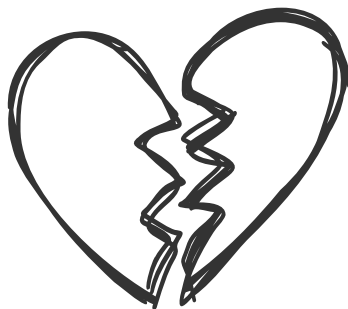


When Life
Ends and
Love Remains

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Introduction

Sometimes a book finds its way into our hands without us really knowing why. Maybe it was a coincidence. Maybe a quiet inner nudge. Or maybe it was simply the desire to find something that remains when so much seems to have been lost. If you've opened this book, chances are you have lost someone who was a part of you. A person who has made your world quieter since they've been gone.

Maybe it's only been a few days since they left. Maybe it's been weeks or years. Maybe you've been carrying this loss for a long time, and yet it still feels as raw as ever. Maybe you were simply hoping to find words that understand you in this silence.

This book is not meant to be a guide that tells you how to grieve. It won't tell you when you should "move on" or how you can "let go." It won't map out a path for you or set deadlines. Because grief cannot be planned. It is messy. Contradictory. Loud and quiet at the same time. It comes in waves, and sometimes even in the middle of the night, when all should be quiet.

Grief is not weakness. It is love with nowhere to go. It is an echo of what was and what remains. And it is ok for it to be there. Even when it hurts. Precisely because it hurts.



In the following chapters, you'll find writings that come straight from the heart. They speak of loss, of memories, of pain, and of everything that changes after goodbye. They are relatable, sometimes raw, sometimes tender. And above all, they want to tell you one thing: You are not alone.

At the end of each chapter, you'll find some questions. There's no test. No goal. They're meant to invite you to reflect, not with your head, but with your heart. Sometimes you'll have answers. Sometimes you'll just feel something stirring inside you. That, too, is enough.

You may read this book at your own pace. You may set it aside if it becomes too much. You may leave pages blank, cross out words, turn back to earlier pages, or linger over a single sentence. It is not about achieving anything. It is about holding yourself during a time when so much seems to be falling apart.

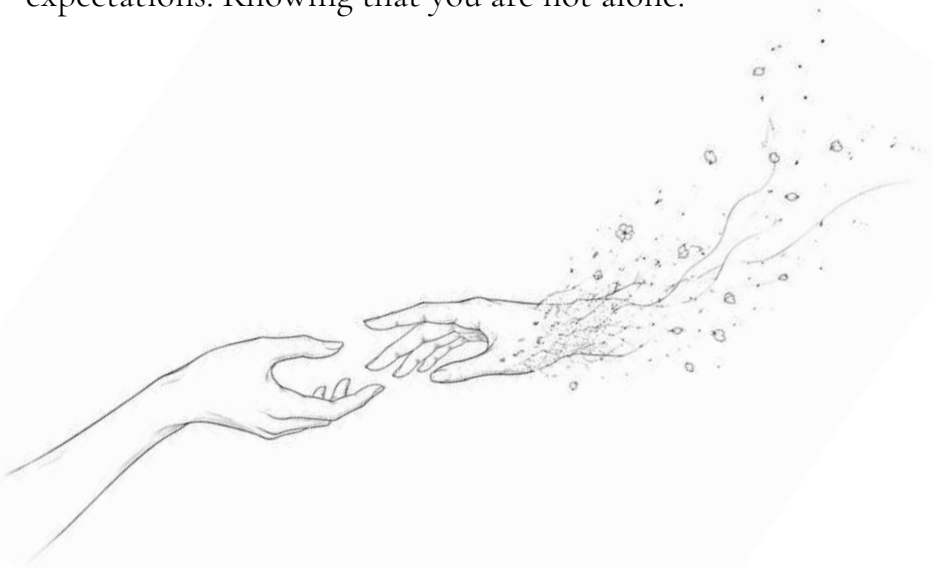
Maybe this book can be a quiet companion by your side. Maybe it is a place where you may cry without having to explain yourself. Maybe it is simply a small anchor in a vast, dark sea.

When you eventually close it again, don't take every sentence with you. Not every line has to be written just for you. But perhaps a feeling will remain. A reminder that you're allowed to feel. That there's room for your grief. And that, with everything that was, you are allowed to keep breathing. Not because it's easy. But because you love. And love remains.

There are losses that divide your life into a "before" and an "after." These are the moments when the world keeps turning for everyone else, while your own stands still. You sit there, breathing, maybe even functioning, but inside, everything is different.

No one you love ever disappears without a trace. Something remains. In your gaze. In your heartbeat. In those moments when you stare absently into space and suddenly feel how much you miss them. And even if no one else sees it, you carry that person with you. In memories that suddenly surface. In questions that remain unanswered. In moments you want to share, and then realize you no longer can.

And yet, life goes on. Differently. No less painful, but sometimes gentler. With time. With small steps. With breaths that become a little easier again. This book accompanies you on this journey. Without pressure. Without expectations. Knowing that you are not alone.



„There are moments that change everything, and yet from the outside, you can hardly tell. You stand there, talking, going through the motions. But inside, there is a crack. One that no one sees but you. Ever since that person has been gone, a piece of you is missing. And you learn to live with that emptiness. Not because you want to. But because you have to.“

Chapter 1

When Goodbye Comes

Nothing prepares you for it. Not the conversations. Not the books. Not the well-meaning advice. No one is ever truly prepared for the moment you lose someone you love. Even when you sense it coming. Even when you know. Even then, it feels like a shock that brings everything to a standstill. And when that moment comes, something changes. Forever.

Breathing becomes heavier, and the world grows quieter. Everything suddenly seems different. Even the sky no longer seems the same. The things that just a moment ago seemed so important lose their value. It is as if time were splitting into two parts: the life before and the life after.

Maybe you held them one last time. Maybe the words wouldn't come. Maybe you were there. Maybe the news came suddenly, and everything inside you came crashing down. No matter how it happened, when death enters our lives, it leaves a void that no one can fill.

And yet the world goes on. The birds keep singing. The cars keep moving. The news keeps running. Everything is normal. Only for you, nothing is the same anymore.



You will feel many things. Maybe anger, maybe guilt, maybe only emptiness. Maybe you barely cry. Maybe you can't stop. Maybe you wake up in the morning hoping it was all just a dream. And at night, you lie in bed and once again realize that you will never hear that voice again.

The first days after saying goodbye often feel like a fog. You keep going because you have to. You talk, even though you hardly feel anything. You take care of things while your heart is screaming. Maybe you're surrounded by people, yet you feel alone. And no one can truly understand this pain except you.

And that is exactly what this book is about. It is not about telling you how to grieve. It is about giving you the space to do it your way. As you need to. Because there is no right way through grief. There is only your way.

Maybe you want to talk. Maybe you want to stay silent. Maybe you want to revisit memories and hold on to little moments that used to be taken for granted. A smile. A few words. A hug. Breakfast together.

None of it was ever a given. Everything was precious. And now, everything is allowed to be missed.

Saying goodbye isn't just the end of a life. It's the beginning of a long, new journey for you. A journey through pain, memories, and silence. A journey in which you will learn to live with the emptiness without having to fill it.

Maybe not today. Maybe not tomorrow. But one day, you will look back and feel that you still carry them with you. Different. Quieter. But no less close.

If you're not quite there yet, that's perfectly fine. You don't have to be strong. You just have to be yourself with everything you're feeling.

And if you like, go ahead and turn the page now. Let the next few pages give you some space. Not for quick answers. But for honest questions.



Exercise 1

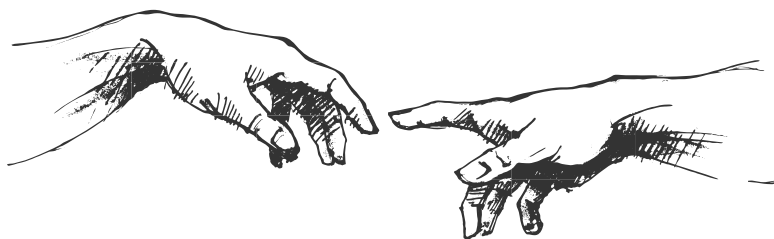
The Last Moment with You

Close your eyes for a moment and take a few slow, deep breaths. Try to remember the last conscious moment you shared with the person who passed away. It doesn't have to be a big, special moment. Perhaps it was something ordinary: a sentence, a smile, a glance, a sound. Let the image slowly emerge within you, without judging it.

When you're ready, write freely and without pressure about this moment. Feel free to use the next page of this book for that. Take your time. You don't have to answer to anyone but yourself.

Questions to support you (optional):

- Where were you?
- What did you say or do?
- What were you feeling in that moment?
- Is there anything you didn't see or understand at the time?
- If you could, what would you add to that moment today?



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