

**The power of her desire**



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## Introduction

### The beginning of an untamed life

Lisa grew up in a village where everyone knew each other, where stories travelled faster than people, yet where the horizon still felt open. The streets were narrow, and so were the expectations, but at home there was space. Her parents did not believe in blue for boys and pink for girls. They believed in character, curiosity, and the right to discover who you were without shame being imposed beforehand.

Lisa and her brother were given the same rules, the same freedom, and the same responsibilities. What she wanted was never dismissed as inappropriate. What she felt was never minimized. Within those walls, she learned that her voice mattered. Outside those walls, a different script applied.

She was fourteen when she first got a taste of nightlife. Not because she desperately wanted to be an adult, but because the world there seemed to glow: full of lights, music, and gazes that lingered just a little too long. She knew she was technically too young for it, yet no one stopped her. On the contrary: she was noticed. Sometimes desired. Not always in a pure way, not always safely, but it was attention, and attention is a powerful poison when you grow up believing it is scarce.

It was the era of the 1990s and the early 2000s, a very different social climate from today. Boundaries and social norms, especially regarding relationships and age differences, were often approached more loosely. What was sometimes considered normal or harmless back then is viewed far more critically today. There is now greater awareness of power dynamics, consent, and the protection of minors, casting such situations in a very different light.

Something awakened inside her that she did not yet have a name for. Not in her mind, but lower, like a tension that kept pulling at her. It was

not love, nor recklessness, but a hunger for intensity: for feeling, for living without filters.

At first, there were boys her own age: awkward, sweet, predictable. But her gaze soon shifted. She sought calmness, confidence, a certain steadiness she could not find there. Older men seemed to embody those qualities. To her, the age of twenty-one did not feel like danger, but like a promise: excitement without chaos, strength without childishness. Or at least, that was how it seemed at the time.

Going out with her friends became a game. Not out of emptiness, but out of fun. Who dared the most, who laughed the loudest, who had the courage to approach that handsome guy, and who would ultimately be chosen. Lisa played the game well. She knew her charm, her timing, her boundaries. She enjoyed the feeling that she was the one in control.

But the village was watching. Whispering. Judging. While her brother received applause and pats on the back, she received labels. Words that clung like mud. Slut, whore, cheap, easy... What was considered bravado in him became promiscuity in her. That was how Lisa learned early on that freedom for women always comes with a price tag. She did not pay with apologies. She paid with resistance. She kept her back straight and her gaze sharp. She refused to be ashamed of her curiosity, her desire, her libido, and her boldness. And yet, it left marks behind. Invisible, but permanent.

## Her Father

When Lisa was fifteen, something at home finally fell apart as well. Her parents divorced. There was no explosion, no screaming matches with doors slamming shut. Just a quiet fracture that slowly rooted itself inside her. What disappeared was not only the family as she had known it, but above all, her place within it.

One day, her father simply left. "We are getting divorced," he had told her mother. The parent Lisa felt closest to walked away. Not only from the house, but gradually from her life as well. He built something new elsewhere, though still within the same village. A new house, a new wife, new stepdaughters. For them, there seemed to be room effortlessly. For Lisa, that place remained vague, uncertain.

She never received a house key, no fixed weekends at her father's place. Nothing felt guaranteed. No sign that she was welcome whenever she wanted to come by. Only the words her father had spoken: that she was always welcome and that the door was always open. Yet it never truly felt that way.

When she went there for dinner on Wednesdays, she often stood outside waiting on the pavement. Sometimes in the cold, sometimes still wearing her coat, staring at a door that did not open for her. She could not let herself in. She could only wait until someone came home and allowed her inside. Every time, it felt like a test she had never signed up for. As though her presence was tolerated, but never genuinely wanted.

She stayed overnight there twice. Only twice. On a small mattress on the floor, in one of her stepsisters' rooms. She got along well with those girls; that was not the issue. The issue was the space her father gave her, or rather, failed to give her. She felt like a guest in a house where she should once have been a child.

The real breaking point came later, quieter than one might expect, almost invisible to the outside world. Lisa was sixteen and needed money for her studies. Not for luxury, not for whims, but for books, study materials, travel expenses. The basic conditions required simply to participate. She was too young to receive student financial aid. Back then, there was no safety net, only parents.

She asked her father for help carefully, as though she instinctively already knew that asking could be dangerous. He refused. Briefly. Flatly. Without an explanation that truly reached her, let alone touched her. As though words here were merely a formality, not a bridge. Even though, beyond the child support he already paid irregularly or not at all, he was also partly responsible for the costs of her education. That framework existed, but it was never acknowledged. Not by him. Not to her.

Child support had already been a problem for him, or so she occasionally heard her mother complain. That he had once again failed to transfer the money. Always the same refrain of shortage, of absence disguised as inability. To Lisa, his refusal did not sound like a financial issue, but like a rejection without a name. Never spoken harshly, but sharp enough to linger.

She swallowed it, as she had learned to do. No scene. No further questions. No emotions taking up space. She carefully folded the feeling away and stored it somewhere deep inside, alongside other moments when she had understood that she should never lean too heavily on anyone.

But something shifted there. Something small, almost imperceptible, that would later prove enormous. The realization that at the moment he should have stood firm, not only as a father, but as a responsibility, he chose absence instead. And once again, Lisa learned what she had already learned too often: to become independent out of necessity, not choice.

Love did not disappear with noise, but with silence. Only later did she discover that he “had” paid, not for her, but for the expensive private education of one of her stepdaughters. A child for whom he officially carried no responsibility. She already had a father of her own who was

responsible for her. That knowledge cut deeper than the money ever could.

From that moment on, the distance between them grew. Not because Lisa wanted it to, but because rejection accumulates. Every missed invitation, every time she felt like too much, every occasion when she decided not to go after all. Slowly, she disappeared from that family. Not through arguments, but through resignation and disappointment.

That first Christmas arrived quietly, as though even the holiday itself was unsure whether it was welcome. There was no invitation. No car ride to a house glowing with warm lights. No place set for her at a long table. Lisa and her brother stayed home while, somewhere else, laughter echoed that was not meant for them.

A year later, there 'was' an invitation. They went. Nicely dressed, polite, slightly guarded. Beneath the Christmas tree were piles of gifts. Packages from the chosen side of the family: uncles and aunts. From grandparents. Shiny wrapping paper, ribbons curling like cheerful promises. For Lisa and her brother, there was nothing.

No one said anything. No one explained it. The emptiness sat between them like an invisible gift no one wanted to unwrap. Lisa smiled when it was expected of her. She told herself it did not hurt. That she was old enough to understand that adults were complicated. But she was not old enough to understand why love was sometimes wrapped in boxes, and why some children did not receive those boxes.

Other holidays followed the same pattern. Sometimes they were not invited. Sometimes they heard afterward that there had been a birthday celebration, a family gathering, a dinner. Slowly, they became spectators in a story they had once naturally belonged to.

There was one exception. One time, they were allowed to join a vacation: an entire week in America, in Florida. They visited Orlando, Bel Air, and Miami. It all felt almost unreal: roads that seemed endless, waitresses with enthusiasm that felt almost rehearsed. Everything was bigger, louder, brighter than back home. As though the distance could temporarily conceal the cracks.