

JAMES JORDAN

COWBOY SURFER'S JOURNAL





James Jordan

COWBOY SURFER'S JOURNAL

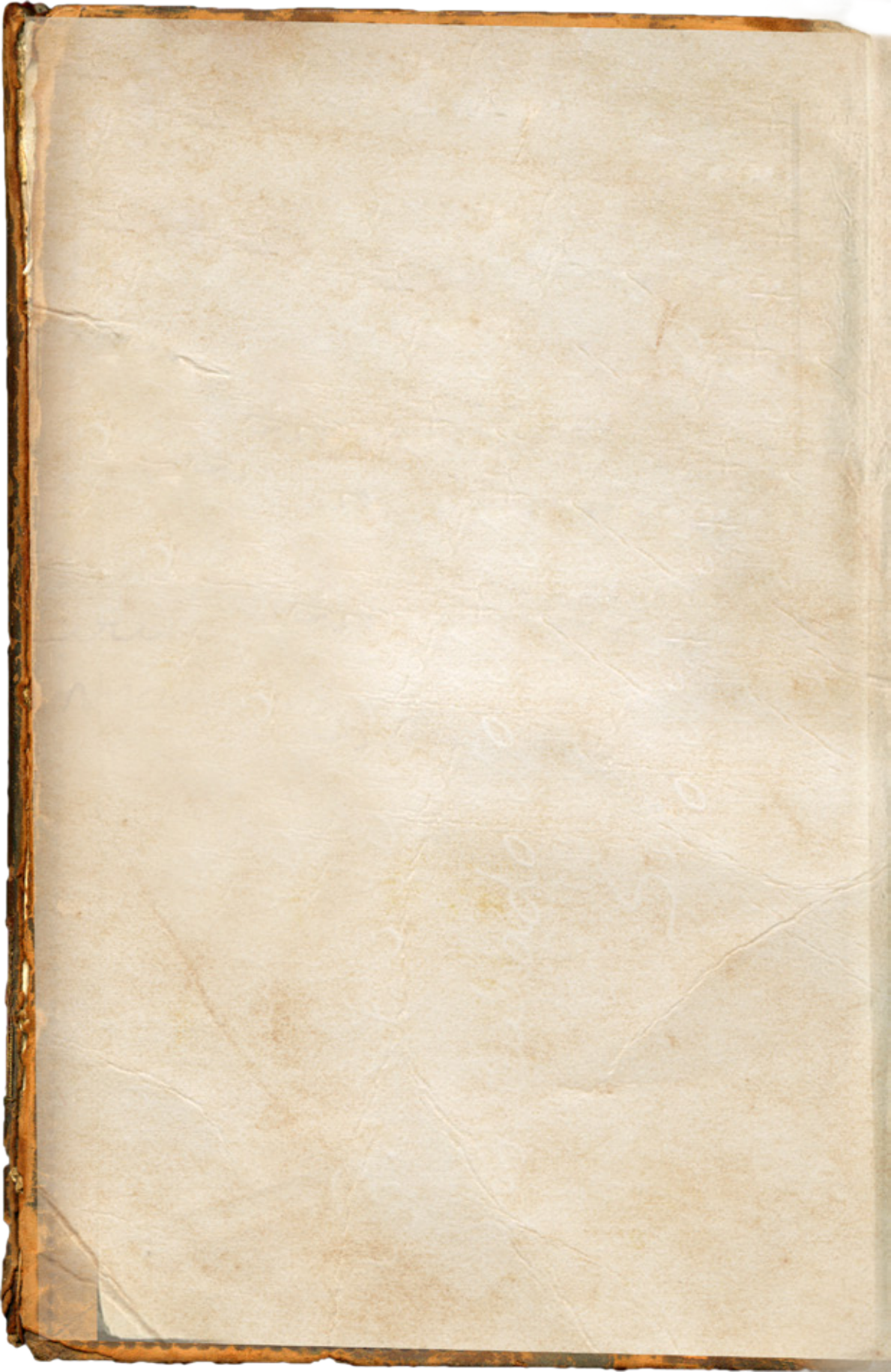
The Lost Ember



Frontispiece by Joel Nakamura

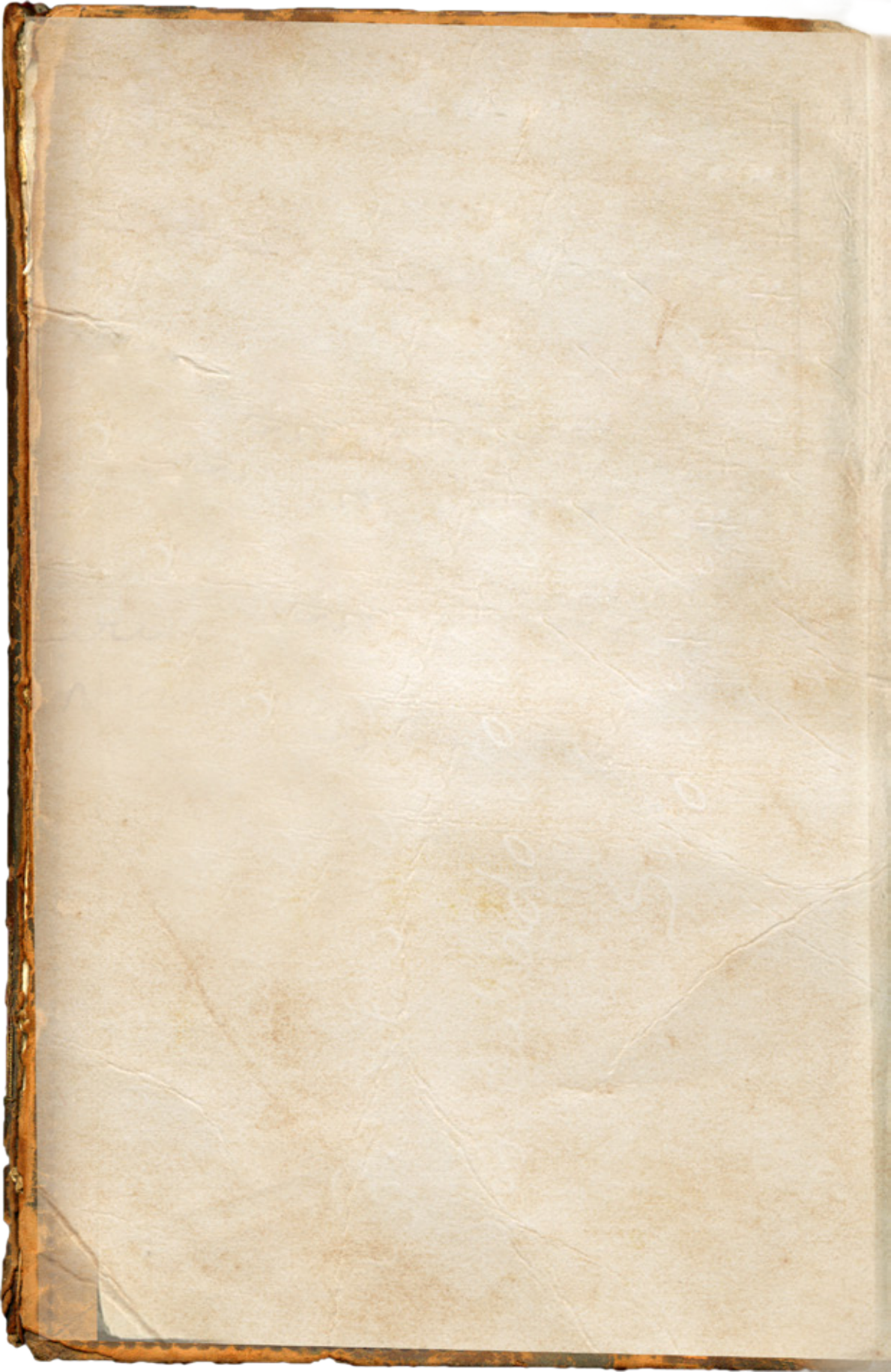
Design and production Monica Gallo

copyright 2009 ember creative media



*There will come a time, in the distant future,
when the Ocean will break its chains
and a vast land will be revealed to man
when a bold mariner ... discovers a new world.*

Seneca





OVERTURE

"Lord of the Distant Isles"

Each of us suffers his own spirit: a few of us are later released to wander at will through broad Elysium, the joyous fields; until, in the fullness of time ... nothing is left but pure ethereal sentience and the pure flame of the spirit.

Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.742



ost in thought peering out the upstairs window, reflecting on events from so, so long ago, he sighed deeply thinking about the story he would share with his family and neighbors that warm summer evening. How could they understand what really happened, he thought? Everything is so perfect now, the way Santosha used to be . . . maybe they will understand, but how can they without a comparable experience?

The patter of little feet pulled his attention toward the long hallway leading to the grand staircase. As little Meg appeared, grabbing his hand and urging him to follow, the great man silently gestured to her, as his attention returned to the present moment, smiling broadly.

Please, settle into your seats and listen to a children's story, for adults. It is a story of bravery, romance, heartbreak, and adventure. Many of you will remember the story of the Cowboy Surfer.

"I remember," said one old man with a wry smile, "I was there."

Yes Patrick, you were, nodded the generous raconteur. Children giggled as the storyteller continued.

Far away in a distant land, toward the end of the Second Epoch of Man, before this period of peace we know as *El Tiempo de Esperanza*, or “The Time of Hope”, the earth was lost: overrun with greed, avarice, and wickedness. Paradise existed only as an idea, really, accessible to few. The Eden of the ancient texts where harmony reined had found a new home, resting as an island in the sea, dimensions away from the earth-plane, while across the arc of time and millennia an assortment of brave souls left their terrestrial homes in search of deeper meaning, foretold by the sages, prophets, and oracles of civilizations of record and without, leaving their home ports to discover this Eden (only to be cast away or more to the point, shipwrecked on the reef of a parallel dimension), and whose mortal souls briefly, hung there in the balance to chose either redemption or damnation. One such pilgrim later took the lessons found out on that glorious isle and became the leading edge of the King’s Reformation, which ushered in the period of Man we are now living in. We all owe our way of life to these men and women.

The Garden morphed to her current locale, after the time of the Fall—when Man was banished from the Garden by the cherub’s flaming sword—Paradise then slowly receded from the cradle of the Tigris and Euphrates. This Arcadia (home to poet shepherds, but lost to Sincero’s frightful dream) faded from this earth plane on a circular quay, roiling as a coil of indeterminate manifestation, unknown, through time and space, while passing through the infinite celestial bodies to be absorbed by an irregular dimension. Void of error this place where Man was cast (before falling to the serpents lies), this Garden, became once again a birthplace of transformation and light, an island of salvation for those whose voyage brought them to this liquid field of joy.

West of the Pillars of Hercules (far beyond Poseidon’s grasp) and through the portal of Oceanus, rests “The Forgotten Isle of Santosha”, home: to the Immortals. Within this vast playground to pods of whales and dolphin, and schools of tuna and billfish, *Atlanticus*, former home and last resting place of the legendary isle (lost, yet not discovered) exists an accidental sanctuary to certain seafarers bound to destruction. Now, whether by luck or coincidence, it is difficult to say, but reprobates, formerly in need of salvation, inhabit this dimension. Eden rests there, the Garden Paradise, and tales have been told that would lead you to believe more . . . These voyagers, avoiding a more somber fate—being cast to the monsters of the deep, to a place of everlasting torment, a banquet table of flesh for aquatic ghouls, and the Leviathan—instead, found peace.

Outside the serene turquoise lagoon that Santosha is encircled by, are

reefs of fire coral and lava, which break the swell of the Atlantic Ocean. It is said the grandeur of the outer banks is filled with liquid cylinders—perfect waves—ridden by immortals astride iridescent sea-horses, and where on occasion, the prince of this utopia is seen climbing and dropping on the steep blue-green walls of Santosha's outer reefs, on his royal steed Regirt. This sovereign, formerly a prodigal of blemished, yet noble birth, son of Phillip the Second of Spain, grandson to Ferdinand and Isabel, had traveled for centuries through time as an immortal, beyond Santosha, in service to the Field (that empyrean host) of the Most High Realm. This Spanish knight, by trial of fire, became a Prince: Prince Alcazar. Our story finds this noble early one morning, on his magic isle. But this is not where our story begins . . .

The sun infused warmth of the light morning trade winds swirled the sweet scent of winter lilac across the cape of his shoulders releasing a nectarous perfume. The knight was pleased, drawing a quick breath (trying to capture the floral beast in a single gulp) he stood: erect, sweat glistening at his brow, his mind scanning faint images of dark conflict—struggles long since realized.

This gentleman (Don Alcazar Enriquez De Guzman, a Knight of Seville of the Order of Santiago) stood high atop the river Idigina's escarpment before the gathering. Today seems to be like most, he thought, pleasantly vague and undefined; laughing aloud he amused himself.

Drawn into the migratory orbit of sunburst orange draping Alcazar's torso, a tangerine linen shirt, a pair of dragonflies lit on his breast. These guardians of the laconic waterways, fed by underground cisterns that run pristine like warp and weft through the islands gardens and parks, are in actuality efficient matadors (killers). The finely articulated animals, hot with pure incendiary spectral radiance—like tiny neon rainbows—seemed to writhe in an uncertain trochaic tetrameter as they alighted, only to scadattle as quickly, while momentarily recalling—"the horror, the horror"—with the gauzy urgency only these errantly slandered milongueros share. But oh, what a tango!

So much time has passed since I washed up on the lagoon, thought Alcazar, as he visualized himself stretched out under the shade of the tall and skinny palms that line Lilith's Lagoon. It's astounding, he continued, my entire crew perished, and I, did not . . . As he gazed across the vast flood plain of Nusquama and into the recesses of More Meadow, peopled by family and friends he had known for centuries, Alcazar summoned the words that shadowed his heart. Embracing each smile, a tear of indeterminate origin—whether joy or sorrow I do not know—spilled onto the ground at his feet. First a servant, nonetheless, he remained: "Lord of the Distant Isles".

"Fellow citizens of the Isle of Santosha, neighbors and friends, today

we extol the virtues of our unique homeland, remembering this "Day of Gladness", a day of unbridled freedom!

Many of you here today have never known pain, suffering or hatred. You were born into a world void of the error for which Christ died. This paradise we know as home, has been a haven from the fallen world of our father Adam, from the time it receded from its terrestrial anchorage, to this "Distant Isle". Sometimes it is best to forget the pains of life, and sometimes they are beacons to light the path home. Today we celebrate the promise of the future; and we consecrate ourselves anew, to a freedom birthed by the sacrifice of those fallen heros. Whereas our brothers: Balthasar, Gaspar, and Melchior (some called them the Holy Triumvirate), bring to us a message of Hope."

While Alcazar continued his talk, the three kings bowed their heads, in reverent contemplation of their journey long before: The Epiphany of the New Birth had begun.



Alcazar walked arm-in-arm with his goddaughter Joyela, thru the shade of the Linzer Palms, while peacock colored butterflies darkened the Western sky. As the two reached the jungle's apron, they stood amongst the creatures on the shore of the Great Spring Lake: impalas, cheetah, spider monkeys and warhogs, all played together near the waters edge. He admired the beauty and grace his young charge demonstrated—a soul of destiny. Compressing his graceful personage, he bowed in the fashion a knight would address a lady of stature; Alcazar carefully chose this moment to unveil his intention.

"Joyela, your shyness today at the festival bespeaks contemplation. What are you mindful of today?"

"I don't know. But I might start by asking my most noble knight, and godfather, to be less formal when speaking with me." Joyela smiled a great smile.

"I suppose it's a force of habit, or perhaps a bit forced," Alcazar said smiling, "All the pomp and circumstance from the Spanish Court."

"Yes, I suppose it is."

"Someday you will have a great responsibility to your people, but that is not why I wanted to talk with you today. I have waited a long time to tell you the story of your family."

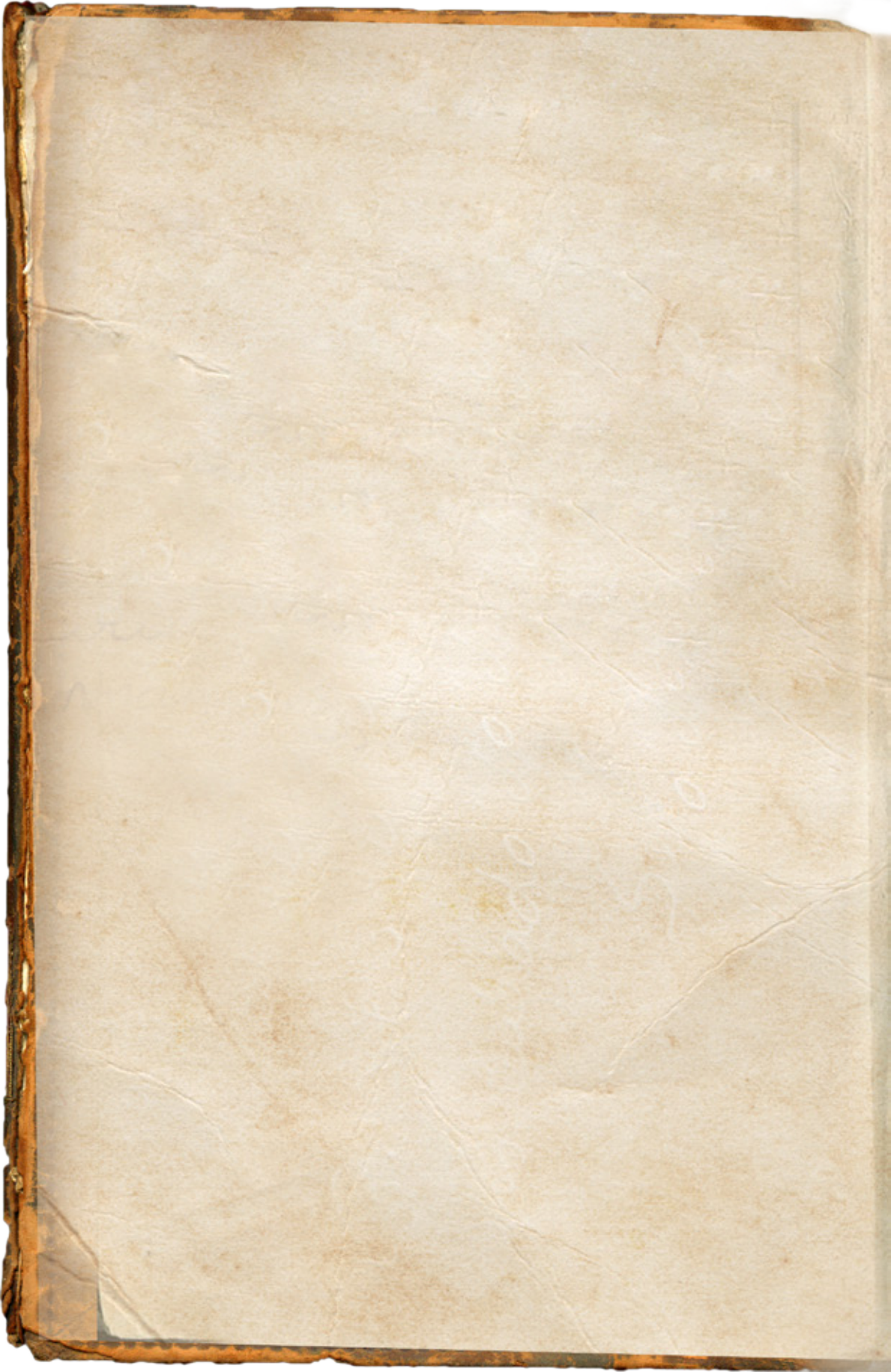
"I sometimes dream of my parents, imagining their faces, vague smiling faces—and grandpa's too. When will they return?" said Joyela. "When will I see them again?"

"Soon—I think so—very soon. I have written about your father and

mother, and John Henry. The journal under my arm is yours. It is the story of our family, the story of their struggles, and the failures and triumphs unique to the human spirit. The lessons Sophia and William, your parents, and your grandfather have left us are invaluable”.

But this is meant only as a primer, boys and girls (said the storyteller that summer evening), a peek into a world of contrasting elements, of sun and shade, and constantly shifting characters. At the heart of this tale are a father and a son, and a love that has no boundaries.







chapter 1

Alice:

I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think. Was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is 'Who in the world am I?' Ah, that's the great puzzle!

Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*

It was as immediate as an ice cream headache; from the moment William saw Ravello he was in love. He first visited there with his best friend Marcello; they were young, and Marcello brought along a German girl by the name of Adalia. She fell in love with Marcello's cousin, and married him eventually. Marcello was happy for Vincenzo, but Vincenzo remained jealous. I don't believe they've spoken since before the wedding, much to the consternation of their mothers.

Of all the memories William had of Ravello, the thing that haunted him most were its native crustaceans, succulent and infused with an aroma of the sea. He especially liked these red king prawns, locally caught and served with a citrus-risotto, fresh grilled peppers, and drizzled with olive oil and the tart juice from the ancient orchards dotting the hillsides. (They are magnificent, these lemons, a variety known as "Sfusato Amalfitano", and are thought to date back to the eleventh century.) The native wine was delicious as well, a fragrant Ravello Rosato, youthful and coltish in nature, as it danced playfully

on his palette, fruit massaged by the warm breezes of the Amalfi. Still, William couldn't help but dream of those delectable prawns, waiting for him at Gina's chic café, tucked into the mountain-cliffs, far above the azure sea.

With the arrival of fall it was apparent the coast could breathe again. Summer brought American tourists, the barbarous hordes from places like: Orinda, California, Short Hills, New Jersey, and Peoria, Illinois. They were entitled wives of tractor distributors and gypsum mine owners, trial attorneys and chain restaurant operators, trying to crush her elegant simplicity into submission, hoping to steal the soul of the place and return home with yet another trophy; the Germans too, and the relentless clicking of state-of-the-art Japanese cameras, Chinese tourists at the helm, new capitalism, all very strange. He didn't mind, his beloved California Coast had been under siege as long as he could remember, and with the onset of fall, the tourists were gone for now, and only the Limoncello and prawns were left to steal his attention, and the call from home.

"Charlie, Charlie! I don't care what Mac says. I am burned out. Do you hear me? Burned out! And I'm expecting an important call soon."

"William, baby, this gig on the Today Show gives us fresh exposure—national! You hibernate for over a month, and I field media requests I have no concrete answers for," said Charlie, frustrated his client cared more about spa time than about his self-interests.

"Look Charlie," said William, "Don't start with the 'William baby stuff'. I did the agent shtick for longer than I care to remember. Six months of appearances, six months. Are you serious?"

"All I'm trying to say is . . ." started Charlie.

"Charlie, I got to go. Look, I'll be back in two weeks. We'll talk then."

This is all too much, thought William. I get lucky and write a New York Times Best Seller and suddenly have no life. My old boss calls me to say he over-reacted (firing me) to what happened two years before, and offers his personal helicopter to pick me up on Rancho Esperanza, where I am at the time, and fly me to his personal compound on Mulholland to discuss movie rights. My ex-girlfriend Liz, won't stop the emails, since she doesn't have my new cell, and suggests we meet in Aspen at her new boyfriend's chalet while he's out of the country, just to catch up. A lot sure has changed in two years; yeah, a lot sure has changed.



"Mr. McCanles, how does it feel when you tell a lie?" asked Dr. Rizzoli.

William didn't really know. He knew it was easier than telling the truth. Maybe the culture of Show business he grew up in taught him that lesson. Everything was always grand. His Mother (Pricilla) would famously say when asked how things were, "Simply splendid darling, I'm just swimming in liquid sunshine." After Stanford, he went right to work in the mailroom at William Morris. William understood the system. Telling lies didn't hurt his career at all. In fact, he was rewarded for maintaining an image, representing esprit de corps, "The show must go on", and all that rot.

"Do you follow any philosophy . . . religion, hmm, do you have a personal faith Mr. McCanles?" asked Dr. Rizzoli.

"Certainly, of course I do," said William.

"Are you comfortable telling me about what you believe in that is bigger than yourself, something you feel like you are a part of, or belong to?"

He was stumped; and still, he remembered this session, from the over one hundred and fifty sessions they shared together that year. Something happened in William's psyche that day; he understood that he was the one that was blind, not Dr. Rizzoli.

Dr. Suzanne Rizzoli was Williams court appointed therapist. She didn't save William; she pointed to the shore and pleaded for him to swim. An attractive woman in her mid-thirties, slender, pretty, and stylish, she grew up in a seventeenth-century villa near the Spanish Steps in Rome. Her family descended from an old lineage predating the Holy Roman Empire; whose family tree included Pope Leo III (quite unceremoniously I might add—not that they would ever tell you this detail—much to their credit) who crowned Charlemagne: "Imperator Augustus", after his conquest of Italy. Perhaps it was Dr. Rizzoli's pedigree that ordered her life in such a way as to fold deeply within herself the rarest of traits—dignity—it revealed an elegance in her character which always seemed to transcend her being vision impaired. Passionate about her will to make a difference, along with being a devoted wife and mother, Dr. Rizzoli could be said to be an actualized person.

Her generosity more than compensated for her handicap, although she didn't see her condition as such, and through their sessions, Dr. Rizzoli became "The Other" for William he had never experienced: non-judgmental, affirming, and supportive. She gave William a framework or safe harbor to free himself from deep childhood wounds, and included the added benefit of becoming an archetype of things to come. This immaculate blueprint would soon resurface to resonate within William, in the character of another daughter of Italian nobility, far from Suzanne's West Los Angeles therapy

office . . . somewhere beneath the laconic breezes of the Amalfi, deep within the Pillars of Hercules.

The events that threatened his freedom simultaneously enabled William's fate. After reading the police report that day lying on the couch in his Malibu digs, the terror he felt was tangible. Instead of disaster, he avoided potential incarceration with the help of a family friend-the presiding judge-which led up to a fortuitous meeting with Dr. Rizzoli, and subsequently true freedom-a peace of mind.

He was in the midst a major crash and burn. William's favorite uncle, John Henry, died in a plane crash just two months prior, and he'd just been charged with felony drunk driving and manslaughter, for hitting a cyclist on the Pacific Coast Highway. It happened at daybreak, coming home from an all night bash in the hills above Sunset Plaza. Enjoying the morning sun on the patio in Ravello, he reflected on that distant evening, two long years before.

Man that was a crazy night, he thought. The evening started out pretty cool, cool that is for that time in my life. He and Liz had just gotten back from Rancho Esperanza, the family ranch just north of Los Angeles in Santa Rita County. After unloading the Rover he walked toward his study, passing Liz in the hallway. She smiled and gently tugged on his shoulder. He swung around and gave her a kiss. Liz pulled William close, slid her hand under his t-shirt, caressing his chest.

"William, I think we had a good time at your family's place. You seemed happy?"

"Yeah," William said, with a forced enthusiasm.

"I know how upsetting it's been," said Liz.

"No. Not really Liz. You really don't."

"I know you miss him; and that you feel alone."

I don't know? I just don't."

"I just want us to work William. I'm scared."

Liz was shrewd, scared? She was too organized for scared. Shortly after John Henry's death, in the midst of his grief, Liz convinced William to sign for a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar business loan; all of which sat in a new corporate bank account controlled by her.

"It'll be OK. I love you," said William.

As he walked the beach in front of their home at Latigo Shore that evening with Shirley, his Redbone Coon Hound, he puffed on a skinny, perfectly rolled joint. A squadron of Brown Pelicans in V-formation scraped their wingtips against the gently sloping curl of the evening surf, one by one, as if to tip their hats in a salutation to the day. While Shirley chased Sandpipers along the surf, William watched the sunset, sitting on a neighbor's chaise

lounge down the beach a ways, while Liz got a massage at the house. He laughed out loud, hard, reading a text message from his assistant, Lauren. Her boyfriend had just told her it was over, he was leaving her for another man (which she had suspected for some time) and she seemed to be taking it just fine, inviting a new love interest to the Premier. He thought back to his family home, Highlands Manor, in the hills above Los Angeles, with sunset views to the coast; the smog always made the best ones, orange-red yolks melting onto a cast-iron skillet horizon.

He remember being scared, even sitting there on the beach watching that mesmerizing sunset; and tried hard to reel the feelings back in, as they expanded outward toward the sinking sun, fearing he might be swallowed alive by an angry world. He figured out later, after an epic year with Dr. Rizzoli, it wasn't the world at all he needed to concern himself with, it was the monsters within, those angry children, disenfranchised parts of himself, wrenched away, weeping, and locked in the basement of his sub-conscious, to fend for themselves at an early age—those whose pathological allegiance would crash his world so he could rebuild it.

As they got ready for the Premier that night, Liz made a pitcher of margaritas. They'd been pretty rocky for a couple months, but, this night she seemed to be having a good time, surprising William with certain party treats she'd been critical of him using. He wasn't too keen on going to the Premier, three days on the ranch kind of mellowed him out, and dealing with all the hoopla, well, the lead actor happened to be his biggest client-and Liz lived for these events.

After John Henry's funeral William started getting high a lot; affecting his work, and people were talking. L.A.'s that way, like a giant fish-tank filled with sharks, one smell of blood and they attack. People just love to see you fall; it makes them somehow feel bigger. Anyway, you could see it, Liz kicking into full survival mode. It wasn't hard to figure out if he kept going at the same trajectory he was going to hit the side of a mountain. Too much coke and booze, starting at or around lunch; you get the picture. Liz wasn't a bad chick, just so typical though: the right-look and just enough attitude to be your own personal good time Sally; but she had one foot out the door.

In Hollywood you have to be nimble. No one wants to go down with a sinking ship. Well, that night William's pretty much sank. At dinner before the screening, he had a couple more stiff drinks, martinis I think, and took several trips to the loo to powder his nose. He was pretty lit by the time he got to Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

At the after party, a swank club atop the St. James Club they closed for the VIP guests from the premier, he had a couple more cocktails. Liz was furious,

and by that time mingling without him. William found her talking with Red, the star of the film; walking up to her, he insisting they leave the party. Liz wasn't interested, and the whole scene escalated into William shouting at the top of his lungs. Red, his biggest client, and the agency's biggest client, told him to go f- himself as his boss, and the President of J.O.S., Hollywood's premier talent agency, walked over to see what was going on. It was too late; he hauled off and swung at Red while Liz and Joe Moran, of J.O.S. fame, stepped between them. Liz caught the glancing blow, which broke her nose. Joe Moran walked right into the full fury of the punch and went down hard, while Red fell tuxedo and cigar into the pool.

The bottom looks pretty close when you're lying in the gutter looking down. William's birth-rite had been squandered—stolen from him—by the woman that conceived him, under the great oak tree in the big open meadow at Point Conception; and, it was all for the love of the filthy lucre that was money, and a fleeting apparition of fame.

When William's emotionally and psychologically fractured grandmother ran off with a trucker in Deming, New Mexico, she left "little" Pricilla sitting in a hotel room, where she'd been forced to listen to their sex, through the bathroom door, the bathroom that was her bedroom for three weeks—room number eight. Each night Pricilla woke to the stench of cigarettes and cheap liquor, and the dark, awful shadow standing above her to urinate. The feeling of his rough hands, fondling her unformed breasts while her mother slept still gave Pricilla nightmares. William's mother didn't have a chance for a normal childhood.

"How do you feel?" asked Dr. Rizzoli.

"Feel about what?" said William.

"OK. How do you feel about your mother William?"

"I love . . . I, I don't feel anything. Does that mean I'm f'ed up or something?"

"It means you're shut down, basically. It means the intuition and emotions that want to operate in your best interest are not accessible to you at this moment."

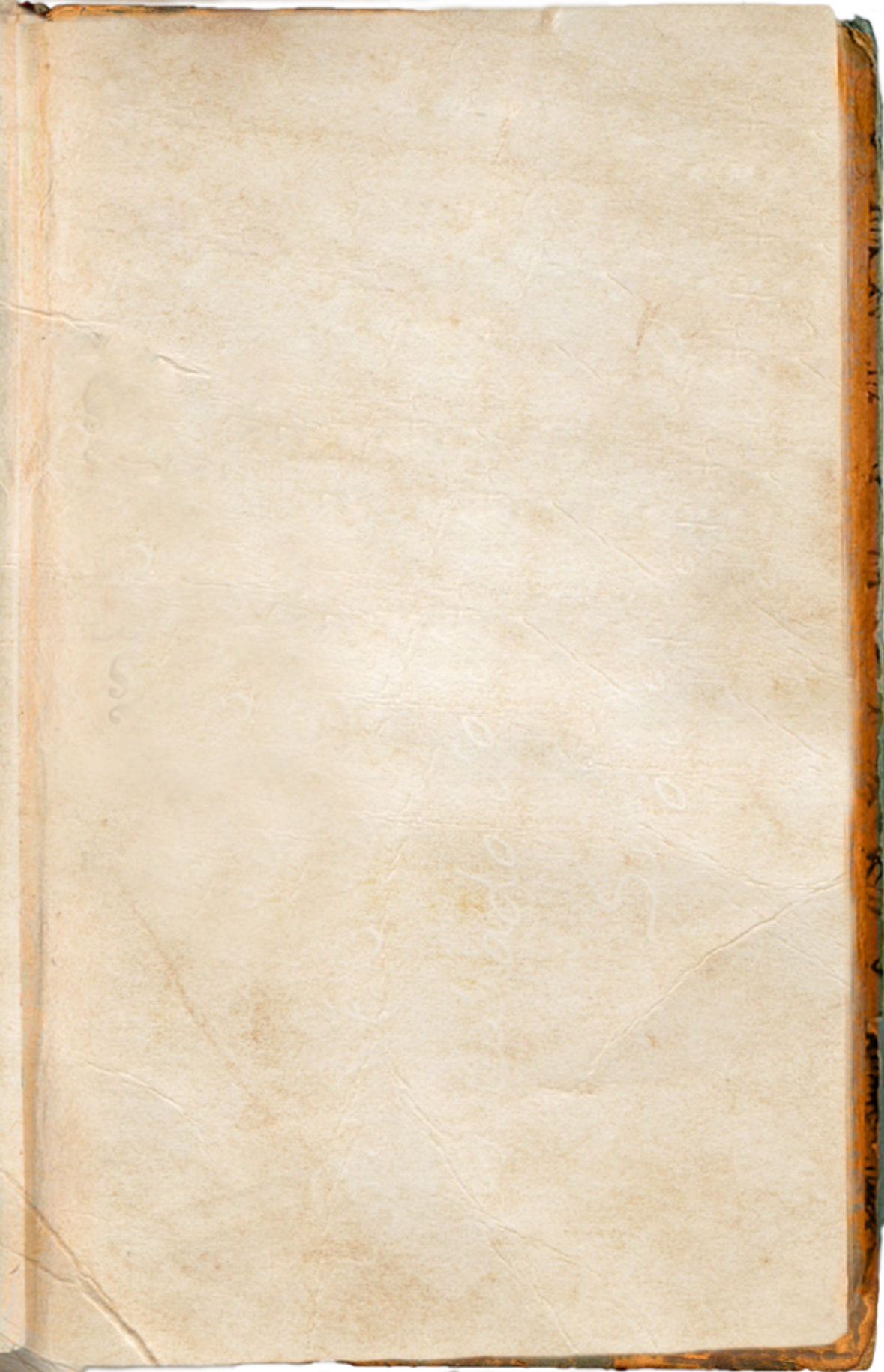
"I feel funny, like I want to cry."

"That's wonderful William; a truly magnificent emotion!"

When he left the office that day, he felt as if he'd crawled out of there on his belly. He couldn't have been any lower.

He never forgot Dr. Rizzoli, and when they ran into each other almost two years later in the sixteenth century church built by the Knights of Malta, she recognized his voice.





Mountains



Pacific Ocean



Franchito Esperanza

