyed for an individual family.

He seemed to be standing nearby, but he could no longer touch anything.

He had no weight.

He had no voice.

I only saw it.

It was as if consciousness remained, but her body was no longer her home.

And the first thing he heard was crying.

Not harsh.

Not theatrical.

Not like in the movies.

Real crying almost always sounds quieter.

More dangerous.

Deeper.

There is something in it that immediately makes you understand: this is no longer just an emotion, it is pain that the body does not have time to hold.

Mother sat on the edge of the bed.

Her hands trembled as if not even her fingers knew how to exist properly now.

The face no longer had the usual composure that happens every day.

When a person loses someone close to him suddenly, the first thing that breaks down is the habitual structure of movements.

Even a simple gesture becomes different.

It was as if she wanted to say something, but her voice broke every time before the word.

There was a blanket on the floor, which someone had moved in a hurry.

There was a cup on the table, which no one touched.

The world kept all objects the same.

And this made it even more scary.

Because things don't know what happened.

They just remain.

The bed remains a bed.

A table is a table.

A pen is a pen.

And the person who touched these things yesterday no longer answers.

Father stood a little farther away.

Silently.

And this silence was even heavier than crying.

Because sometimes male pain is manifested not by screaming, but by the fact that the shoulders suddenly become motionless, and the gaze seems to lose direction, as if the brain still refuses to accept the fact itself.

He looked somewhere at one point, but it was clear: in fact, he was not seeing a room at all now.

Sees something else.

Maybe last night.

The last conversation.

The last small phrase that seemed like nothing at the time.

And this is often the most cruel after a loss - the brain begins to go through the last minutes, as if looking for a place where it could change the time line.

But there is no place to change time.

And then comes the guilt.

Not only those who remained.

Even him.

Because now he saw it from the side.

Saw something that can never be seen from inside a difficult moment.

When a person is alive and in pain, the brain often narrows the picture so much that others almost disappear.

Only one's own inner darkness remains.

But now others have turned sharply.

Too abruptly.

And it became clear: the pain did not go away.

He just went into someone else's chest.

He looked at his mother and for the first time felt not fear, not fatigue, not equality.

Guilt.

Pure, heavy, physically palpable guilt.

It was as if something inside had suddenly become heavier.

Because suddenly it became obvious: every thought about one's own disappearance is never only about oneself.

There is always a circle of those who will change breathing, sleep, morning, even the sound of their own home after that.

Voices were heard outside the door.

Quiet.

Neighbors.

Someone's whisper.

Steps.

Phone call.

Someone spoke too quietly, because at such moments people instinctively lower their voices, as if they were afraid of hurting the space even more.

There was a phone on the table.

And it was already glowing with new messages.

Names.

People.

Friends.

Those who could have joked yesterday.

Today their words were short, fragmentary, almost disorderly.

Because when something final happens, words in general abruptly lose their power.

They become too small.

And it was then that he realized the worst thing:

Not a single moment of inner darkness shows a person a complete picture of what will happen after his disappearance.

The darkness is lying.

She says: it will be quiet.

But the truth is different.

It gets very loud.

Only in other people's hearts.

And that's exactly what is unbearable.

Because now, looking at this morning, he no longer wanted silence.

He wanted to turn back one second.

So that all this does not happen.

But sleep did not let go.

And the day was just beginning.



Chapter 35. Moon. Friends have forgotten, but the best have not

“Life belongs to the living, and he who lives must be prepared for changes.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A month passed.

The time after the great loss behaves strangely: in the first days, it seems to move too slowly, each hour seems like a separate heavy weight, every morning begins with the same short blow to consciousness - a reminder that something has happened that can no longer be undone, and then gradually the days begin to lose sharpness, and the calendar, which at first seemed almost motionless, suddenly imperceptibly turns the pages.

The world was working at its usual pace again.

Morning buses arrived on schedule.

Shops were opening.

Bells rang at school.

Teachers opened magazines, set dates, checked homework, made comments in the same voice they had done before.

Even the weather has already changed several times.

The rains came and went.

The morning was sunny several times.

One day, the wind swayed the trees near the school, and the dry leaves swirled for a long time at the entrance, as if the air itself was also in a hurry somewhere.

And all this continued without him.

This is what turned out to be the strangest.

Because when a person imagines his own absence, it often seems to him that the world should change more significantly, but no.

That something will be different for a long time.

That even space should react more strongly.

But the truth of life turned out to be much more direct: the world is sad — and at the same time goes further.

Not because he is indifferent.

But because he can't do otherwise.

He stood in the school hallway, which he could no longer touch, and watched the children move past familiar walls between lessons.

The same backpacks.

The same voices.

Someone laughed at something random.

Someone argued about grades.

Someone was nervously looking for a pen before class.

Life returned to its usual small mechanics.

And it hurt strangely — not acutely, but slowly.

His desk was still standing.

At first, it was not occupied.

For the first weeks, there was a small free space around her, as if even the class was unconsciously not yet ready to pretend that everything was just going on.

But a month later, other people's notebooks were already lying on it.

Someone put a textbook there.

Then he sat down.

Uncertain at first.

Then usually.

And this was almost a symbol of how memory works: even a place that until recently had a clear inner meaning gradually becomes just a place again.

The teacher spoke evenly.

Sometimes it's a little quieter when by chance the gaze lingers in the other side of the classroom.

But the lesson was going on.

Topics changed.

The pages were turning.

Grades were given.

Once someone even joked near this desk.

And a few people laughed.

First, briefly.

Then without internal tension.

Because the human brain is designed in this way: it cannot endlessly hold the same intensity of pain.

The psyche is protected by a gradual return to normality.

Otherwise, a person simply would not be able to stand life.

That is why even a severe loss gradually ceases to be every minute.

Does not disappear.

But it ceases to stand in the center of every minute.

Some have already really talked about the other as if an entire era had passed between the past and the present.

Someone was already laughing as loudly as before.

Someone has already argued about the test.

Someone was already planning a weekend.

And at first it seemed almost insulting.

As if life had allowed itself to regain familiarity too quickly.

But then came the understanding: this is not betrayal.

This is the nature of time.

Time does not ask permission.

He doesn't stop even at someone else's pain.

He just keeps moving.

And only a few people still carried their memory differently.

My best friend held his gaze on the empty space for longer.

Sometimes he was silent when he would have said something before.

Sometimes I looked out the window a little longer than necessary.

Such things are visible not in words, but in small pauses.

Because true memory is rarely loud.

She often lives in how a person suddenly changes intonation when the mention comes too close.

A girl in the hallway walked by one day and looked for a second where he had once stood between lessons.

Just a second.

But this was enough to understand: some images remain longer than it seems from the outside.

And that's where a new thought came.

The clearest in all this time.

If even the memory of you changes over time, if even the most severe pain gradually becomes quieter, then why was it so hard to live through someone else's noise?

Why was it so deep to allow other people's words to control the inner state?

Because those who sometimes think that the world is collapsing, very often live their new days themselves in a month.

Their thoughts have been switching for a long time.

Their problems are different.

Their mornings go further.

And your life is only one.

And that is why it cannot be built as a response to someone.

You can't live only for reaction.

You can't measure yourself by other people's views.

Because in the end, even someone else's memory does not remain unchanged.

Only one question remains:

What did you manage to create while you were here?

What did you manage to live for real?

What belonged to you, and not someone else's noise?

And it was then that he first truly felt:

I had to live deeper for myself.

Not selfish.

And honestly.

So that one's own life has a center inside, and not outside.

Because only then does it not collapse from every random wave.



Chapter 36. Year. The memory grows quieter

“What we do for ourselves dies with us. What we do for others remains and is immortal.”

— Albert Pike

A year has passed.

It was a completely different time.

Not the one in which it still hurts separately every day.

Not one where every morning begins with the same acute awareness of loss.

A year is the limit after which even severe pain ceases to sound the same every day.

It does not disappear completely, but changes shape.

Becomes less harsh.

Less visible.

It is as if memory learns to carry heavy things quieter so that a person can move on.

The world was on the move again.

The new students walked along the corridors.

New topics appeared in magazines.

Other dates were already written on the boards.

Some teachers even changed their habits: someone began to start the lesson differently, someone now smiled more often, someone, on the contrary, became more silent.

But in general, everything looked as if the system had adapted to what had happened a long time ago.

Human life is surprisingly hardy in this: even after large cracks, it gradually restores its usual shape.

He was standing at the window of the school corridor.

The same one where I used to often look at the yard between lessons.

The glass was now slightly scratched in the bottom corner.

Someone left a pen on the windowsill.

Outside the window, the trees already looked different than a year ago: the same trunks, but the branches became thicker, and even this surprisingly cut the thought - nature also goes further, without asking if you are ready to accept it.

In a classroom where once his place looked special for a long time, things were completely different now.

The desk has long become just a desk.

She didn't even have a brief inner pause in someone else's eyes anymore.

The new student habitually put books there.

Textbooks.

Telephone.

He wrote.

He laughed.

Sometimes he argued.

And this no longer surprised anyone.

Because after a year, even space ceases to protect the form of loss so clearly.

Memory no longer lives in an object.

It remains only where someone else wears it consciously inside.

One of the friends sometimes still remembered.

Not often.

Without long words.

It's just that sometimes a name sounded in some random sentence.

Or in the conversation suddenly appeared:

Do you remember?..

And this was enough to briefly return a whole layer of time.

But even that sounded calmer.

Not like an open wound.

Rather, as a trace that has long become part of the internal biography.

What struck me the most was something else: some of the new students didn't even know.

For them, these walls no longer had that history.

For them, it was just class.

Just a school.

Just a day.

And it was in this that a very tough but honest truth was suddenly revealed:

Human memory is shorter than it seems to those who now live inside their own drama.

Not because of indifference.

Through life.

Because everyone carries their own problems, their own changes, their own fears, their own new mornings.

And someone else's pain, even very strong, gradually becomes only part of the general movement of time.

At first, this thought almost hurt.

Because it sounded too direct.

As if everything can dissolve.

As if even the loudest will someday become quieter.

But then came another part of understanding.

Perhaps it was never a matter of being remembered endlessly.

Because memory is an unreliable form of presence.

It changes.

Weakening.

It is rewritten with new events.

The real question is different:

What do you leave behind who lives without the need to constantly remember you?

Not just a name.

Not just an emotion.

And the real footprint.

Opinion.

System.

Knowledge.

Help.

Something that works even when the day goes on without your voice.

He looked into the corridor and suddenly felt very clearly that it was too little to live just to be liked.

Because the likes are short.

Today there is.

Tomorrow is different.

The day after tomorrow, no one cares anymore.

Living just to be noticed is also not enough.

Because attention is even faster than memory.

It disappears almost instantly.

But creating something that will remain useful after you is already a different level of existence.

It was then that a question first arose that no longer let go:

And what would I leave behind?

Not emotion.

Not a pity.

Not a temporary silence.

And the real benefit.

What would really be left in the world if I was no more?

And the answer has been too short so far.

Insufficient.

As if there was still a lot of potential internally, but little complete form.

And it was this incompleteness that turned out to be stronger than any sadness.

Because until it is completed, there is still a reason to live.

There is still something to build.

There is still something to prove not to others, but to time itself.

The world does not promise to remember for long.

But he sometimes leaves behind what was created honestly.

And maybe that's what's more important than any memory



Chapter 37. And what did I leave in the world?

“The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”

— Pablo Picasso

After a year, the silence was no longer sharp.

It has become different — longer, deeper, less sharp, but in some ways even more dangerous, because it is in such silence that questions begin to come that are no longer possible to turn away.

When the pain is still fresh, the consciousness is occupied with the very fact of loss.

As time passes, the brain gets used to a new form of reality.

But then something else comes to the surface: not just what happened, but what everything that happened before meant in general.

It was now that this question became so clear that it was no longer possible to hide from it:

And what is really left after me?

Not a short shock.

Not a few months of silence.

Not a stranger to pain, which also gradually became quieter.

And something that does not depend on the emotion of the moment.

Something that exists separately from memory.

Because memory turned out to be unstable.

Even the strongest.

It does not disappear suddenly, but constantly changes shape.

At first, people remember the voice.

Then intonation.

Then individual phrases.

Then only a few strong images remain.

And then even these images become rare.

And this is not cruelty.

This is the mechanism of life.

Otherwise, people would not be able to withstand their own years.

He was standing in a familiar space, looking at the same corridor where everything had long since returned to normal motion, and suddenly he saw everything as if for the first time: how many things in life a person considers important only because he lives inside the moment, although after a while most of these things turn out to be too small.

Someone once said something unpleasant.

Someone didn't understand.

Someone assessed it wrong.

Someone looked down on him.

And once it seemed almost big.

Now it all looked almost weightless.

Because the year easily erases even what once seemed huge.

But then an even harsher realization arose:

If even other people's words lose their meaning so quickly, why were they ever allowed to have such power in the first place?

Why was it necessary to carry other people's assessments so deeply?

Why allow random people to become part of the internal coordinate system?

Because now it all looked almost strange.

Those who once seemed to be the center of individual painful thoughts have long lived their new days.

Perhaps without even remembering many of the little things that once made it so difficult inside.

And a life that could have gone on was cut short too soon for things that didn't even have real lasting power.

He thought about everything that never happened.

About all the ideas that have not even had time to get in shape yet.

About studies that have not yet begun.

About things that could be created.

About texts that are not written.

About knowledge that is not transferred.

About people who could still be helped.

About a system that could still be built.

About the future, which did not have time to start at all.

And it was then that for the first time it became really scary, not because of death.

And because of the scale of the unfinished.

Because death suddenly ceased to look like silence.

It began to look like a stopped incompleteness.

Like a closed door in front of thousands of things that have not even been given a chance to be born yet.

This was the main difference between a brief pain and true understanding.

Pain thinks only about the present.

Understanding sees all the lost future.

He suddenly felt very clearly: if it were possible to return at least one night now, everything would look different.

Because then there was still a possibility.

There was still air then.

Then there was still time.

And while there is time, there is room for change.

Even if nothing is ready now.

Even if you have not yet become what you want to be.

Even if so far he has only a small fragment of himself in his hands.

This is already enough to continue.

For no great thing is born complete.

Everything big is very small at first.

Sometimes one page.

One idea.

One night you just don't give up.

That is why the question "what did I leave?" suddenly changed shape.

It ceased to be regret.

And it became an order:

still needs to be left.

Still needs to be done.

We still have to make it.

It is also necessary to create something that will cause one's own existence to have not only memory, but form.

And at that moment, for the first time, there was an almost physical internal denial of everything that had already happened:

no.

This is not enough.

Not like that.

Not now.



Chapter 38. No! Let's fix it!

"When you cannot control what is happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond."
— Viktor Frankl

Sometimes, even in the deepest inner fall, there is a point after which something inside suddenly refuses to move further down.

Not because the pain goes away.

Not because the fear is getting smaller.

And not even because a person suddenly finds a ready-made answer.

But because at some point consciousness itself begins to see too much of the lost perspective to continue to accept its own defeat.

This is exactly what has happened now.

After everything I saw—after crying, after silence, after months, after a year, after that strange terrible sensation when even memory begins to become thinner—it suddenly became clear: the biggest mistake was not only in the decision itself, but in how narrow the picture of the world was then.

Because any difficult moment always lies about the scale of reality.

When it hurts, it seems that the pain is the whole territory.

When it is dark, it seems that the light no longer exists.

When tired, it seems that there will never be strength again.

But this is only a perceptual error created by an overloaded consciousness.

The human brain is strangely arranged: in a critical state, it begins to narrow the horizon, as if the inner space is suddenly compressed into one narrow corridor, where only the nearest wall is visible, but no further turn is visible.

That is why the human being sometimes believes in the finality of what is really just a phase.

He stood in that strange space between what he had already experienced and what was not yet understood, and suddenly he felt such a sharp inner resistance that this thought was no longer just a phrase.

It sounded almost like a blow:

no.

Not like that.

This is not how it should end.

Too much has not yet been done.

Too much has not even begun.

Too many decisions have not yet been made.

Too many mistakes can still be corrected.

And most importantly, too much of my own life was almost given over to those things that did not even have the right to be so great.

Because if you look honestly, most of what sometimes destroys a person inside, after a year already looks smaller than it seemed at the very moment.

Someone else's opinion.

Evaluation.

Misunderstanding.

View.

Words spoken by someone accidentally or carelessly.

All this may seem huge at the moment, but time shows their true weight: often it is much less than the price of their own lives.

And life is always more expensive.

Always.

Because as long as a person is alive, even on the worst day, he has one thing that cannot be overestimated: the ability to change direction.

Not all at once.

Not instantly.

Not ideal.

But change.

Even if only a few degrees so far.

Sometimes it is a few degrees after years that create a completely different fate.

This is the main truth: big changes almost never come as one high-profile moment.

They are born as a quiet inner decision not to let one dark wave define everything.

He felt how the space around him began to shrink.

The light has changed.

The circuits have become unstable.

The air seems to have become thicker.

It was as if the dream itself began to break under the weight of a new internal impulse.

And it was at this second that another understanding came - tough, but absolutely pure:

no one has the right to live instead of you.

No one has the right to live your life right for you.

No one can give you a full guarantee that it will be easy.

No one is obliged to always understand.

But no one has the right to become the reason why you give up on yourself.

Because people come and go.

Today, someone speaks harshly.

Tomorrow the same voice is already busy with its own business.

Today, someone assesses.

He doesn't even remember tomorrow.

And your life remains only for you.

And that is why it cannot be a bargaining chip for other people's temporary reactions.

You can't risk everything because in a year it will not even have the same force.

A person must learn to be cold not to good, not to loved ones, not to the world — but to unnecessary noise.

To the point that it does not have strategic weight.

Because without inner coldness, it is impossible to maintain one's own center.

Emotions are needed.

But they cannot manage the final decisions.

The most dangerous decision is a decision made at the moment when the emotion temporarily pretends to be the truth.

Emotion comes in a wave.

And the wave always passes.

Even the darkest.

Always.

That is why you need to wait for the wave to pass before believing her words.

Because almost every person who has experienced a difficult boundary sees after a while: what seemed to be the end was actually just a knot that had to be passed.

Not pretty.

Not easy.

But pass.

The world shuddered sharply.

And at that very second he woke up.

Sharply.

As if the air returned to the chest too quickly.

The breath was deep, ragged, almost painful.

My heart was beating so hard that the sound of my own pulse became louder than anything else for a few seconds.

Pajamas stuck to her back.

The skin was cold with sweat.

It was still night in the room.

Wall.

Closet.

Table.

Telephone.

Sheet.

Everything is the same.

Real.

Unchanged.

He sat on the bed and didn't even move for a few seconds.

He was just breathing.

And for the first time in a long time, this simple breathing carried such weight, as if each breath suddenly became not automatic, but conscious proof: life is still here.

And that is why nothing has been completed yet.

You can still talk.

You can still fix it.

You can still study.

You can also ask for forgiveness.

You can still create.

You can still change not the whole world — at least your direction.

And this is already enough to prevent the darkness from winning.

Because the real victory is not in never falling.

And in order to stay alive after even the darkest inner night and start building further.



Chapter 39. Cold morning

"Small deeds done are better than great deeds planned."

— Peter Marshall

Morning did not come immediately.

At first there was still night - thick, quiet, semi-motionless, the kind in which even the clock sounds louder than during the day.

After a sharp awakening, the room did not become ordinary for a long time.

Consciousness did not yet fully accept simple things: the wall in front of his eyes, the familiar table, the dark outline of the closet, the half-open curtain, behind which the horizon slowly brightened.

Everything looked like it was real, but after such a dream, even reality seems strange for a few minutes, as if it also needs to be checked.

He sat on the bed with his feet flat on the floor and felt the coldness of the parquet.

The cold was simple, physical, but this is what was strangely calming now.

Because physical cold is always honest.

He doesn't hide anything.

Doesn't pretend to be more complicated than it is.

There is no need to look for psychological explanations for it.

It just exists.

Sometimes it is these small sensations that best bring a person back to the present moment.

He slowly stood up.

He walked a few steps around the room.

In the dark reflection of the window, he briefly saw himself: a short silhouette, short hair, a little disheveled after sleep, thin shoulders, green eyes, which now looked darker because of the twilight.

This image suddenly seemed very real - not as a hero of his own thoughts, but just a person standing in the middle of the night after a heavy internal blow.

And it was this simplicity that had a special power.

Because sometimes a person complicates himself too much.

In fact, at the most important moments, everything comes down to simple:

You're still here.

Your heart is still working.

Your body is still moving.

So, nothing is done yet.

He walked over to the table.

There was a sheet on the table.

Pen.

Several books.

A phone with a dark screen.

All this was just objects yesterday.

Now every object was strangely reminded: life does not consist of great dramas, but of what lies next to you every day and waits to see if you will use it for something.

The sheet may remain blank.

Or it can be the beginning of the book.

The handle can just lie down.

Or he can write down a thought that will outlive your current mood.

The phone can steal time.

Or it can become a tool for knowledge.

The book can get dusty.

Or it can change the direction of thinking.

This is where almost all adult responsibility is hidden: objects themselves do nothing, everything is decided by internal choice.

He went to the window and pulled back the curtain.

The city was just waking up.

The lanterns were partially burning.

Somewhere far away, the first car was driving.

The lights were already on on one balcony.

Someone also woke up earlier.

And this suddenly caused a strange feeling of unity: in every window now, too, someone lives their morning, their thoughts, their difficulties, their decisions.

The world is much bigger than one internal crisis.

And this does not detract from the pain.

It just turns the scale.

When a person looks only inside himself for too long, it begins to seem to him that the whole world is shrinking to his state.

But as soon as you raise your head, you can see that the world is huge, the movement continues, and there is still a lot of room for new things in it.

Suddenly, a very simple thought came to me:

If you have already woken up, then you need to do something differently today.

Not tomorrow.

Not ever.

Not after a perfect mood.

Just today.

Because a great future is always built only because of a specific day.

Through a specific morning.

Because of the very small movement.

He dressed slowly, quietly, so as not to wake anyone up.

It was semi-dark in the corridor.

The kitchen still smelled of the silence of the night, cold water and something familiar, homely, that always exists even when you don't notice it.

And then came another feeling of guilt - but no longer destructive, but useful.

Not the one that pulls down.

And the one that says:

You can still be more careful.

You can also say more heat.

You can still have time to do something good before the day goes on.

Because the greatest illusion of youth is to think that time is endless.

In fact, even at a very young age, time already has weight.

Every day something either builds or dissolves.

There is almost no average.

He looked at the door of his parents' room.

Then to the kitchen.

Then back out the window.

And he understood one thing very clearly:

After any inner collapse, life does not come back on its own.

He is returned by small deeds.

Not big promises.

Not pretty phrases.

And specific things:

to help.

Thank.

Learn.

Do not postpone the important.

Do not be silent where you can say a good word.

Because this is what then forms the version of yourself that you will either respect or not.

And one more thought became finally clear:

Death is never the right way to respond to temporary darkness.

Because any darkness is shorter than a full life, if you give yourself a chance to pass it.

Even when it seems impossible now.

The brain in crisis lies about finality.

Time is always stronger than a crisis.

And the future almost always has more options than is seen overnight.

He looked out the window again.

The sky was already brightening.

And in this morning light there was something very simple and very powerful:

A new day doesn't ask if you're perfect.

He just comes.

And it gives another chance.



"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."

— Aristotle

After such a morning, the day could no longer remain normal.

And it wasn't that the world around him had changed dramatically.

The house remained the same.

The same door.

Same walls.

The same sounds of water in the pipes.

The same kitchen table.

The very morning in which the city was already starting to make noise somewhere far away.

But after an internal fracture, even familiar things suddenly begin to look different, because it is not the object that changes, but the point from which you look at it.

Sometimes the biggest change in life is outwardly almost imperceptible.

It occurs in the way the hand takes the cup, how you look out the window, how you react to the silence, how you think before saying a word.

He stood in the kitchen, still feeling a little tired after the night, but this fatigue did not press now.

It looked more like a trace after a strong internal shock - when something hurts inside, but no longer destroys, but is rebuilt.

On the table were several apples, a cup, bread, a knife.

Normal morning.

And it was this ordinariness that suddenly became very expensive.

Because only now it has become clear how often people do not notice their own lives until they imagine its absence.

We get used to the simple so much that we stop seeing its weight.

We get used to the voices of our relatives.

To the smell of home.

To the sound of doors.

To the fact that someone exists nearby.

And only when consciousness passes next to the loss at least once, these simple things return in a completely different depth.

He opened the refrigerator, looked inside, and suddenly remembered how long he had wanted to just do something good for no reason.

Not because they asked.

Not because it is necessary.

But because you can.

For a good action has a special power precisely when it is not caused by duty.

It shows true inner choice.

Later, on the way home from school, he went to a small store.

I bought flowers.

Small bouquet.

For no particular reason.

No holiday.

Without a prepared phrase.

And when he held them in his hands, he suddenly felt a strange unusualness of this gesture - as if a simple act turned out to be more difficult than complex thoughts.

Because it's easy to think.

Planning is easy.

It's easy to imagine.

But it is often much more difficult to really make a small warm movement.

That is why small good actions say so much about inner maturity.

When Mom opened the door, her surprise was very brief, but real.

There is sometimes more to such views than long conversations.

Because people feel when a gesture goes without coercion.

Sometimes even one simple action says:

I see you.

I am grateful.

I remember that you are nearby.

And that's enough.

Later there was a father.

Not a pretentious conversation.

Not a great explanation.

Just help.

Where it was previously possible to pass by, now the hand itself reached out to help.

Bring it up.

Hold.

Ask.

Because adulthood does not begin with age.

Adulthood begins at the moment when you cease to be the center of your own attention so much that you begin to really see around others.

It was here that one very hard truth came to mind again:

Age is really just a number.

Because you can be older and live internally very superficially.

And you can be younger, but already see things that many put off for decades.

But at the same time, this truth does not mean that everything comes by itself.

Potential is not a result.

Discipline is required.

Without discipline, even a strong mind begins to disperse.

Without discipline, even talent slowly turns into a beautiful but unrealized opportunity.

He returned to the room and looked at the table.

The books were lying there.

Laptop.

Sheets.

Pen.

And now all this no longer looked like a random set of things.

It looked like a field of choice.

This is where it became very clear:

No one builds the future with one big decision.

The future consists of whether you sat down to study today when you didn't really want to.

Did he finish reading the page when he was tired.

Did I finish the task when I wanted to postpone.

Did he discover a material that is complex.

He did not betray his own direction because of a short emotional noise.

The world is very fond of beautiful success stories, but is almost always silent about their true basis: repeating small right actions on days when there is no inspiration.

This is exactly what inner strength is.

Not a loud character.

Not an insult.

Not a demonstration.

And the ability to continue when no one sees.

He sat down at the table.

He opened the book.

Then another.

Then I wrote down a few thoughts.

Then another.

And in this simple sequence, a very strong feeling suddenly appeared:

Perhaps this is what a real return looks like - not because of big vows, but because of the calm restoration of the internal trajectory.

When you're no longer trying to be perfect instantly.

And you just stop destroying yourself with your own inaction.

Because the most dangerous thing is not weakness.

The most dangerous thing is when a person gets used to postponing his own life, thinking that he will start sometime later.

In fact, "later" almost always consists of what is done now.

And one more thought was no longer in doubt:

If life has already returned a chance, then this chance cannot be lived by chance.

It should be used so that one day the question "what did I leave?" sound not like regret, but like a calm answer.



Chapter 41. A man who seeks heaven

"Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by rulers as useful."

— Lucius Annaeus Seneca

After a few days of new internal rhythm, he began to notice that thoughts had changed direction.

Previously, the main question was very personal: why does it hurt, why do people hurt so easily, why is it sometimes dark inside even when it is daylight outside.

Now the questions have become broader.

As if after the experience, consciousness could no longer stop only on itself.

When a person goes through a strong internal blow, he almost always begins to look not just for an explanation for his own condition, but for the general constructions of the world - those large systems in which millions of other people have invested meaning for centuries.

That is why this evening, sitting at the table under the lamp, he opened a non-fiction book at all.

In front of him were texts about religions.

Not to find an answer right away.

Because after thinking about death, it is almost impossible not to ask yourself an ancient human question:

Why have so many generations so persistently sought an explanation for what no one can bring to an end?

There were notes on the table.

Next to the laptop.

The light of the lamp fell evenly, leaving half the room in soft shadow.

A room was reflected in the window: short hair, green eyes, a low silhouette, a concentrated face of a man who is still very young, but already thinks about things that many people approach only much later.

He read about how different civilizations created their images of a higher order.

Some saw the gods in a thunderstorm.

Others are in the sun.

Someone believed in a lot of power.

Someone — into one.

Someone was building a temple.

Someone is a text.

Someone is the law.

And gradually a strange pattern became visible: regardless of geography, time or culture, man almost always tried to create a form through which chaos could be explained.

Because chaos is frightening.

Especially when there is no answer.

When there is a war.

When there is death.

When a child asks why the house was destroyed.

When a person loses loved ones.

When there is no guarantee that tomorrow will be calm.

It is at such moments that humanity has historically searched not only for facts, but for meaning.

And religion often became the language of this sense.

But at the same time, the other side came.

Where there is a large system of meaning, a power structure almost always appears.

Because any strong idea that unites many people, sooner or later begins to affect not only the soul, but also behavior.

This is how social psychology works.

A person rarely lives only individually — he is always looking for a frame in which it is easier to explain right and wrong.

And that is why religions have been different things at the same time for centuries:

for some, salvation;

for some, it is a moral support;

for some, it is a response to the fear of death;

for some, it is an instrument of order;

and for some, it is a form of power.

He wrote:

Any large system can treat and control at the same time — it all depends on who holds it in their hands.

Then I looked at this line for a long time.

Because it's not just about religion.

The same works with politics.

With education.

From the media.

Even with knowledge.

Any tool can either open a person or narrow them.

The question is not only in the system itself, but in whether it allows a person to think.

It was here that he first felt a very important difference:

True faith and blind submission are not the same thing.

Faith is born where there is an inner choice.

Blind submission begins where choice is taken away.

Therefore, historically, it cannot be said that religions existed only for control.

That would be too superficial.

Because millions of people found in them the strength to survive losses, wars, hunger, death of children, destruction of cities.

But it is also true that any great faith has sometimes become a handy tool for those who wanted to manage fear.

And then the hero suddenly realized the main thing:

Adult thinking begins when you are able to see two truths at the same time.

Not just one.

Not a simple one.

A difficult one.

The world is almost never made up of pure good or pure evil.

Everything is much thinner.

Even religion.

Even science.

Even freedom.

Even love.

Because a person brings himself into any system — with his fear, greed, hope, pain, and need for meaning.

He got up, walked around the room with bare steps, slowly, almost without a sound.

In the silence of the evening, my own movement also sounded like part of the thought.

Outside the window, the city has already completely passed into night.

A car drove somewhere far away.

The world lived.

And in this simple nocturnal reality, it suddenly became very clear:

Perhaps the main thing is not what system a person chooses.

And whether she retains the right to ask questions.

Because as soon as the questions disappear, the real danger begins.

For thought.

For freedom.

For the future.

That is why teaching is always more important than ready-made dogma.

Because education teaches you to see wider.

And any blind design only teaches you to repeat.

And perhaps that is why knowledge should be available to everyone — regardless of wealth, age, or country.

Because a person who thinks is much less likely to allow someone to definitively control their own inner world.



“Research is what I’m doing when I don’t know what I’m doing.”

— Wernher von Braun

After that night, the thinking changed completely.

Previously, many thoughts revolved around inner pain, around how to endure the day, how not to break under pressure, how to survive your own dark waves.

Now there is another feeling: if life has already returned a chance, then this chance must have a form.

Not just existence.

Not just another day.

And something that can be left out of your own mood, age, condition or even time.

That is why this evening the table already looked different.

Not only school books were on it.

Nearby were open tabs with scientific articles, notes, formulas, diagrams, several pages with their own short notes.

The lamp cast a narrow light only on the working part of the table, leaving the rest of the room in semi-darkness.

In this light, everything looked almost laboratory-like.

As if even a simple room could temporarily become a place where something more than an ordinary day is born.

He sat up straight, leaning forward slightly, looking carefully at the lines of text.

The green eyes moved quickly between paragraphs.

Short hair fell a little more on the forehead after the shower.

There were already several written off pages on the table.

And these were not just thoughts.

Here another form of internal movement began - research.

There is a strange difference between thought and research.

The thought can be quick.

Emotional.

Incomplete.

Research, on the other hand, requires discipline.

It does not allow you to be satisfied with a beautiful assumption.

It forces you to check.

Compare.

Doubt even your own idea.

That is why research is often a form of maturing thinking.

Because it is no longer enough just to feel there.

You need to prove.

He wrote at the top of the page:

If a person wants to leave a mark, he must create something that works even without his presence.

Then I looked at this line for a long time.

Because it suddenly contained almost everything that became clear after sleep.

Words live longer if they are honest.

Ideas live longer if they are useful.

Systems live longer if they are actually helping others.

And knowledge is one of the few forms that can pass between generations without losing its essence.

That is why science, in a sense, is also a form of human immortality.

Not the body.

Not a name.

And influence.

When a person has long since left, but his formula still works.

Its text is still being read.

Her method is still used.

Its opening makes the way easier for someone else.

He opened another file.

There were the first schemes.

Imperfect.

Raw.

In some places they are even chaotic.

But this is how any real work always begins.

At first, almost everything looks weak.

The beginning is rarely beautiful.

The beginning almost always looks like an unfinished fragment.

And only those who know how to withstand this raw stage reach the true result.

It was already night outside the window.

The city shone through separate windows.

Somewhere far away, there was still transport.

And this simple picture suddenly coincided very closely with the inner feeling:

Each light in the dark is a separate work, a separate thought, a separate person who is also now building something in his corner of the world.

Perhaps this is what the true development of humanity looks like - not because of big slogans, but because of thousands of separate quiet tables at which someone thinks honestly at night.

He suddenly remembered a very important thing:

The strongest thing that can be contrasted with chaos is structure.

When it was once dark inside, thoughts often scattered without form.

Now each record was almost like a small victory over internal blurring.

Because the recorded thought already has a limit.

It has a shape.

And where there is form, there is control.

That is why training saves not only the future professionally.

It sometimes literally saves the psyche.

Because chaotic consciousness often calms down where a logical process appears.

When you read.

You analyze.

You write.

You build.

Even pain in such a regime begins to lose its chaotic power.

Does not disappear completely.

But it no longer manages everything.

He opened a new page and wrote:

Man must create more than he consumes. Otherwise, it gradually loses its sense of inner meaning.

Then another:

True adulthood begins where you stop waiting and begin to build even imperfectly.

And one more thing:

If the world is sometimes harsh, that's no reason to disappear. This is the reason to become so strong to create something better than the part of the world that once put pressure on you.

It was here that an almost calm realization came:

Perhaps the best response to the darkness experienced is not to analyze it endlessly, but to build something brighter after it.

Because even the most difficult experience only makes sense when it becomes material for growth.

Otherwise, the pain remains just pain.

And if knowledge is born through it, then even the dark chapter ceases to be useless.

The lamp continued to shine.

The pages were gradually filled.

And for the first time in a long time, the night no longer looked like a space of pressure.

It has become a space of work.

And this is a completely different form of silence.



Chapter 43. Making a contribution to the future

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."

— Alan Kay

The more he worked in the evenings, the clearer one strange inner fact became: knowledge alone does not give a complete sense of completeness.

You can read dozens of pages.

A complex theory can be understood.

You can learn to analyze.

You can even write the right conclusions.

But if all this remains only inside you, sooner or later the question arises: what next?

Because the human mind is designed in such a way that deep learning almost inevitably leads to the need to create.

Do not repeat.

Not easy to store.

And to build something new from what I have already understood.

It was this evening that the room no longer resembled more than just a place for lessons.

On the table there were open diagrams, drafts, several separate sheets with different options for the structure, arrows between ideas, short marks in the margins.

The lamp is light evenly.

The computer was quietly running.

In the window, the night again gathered the city into separate light squares.

And suddenly, everything that used to look like separate thoughts began to add up into one big line.

Not just to learn.

Don't just get stronger.

And to make sure that knowledge ceases to be a privilege for those who are more fortunate.

Because the more he looked at the reality around him, the more he saw the injustice: access to quality education still very often depends not on ability, but on circumstances.

Some have expensive courses.

Some have strong teachers.

Someone has equipment.

Someone has a stable space.

And someone has only a desire and almost nothing else.

And this is where it became particularly clear: If the future really wants to be fairer, education must stop depending on a random starting point.

Because talent is not born only in rich rooms.

The mind does not ask about social status.

Potential often sits in places where no one even expects to see it.

But without tools, even strong potential is sometimes just a silent possibility.

He wrote in capital letters:

Education should be available as naturally as air.

And I looked at this line for a long time.

Because he no longer had just a thought.

It had a position.

Not abstract.

And personal.

When a person at least once truly understands how much knowledge can change inside, he can no longer perceive education as just a set of lessons.

Education is not an assessment.

Not a diploma.

Not a formal procedure.

In a deeper sense, education is the ability of a person to stop being controlled by someone else's framework.

Because he who understands more is less afraid.

Less believes in simple manipulations.

Less obeys random pressure.

And he is more able to build his own trajectory.

That is why the idea of the future system began to become more and more concrete.

Not just a website.

Not just a course.

Not just a base of materials.

And the environment where a person feels: they do not close the door only because of age, country, status or starting position.

Because age is really just a number if there is a real ability to work.

But at the same time, age should not become an excuse for either laziness or irresponsibility.

It was here that my own words came to mind again:

“Age is just a number, and it does not define your potential. Unfortunately, many use this fact as an excuse for their laziness. True progress comes when we stop making excuses and take responsibility for our actions.” — Stas Kozosvyst

And now this quote no longer sounded like a separate phrase.

It became a principle.

Because potential without responsibility does not give anything.

The world very often romanticizes talent.

But almost everything strong in history was done not by talent, but by a long repetition of the right work.

That is why investing in the future does not begin with a beautiful name, but with a very simple discipline: do it day by day even when it is not perfect.

He opened a new file.

Created a structure.

Sections.

Logic.

Opportunities.

First blocks.

Still raw.

Still imperfect.

But they are already alive.

Everything big always starts like this - with an imperfect first version.

People are often afraid to start because they want a flawless result right away.

But this is a trap.

The first version is almost always weak.

And that is why it must be allowed to be created.

Because without a raw first step, there is no strong ending.

It was even darker outside the window.

In a distant yard, someone was returning home late.

The world continued to live its own small routes.

And suddenly a very strong inner feeling came:

Perhaps this is the correct answer to all the dark questions of past chapters.

Not just to survive.

And to do something useful after survival.

Because if pain does not turn into meaning, it remains only a wound.

And if a system is born out of it that will help others, then even a difficult experience ceases to be in vain.

This is the adult meaning of any deep path: not only to go through one's own, but to create something that will make it easier for someone further.



Chapter 44. I'm not running away anymore

"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."

— Friedrich Nietzsche

There is a moment when a person suddenly notices a very subtle but decisive change: thoughts have remained almost the same, the world around has not become perfect either, problems have not completely disappeared anywhere, but inside there is no longer that panicked need to constantly run away from them.

This is exactly what has happened now.

Until a few weeks ago, any silence could quickly turn into a dangerous space.

Because in silence it is always stronger to hear yourself.

And when there's a lot of unresolved things inside, your own inner voice sometimes sounds heavier than any outside noise.

That is why many people are so afraid of silence: music, tapes, messages, endless movement are often needed not because it is interesting, but because a pause forces you to meet what has long been postponed.

But now the room no longer looked like a place of struggle.

The evening was calm.

The lamp gave even light.

There were open notes on the table.

Several books.

Laptop.

A cup of water.

Outside the window, the city lived its dark, familiar rhythm.

A car drove somewhere far away.

Somewhere someone closed the window.

Somewhere a dog barked briefly.

And all this simple everyday reality suddenly became very important.

Because it is in simple evenings that a new inner stability is often born.

He got up from the table and walked slowly around the room for several minutes.

Not from nervousness.

Not from overload.

Simply because the thought sometimes moves better with the body.

In the reflection of the window, a familiar silhouette briefly appeared again: short stature, short hair, green eyes, already calmer face than a few chapters ago.

And this was also noticeable: a person's face changes not only with age, but also with how he goes through his own internal stages.

There is fatigue that makes the features stiffer.

There is fear that is visible even in the gaze.

There is prolonged internal pressure that changes even posture.

And there is a moment when, after a lot of tension, another type of silence comes - not empty, but collected.

This is exactly the silence that was now.

He stopped at the window.

He looked down at a few lights in the yard.

And suddenly I realized very clearly: the biggest mistake many people make is to think that a strong person is someone who does not have dark thoughts.

In fact, a strong person is not one who does not have darkness.

A strong person is one who has learned not to subordinate final decisions to him.

Darkness can come.

Fatigue can come.

Sadness can come.

Disappointment too.

It's all part of the psyche.

But no temporary state has the right to become a final sentence.

Because the psyche is not static.

It is wavy.

Today there is one state.

A week later, another.

A month later, another one.

And people often make the fatal mistake of believing a temporary wave as if it were the whole truth
about life.

In fact, no wave lasts forever.

Even very dark.

That is why the main rule of survival is sometimes very simple: do not make irreversible decisions in a
state that has not yet ended.

Because an emotion is always shorter than a consequence.

And the consequence is longer than one night.

This was already felt very clearly now.

The silence was no longer frightening.

Because there was no enemy in silence.

There was space in the silence now.

For thought.

For work.

For the plan.

For the future.

And this is where another important realization came:

A person does not have to prove something to someone all the time.

The world loves to make you compare.

Who is faster.

Who is stronger.

Who is richer.

Who declares himself louder.

But almost all major domestic victories take place without spectators at all.

No one sees how you didn't give up at night.

No one sees how tired you opened the book anyway.

No one sees how you survived a difficult day and did not destroy yourself with your own impulses.

But it is these things that then form the character.

Not an external image.

And the real internal structure.

He sat down at the table again.

I opened a blank slate.

And he looked at him for a long time.

The white space no longer pressed.

Previously, a blank page could remind of chaos.

Now it looked like freedom.

Because a blank page is not a lack of content.

This is a space in which you can still create the right direction.

And, perhaps, the same with life.

As long as it lasts — even if a lot has already been difficult — there is always a part that can still be written differently.

This is what it means to no longer run away:

do not demand complete lightness from the world;

not expect that there will never be dark days again;

but simply accept that even with darkness it is possible to move forward.

Slowly.

Not perfect.

But go ahead.

Because escape never creates strength.

Strength is only created by being present in one's own life, even when it is complex.

†

Chapter 45. Death doesn't come as an end

"It is not death that a man should fear, but never beginning to live."

— Marcus Aurelius

People usually think wrong about death.

Or too far from it, as if it exists only in other people's stories.

Or vice versa — too emotional, when one difficult moment suddenly begins to look bigger than the entire previous and possible future path.

But death is never what tired consciousness often imagines it to be.

It doesn't come as a beautiful final point.

Not like perfect silence.

Not as a romantic ending to pain.

In reality, death almost always rudely interrupts the unfinished.

She doesn't ask if you've already had time to say the main thing.

Does not check whether you have completed important work.

It does not give another day to correct a phrase that he wanted to say and did not say.

It does not return the opportunity to hug someone to whom you have long wanted to give more warmth.

And that's where its real toughness lies: it doesn't just take away the present moment — it cuts off all potential future options that could still be born.

He sat by the window, and the evening was strangely quiet.

There was no strong wind.

There was no rain.

Even the city sounded muffled this time, as if the outside world didn't want to interrupt the inner thought either.

The light of the room was reflected in the glass, and next to the darkness of the courtyard a familiar silhouette was again visible: short hair, a calm profile, green eyes, which now no longer had the chaotic movement that had existed before.

Because sometimes after a great inner storm comes a very sober type of thinking.

Without unnecessary drama.

No illusions.

Just clarity.

Right now, this clarity sounded almost harsh:

A person very often overestimates the power of one difficult day and underestimates the power of his own long future.

One day can be unbearable.

One night can seem endless.

One conversation can suddenly hurt more than it should.

One mistake can put pressure on the inside for a long time.

But none of these fragments have the scale of a lifetime.

The problem is that in a crisis, the brain temporarily stops seeing a wide horizon.

It narrows the perspective to the nearest dark point.

And if you believe this optical error at this moment, you can lose the entire future due to a state that was not eternal in itself.

That is why it is so important to remember: the psyche often lies under load.

Not out of spite.

Not on purpose.

It's just that an overloaded system temporarily does not assess scale well.

In psychology, this is one of the most dangerous traps - when a temporary internal wave seems to be the ultimate truth.

In fact, almost any strong wave subsides.

And after hours, days or weeks, the same situation looks different.

Not always easy.

But it's different.

Therefore, the most sensible rule in a dark moment is very simple: do not trust final decisions until the condition has stabilized.

Because a stable consciousness sees more.

A stable consciousness remembers the future.

Stable consciousness knows: even if it is difficult now, this does not mean that the entire route is broken.

He thought of a strange thing: why do people so often live as if they have an infinite supply of time, but at the same time in a crisis behave as if there is no time at all?

Both extremes are equally dangerous.

The first creates laziness.

The second is panic.

And the truth is always between them: time is enough, if you do not spend it thoughtlessly, but it is not unlimited to allow yourself to ruin life because it is not worth the price.

It was here that the thought of what really remains after a person returned again.

Not her dramatic moment.

Not even her hardest day.

And what she created in between these days.

Texts.

Solution.

Help.

Systems.

Training.

Good.

Even the simple habit of being attentive to those around you often outlives individual big words.

Because death doesn't ask how beautifully you explained your pain.

But life bears the consequences of what you really managed to do for a long time.

And that is why death should never become a response to someone else's pressure.

Not to other people's expectations.

No to insults.

No shame.

No to fatigue.

Not even into inner darkness.

Because all this is changing faster than it seems inside a crisis moment.

And life, even a difficult one, almost always opens up new options after a while, which are simply not visible on a dark night.

He inhaled slowly.

He looked through the dark glass.

And suddenly he felt very clearly:

Death alone does not explain anything.

It doesn't make sense.

The meaning is born only in what a person does to him.

And that is why the main question is not "when".

The main question is "what is filled".

Because if you fill the path correctly, the border itself no longer looks like a defeat.

It just becomes a natural part of a great story that was not ashamed to live.

†

Chapter 46. Live on

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."

— Rumi

There is a moment when a person suddenly stops counting how many times it was difficult for him, and for the first time he looks not at the pain, but at the path that he has already managed.

Not because all the pain is gone.

Not because the world suddenly became easy.

Not because there will never be difficult days again.

But because a very calm understanding appears inside: you are no longer who you were at the moment when the darkness seemed limitless.

This is exactly what was felt now.

The night was quiet.

There were pages on the table.

Written off.

Alive.

Different in mood, different in weight, but already integral.

Next to it are notes, diagrams, open books, several separate drafts in which there were still edits left.

The laptop lit up softly.

The lamp gave a soft light.

Outside the window, the city breathed its nightlife: separate windows, distant transport, faint movement of light between houses.

And in all this, for the first time, there was no feeling of internal struggle.

Only silence that no longer pressed.

He sat upright, looked at what was written and understood: every page is not just a text.

Each line is a part of something that once had no shape inside.

Because thought without form often torments.

And the thought that has received words is already partially understandable even to the person himself.

That is why writing sometimes heals more strongly than it seems.

Not magically.

Not instantly.

But through the structure.

When chaos takes shape, the psyche no longer drowns in it so easily.

And this applies not only to writing.

Any right action works in a similar way: studying, researching, working, creating a system, helping another — all of this gives an inner space where darkness loses its monopoly.

Because the greatest danger begins where a person does not build anything for a long time.

The void very quickly begins to be filled with what destroys.

That is why life does not require constant happiness, but constant movement.

Even a small one.

Even a slow one.

But go ahead.

He ran his fingers along the edge of the page.

The paper was a little warm from the lamp.

And suddenly one thing became very clear that many people understand too late:

A person should not wait for the perfect moment to start becoming himself.

Because the perfect moment almost never comes.

There will always be noise.

Fatigue.

Other people's thoughts.

Doubts.

Inconvenience.

Sometimes fear.

Sometimes it feels like it's too early.

But the truth is that life doesn't ask if you're already fully prepared.

It moves.

And the only way not to lose to him is to move too.

Even if the step is very small at first.

It is small steps that almost always save more than big beautiful promises.

Because one page every day is stronger than the dream of a book.

One hour of study is stronger than the desire to ever become smart.

One honest act is stronger than a long conversation about correctness.

One hard day lived is stronger than escaping from it.

And it was here that the hero realized one more thing:

The coldness that he thought about so much does not mean becoming indifferent.

True inner coldness is the ability not to allow emotions at a critical moment to fully control the decision.

Because emotion is a wave.

And the decision sometimes leaves consequences for years.

That is why a strong person is not one who does not feel anything.

But the one that knows how to feel and at the same time not destroy itself under the pressure of the moment.

And if one day darkness comes again — and it sometimes comes to everyone — we must remember the main thing:

No difficult evening has the right to take a lifetime.

No other person's voice is worth crossing out your own future.

No shame, failure or pain is the final sentence.

Because a person is always bigger than his worst day.

Psychology has long known one important truth: the brain in crisis almost always shows a picture narrower than it is.

At the moment of pain, it seems that there are few options.

After a while, it almost always turns out that there were significantly more.

That is why you need to survive the wave before believing it.

Survive the night.

Survive the morning.

Give yourself another day.

Because sometimes another day changes more than it seems impossible at night.

He looked up at the window.

In the dark glass there was his imprint again: short hair, green eyes, short stature, calmer look.

Not perfect.

Not without wounds.

But alive.

And this word now had the greatest meaning.

Alive means not yet complete.

And if it is not yet completed, then you can still add the correct pages.

You can still get stronger.

You can still make mistakes and correct.

You can still build something that did not exist yesterday.

You can still give the world something more than your own pain.

He smiled softly.

Barely noticeable.

He looked at what was written.

And for the first time in a long time, this smile was not an attempt to hide from thoughts.

She was honest.

Almost calm.

And very briefly, almost in a whisper, it sounded:

"Hah... I could..."

Not because everything is complete.

But because the most difficult thing has already ceased to control the direction.

And everything else is now a matter of time, discipline and the courage to move on.

No need to give up. Find help in yourself and become better. Everything bad has a beginning and an end. You shouldn't kill yourself because of someone. All problems are temporary. I believe that you will become the best in the world. Thank you.

Shadow of the Soul. (Psychological and philosophical novel)

0. Background

- 1. The Way to School**
- 2. Essay Assignments**
- 3. The First Thought of Freedom**
- 4. School Pressure**
- 5. Age Is Just a Number**
- 6. Why Should I Think How I Am Seen?**
- 7. Depression and apathy in my child's body**
- 8. Emotions cannot be removed with the word "good"**
- 9. War is the biggest wound**
- 10. The city after the alarm**
- 11. Night: rockets in the sky**
- 12. Restrictions**
- 13. Others cannot control lives**
- 14. Hurting jokes**
- 15. Shadow does not destroy**
- 16. Leaf: the first drop**
- 17. Leaf: the last drop**
- 18. Memories and realities**
- 19. Every window is someone's story**
- 20. Are you afraid of the dark?**
- 21. Everything Has an End**
- 22. Flight to Infinity**
- 23. Children's Park**
- 24. First Kindergarten**
- 25. Body and Clothes**
- 26. Quark in the Void**
- 27. Soul in Superposition**
- 28. Emptiness in the Room**
- 29. White Noise**
- 30. Silence That Speaks**
- 31. Shadows of Friends**

- 32. Shadows of Family**
- 33. Forgotten Names**
- 34. Day. Guilt**
- 35. Moon. Forgetting**
- 36. Year. Memory Becomes Quieter**
- 37. And what did I leave in the world?**
- 38. No! Let's fix it!**
- 39. Cold Morning**
- 40. First Corrections**
- 41. Man Who Seeks Heaven**
- 42. Starting Research**
- 43. Making a Contribution to the Future**
- 44. I Don't Run Away**
- Anymore 45. Death Doesn't Come as an End**
- 46. Living On**

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Availability

This book is created for free.

Like knowledge, it should not be inaccessible due to money, status or circumstances.

The author supports the principle that learning, development and access to thought should belong to everyone, regardless of age, country or financial situation.

Age restriction

18+

The work contains psychologically complex themes, deep reflections on death, internal crisis, war, loss, mental pressure and the meaning of human existence.

Recommended for the mature reader.

Title of the work

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