

LAVIN

The Path I Become



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Prologue

There are paths that begin long before they are recognized. They do not arise from decisions, but from quiet shifts, barely perceptible moments that only later reveal themselves as a direction.

Sometimes it is a sentence that lingers.
Sometimes a look that lasts longer than necessary.
Sometimes only a feeling that cannot be explained and yet remains, like a fine thread weaving through the days.

Lavin did not know exactly when this thread had begun. Perhaps in a city that never quite belonged to her. Perhaps in a conversation she had not sought. Perhaps in a restlessness that could not be dispelled, no matter how loud life became around her.

What she knew was only this:
That something within her was moving.
Not quickly, not dramatically, but silently — like water finding its course beneath a closed surface.
And that this movement would lead her to places she had not intended to go, and to questions she would never have asked aloud.

This is the story of that movement.
Not of answers, but of paths.
Not of great turning points, but of the small, inconspicuous moments in which a life changes its direction without anyone noticing.
A prologue cannot say where all this leads.
It can only open the door.
The rest happens while walking.

It began on an ordinary afternoon in Berlin, on one of those days that do not announce themselves and yet later stand in memory like a silent turning point.

Lavin had been out with two friends, aimless, as had become typical for her weekends in Berlin. For her, the city was not a place but a state: a space in which everything seemed possible without anything being demanded.

They stood at the Gedächtniskirche, where the streams of people crossed, where tourists paused and Berliners moved on, and where time sometimes felt like a thin thread stretched between past and present.

There sat a man on a small folding chair. Before him a sketchpad, beside it a cup of pencils. He drew caricatures, quickly, surely, with a hand that knew what it was doing. Lavin stopped. Not out of curiosity, but out of a kind of inner resonance she could not name.

She observed the lines the man set down. They were precise, but not rigid. Loose, but not accidental. There was a kind of clarity in them that she understood immediately. She asked him, without thinking long, what he did for a living. He looked up briefly, smiled as if he had heard this question many times before, and said:

“I am an architect. I come from Poland.”

The sentence fell into her like a stone into calm water. No dramatic moment, no flash of light, no sudden realization.

Rather a matter-of-fact, inner clicking into place. Something that was already there, but only now took shape.

The next day she drove back to Frankfurt. Two days later she submitted her application to the Technical University of Berlin. It was not an impulsive decision. It was a decision that felt as if it had long been waiting for her.

When her parents found out, they were pleased. Not loudly, not exuberantly, but in that quiet, dignified way that was customary in their family. They came from Dersim, a region where people practiced Raa Heq, a teaching of light, of equality, of freedom. Lavin had grown up with this attitude: that a person is not limited by origin, but by the decisions they make.

Berlin was not a break for her, but a continuation.

4

Two weeks later she moved into a shared apartment for three in Charlottenburg. The apartment was old, with high ceilings and a hallway that always smelled slightly of coffee and cold air. Her roommates were Marcus, a German medical student, and Agatha, a Polish biochemistry student.

They were fundamentally different, but that did not matter. They were young, they were in Berlin, and they were students. That was enough.

In the evenings they often sat in the kitchen, at a round table that had many years behind it. They talked about everything that came to mind: music, movies, politics, coincidences that occupied them. Marcus listened to hard core and punk rock, Agatha to anything that sounded harmonious, and Lavin to minimal techno.

It was not a loud coexistence. Rather a quiet side-by-side that over time felt like a shared rhythm.

Berlin became a second origin for Lavin. She moved through the city as if she were not discovering it, but finding it again. The architecture she studied was not a technical subject for her. She saw in it a Path of thinking: spaces as decisions, forms as consequences, cities as networks of paths.

In a seminar on architectural theory, she met Tim. He was a year older, quiet, attentive, with a kind of seriousness that did not seem heavy. They spoke first about texts, then about designs, then about everything else.

The relationship did not begin suddenly. It arose, like many things in Lavin's life: out of a quiet, clear movement. For one year they were together. A year that was neither particularly dramatic nor particularly easy. It was simply a part of her path.

5

When they parted, it was not a break. Rather a drifting apart that had been announcing itself for a while. After that, she concentrated on her studies. Not out of flight, but out of clarity.

She completed her studies, began working in an architectural firm, and quickly realized that she did not want to design the architecture of others. She wanted her own.

But to get her own commissions, she had to take part in competitions. And to finance competitions, she had to continue working in the office.

The days grew longer. The nights shorter. She got up at seven, worked until ten in the evening, ate something in between, hired a student for support, but still did most of it herself.

It was not a sacrifice. It was a choice.
But choices have consequences.

While she was working on a competition for a residential and commercial building, she fell into a state she did not notice. The deadline was in one week. She worked day and night without being conscious of it. The design became brilliant. But the pressure became greater than herself.

The psychosis did not come suddenly. It came creeping, like a shadow slowly laying itself over a landscape.

What she experienced was hard to describe. The boundaries between inside and outside shifted. Thoughts became spaces, spaces became voices, voices became structures that could no longer be ordered.

When she entered the psychiatric ward, she was exhausted. Not broken. Only exhausted.

Six weeks later, she learned that she could no longer work. Not in this profession. Not with this intensity.

She had planned to work a few more years, save money, and then go to Southern Kurdistan to design cities and buildings there. There was a construction boom. She could have been needed there.

But this path was no longer possible for her.

She moved back to Frankfurt, to her parents. She continued to live there. Not as a failure, but as another form of her path.

Path 1 – Part 2: The Decision That Remains

The time after the clinic was quieter than anything Lavin had experienced before. Not empty, not dark, but quiet. A silence that did not come from outside, but from within. It was not oppressive. It was a kind of intermediate space in which she had to rearrange herself without anyone demanding it of her.

Frankfurt welcomed her with a familiarity she had never noticed before. The streets she knew as a child seemed smaller. The houses she passed seemed less significant. It was as if she had changed while the city had remained the same.

Her parents did not treat her differently. They did not ask much. They observed her with that quiet attentiveness they had brought from Dersim: one allows the person they love the space they need.

Lavin spent the first weeks sleeping, reading, walking. She often walked along the Main, slowly, without a goal. She saw the people jogging, on the phone, laughing, and she felt neither outside nor inside this world. She was simply there.

There were days when she thought she would work again someday. And there were days when she knew she could not. Not in the form she knew. Not in the intensity that had once carried her.

The psychosis left no visible traces. No scars, no external signs. But it left a change in the way she perceived the world.

She had experienced how thoughts could become spaces, how spaces could shift, how the boundary between inside and outside could become permeable. It had not been a nightmare. It was more an overextension of consciousness, a state in which everything held too much meaning.

Sometimes she remembered individual moments:

A sound that acted like a hint.

A shadow that appeared like a message.

A thought that spread out like architecture, with walls that shifted and doors that opened without her knowing where they led.

She knew that these experiences had not been real. But she also knew that they had felt real. And that was enough to make her cautious.

8

Her parents rarely spoke about the future. They did not ask if she wanted to study again, if she wanted to work, if she had plans. They knew that plans only make sense when the person making them is stable enough to carry them.

Lavin began to build small routines. She got up in the morning, had breakfast, went for a walk, read. She read a lot about architecture, but no longer about design or competition. She read about the history of cities, about the philosophy of space, about the question of how people shape places and how places shape people.

It was a different kind of architecture. One that did not need to be built to exist.

Sometimes she thought back to Berlin. Not with longing, but with a kind of objective distance. Berlin had been a path. A possible path. A path she had walked until it came to an end.

She thought of Marcus and Agatha, of the evenings in the kitchen, of the conversations that were never really important and became important for precisely that reason. She thought of Tim, of the relationship that had been neither particularly happy nor particularly unhappy. She thought of the nights she had spent in clubs, where the bass was like a second heartbeat.

All of that belonged to her. But none of it defined her.

9

There was a moment when she understood that her life did not consist of a single path. That the decision for architecture had not been final. That no decision was final.

She had not become an architect because it was her destiny. She had become an architect because, on an afternoon in Berlin, she had asked a Polish artist what he did for a living.

One sentence had been enough to open a direction.
Another sentence had been enough to close it.

Identity was not a state.
Identity was movement.

She began to no longer view herself as a failure. She had chosen a path, followed it, and walked it to its end. That was all.

There were people who told her she was strong. Others said it was a pity she could not continue working. Still others said she would surely return someday.

She listened, but she did not take it in.
She knew that strength was not a goal.
She knew that loss was not a judgment.
She knew that the future was not a promise.

She only knew that she lived.
And that it was enough.

10

In the following months, she found a kind of balance. Not a great one, not a final one, but a functioning one. She helped her parents with daily life, occasionally met old friends, and began to draw again. Not professionally. Not with the ambition to create something.

She drew because it was a movement that calmed her. Lines that ordered themselves. Shapes that emerged. Spaces that existed only on paper and demanded no responsibility.

It was a quiet return to something she had never lost.

Path 1 – Part 3: Between Origin and Present

Daily life in Frankfurt took on a form that was neither planned nor consciously designed. It simply emerged. Lavin

noticed that her life now consisted of small, recurring movements: getting up, making tea, opening a book, going out, returning.

It was a life without a goal, but not without direction.
A life without pressure, but not without meaning.

She began to no longer view the days as steps that had to lead somewhere. She viewed them as rooms that one enters, crosses, and leaves again. Every day was a room. Every room had its own temperature, its own light, its own silence.

Sometimes she sat in a café in Sachsenhausen, always at the same table by the window. She watched the people passing by and realized that she no longer tried to compare herself with them. Previously, she had often thought that other people had clearer paths, more stable plans, firmer identities. **11**

Now she knew that this was an illusion.
People only appeared as if they knew where they were going.

In truth, they moved just as she did: step by step, decision by decision, often without knowing why.

Her mother asked her one evening if she was drawing again. Lavin nodded. She showed her a few sketches: simple lines, small spaces, abstract shapes. Her mother looked at them for a long time without saying anything. Then she put the pages back and said only:

“You haven't lost your eye.”

It was not a compliment.

It was an observation.

And Lavin knew that it was true.

She began to occupy herself with the question of what architecture had been for her. Not as a profession, but as a Path of thinking.

For her, architecture had never just been about building.

It was the way people moved in the world.

How they created spaces to order themselves.

How they built structures to protect or open themselves.

She realized that she had not lost this Path of thinking. She had only lost the possibility of implementing it in the outer world.

But the inner world remained.

And it was large enough.

There were days when she wondered if she would have won the competition if she hadn't fallen ill. Whether she would have eventually gone to Southern Kurdistan. Whether she would have designed houses there for people to inhabit, enliven, and change.

But these questions lost their edge over time.
They became hypothetical rooms that one could enter without
having to live in them.

She understood that possibilities do not disappear.
They remain, even if one does not choose them.
They are paths that one is, even if one does not walk them.

Once she met an old school friend by chance in the
supermarket. The friend asked how she was, what she was
doing, if she was still in Berlin. Lavin answered calmly,
factually, without evasion.

The friend nodded and said it was a pity she no longer
worked as an architect.
Lavin did not disagree.
She felt no impulse to explain anything.

She knew that people tend to evaluate life paths as if they
were projects that can be completed successfully or
unsuccessfully.

But a life was not a project.
A life was a course.

In the months that followed, she began to feel secure once
more. Not strong, not resilient, not “healed”—but secure.

She could take longer walks again without her thoughts evaporating. She could read books again without the words shifting. She could sleep again without the night expanding.

It was not a return to a previous state.
It was a moving forward in a new one.

One day she took out her old designs from Berlin. She had not looked at them for a long time. The lines were precise, the concepts clear, the models well-conceived. She recognized the work she had done. She recognized the intensity she had carried.

But she also recognized that this intensity no longer belonged to her. She was no longer the person who had created these designs. 14

And that was not a loss.
It was a change.

She began to keep a small notebook. Not as a diary, not as a narrative. Only short sentences, observations, thoughts.

“A space is a decision.”

“A path is a form of the self.”

“Identity is movement.”

“I am not less because I am different.”

These sentences were not answers.
They were markers.

Like small stones at the edge of a path, indicating that one is continuing on.

So time passed.

Not fast, not slow.

Simply in its own rhythm.

Lavin lived in Frankfurt, with her parents, in a life that was not planned and yet felt right.

She was not an architect.

And yet, architecture had remained a part of her.

Not as a profession.

But as a Path of seeing the world.

Path 1 – Part 4: The Moment That Shifts Everything

15

Spring came slowly to Frankfurt. The trees along the Main wore a delicate green that was more an intimation than a color. Lavin noticed that she was beginning to pay attention to such details again. Not consciously, not as an exercise, but as a natural movement of her gaze.

It was a sign that something within her was stabilizing. Not completely, not finally, but noticeably.

She began to visit the city library more frequently. Not because she was looking for something specific, but because the place had a stillness she liked. The long shelves, the muffled footsteps, the quiet turning of pages.

She often sat in the architecture section, but she no longer reached for books on design or construction. Instead, she read about urban sociology, about the perception of space, about the question of how people experience places.

It was as if she were viewing architecture from a different side. No longer as a task, but as a phenomenon. No longer as a profession, but as a Path of thinking.

Sometimes she met an older man there who always chose the same table and always read the same books: philosophy, history, anthropology. They never exchanged more than a few words, but a silent familiarity grew between them.

Once, he asked her what she was reading.

She answered: "About spaces."

He nodded, as if that were a perfectly sufficient explanation.

Then he said: "Spaces are what remains when you take away time."

The sentence lingered in her mind for a long time.

She did not know if it was true.

But it had a clarity she liked.

At home, she began to change her drawings. The lines became simpler. The forms more reduced. She no longer drew buildings, but structures that reminded her more of thoughts than architecture.

Sometimes they were just rectangles overlapping.
Sometimes lines that crossed and separated again.
Sometimes planes that felt like spaces without having walls.

It was as if she were trying to capture something that could not be held: the movement of a life that did not develop linearly.

Her parents continued to observe her with that quiet attentiveness she knew. They did not ask if she wanted to work again. They did not ask if she had plans.

They knew that plans only make sense when the person making them is ready to carry them.

Once, her father said during dinner:
“Sometimes a detour is not a detour. Sometimes it is the Path.”

It was a simple sentence.

But it struck something in her that she had not named for a long time.

Lavin began to occupy herself with the question of what a path actually was.

Was a path something one walked?

Or something one became?

She thought of Berlin, of the Gedächtniskirche, of the Polish artist, of the sentence that had set everything in motion back then.

“I am an architect.”

A simple sentence.

A sentence that had opened a direction.

A sentence that had shaped a life.

And yet, it had only been one possibility.

One of many.

Sometimes she wondered how her life would have unfolded if she had not spoken to the artist. If she had not stopped that day. If she had simply walked on, without the impulse to ask a question.

But she knew that such thoughts brought no answers.

They were only variants.

Possible paths.

Paths she could have been.

She understood that identity did not consist of what one became, but of what one could have become.

That possibilities did not disappear, but remained as silent forms in the background.

In late summer, she began to seek more contact with people again. Not out of duty, but out of a quiet need for connection. She met an old friend from school who was now working as a social worker.

They went for walks together, talked about everyday things, about work, about family, about the city. The friend eventually asked cautiously how Lavin was doing.

Lavin answered calmly:

“It’s okay. Not good, not bad. It’s okay.”

The friend nodded.

“Sometimes that’s enough.”

And Lavin knew that it was true.

She began to take an interest in the world again. Not in the architecture industry, not in competitions, not in projects. But in what moved people. **19**

She read about Kurdish cities, about reconstruction, about political developments. She read about people trying to create structures that endured.

She felt a connection that had not vanished.

A connection to a people, to a history, to a possibility.

But she also knew that she was no longer the person who could go to Southern Kurdistan and design cities.

She knew that this path was no longer her path.

And she accepted it.

In autumn, she began to write again. Not much, not regularly, but enough to find a form. She wrote short sentences, observations, thoughts.

“A path does not end. It only changes its direction.”

“I am not what I do. I am what I decide.”

“Possibilities are spaces one does not have to enter in order to be them.”

These sentences were not answers.

They were markers.

They were points of orientation in a life that was rearranging itself.

So time passed.

Not as a return, not as a new beginning, but as a continuation.

Lavin lived in Frankfurt, in a life that was not planned, but felt right.

She was no longer an architect in the professional sense.

But architecture was still within her.

Not as a task.

But as a gaze.

As an attitude.

As a possibility.

20

Path 1 – Part 5: Voices She No Longer Carries

Summer came, and with it a warmth that slowly settled into the city. Lavin noticed that she was beginning to distinguish

the days again. No longer as a uniform sequence, but as individual units, each carrying its own mood.

She went out more often. Not far, not for long, but regularly. Sometimes she sat on a bench by the Main and watched the boats passing by. They moved slowly, almost sluggishly, and yet they moved forward.

She liked this kind of movement.

It was quiet.

It was clear.

It was without pressure.

One day, she took an old sketchbook outside with her. It was one from her time in Berlin, with designs she had considered significant back then. She leafed through the pages, looking at the lines, the concepts, the perspectives.

21

She recognized the precision.

She recognized the ambition.

She recognized the intensity.

Lavin possessed a quiet, unobtrusive form of ambition that was not directed outward. She collected thoughts, observations, and small insights in her notes, never wondering if anyone would read them. For her, this act of recording was not a project, not a goal, but a Path of ordering herself. Her ambition was not visible, yet it was at work—like an inner current that never ran dry.

This ambition was free of expectation. It arose from curiosity, from the need to understand the world in small fragments.

Lavin did not work toward a result; she merely followed the impulse to create clarity where others passed by heedlessly. In this silent consistency lay something rare: a persistence that did not become loud, but remained.

She also recognized that this intensity no longer belonged to her.

She had become a different person.

Not better, not worse.

Just different.

She began to make new sketches. Not as a continuation of the old, but as something independent. The lines were simpler. The forms more reduced. The spaces more open.

22

They were not buildings.

They were states of being.

Movements.

Thoughts.

She no longer drew to design something.

She drew to understand something.

Her mother noticed the change.

“You are working again,” she said one evening.

Lavin shook her head.

“No,” she said. “I am only moving.”

Her mother smiled.

“That is also work.”

It was a sentence that, in its simplicity, carried a truth Lavin would only grasp later.

Path 1 – Part 6: The Heaviness of Small Steps

Winter arrived earlier than expected. The air grew sharper, the days shorter, and Lavin noticed that the darkness no longer unsettled her. Previously, she had associated darkness with standstill, with a sense of confinement. Now she perceived it as space. As something that did not have to be filled.

She often went for walks in the evening when the streets grew quieter. The city lights were reflected in the Main, and the sounds were muffled, as if the world were breathing more slowly for a moment. In this slowness, she found a form of peace she had not known for a long time. 23

She began to draw regularly again. Not out of ambition, not out of a desire to achieve something, but out of an inner necessity. The lines became even more reduced. Sometimes it was just two or three strokes seeking a relationship with one another.

She realized that she was no longer trying to design spaces. She was trying to understand states of being.

Once, she drew only a single horizontal line. She looked at it for a long time.

Then she wrote beneath it:
“Even a line is a path.”

Her parents noticed that she had become calmer. Not resigned, but collected. They rarely spoke about the past and even more rarely about the future. They lived in the now, and that was enough.

Once, her mother asked her if she could imagine working again.

Lavin answered:

“I don't know. Maybe. Maybe not.”

Her mother nodded.

“You don't have to know. You only have to live.”

24

It was a sentence that, in its simplicity, contained a great freedom.

Lavin began to occupy herself with the question of what it meant to lead a life that did not correspond to the original plan. She found that plans were often only constructions needed to feel secure.

But security was not a state.

Security was a relationship to the world.

And this relationship could change.

She understood that she was not less because she had left a path.

She had only become different.
And being different was not a loss.

Sometimes she thought back to the time in Berlin. Not with longing, but with a kind of objective tenderness. She remembered the nights in the clubs, the conversations in the kitchen, the long hours in the studio.

She remembered Tim, the relationship that had been neither particularly happy nor particularly unhappy. She remembered the competitions, the designs, the nights she worked until time lost its contours.

All of that had been part of her life.
But it no longer defined her.

25

One day, in a drawer, she found an old note from her time in Berlin. On it was a sentence she had heard back then in a seminar:

“Architecture is the art of shaping possibilities.”

She read the sentence several times.
Then she put the note back.

She knew now that possibilities did not exist only in buildings.

They existed in decisions.

In paths.

In people.

In the course of the winter, she began to seek more contact with her Kurdish community. Not out of a sense of duty, but out of a quiet need for belonging. She attended events, listened to lectures, spoke with people who carried stories similar to her own.

She realized that she was not the only one whose life had developed differently than planned. Many people carried paths within them that they had not walked. Many lived with possibilities they had not realized.

And yet they were whole.

26

In January, she wrote in her notebook:
“I am not the sum of my successes.
I am the sum of my paths.”

It was not a final sentence.
But it felt right.

Spring returned, and with it a new lightness. Lavin began to take on small projects again. No major tasks, no fixed obligations. Only small, manageable activities: illustrations for a local initiative, layouts for a brochure, a few graphic works for acquaintances.

It was not a return to the profession.
It was a movement.

An opening.
A cautious stepping forward.

She knew she would never be an architect in the classical sense again. But she also knew that architecture had not disappeared.

It had remained in her gaze.
In her Path of seeing the world.
In her ability to think in spaces—even if she no longer built them.

So she lived on.

Not in a closed chapter, not in a new beginning, but in a state that was neither one nor the other. 27

A state that simply was. A state that was enough.

Lavin was not the architect she had once wanted to become.
But she was a person who had walked paths.
And paths that one walks do not disappear.

They remain.
As forms.
As possibilities.
As identity.

Path 1 – Part 7: What She Leaves Behind

Lavin realized that letting go is not always loud.
Sometimes it happens in small, inconspicuous moments that
no one notices—except herself.

There were no great farewells.
No dramatic cuts.
Only quiet decisions that ran like fine cracks through her
daily life.

She left behind expectations that had never been her own.
Sentences that had accompanied her for years without
belonging to her.
Looks that had made her smaller than she was.

And the more she shed, the lighter she became.
Not because the old was unimportant,
but because she finally felt what truly belonged to her—
and what had merely been clinging to her.

It was a silent process.
An inner sorting.
A tidying without words.

She did not know where the path led.
But she knew what she no longer wanted to take with her.

And that was enough to move on.

Path 1 – Part 8: The Silence After the Choice

After she had decided what she no longer wanted to take with her, something remained that surprised her: silence.
No relief, no fear, no triumph.
Only a space that felt as if someone had stopped the world for a moment.

It was the kind of silence that arises when something inner rearranges itself.
Not visible, not namable—but perceptible.
Like a breath that lasts longer than usual.

Lavin realized that decisions do not take effect in the moment they are made.
They take effect afterward.
In the void that arises when the old has no more room and the new has not yet begun.

This void frightened her at first.
It was unfamiliar, indefinite, open.
But the longer she stood in it, the more she recognized that it was not a loss.
It was a transition.
An intermediate space that allowed her to hear herself.
Without voices from the outside.
Without expectations.
Without pressure.

In this silence, she felt for the first time that she was not just leaving something behind—
she was moving toward something.

And that was enough to move on.

Path 1 – Part 9: The Path That Opens

When the silence had settled, Lavin felt something she had not expected: a slight, barely perceptible movement within her. No urging, no pulling—rather a gentle opening, like a window that opens a crack on its own.

It was not a new path that suddenly lay before her. It was the old one, which she saw for the first time without the burden of past decisions.

A path that had always been there but had never become visible as long as she stood in her own way.

She realized that paths do not arise by seeking them. They arise by creating space. By taking away what obscures them.

And now that she had let go, she could recognize what remained:
a direction that was not loud, not unambiguous, not compelling—
but honest.

It was a path that did not promise to be easy. But it was clear. And it belonged to her.

Lavin took a step. Not because she knew where it led. But because she felt it was right.

And sometimes, she thought, exactly that is enough.

Path 1 – Part 10: The Direction She Recognizes

The path did not open suddenly.

It did so slowly, almost hesitantly, like something that first had to be sure whether it wanted to be seen. Lavin felt this opening not as a realization, but as a fine shift within her—a barely perceptible tilting of perspective.

She walked on, and with every step it became clearer to her that it was not the path that was changing.

It was she.

31

The streets of Frankfurt, which she had known since childhood, seemed different on this day. Not foreign, but new. The sounds of the city—the rush of cars, the clinking of cups outside cafés, the muffled murmur of people passing by—no longer pressed down upon her. She heard them without losing herself in them.

It was as if she had switched off an internal filter that, for years, had determined how she perceived the world. And now that it was gone, she saw things that had always been there but had never held meaning.

An elderly couple holding hands.

A young man laughing on his bicycle as if he had just received good news.

A woman pausing to straighten a child's hat.

Small scenes she would once have overlooked.
But now they acted like hints.
Not of what she should do—but of what was possible.

Lavin stopped at a traffic light and realized that, for the first time in a long while, her thoughts were not running ahead.

She was simply there.

In this moment.

In this city.

In this body that had sometimes felt like a stranger to her.

And in this presence, she recognized something that surprised her:

The direction she sought was not an external one.

It lay not in a decision, not in a goal, not in a plan.

It lay within her.

32

It was the direction that arises when one stops ignoring oneself.

When one turns down the volume of the voices that keep one small.

When one finds the courage not to know where one is going—and to keep walking anyway.

Lavin breathed in deeply.

Not to calm herself.

But to feel herself.

And in that breath lay the direction she recognized:
not ahead of her, but within her.

Not as a path, but as an attitude.

She did not have to know where she was going. She only had to know that she was going—and that every step brought her closer to herself.

Path 1 – Part 11: The Point of No Return

There was no dramatic moment, no loud cut, no clear boundary.

And yet Lavin felt that she had reached a point from which she could no longer go back. Not because something was holding her—but because she could no longer press herself into the old mold.

It was a feeling that had built up slowly, layer by layer, decision by decision.

A feeling that did not ask if she was ready. It was simply there.

She walked through the streets she had known for years and noticed how little they still fit the person she used to be. Not because the city had changed—but because she was changing. Frankfurt had remained the same city: the wide streets, the glass facades, the bridges over the Main, the people hurrying past one another.

But Lavin moved differently within it. She was no longer the young woman trying to fulfill expectations that had never been her own. Nor was she the one who had been worn down between origin and future.

She had become someone who could listen to herself.

And that was exactly what defined the point of no return:
Not that she was leaving something behind—
but that she had found something within herself that would
no longer disappear.

She stopped at a crossroads.

Cars rushed by, people crossed the street, a bicycle bell rang,
somewhere a door clicked shut.

Everyday sounds that would once have overwhelmed her.

But now they acted like a backdrop against which something
inside her became clear.

She thought of the decisions of the past few days.

Of the small steps she had taken.

Of the letting go she had not trusted herself to do.

Of the silence that had first frightened and then carried her.

34

And she knew:

There was no path back to the old life because she was no
longer the person who had lived that life.

The point of no return was not a place.

It was a state.

An inner knowledge that could no longer be denied.

Lavin breathed in deeply and felt something align within her.
Not outward, not toward a goal, not toward an expectation—
but toward herself.

She did not have to know what was coming.

She only had to acknowledge that she was moving forward.

And that the path ahead of her was no longer the old one.

She took a step.
Then another.
And with every step, the direction became clearer—
not because she understood it,
but because she felt it.

Path 1 – Part 12: Architecture of Letting Go

It took a while for Lavin to realize that letting go is not an act, but an architecture.
Something one does not build, but uncovers.
Layer by layer, decision by decision.

That evening she sat on the banks of the Main, where the city lights broke in the water and the sounds seemed muffled, as if someone had laid a veil over the world. People passed her by, some in a hurry, some lost in their own thoughts. But Lavin remained seated, as if the ground beneath her were holding onto something she could not yet name.

She thought of the last few days.

Of the small farewells she had barely noticed.
Of the silence that had first unsettled and then carried her.
Of the direction she did not understand but felt.

And suddenly she realized that letting go does not mean losing something.
It means creating space.
For what is allowed to come.
For what one can become.
For what one already is but never permitted.

She felt something order itself within her—not loudly, not visibly, but unequivocally.

An inner foundation reshaping itself.

Not out of certainties, but out of clarity.

Not out of answers, but out of honesty.

Lavin laid her hands in her lap and looked at the water.

The current moved calmly, unexcitedly, but steadily.

She thought of how often she had tried to swim against currents that had never been her own.

How often she had adapted so as not to stand out.

How often she had remained silent so as not to be wrong.

But now, in this moment, she understood:

Letting go was not a loss.

It was a rediscovery.

36

She stood up, slowly, as if shedding an old skin.

The air was cool but clear.

The city vibrated quietly around her, and for the first time she felt not swallowed by it, but carried.

The first Path was not concluded because she had achieved something.

It was concluded because she had recognized something:

That every path she would walk began within her.

And that she was the one who decided how far it led.

With this knowledge, she set herself in motion.

Not faster, not more resolutely—

but more consciously.

The first Path lay behind her.
The second was already waiting.
Not somewhere out there, but within her.

And she was ready to enter it.

Path 2 – Graphic Design

Path 2 – Part 1: The World of Lines and Colors

It was an ordinary afternoon in Berlin, one of those days that do not announce themselves and yet later stand in memory like a silent point of departure. Lavin had been out with two friends, as she so often was on weekends. For her, Berlin was not a destination but a state: a space in which she felt lighter, more open, more permeable.

37

They stood at the Gedächtniskirche, where the streams of people crossed, where tourists paused and Berliners moved on, and where time sometimes felt like a thin thread stretched between past and present.

There sat a man on a folding chair. Before him a sketchpad, beside it a cup of pencils. He drew caricatures, quickly, surely, with a hand that knew what it was doing. Lavin stopped. Not out of curiosity, but out of a kind of inner resonance she could not name.

She observed the lines the man set down. They were loose, but not accidental. Precise, but not rigid. There was a kind of clarity in them that she understood immediately.

She asked him, without thinking long, what he did for a living.

He looked up briefly, smiled as if he had heard this question many times before, and said:

“I am a graphic designer. I come from Poland.”

The sentence fell into her like a stone into calm water. No dramatic moment, no flash of light, no sudden realization. Rather a matter-of-fact, inner clicking into place. Something that was already there, but only now took shape.

The next day she drove back to Frankfurt. Two days later she faced the decision to apply to the University of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt. But she knew that she needed a portfolio. A portfolio that showed not just talent, but an attitude. 38

She enrolled in a painting and drawing course at the adult education center in Frankfurt. For six months she worked on her portfolio. Not obsessively, but with concentration. She drew still lifes, portraits, abstract shapes. She experimented with colors, with lines, with compositions.

When the portfolio was finished, she felt no euphoria. Only a quiet certainty.

She submitted it.

And she was accepted.

Studies began without great expectations. Lavin had never been someone who defined herself through goals. She moved

through the seminars, the studios, the workshops, as if exploring a space that only revealed itself while walking.

She learned about typography, about layout, about visual systems. She learned how images generate meaning, how colors shape moods, how forms communicate.

It was a different kind of architecture.

An architecture of the surface.

An architecture of the gaze.

In a foundation course, she met Lukas. He was quiet, attentive, with a kind of serenity that did not seem sluggish. They spoke first about projects, then about music, then about origin.

There was no moment in which she fell in love.

It was rather a slow drawing closer, a silent recognition.

A relationship that did not begin, but emerged.

They often worked together. Not out of necessity, but out of a shared rhythm. Their styles differed, but they complemented each other. His clarity met her sensitivity. His structure met her intuition.

39

After university, they founded a small agency. No large office, no ambitious startup. Just a room, two desks, two computers, a printer that constantly had paper jams.

They worked for small businesses, for clubs, for local initiatives. They designed logos, flyers, websites. It was not glamorous work. But it was theirs.

They married. Not out of romance, but out of a quiet certainty that they belonged together. They had two children, a boy and a girl.

Their life became more orderly.
Routines emerged.
Days gained structure.

Yet Lavin remained connected to what defined her.

To her origin.
To her people.
To the idea of freedom.

She was involved in Kurdish organizations, supported initiatives, took part in events. Not loudly, not militantly, but in a quiet, steady way.

She knew that identity did not only consist of what one did. But of what one did not forget.

The years passed.
Not fast, not slow.
In a rhythm that simply arose.

Lavin worked, lived, loved, argued, laughed.
She was a graphic designer.
She was a mother.
She was Kurdish.

She was all these things simultaneously, without one displacing the other.

But eventually, she began to feel that something within her was changing.
Not dramatically.
Not painfully.
More like a quiet shift.

She noticed that she drew less.
Experimented less.
Searched less.
She functioned.
But she was no longer moving.

41

Path 2 – Part 2: Forms That She Understands

The next day, Lavin sat in a small café in Nordend, a place where she often worked when she needed distance. The windows were large, the light soft, and the street noises entered only muffled. It was a space that did not crowd her. A space that allowed her to see.

She opened her sketchbook, not the digital one, but the old one with the slightly yellowed pages. It was the book she had carried with her for years without really using it. Perhaps, she thought, she had never dared to be honest in it.

She leafed through the pages.
Unfinished lines.
Half ideas.
Approaches she had discarded back then because they were not “good enough.”

Now she saw them differently.
Not as errors, but as traces.
As hints of who she had once been—and who she was no longer.

She took a pen and began to draw.
No logos, no commissions, no specifications.
Only forms that came out of her without her knowing where they led.

A circle that opened.
A line that could not decide whether to be straight or curved.
A pattern that reminded her of her grandmother’s rugs—not in form, but in feeling.

She paused.

For the first time, she understood that design was not just something one did.
It was something one felt.
Something one allowed.

She thought of her parents, of the stories about the mountains she had never seen, of the colors of the fabrics her mother used to wear.
Perhaps, she thought, graphic design was not a break with her origin, but a continuation of it—only in another language.

She continued to draw, and as the lines moved across the page, she noticed she was not trying to create something perfect.

She was trying to create something true.

And truth, she knew, was rarely symmetrical.

As she set the pen aside, she looked at the page.

It was not a finished image.

But it was a beginning.

A beginning that did not feel like work, but like an epiphany.

She smiled softly.

Not because she was proud—

but because, for the first time in a long while, she felt understood.

Path 2 – Part 3: Colors She Can Feel

In the days that followed, Lavin began to perceive colors differently.

Not as decorative elements, not as technical decisions—
but as moods, as memories, as internal movements.

She sat at her desk, the window open, the sounds of the city in the background. On the screen lay a new project: a poster design for a small exhibition. Before, she would have started immediately with the composition, with questions of balance, typography, structure.

But today, her gaze lingered on the colors.

A warm ochre that reminded her of her grandmother's blankets.

A deep blue that made her think of the nights in Frankfurt when the city grew quieter.

A delicate pink she had never used because it seemed too soft to her—

and which now suddenly carried a vulnerability she no longer wanted to hide.

She ran her finger over the color palette as if touching something that lay not on the screen, but within her.

Perhaps, she thought, colors were never just colors.

Perhaps they were feelings seeking a form.

She mixed tones she would never have combined before.

A broken yellow with a cool grey.

A warm red with an almost invisible green.

Colors that contradicted each other—and precisely for that reason spoke to one another.

As she worked, she noticed she was no longer trying to design something “beautiful.”

She was trying to design something real.

Something that was not perfect, but true.

She remembered a sentence her mother had once said when she was still a child:

“Colors do not lie.”

At the time, she hadn't understood what it meant.

Now she knew.

Colors showed what one felt before one could speak it.

They betrayed what one sought before one knew it.

They opened doors that one had kept closed for years.

Lavin leaned back and looked at the screen.
The poster was still unfinished, but it carried something she
had not felt in a long time:
an honesty that was not loud, but clear.

She felt something release within her.
Not a problem, not a doubt—
but an old restraint she had never questioned.

Perhaps, she thought, this path was not just a professional
one.
Perhaps it was an internal one.
A path that taught her to see herself in colors.

And in that moment, she knew:
She was ready to move on.
Not because she knew where to—
but because she finally felt what she was looking for.

45

Path 2 – Part 4: Compositions That Order Her

In the following days, Lavin began to view her work
differently. No longer as a task, no longer as something she
had to do “well”—but as a mirror.
As a path to order her inner world.

She sat at her desk, several open files, sketches, and color
palettes before her.
Before, she would have tried to solve everything at once.
Now she let things lie, observing them without judgment.

She noticed that composition did not consist of arranging elements perfectly.

Composition was a process of omission.

What remains?

What carries?

What is merely noise?

She zoomed into one of her works—a poster design that had caused her many headaches.

The elements were all there:

typography, image, color, structure.

And yet, something had never been right.

Now she saw it.

It was not the design that was restless.

It was she herself who had been.

46

She deleted one element.

Then another.

The surface became emptier, but clearer.

She felt something relax within her, as if she were creating space internally while removing externally.

Perhaps, she thought, design was always a dialogue between what one shows and what one leaves out.

Between what one says and what one no longer needs to say.

She remembered her mother's stories—

how, as a young girl in the mountains, she had learned to weave patterns.

Not to create something beautiful, but to bring order to the chaos of life.

“Every pattern has a gap,” her mother had once said.
“And in that gap lies the truth.”

Lavin understood this sentence differently now.
Not as a craft.
But as an attitude.

She began to rebuild her composition.
Not to make it perfect—
but to make it true.

The elements found their place, not because they had to, but
because they were allowed to.
The colors spoke to each other without overpowering one
another.
The typography did not stand in the foreground but breathed
with the image.

47

When she was finished, she leaned back.
The poster was not spectacular.
It was quiet.
Honest.
Clear.

And in this clarity, she recognized something that surprised
her:
She was not just ordering the design.
She was ordering herself.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true core of this path:
not to shape something, but to shape oneself.
Not to order something, but to order oneself.

And while she looked at the screen, she knew:
She was ready for the next step.
Not because she understood it—
but because she felt it.

Path 2 – Part 5: Perspectives That Shift Her

Lavin had never thought about how much perspectives
determined her life.
Not just in design—there it was obvious—
but in everything she did, felt, decided.

That afternoon, she sat in the Museum of Modern Art, a place
she rarely visited.
Not because she didn't like art,
but because she had often felt out of place.
Too loud, too foreign, too much between worlds.

But today was different.
She walked slowly through the rooms, viewing the works not
as answers, but as questions.
As possibilities to see the world differently.

She stopped in front of a large, almost empty painting.
A white background, with only a thin, black line curving
slightly upward.
Before, she would have thought:
That is nothing.
Today she thought:
That is a decision.

A stroke that refuses to stay straight.
A stroke that lifts itself, though nothing forces it to do so.
A stroke that says:
I could be different—and I am.

She sat on a bench and observed the line for a long time.
She thought about her own life.
About the paths she had walked because she believed she had to walk them.
About the decisions she had made so as not to disappoint anyone.
About the perspectives she had adopted without checking if they suited her.

Perhaps, she thought, perspective was not something one *has*.
Perhaps it was something one *chooses*.

49

She stood up and walked on.
In another room, she saw an installation made of mirrors.
The mirrors distorted her image, stretching it, compressing it, making her appear taller, smaller, wider, narrower.
She had to smile.

How often had she seen herself in distorted mirrors?
In expectations that were not hers.
In roles she had never chosen.
In images that others had of her—
and which she had eventually adopted because she had none of her own.

She stepped closer to one of the mirrors.
Her face was barely recognizable, the lines shifted, the contours broken.
And yet she knew:

That was her.
Just seen differently.

Perhaps, she thought, life was not about finding the perfect image of oneself.

Perhaps it was about recognizing that every image was merely a perspective—
and that she had the freedom to choose another.

When she left the museum, she felt lighter.

Not because she had found answers,
but because she had understood that she did not need all the answers.

Perspectives could shift.

And she was allowed to shift with them.

It was not a loss.

It was movement.

It was design.

And in this movement, she felt:

The second Path was not just a professional path.

It was a new Path of seeing herself.

50

Path 2 – Part 6: Spaces She Enters

Lavin had never given much thought to how much spaces influenced her. She had walked through apartments, offices, cafés, studios, without noticing that each of these places changed something within her. But since she had begun to

design more consciously, she also began to see more consciously.

On this afternoon, she entered the studio of a small agency where she occasionally took on freelance projects.

The room was bright, the walls white, the furniture simple. Nothing special—and yet she felt immediately that this room was different.

Perhaps it was the silence.

Perhaps the way the light fell through the large windows.

Perhaps the fact that no one was watching her, no one wanted anything from her, no one placed expectations upon her.

She sat at an empty table, opened her tablet, and looked around.

The other designers worked with concentration, but without tension.

It was a space where one could breathe.

A space that did not push, but invited.

She thought of the spaces of her childhood.

Of the cramped apartments where there were always too many people.

Of the living rooms with rugs that told stories.

Of the kitchens where her mother cooked and sang while the city rushed outside.

These spaces had shaped her without her noticing. They had taught her that sometimes one had to make oneself small to leave room.

That one had to adapt so as not to stand out.

That one had to be quiet so as not to disturb.

But this space here said something else.

It said:

You are allowed to take up space.

You are allowed to be visible.

You are allowed to design.

She opened a new project—branding for a small café seeking a modern but warm identity.

Before, she would have started immediately with mood boards, with color palettes, with typography.

Today, she did something else.

She stood up and walked through the room.

She observed the shadows on the walls, the lines of the furniture, the textures of the surfaces.

She let the space act upon her as if it were a conversation partner.

52

Perhaps, she thought, design was not just what one created. Perhaps it was also what one allowed.

She sat down again and began to work.

The forms came more easily.

The colors found each other almost by themselves.

The composition arose not from rules, but from feeling.

And while she designed, she noticed that she was not just entering a space—
she was entering herself.

A part of herself she had long ignored.

A part that did not want to be quiet.

A part that did not have to be small.

A part that wanted to design because it could.

When she saved the first draft, she felt a calmness that surprised her.

Not because the design was perfect—
but because it was honest.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true core of this path:
To enter spaces that did not make her smaller,
but larger.

And in this knowledge, she was ready to move on.

Path 2 – Part 7: Decisions She Shapes

In the weeks that followed, Lavin noticed that decisions are not only made in the head.

Sometimes they arise in the hands.

In lines that one draws.

In colors that one chooses.

In spaces that one enters—or leaves.

She was working on a new commission, a visual concept for a small initiative supporting women with a history of migration in creative professions.

A project she might have accepted before because it “looked good” in her portfolio.

But now it felt different.

Closer.

More honest.

Like a conversation she had wanted to have for a long time but had never found the words for.

She opened the file and looked at the empty surface.
Before, she would have started placing elements
immediately.

Today, she waited.
Not out of uncertainty—
but out of respect.

An empty surface was not a deficiency.

It was a space.

A space that asked:

What do you really want to say?

Lavin thought of the women she knew.

Of her mother, who had never had the chance to live out her
creativity.

Of her cousins, balancing between tradition and modernity.

Of herself—

between Frankfurt and origin, between adaptation and
freedom, between expectations and her own lines.

She began to design.

Not fast, not frantically, but consciously.

Every decision felt like a step.

A step that shaped not only the design but also herself.

A vibrant red—not aggressive, but alive.

A deep green—not folkloric, but grounding.

A typography that was clear, yet soft enough not to dominate.

As she worked, she realized she wasn't just developing a
visual concept.

She was developing a stance.

Decisions didn't have to be perfect.
They had to be true.

She remembered a moment from her childhood:
how she had chosen fabrics with her mother, without
knowing that she was already designing even then.
Her mother had always said:
“Choose what makes you quiet.”
At the time, she hadn't understood what that meant.
Now, she knew.

Quiet wasn't boring.
Quiet was clear.
Quiet was honest.

As she looked at the draft, she felt that quiet.
Not because everything was finished—
but because everything was right.

55

Perhaps, she thought, that was the core of this path:
not to make decisions,
but to design them.

And as she closed the screen, she knew:
She was ready for the next part of this journey.
Not because she understood it—
but because she felt it.

Path 2 – Part 8: The Silence After the Draft

When Lavin turned off her tablet that evening, she remained sitting for a while.

The room had grown dark; only the faint light of the streetlamps fell through the window.
She heard the city—muffled, distant, yet familiar.
And in this soundscape, she sensed something she had rarely felt in recent years:
a silence that was not empty.

It was the silence that follows a draft which was not merely work, but a conversation with herself.

She leaned back and closed her eyes.
The lines she had drawn still drifted within her.
The colors she had chosen lay like layers over her thoughts.
The decisions she had made did not feel like compromises, but like steps she had taken consciously.

Perhaps, she thought, design was not the result.
Perhaps it was the state that followed.
The moment when you feel that something inside you has come to rest.

She thought of the women in her family.
Of her mother, who never had the chance to live out her creativity.
Of her aunts, who wove patterns without knowing they were artists.
Of her grandmother, who mixed colors without ever entering a studio.

Perhaps, she thought, creativity was not something one learned.
Perhaps it was something one inherited.
Not as a technique—
but as an attitude.

She opened her eyes and looked at the desk.
Between the pens, notes, and sketches lay a small slip of
paper she had written weeks ago:
“To design is to see.”

Back then, she hadn't understood the sentence.
Now, she knew what it meant.

To design did not mean to create something.
To design meant to recognize something.
In oneself.
In the world.
In the spaces in between.

She stood up, went to the window, and looked down at the
street.

People walked by, cars rushed, a bicycle bell rang.
Everything was in motion—
and yet she no longer felt overwhelmed by it.

She felt part of it.
Not as an observer, not as a stranger,
but as someone who had found her place—
at least for this moment.

The silence within her was not an end.
It was a transition.
A space that opened up,
because she had stopped ignoring herself.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true core of this path:

not to design in order to show something,
but to design in order to hear oneself.

And in this silence, she knew:

The journey was not yet over.
But it had a direction.
One she did not understand, but felt.

Path 2 – Part 9: The Path That Opens

In the days following the final draft, Lavin felt a change she couldn't immediately name.
It was nothing loud, nothing spectacular.
Rather a quiet unfolding, an inner shifting that felt like a new room.

She walked through the streets of Frankfurt, and the city seemed different.
Not because it had changed—
but because she saw it differently.

The colors of the facades, the patterns of the shadows, the lines of the bridges over the Main—
everything seemed to speak to one another.

Not in words, but in forms.
In rhythms.
In movements.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the moment a path opened:
not when you understood it,
but when you saw it.

She stopped at a traffic light and observed the people around her.

A woman hurrying across the street with a shopping bag.

A man staring at his phone as if the world lay within it.

A child pausing to watch a pigeon.

Before, she would have overlooked these scenes.

Now, they seemed like small compositions.

Unplanned, imperfect—

but full of meaning.

She thought of her work.

Of the lines she had drawn.

Of the colors she had chosen.

Of the decisions she had made without justifying herself.

Perhaps, she thought, design was not just a profession.

Perhaps it was a Path of reading the world.

And of recognizing oneself within it.

She continued on her path, and with every step, it became clearer to her that the second path did not consist of learning something new.

It consisted of shedding something old:

the fear of being wrong.

The fear of not being enough.

The fear of becoming visible.

She thought of her heritage.

Of the women in her family who had expressed their creativity in patterns, colors, and gestures without ever setting foot in a studio.

Perhaps, she thought, she was not the first to design.

Perhaps she was only the first to voice it.

As she stopped at an intersection, she felt something that surprised her:

a direction.

Not loud, not explicit—

but palpable.

It was not a goal.

It was an attitude.

An inner alignment that said:

You are allowed to design your own path.

She breathed in deeply.

Not to calm herself—

but to feel herself.

Path 2 – Part 10: Architecture of Visibility

It was late when Lavin extinguished the studio lights that evening. Outside, the city was hushed; the streets glistened with rain, and the headlights of passing cars drew soft lines across the asphalt.

She stood still for a moment, her hand lingering on the switch, as if testing whether the darkness truly meant her.

In that darkness, she sensed something she had long kept at bay:

Visibility.

Not the visibility one fights for.

Not the kind one trains for.

But the kind that emerges when one simply stops hiding.

She sat at the large table in the center of the room, placed her hands upon the smooth surface, and breathed in deeply. She thought of the lines she had drawn. Of the colors she had chosen. Of the decisions she had shaped. And she realized that all these things had not merely been professional steps— they were steps toward herself.

Graphic design had never been just about aesthetics. It was a mirror. A space where she could see herself without losing herself. A place where she was allowed to decide how much of her became visible.

She stood and walked to the window. The city lay before her like a vast, restless composition— unfinished, contradictory, alive. And for the first time, she did not feel smaller than this city. She felt part of it.

Not as someone who had to adapt.
Not as someone who had to explain herself.
But as someone who was permitted to create.

This approach had not been one of perfection. It had been a process of perception—one that taught her that visibility does not mean being loud, but being honest. She leaned her forehead lightly against the cool glass and closed her eyes. Within her was a stillness that did not stem from exhaustion, but from clarity.

She knew that it was coming to an end.
Not because she had understood everything—
but because she had understood something more vital:

She was allowed to be visible.
In her lines.
In her colors.
In her decisions.
In her life.

As she left the studio, she did not feel a closure.
She felt an opening.
An expanse.
A possibility.

Path 3 – Computer Science
Path 3 – Part 1: Life in Logic

It began on an ordinary afternoon in Berlin, one of those days that do not announce themselves and yet later remain in memory like a quiet turning point. Lavin had been out with two friends, aimless, as had become typical for their weekends in Berlin. For her, the city was not a place but a state: a space in which everything seemed possible without anything being demanded.

They stood at the Gedächtniskirche, where the streams of people crossed, where tourists paused and Berliners moved on, and where time sometimes felt like a thin thread stretched between past and present.

There sat a man on a small folding chair. In front of him a sketchpad, beside it a cup filled with pencils. He drew caricatures—quickly, surely, with a hand that knew what it was doing. Lavin stopped. Not out of curiosity, but because of a kind of inner resonance she could not name.

She watched the lines the man set down. They were precise, but not rigid. Loose, but not accidental. There was a kind of clarity in them that she understood immediately.

Without thinking long, she asked him what he did for a living.

He looked up briefly, smiled as if he had heard the question many times before, and said:

“I am an architect. I come from Poland.”

63

“Oh,” she said softly. “Can an architect draw that well?”

The man smiled without looking up and added another line. “Yes,” he replied, “as you can see.”

They both laughed—briefly, lightly—as if they had met for a moment on an invisible line.

“I’m thinking about studying,” Lavin said then, almost more to herself than to him. “But I can’t decide. Architecture, graphic design, computer science... everything pulls at me, but nothing feels certain.”

This time he actually set the pencil aside. He looked at her—searching, but not condescending.

“Study computer science,” he said after a moment. “Learn a profession that belongs to this time.”

She frowned slightly.

“And art? Architecture?”

He exhaled, as if retrieving an old answer once more.

“Art is beautiful,” he said. “But mostly, it doesn’t pay. You need a lot of luck, a lot of contacts, a lot of patience. And even then...”

He made a vague gesture in the air, as if drawing an uncertain line.

“It’s hard to make a living from it.”

“And architecture?”

64

A short, dry smile.

“Architecture is very stressful. It’s not easy to get commissions. And if you don’t have your own projects, you sit in some office drawing other people’s architecture. You draw what they want. Not what you want.”

He paused, as if giving her time to hear it.

“Computer science gives you more freedom,” he added. “You can work anywhere. You can earn well. And if you want, you can combine art and computer science. Graphics, animation, games, visualizations... The world needs people who can do both: see and think.”

The word *see* lingered within her.

“But I’m afraid of numbers,” she said. “Of logic. Of...”
She searched for a word.
“Of systems.”

He shook his head slightly.

“Systems are just patterns,” he said. “You like lines, don’t you?”

He pointed to his drawing.

“Computer science is lines too. Invisible ones. You just have to learn to read them.”

She remained silent. Behind her, the city moved on—cars, voices, footsteps, the distant rush of the subway. Before her, a man, a sketchpad, a few pencils. And between them, a sentence that settled inside her without being loud.

65

“I don’t want to study something that takes me away from myself,” she finally said. “I don’t want to just function.”

He nodded slowly.

“Then make sure you master the tool,” he replied. “Not the other way around. Computer science is a tool. Not a cage. If you master it, you can decide what you do with it. Art, architecture, something in between. But without the tool, you depend on those who have it.”

She looked at him longer than necessary.

“And you?” she asked. “Are you satisfied with your decision?”

He laughed softly, this time without bitterness.

“I sit here drawing at the Gedächtniskirche,” he said. “I studied architecture, I worked in offices, I spent nights drawing for projects that were never built. Now I draw people who walk away in ten minutes. Satisfied? I don’t know. But I know what I would tell you if you asked me what you should do.”

He picked up the pencil again, as if the conversation had not ended but merely shifted into another form.

“Study computer science,” he repeated. “And don’t forget to draw.”

She smiled.

“Maybe,” she said, “that’s exactly the problem. I want both.”

“Then do both,” he replied. “But start with the one that opens doors later. Not the one that closes them.”

66

On the way back, her friends talked about other things—bars, music, plans for the evening. Lavin listened only halfway. Sentences worked within her, images overlapping: the man on the folding chair, the clear lines of his drawings, the word *tool*, the word *pattern*.

On the train, she stared out the window. The city passed by—facades, bridges, graffiti. Everything suddenly looked like a large, moving diagram in which she herself was only a small node.

She wondered whether one could read one’s life like that: as a sequence of inputs, decisions, outputs.

Input: Berlin, Gedächtniskirche, a Polish architect drawing caricatures.

Processing: doubts, questions, a sentence that lingers.
Output: a decision that has no name yet, but is already taking shape.

That evening, back in her room, she opened the websites of various degree programs for the first time with intent.

Architecture.

Graphic Design.

Computer Science.

She clicked through module plans, reading words like *draft*, *design*, *algorithms*, *data structures*.

Architecture stirred an old fascination in her, but also a faint pull toward overwhelm.

Graphic design made her feel understood, but not sustained.

Computer science felt foreign at first.

Then, after a few minutes, something else: a kind of sober, clear possibility.

She imagined what it would be like not only to see images, but to understand systems.

Not only to design surfaces, but to shape processes.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true allure:

not less art, but a different kind of art.

One that took place in the invisible.

In the weeks that followed, she did not let go of the thought. She spoke of it rarely, not even to her friends. Instead, she observed herself: how she lingered on websites, how she read articles about programming without telling anyone, how she watched YouTube videos titled;

What do you do in computer science? and felt as if she were secretly peering into a stranger's apartment.

One evening, as the screen looked back at her with its cool brightness, she opened the page of a university offering computer science.

She read the program description slowly, sentence by sentence.

“Teaching fundamental knowledge in programming, algorithms, databases...”

The words sounded dry, but not dismissive.

She thought of the man at the Gedächtniskirche.

“Systems are just patterns,” he had said. “You like lines.”

She inhaled deeply, placed her hands on the keyboard, and sat still for a moment, as if she first had to grow accustomed to the idea that a decision does not always feel like fireworks. Sometimes it is only a quiet click.

68

Then she opened the application form.

Here began what had until now only been a premonition.

Not in Berlin, not at the Gedächtniskirche, not in conversation with a stranger, but here:

before a screen, in a silent room, with a form that asked for data and yet demanded something else—the willingness to enter a new pattern.

How this path would feel, she did not yet know.

But as she clicked “Next,” she felt something within her no longer withdraw.

It was not a loud departure.
Rather, an internal, matter-of-fact clicking into place.

Path 3 – Part 2: Logics That Calm Her

In the days following her first small attempt at code, Lavin returned again and again to the same spot: the quiet table in the library where she had first felt that computer science was not cold—
but clear.

She opened her laptop, and the familiar emptiness of the editor greeted her.

A blinking cursor.

A beginning that demanded nothing, but allowed everything.

69

She typed slowly.

Not out of uncertainty, but out of respect for the precision this world required.

A command.

A bracket.

A thought taking shape.

She noticed how much this clarity calmed her.

In a world where so much was unpredictable—
origin, expectations, identity,
the constant questions that accompanied her—
there was something here that was reliable.

If she wrote something incorrectly,
the code showed her.

Not reproachfully, not hurtfully, but factually.
An error was not a judgment.
It was a hint.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the reason she felt safe here.
In this world, she did not have to explain herself.
She only had to understand.

She remembered her father's stories,
how he had taught her as a child that every problem has a
structure—
even if you don't see it immediately.

“If you find the structure,” he had said,
“you find the path.”

Back then, she hadn't understood that he wasn't talking about
mathematics,
but about life.

70

Now, as she wrote her first small programs,
she felt something within her aligning.
Not loudly, not visibly, but unequivocally.

She began to recognize patterns:
why a loop worked.
Why a condition was false.
Why an error surfaced even though she was sure she had
done everything right.

And every time she found the error,
she felt a small, silent joy.
Not because she was “good”—

but because she was learning that clarity is not a gift.
It is earned.

She leaned back,
looked at the lines she had written,
and felt something that surprised her:
Logic was not the opposite of feeling.
Logic was a path to order feelings.

Perhaps, she thought, computer science was not just a degree.
Perhaps it was an attitude.
A path of looking at the world without letting it overwhelm
you.

And in this attitude, she felt it:
the path was open.

71

The deeper Lavin delved into the world of computer science,
the more she realized that this world did not consist of
coldness, as she had always believed.
It consisted of relationships.
Of dependencies.
Of invisible threads that wove together into something
greater.

That afternoon, she sat in a small seminar room at the
university. Before her stood a lecturer speaking about data
structures—lists, trees, graphs.
Terms that sounded abstract to many,
but for her suddenly possessed an unexpected familiarity.

A tree, the lecturer explained, was not just a diagram.
It was a decision.

A path that branches.

A system that creates order where chaos threatens.

Lavin looked at the sketch on the board and had to smile. It reminded her of the family trees her relatives used to draw when they wanted to explain who belonged to whom, who was whose child, who carried whose story.

Perhaps, she thought, data structures were nothing more than modern forms of ancient traditions.

Attempts to understand the world by placing it into patterns.

She opened her notebook and began to write down the examples. Not mechanically, but with a growing curiosity about how these systems functioned.

Why a list was faster than a search.

Why a tree was more efficient than a chaos of data.

Why a graph made connections visible that one would otherwise have overlooked.

And as she wrote, she realized that she was not just learning how computer science worked. She was learning how she herself worked.

She thought of her life:
of the decisions she had made,
of the people who had shaped her.

Perhaps, she thought, her life was also a system.

Not linear,

not perfect,

but structured—

if one had the courage to see the structure.

The lecturer continued to speak about algorithms,
about efficiency,
about paths that led more quickly to the goal.
But Lavin remained caught on a single sentence:

“A system is only as clear as the gaze with which one
observes it.”

She wrote it in her notebook.
Not because it sounded important,
but because it was true.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the core of this path:
not to master systems,
but to recognize oneself within them.

As the hour ended, she remained seated for a moment.
The room was empty, the chalkboard half-erased, the scent of
chalk lingering in the air.
She looked at her notes and felt a stillness that surprised her.
Not because she had understood everything—
but because she understood that she was capable of
understanding.

73

Path 3 – Part 3: Systems She Sees Through

The deeper Lavin immersed herself in the world of computer
science, the more she realized that this world did not consist
of coldness, as she had always believed.
It consisted of relationships.
Of dependencies.
Of invisible threads that wove themselves into something
greater.

That afternoon, she sat in a small seminar room at the university. In front of her stood a lecturer speaking about data structures—lists, trees, graphs.

Terms that sounded abstract to many,
but for her suddenly carried an unexpected familiarity.

A tree, the lecturer explained, was not just a diagram.
It was a decision.

A path that branches.

A system that creates order where chaos threatens.

Lavin looked at the sketch on the board and had to smile.
It reminded her of the family trees her relatives used to draw
when they wanted to explain who belonged to whom,
who was whose child,
who carried whose story.

74

Perhaps, she thought, data structures were nothing more than
modern forms of ancient traditions.

Attempts to understand the world
by placing it into patterns.

She opened her notebook and began writing down the
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Why a graph made connections visible
that one would otherwise have overlooked.

And as she wrote, she realized
that she was not only learning how computer science worked.
She was learning how she herself worked.

She thought of her life:
of the decisions she had made,
of the people who had shaped her.

Perhaps, she thought, her life was also a system.
Not linear,
not perfect,
but structured—
if one had the courage to see the structure.

The lecturer continued speaking about algorithms,
about efficiency,
about paths that led more quickly to the goal.
But Lavin remained caught on a single sentence:

“A system is only as clear as the gaze with which one
observes it.”

75

She wrote it into her notebook.
Not because it sounded important,
but because it was true.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the core of this path:
not to master systems,
but to recognize oneself within them.

When the class ended, she remained seated for a moment.
The room was empty, the chalkboard half erased, the scent of
chalk lingering in the air.
She looked at her notes and felt a calmness that surprised her.
Not because she had understood everything—
but because she understood that she *could* understand.

Path 3 – Part 4: Errors They Understand

The further Lavin delved into the world of computer science, the more she realized that errors were not the end—but the beginning.

That evening she sat in her room, the laptop before her, the screen bright in the dark. She was working on a small exercise, a simple function that was supposed to work. But it didn't.

The error was stubborn.
A line that refused to do what she wanted.
A program that locked itself away as if it had a will of its own.

In the past, she would have given up in frustration.
Today, she stayed.

She stared at the error message.
Red text.
A hint, not a judgment.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the greatest difference between this world and the one she came from:
Here, an error did not mean that one had failed.
Here, an error meant that one had overlooked something—and that one could find it.

She began to go through the lines.
Slowly.
Patiently.
Like someone untangling a thread without breaking it.

A missing character.
One bracket too many.
A thought not cleanly followed through to its end.

When she found the error, she had to laugh softly.
Not at herself—but at the realization of how small the cause
had been and how large the effect.

She corrected the line, ran the program again,
and saw that it worked.

A simple success.
But a real one.

She leaned back and felt something that surprised her:
a peace that did not stem from perfection,
but from understanding.

77

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true core of this path:
not to become flawless,
but to become fearless.

She thought of her life.
Of the decisions she had regretted.
Of the moments in which she had judged herself
because she believed she was wrong.

Perhaps, she thought, those errors had never been errors.
Perhaps they were hints.
Red text in her own life,
saying:
Look closer.

She looked back at the screen.
The cursor blinked quietly.
Patiently.
Invitingly.

Errors were not walls.
They were doors.

And in that moment, she knew:
This was more than logic.
It was forgiveness.
Clarity.
Inner freedom.

She was ready to move on.
Not because she understood everything—
but because she understood that she could learn.

78

Path 3 – Part 5: Structures That Carry Her

In the following weeks, Lavin began to feel that computer science did not consist only of code.
It consisted of structures.
Of invisible scaffolds that held everything together—
like the load-bearing beams of a house that one cannot see,
but without which everything would collapse.

She sat in a quiet room at the university, a sheet of paper
before her on which she tried to sketch a problem.
Not on the computer.
Not in the editor.
Only with a pen.

A simple diagram.
A few arrows.
A few nodes.
A system that slowly took shape.

She noticed how much this clarity calmed her.

Not because she understood everything,
but because she understood that everything had a structure—
even if she had to search for it first.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the reason she felt safe in this
world.

Here, there were no expectations she had to fulfill.
No roles she was supposed to play.
No voices saying who she had to be.

Here, there was only the problem.
And the path to solve it.

She thought of her heritage.
Of the stories of her family,
which often seemed chaotic,
but always possessed an inner order
that one only recognized if one listened long enough.

Perhaps, she thought, that too was a form of computer
science.

A human one.
One that was not written in code,
but in memories.

She continued to draw.
An arrow to the left.

A node upward.
A path that branched
but did not lose itself.

And as she drew, she realized that she was not just ordering
the problem.
She was ordering herself.

She remembered a sentence her father had once said when
she was still a child:
“If you know what carries you, you can go wherever you
wish.”

Back then, she hadn't understood
that he was not speaking of paths,
but of structures.

Now, as she observed the lines on the paper,
she knew what he had meant.

Structures were not limitations.
They were support.
They were orientation.
They were freedom.

She set the pen aside and looked at her sketch.
It was not perfect.
But it was clear.

And in this clarity, she felt something
she had long been seeking:
an inner stability
that did not come from without,
but from within herself.

Perhaps, she thought, the essence was
not to build systems,
but to find the systems
that carry you.

And with this knowledge, she was ready to move on.

Path 3 – Part 6: Abstractions That Set Her Free

The longer Lavin occupied herself with computer science, the more she realized that this world did not only consist of concrete commands.

It consisted of abstractions.

Of ideas larger than any single line of code.

Of concepts that were invisible, yet shaped everything.

81

That afternoon, she sat in a quiet workspace at the university.
Before her lay a chapter on object-oriented thinking.

Classes.

Methods.

Inheritance.

Terms that sounded dry to many,
but for her opened an unexpected expanse.

A class, she read, was a blueprint.

A draft.

An idea that only comes to life through its instances.

She had to smile.

It reminded her of the stories of her family.

Of the traditions that were passed down,

not as rigid rules,
but as forms that each generation reinterpreted.

Perhaps, she thought, abstraction was nothing other than freedom.

The freedom to recognize the essential
and to let go of the trivial.

She opened her laptop and began to program a small example.

A class “Human.”

Properties.

Functions.

A system slowly taking shape.

As she wrote, she realized
that she was not just designing code.

She was designing an idea.

A structure larger than the individual lines.

Perhaps, she thought, that was why she felt so at ease in this world.

Here, she did not have to understand everything at once.

Here, she was allowed to abstract.

To reduce.

To condense.

She thought of her own life.

Of the many roles she had carried:

Daughter.

Student.

Stranger.

Friend.

Seeker.

Perhaps, she thought, she too was an abstraction.
Not in the sense of blurriness, but in the sense of possibility.

She was not just one role.
Not just one origin.
Not just one path.
She was a draft,
forming itself anew with every decision.

She leaned back and observed the code.
It was simple. Unagitated. But clear.

And in this clarity, she felt something
she had long been seeking:
an inner vastness
that did not come from without,
but from her own thinking.

83

Perhaps, she thought,
that was the true core of this path:
not to understand the world,
but to understand oneself within it.

And with this knowledge, she was ready to move on.

Path 3 – Part 7: Complexities She No Longer Fears

The further Lavin delved into computer science, the more she realized that complexity was nothing threatening. Previously, she had believed that complicated things were meant only for people who were naturally “clever enough.”

But now, while working on a small project, she felt something else: complexity was not an obstacle.
It was a space.

A space one could enter
if one was willing to walk slowly.

She sat in a silent workspace, the laptop before her,
trying to solve a problem that had occupied her for days.

An algorithm that was not efficient enough.
A path that took too long.

A system that refused to order itself.

Before, she would have been intimidated by it.
Today, she remained calm.

She began to break the problem down.
Not all at once.
Just one part.
Then another.
Like someone loosening a knot,
not through force,
but through patience.

She drew the problem on paper.
A diagram.
A few arrows.
A few decisions.
And suddenly she saw something she had overlooked before:
a shortcut.
A possibility.

A structure that opened up
because she had stopped fearing it.

Perhaps, she thought, complexity was not the opposite of
clarity.

Perhaps complexity was the path to clarity.

She thought of her own life.

Of the many layers,
the many roles,
the many expectations
she had carried.

How often she had believed she was “too complicated.”

That her origin, her questions, her uncertainties
made her heavier than others.

85

But now, as she rewrote the algorithm,
she noticed something that surprised her:

Complexity was no error.

Complexity was depth.

She executed the program.

It ran faster.

Cleaner.

Clearer.

She leaned back and felt a stillness
that did not stem from simplicity,
but from understanding.

Perhaps, she thought,
this was the true core of this path:

not to avoid complexity,
but to penetrate it.

Not to dominate it,
but to find oneself within it.

She looked at the screen,
at the lines she had written,
and knew:
Not simplification,
but depth.
Something that allowed her to grow.

And she was ready to go further.

Path 3 – Part 8: Clarities She Formulates

In the following days, Lavin noticed that something within her had grown calmer.

Not because she suddenly understood everything—
but because she understood how she had to think.

She sat in a small café near the campus, her laptop open, working on a task that would have overwhelmed her before: a small program that connected several parts.

A system that was not linear.

A way of thinking that did not just function step by step,
but in layers.

Before, she would have tried to solve everything at once.

Today, she began with a single question:

What is the core?

She wrote a function.
Then a second.
Then a third.
Each one clear.
Each one bounded.
Each with a task she understood.

And suddenly, she saw how the parts connected.
Not chaotically,
but like a conversation
in which every sentence knew where it belonged.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true beauty of computer science:

It did not force you to know everything.
It only forced you to think clearly.

87

She leaned back and looked at the lines she had written.
They seemed simple.
Almost inconspicuous.
Yet in their simplicity lay a truth
she had often missed in other areas of her life:

Clarity was a decision.

She thought of the many situations
in which she had lost herself
because she wanted too much at once.
Too many expectations.
Too many voices.
Too many paths.

Perhaps, she thought, her life was like this program:
too many functions

wanting too much,
without clearly knowing
where they belonged.

She began to take notes.
Not about code—
but about herself.

What belongs where.
What sustains.
What overwhelms.
What she could let go of.
What she wanted to keep.

It was no diary.
It was a structure.
A way of formulating herself.

88

She noticed how much this clarity calmed her.
Not because she found answers,
but because she ordered the questions.

Perhaps, she thought, the essence lay here:
not in understanding the world,
but in clarifying one's own way of thinking.

She closed the laptop,
took a sip of her now cold coffee,
and felt a peace
that did not stem from simplicity,
but from precision.

And she was ready to go further.

Path 3 – Part 9: Mindsets That Change Her

In the weeks that followed, Lavin noticed that something fundamental had shifted within her.

Not loudly.

Not visibly.

But deeply.

She sat at a long wooden table in the library, her laptop open, working on a project she would once have deemed impossible:

a small system that processed data, made decisions, and reacted to inputs she defined herself.

Before, she would have believed that such tasks were meant only for people who were “naturally logical.”

But now, as she observed the structure of her program, she felt something else:

Logic was no talent.

Logic was an attitude.

She looked at the functions she had written.

Each one clear.

Each one bounded.

Each with a task she understood.

And suddenly she recognized something that surprised her: Her thinking had changed.

Not because she was studying computer science—
but because computer science was teaching her to think
differently.

She thought in layers.
In dependencies.
In possibilities.
In lines that branched
but did not lose their path.

Perhaps, she thought, this was the true essence:
not to build systems, but to develop ways of thinking.

She remembered the many moments in her life
when she had felt overwhelmed
because everything was acting upon her at once.
Expectations.
Heritage.
Uncertainties.
Questions of the future.

90

But now, while observing the structure of her code,
she realized she had learned
how to order these things.

Not to simplify them—
but to structure them.

She thought of her mother,
who had always said:
“If you know where to begin, you will also find the end.”

Back then, she had believed
it was a word of comfort.

Now she knew
it was a way of thinking.

She executed the program.
It worked.
Not perfectly.
But clearly.

And in that clarity, she felt something
she had long been seeking:
an inner direction
that did not come from without,
but from her own mind.

Perhaps, she thought,
computer science was not just a degree.
Perhaps it was a tool
for understanding herself.

She closed the laptop,
breathed in deeply,
and knew:

it was not a matter of technology.
It was a process of transformation.
Something that did not simply change her,
but showed her
how she could change herself.

And she was ready to go further.

Path 3 – Part 10: The Architecture of Her Thinking

It was late when Lavin closed her laptop that evening.
The screen went dark, and for a moment she saw her own
reflection within it—
calm, focused, clearer than before.

She remained seated, hands still on the keyboard,
as if testing whether the silence truly meant her.

In that silence, she sensed something that surprised her:
an inner order.

Not the order of a perfect system,
not the order of flawless code,
but the order of a mind
that had understood itself.

She thought of the many hours
spent sitting before problems
that seemed insoluble.
Of the errors that had frustrated her.
Of the complexities that had intimidated her.

And she realized that all these things had not made her
smaller.
They had made her larger.

Perhaps, she thought, that was the true core of computer
science:
not to build systems,
but to build oneself.

She stood up and walked to the window.
The city lay before her like a vast network—
lights, streets, movements,
all connected,
all part of a system
that no one fully understood
and yet, it functioned.

She looked at the people below,
at the cars moving through the streets,
at the lights reflecting in the asphalt,
and she felt something she had not felt in a long time:

she was not outside of this system.
She was part of it.

Not as someone who had to adapt.
Not as someone who had to explain herself.
But as someone who understood
how things were intertwined.

She thought of her heritage.
Of her family's stories.
Of the patterns that had shaped her.

Perhaps, she thought, her life itself was an algorithm.
Not linear,
not perfect,
but full of decisions
that had led her to where
she stood now.

She leaned her forehead lightly against the glass
and closed her eyes.

Within her was a peace
that did not stem from simplicity,
but from structure.

She knew that this chapter
was coming to an end.
Not because she had understood
everything—
but because she had understood
something more vital:

she could think.
She could order.
She could design her own path.

She could design—
not only with colors,
not only with words,
but with logic.

What she had learned did not
make her more technical.
It made her freer...

As she extinguished the light and
left the room,
she felt no closure.
She felt a groundwork.
A foundation.
An architecture of her thinking
upon which she could build everything
yet to come.

The past lay behind her.
The future stood ready.
Not as a hurdle,
not as a test,
but as the next form
waiting to open to her.

And she was ready to step inside.

Epilogue

Lavin remembered the moment it had all begun. Back then she had been young, determined, curious, perhaps even a little defiant. She had chosen architecture without knowing what that decision would do to her. She had believed it was simply a profession. A degree. A beginning like any other.

95

Yet out of that choice, a life had emerged. A life of long nights, of models, of blueprints, of responsibility, of exhaustion. A life that had shaped her, sometimes to the very limit—and eventually beyond it. Later, much later, she understood that it had not been the best or the worst decision. It was simply the decision she had made. And she had carried it as well as she could.

But sometimes, when she was alone, she imagined how it all could have begun differently. There was the Lavin who, on that day, would not have walked into the architecture lecture hall, but into the studio of the Polish artist. The Lavin who would have chosen graphic design—one of over 328 possible career paths open to her in Germany. A Lavin who would have learned to speak with

lines and colors instead of concrete and statics. A Lavin who might have lived more lightly, or perhaps more heavily; perhaps healthier, perhaps more vulnerable. No one could know.

And then there was the Lavin who would have chosen computer science. Who would have immersed herself in algorithms, in systems, in logic. A Lavin whose daily life would have been different, whose body might have suffered less. A Lavin who would have lived in a world of structures and possibilities, instead of a world of construction sites and deadlines.

Three decisions.

Three beginnings.

Three lives that would all have been possible.

But only one had become real.

96

Lavin thought for a long time about whether that was fate. Whether some invisible force had led her to where she finally stood. But the older she grew, the less she believed in it. There was no pre-drawn line, no higher order that had guided her.

There were only decisions. Her decisions.

And the consequences that followed.

She realized that “what if” was not a question that sought answers. It was a question one eventually had to let go of. Not because it was meaningless, but because it was infinite. Every decision opened one door and closed a thousand others. That was no loss. It was simply the structure of life.

In the end, something else remained: a silent acceptance of her own story. Not because it was perfect. Not because it had been easy. But because it was hers.

Lavin breathed in deeply as she realized this.

Not with resignation.

But with a kind of peace that was not loud, but reliable.

She had chosen.

She had lived.

And she would live on—not in spite of her decisions, but through them.