

ABALIA HOUSE

Narrative Portraits

What if the people we love became books?

PART I

The Philosophy

The Concept

A *Narrative Portrait* is a bespoke editorial book created to tell the story of an individual, a family, a founder, a company or an institution.

Conceived as a one-of-a-kind edition, each book combines writing, editorial direction and visual storytelling to reveal what makes an individual, a family or an organisation truly unique.

Each project may begin with a particular occasion: a birthday, a wedding, a retirement, the creation of a company or a defining moment in its history. Or simply with the desire to tell the story of a person, an adventure or a journey, to leave a trace of it and pass it on.

Our books are built around an original editorial concept, in which memories, conversations and archives become the elements of a singular narrative, entirely composed around its subject.



The Art of Storytelling

Each Narrative Portrait creates its own language, weaving together storytelling, images, illustrations and archives to tell a story in a way that belongs to it alone.

The illustrations

Original drawings created to accompany the story

The archives

Photographs, documents and personal memories

The story

A story written entirely to measure



The details

The little things that make every story truly unique

The editorial composition

Every element finds its place within a narrative conceived as a whole

Our Philosophy

A life cannot be reduced to a chronology.

A relationship cannot be told through a handful of photographs.
A personality cannot be contained in a curriculum vitae.

Those we love exist within us in countless ways.

In conversations.

In habits.

In the jokes only a few people understand.

In contradictions.

In the stories others tell about them.

Over time, part of what tells their story begins to fade.

At Abalia House, we believe it deserves to be gathered, shaped and passed on.

To become a work in its own right.



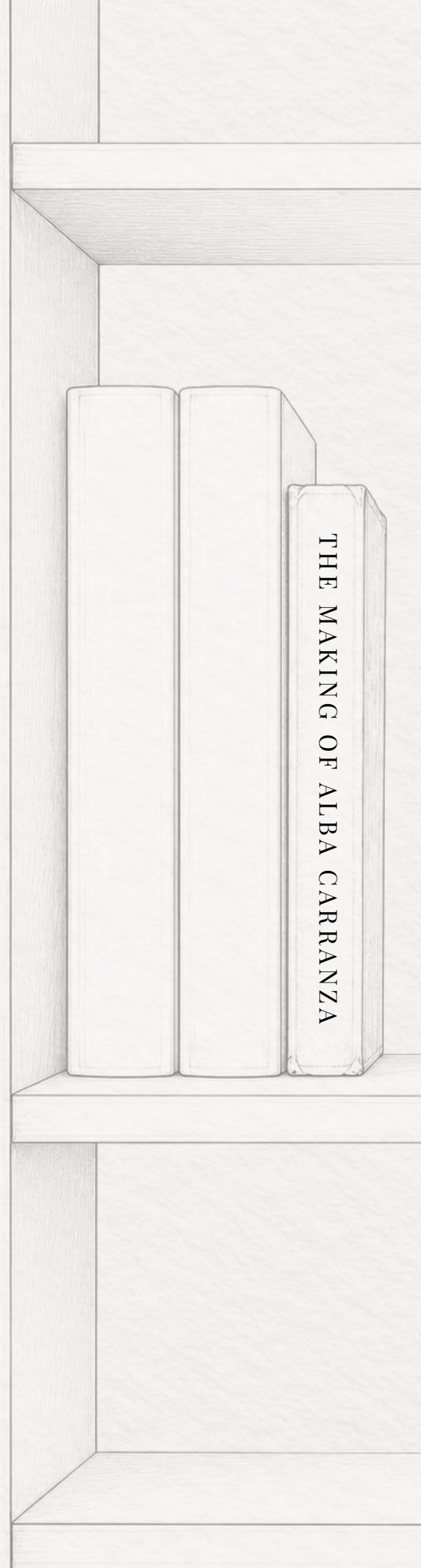
Why a book?

We photograph almost everything.
We keep almost nothing.

A printed book slows time down.
It invites us to pause.
To turn its pages.
To share.
To rediscover.

Some stories naturally
belong on a bookshelf.
Because a book is more
than an object.

It is a presence.
A trace.
A legacy that endures.



PART II

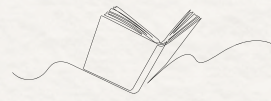
Editorial Collections

Narrative Portraits Collections



I. Personal & Family

- The Unauthorized Biography
- The Observatory
- The Almost perfect Holiday
- Funny Creatures (Pets)
- The Story Behind the Photographs
- ...



III. Love & Relationships

- Before Saying I Do (Wedding)
- A Hundred Small Things
- Court Notes: The Art of Returning to Each Other
- The Story Only We Know
- The Geography of Us
- ...



III. Founders & Entrepreneurs

- The Making Of
- _ Founder Files
- Against the Current
- Notes from the Workshop
- ...



IV. Corporate & Institutional

- The Making of a Brand
- A Century of Craft
- The Story of a House
- Anniversary Edition
- ...

*The following projects are fictional concepts created
to illustrate the possibilities of Narrative Portraits.*

Explorez ces collections comme une source d'inspiration pour imaginer votre propre histoire.

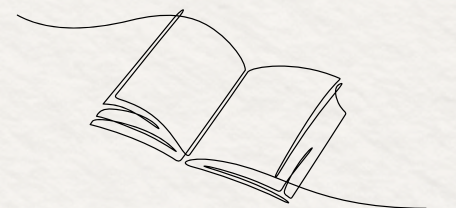
I. Personal & Family

Introduction

A person can never be summed up in a few words.

They reveal themselves through their gestures, their rituals, their imperfections, their shared laughter, and everything that, quietly or vividly, makes them who they are.

The *Individuals & Families* Narrative Portraits explore different ways of telling their story through the relationships that shape them, the moments that reveal them, and the legacy they leave behind.



The Unauthorized Biography

Perfect for people whose personality is best told by those who love them.

Most biographies are written by their subject.

This one isn't.

The story is told through the memories, observations and unsolicited opinions of the people who know someone best.

Friends.

Family.

Partners.

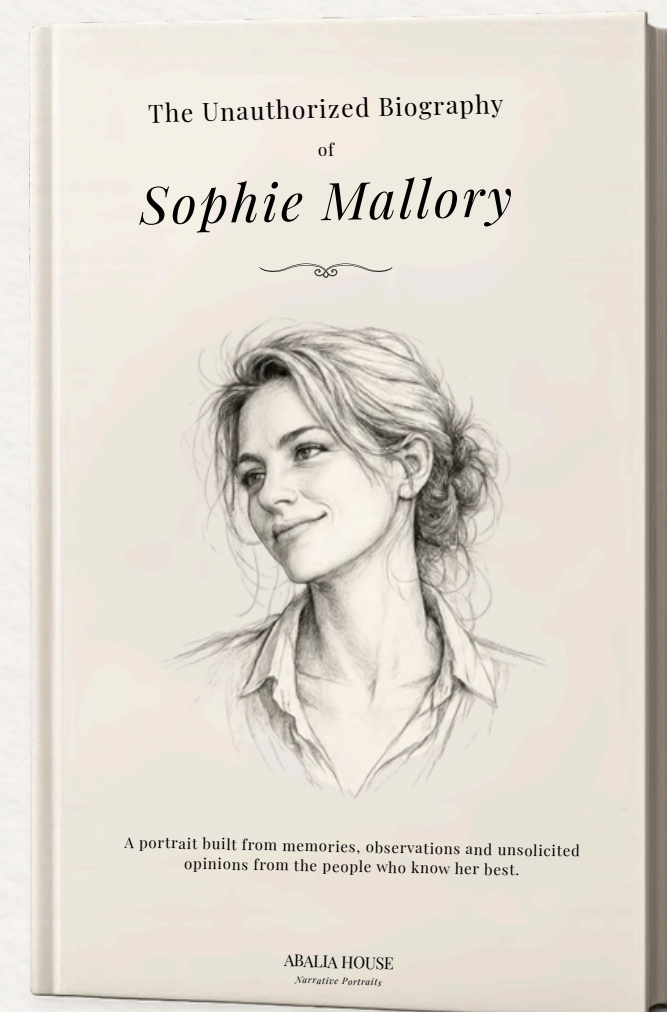
Colleagues.

Each remembers a different version of the same person.

Together, they create the portrait no one could have written alone.

Illustrative example :

« *The Unauthorized biography of Sophie Martin* »



CHAPTER 4

The Woman Who Couldn't Leave Things Alone

Collected from people who know Sophie best

Best Friend
EMMA LAWSON

«She once created a colour-coded Excel spreadsheet to organise a weekend away. There were six of us. It was... impressively efficient.»

Her Husband
DANIEL MALLORY

«Sophie believes every problem can be solved with a list. After fifteen years together, I'm beginning to think she might actually be right.»

Her Daughter
LILY MALLORY

«Mum asks questions nobody can answer. Then somehow answers them herself.»

Former Colleague
MICHAEL TURNER

«She never looked busy. She simply made everyone else feel less overwhelmed.»

Secret revealed :
(Anonymous Household Source)

«She alphabetised the spices. Nobody asked. Nobody complained.»



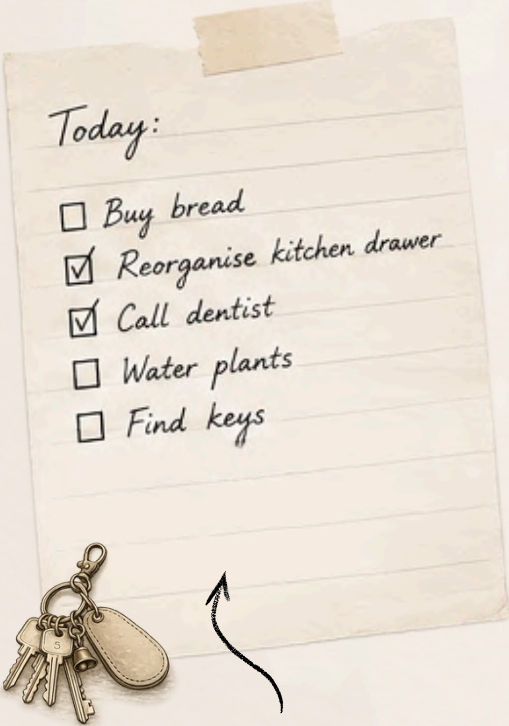
Character Trait :
Spontaneity

Every spontaneous decision has usually been planned at least three weeks in advance.

Official spontaneity rating:
Under continuous review.



Some people open Excel to work. Sophie opens it to make life behave.



Still looking for the keys.

Favourite Place
The Laundry Room

Where most people see chores, Sophie sees order returning to the universe.

Folding, sorting, reorganising. Nothing ever leaves the room exactly as it entered. Including the people.

Frequently Heard

« Just give me five minutes. »

Average observed duration: 23 minutes.



Most people saw laundry. Sophie saw the quiet satisfaction of putting the world back in order.

Confirmed by multiple witnesses.



Known Behaviour
Has never left a stationery shop with only one notebook.

Mission control



Some people leave memories behind. Sophie mostly leaves systems.



Editorial observation :
Every testimony is sincere. None of them tells the whole story.

I. Personal & Family

The Observatory

A field report assembled from observations, habits and personal artefacts.

Some people reveal themselves through stories.
Others through habits.

Some through the places they return to.
The objects they keep.
The patterns they repeat.

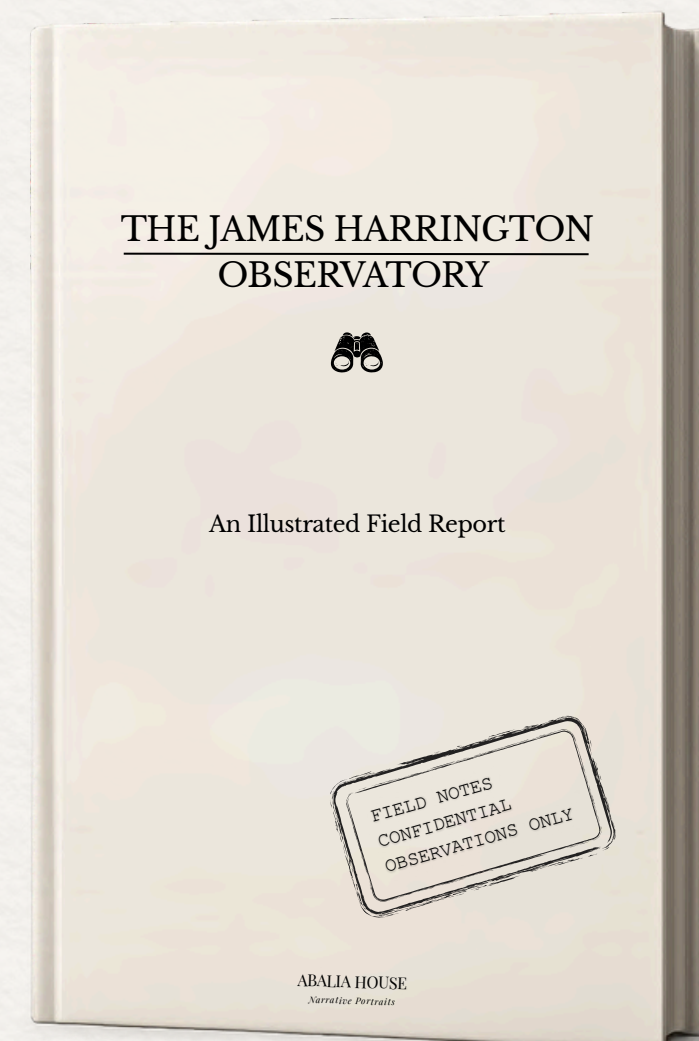
The Observatory approaches a person the way a naturalist
approaches a rare species.

Patiently.
Curiously.
Through accumulated observations rather than explanations.

**No single observation tells the whole story.
Together, they reveal someone unmistakable.**

Illustrative example :

« *The James Harrington Observatory* »



SUBJECT

James Harrington
(a.k.a "JH")

TAXONOMY

Homo Curiosus
(rare breed)



FIRST OBSERVED:

Soho, London Spring, 2012

HABITAT

- Private members' clubs where membership is a form of disguise.
- Bookshops others consider dust traps.
- Restaurants whose décor hasn't changed since his childhood.

FIELD NOTES

- Has strong opinions on almost everything.
- Changes his mind with better arguments (and better wine).
- Collects hotel key cards from cities that changed him.
- Believes the best ideas arrive after midnight.
- Writes. Travels. Observes. Disappears.
- Reappears with stories.

Uncharacteristic behaviour

First editions of French classics
(his most un-British habit),
and unlikely friendships.



Signature look

Slightly rumpled,
never sloppy.

BEHAVIOUR

- Disarmingly charming.
- Changes the subject the moment it becomes too sedentary.
- Collects stories like other people collect art.
- Never settles.
- Never bored.

MIGRATION PATTERNS

- Part to stay. Stays to leave.
- Home is a direction, not a place.
- He rarely knows where he lives.
- He rarely stays long enough to find out.



EQUIPMENT

- Berluti all terrain
- Moleskine (black)
- Montblanc pen
- Vintage camera
- Passport (well used)
- Silk pocket square

DISTINCTIVE CALLS

"I'll be brief."

Translation: prepare for a proper story.



RARE SIGHTINGS

- In the same place two weeks in a row.
- In bed before 2 a.m.
- At an all-inclusive resort.
- Following the itinerary.

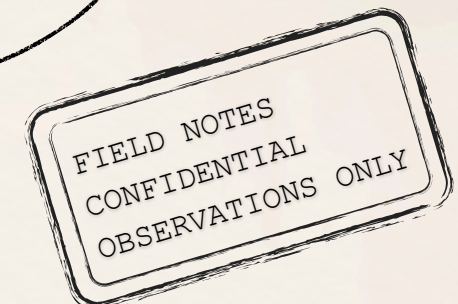
Frequency currently under investigation.

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

Initially appears perfectly domesticated. Closer observation quickly disproves the theory. Drawn to handwritten notes, old books, unfamiliar cities and conversations that continue well beyond midnight. Highly sociable, mildly elusive, and seemingly incapable of taking the shortest route between two points.
Continued observation strongly advised.

DIET

- Late nights in the most refined gentlemen's clubs.
- Perfect Martinis*
- Honest espresso.
- Excellent company**



CONSERVATION STATUS

- Thriving on curiosity
- Endangered by routine.
- Requires regular exposure to unfamiliar cities.
- All attempts at domestication have failed.
- Frequently overcommitted.

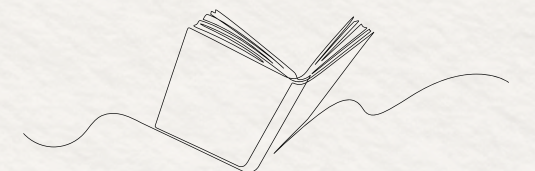
II. Love & Relationships

Introduction

Every relationship develops its own language.
Its own rituals.
Its own memories.
Its own private mythology.

Love & Relationship Editions explore love through the moments that rarely make the headlines, yet quietly shape a life together.

They offer a different editorial perspective on love, affection and human connection.



III. Love & Relationships

100 Small Things

A portrait that only appears once all the pieces are together.

Some love stories are not meant to be read like a narrative.
They reveal themselves, one detail at a time.

Sometimes through a hundred small things that almost go unnoticed.

The habits.

The jokes.

The objects.

The phrases repeated without anyone noticing.

The small gestures no one pays attention to... until they disappear.

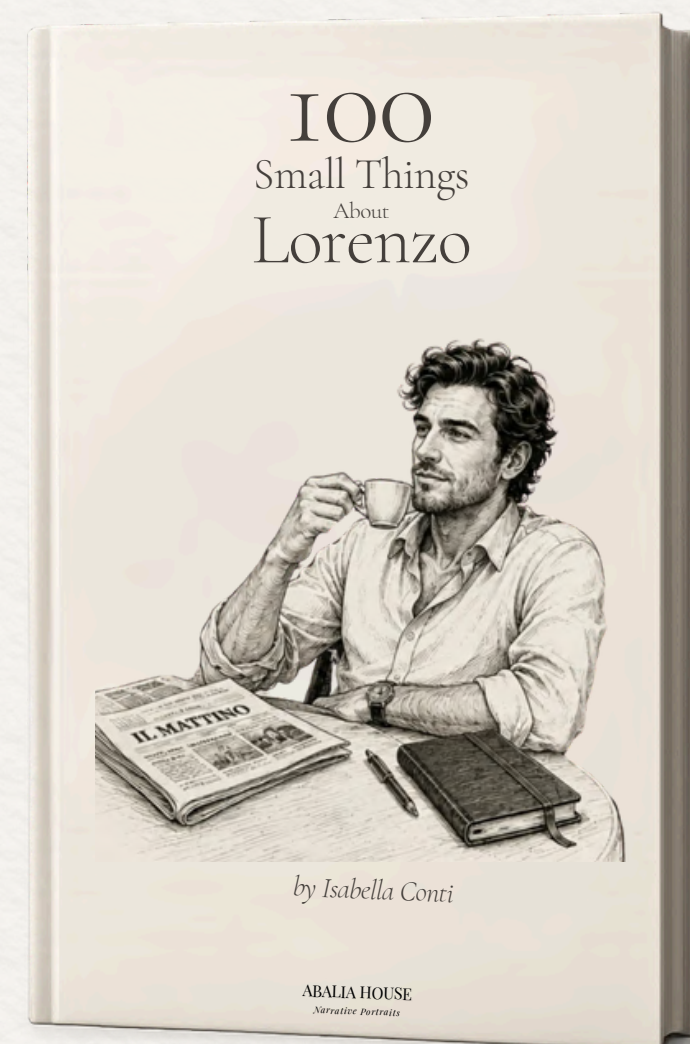
Taken individually, they seem insignificant.

Together, they reveal a story no chronology could ever tell.

Because love rarely hides in life's defining moments. It is almost always built through those hundred small things that quietly weave a life together.

Illustrative example :

« *100 Small Things About Lorenzo* »



12. | You never ask the waiters what's good. You ask what they'd order themselves.

13. | The way you always walk just a little too fast, like you're chasing the next idea.

14. | You judge umbrellas by their handles.



15. | You treat buying olive oil like buying a house.

16. | The way you never travel without a book... and somehow always bring it home with the bookmark still on page twelve.

17. | The way "Vediamo..." has become your most optimistic way of saying "I have absolutely no clue."

"Vediamo"

18. | The way you still buy beautiful fountain pens, convinced this one will finally improve your handwriting.

19. | The way you remember conversations... and completely forget birthdays.

20. | The way you pretend not to be sentimental. Then keep every handwritten note I've ever left you.



21. | The way you still buy beautiful fountain pens, convinced this one will finally improve your handwriting.

22. | The cashmere jumper you refuse to replace. At this point, I suspect it's part of the family.

23. | The way every dog seems convinced you've met before, assuming you're one of the good ones.



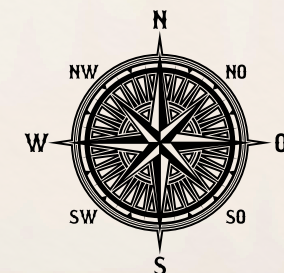
24. | The way your jacket pockets contain everything... except the one thing you're actually looking for.

25. | You refuse to throw away cables because "they might belong to something."

26. | You always carry a pen, just in case. The case never comes.



27. | You always know where North is. Nobody knows how.



III. Love & Relationship Editions

Court Notes: The Art of Returning to Each Other

*A love story examined with the seriousness of a Supreme Court...
and the tenderness of two people still learning each other.*

Every relationship has two versions of the same story.

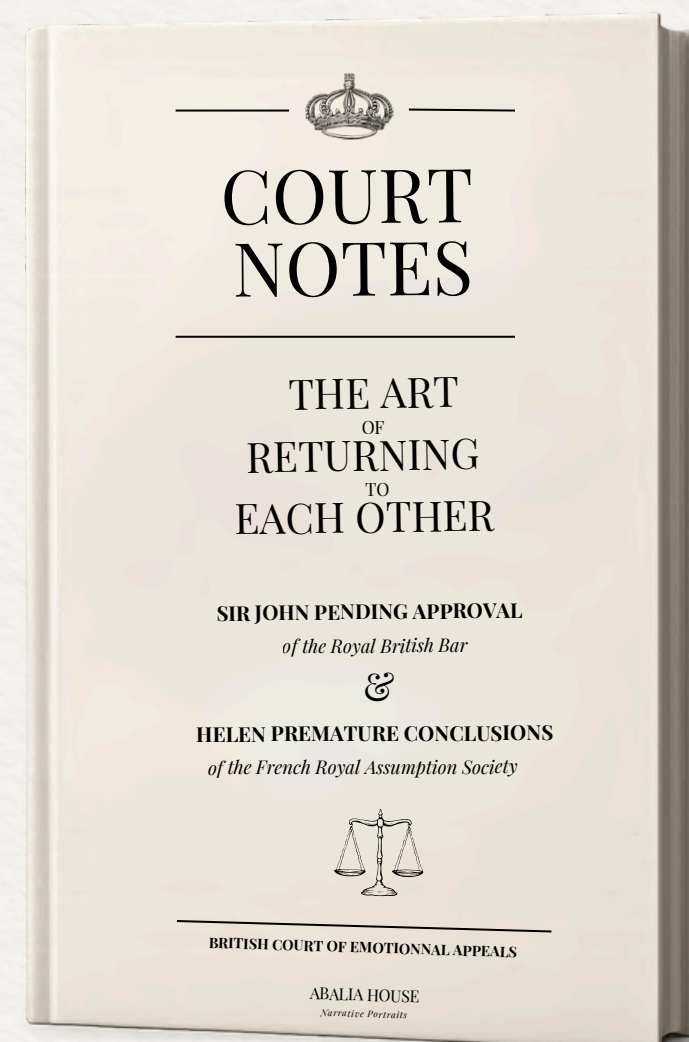
Court Notes reconstructs a relationship as if it were a fictional legal case, where every misunderstanding is examined through the detached eyes of an imaginary Court.

Through exhibits, witness statements and illustrated evidence, two ordinary perspectives gradually become one extraordinary narrative, revealing not who was right or wrong, but how two people could experience the very same moment in completely different ways.

Because every relationship is, ultimately, a case built from two perfectly sincere - and sometimes perfectly incompatible - interpretations of the same experience.

Illustrative example :

« *Court Notes: The Art of Returning to Each Other :
Sir John Pending Approval & Helen Premature Conclusions* »



Introduction

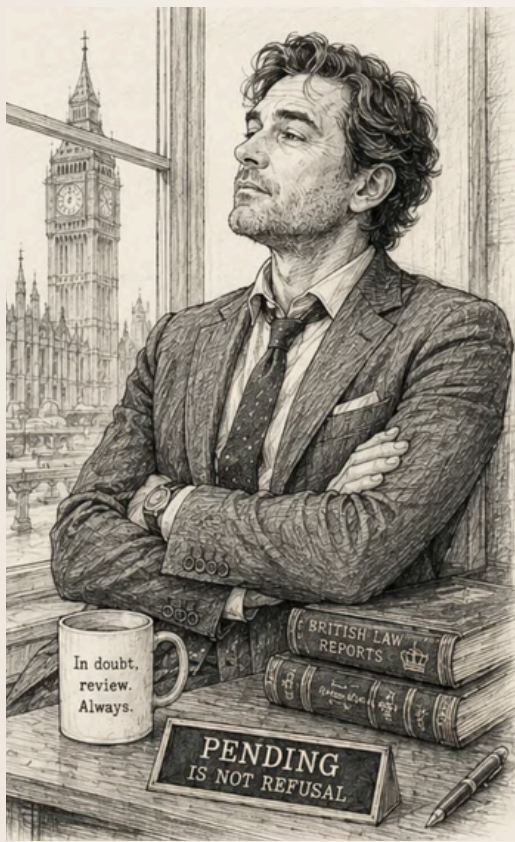


IDENTIFICATION OF THE PARTIES

Every case begins with establishing the Parties.
After all, every relationship is, above all, the meeting of
two operating systems.

“Sir John Pending Approval”
of the Royal British Bar

Procedure Before Passion



Believes that every feeling deserves careful
review before public release.
Frequently mistakes emotional conversations
for procedural matters.



“Louise Premature Conclusions”
of the French Royal Assumption Society

Breaker of British Defence Systems



Capable of constructing seventeen plausible
emotional scenarios from a single sentence.
Usually reaches conclusions before all
available evidence has been submitted.



Chapter 1



THE CONTEMPLATION STATEMENT

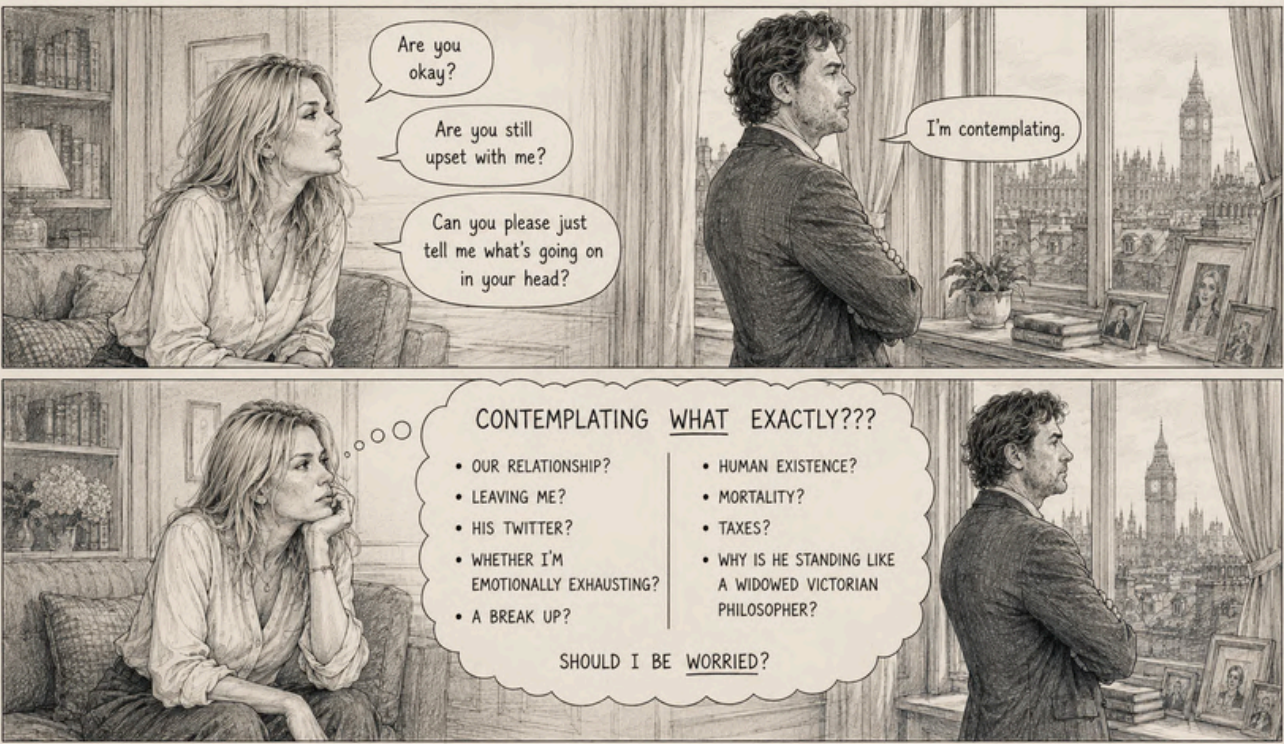


Exhibit A
- Initial Statement Delivered Without Supporting Documentation

Following a minor emotional incident, John issued the phrase: “I’m contemplating.”
No clarification, timeframe, or emotional appendix was provided.

Exhibit B
- Consequences of Ambiguous Terminology

The Court subsequently observed two radically different internal interpretations of the
exact same sentence:
-one involving emotional catastrophe,
-the other involving quiet cognitive processing and probable tea.

Finding of the Court :
The Court established that immediate mutual understanding was not achieved.



III. Founders & Entrepreneurs

Introduction

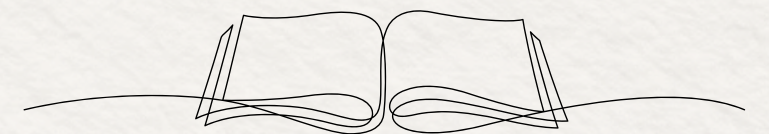
Behind every company is a person.

Before there was a business plan... there was curiosity.
Before there was a product... there was an idea.

This collection is not about businesses.
It is about the people who build them.

Their influences.
Their decisions.
Their obsessions.

Their way of seeing the world.



II. Founders & Business

The Making Of

For founders, entrepreneurs and the people whose greatest creation wasn't only a company, but the person they became while building it.

Every company has a story.

This book tells another one.

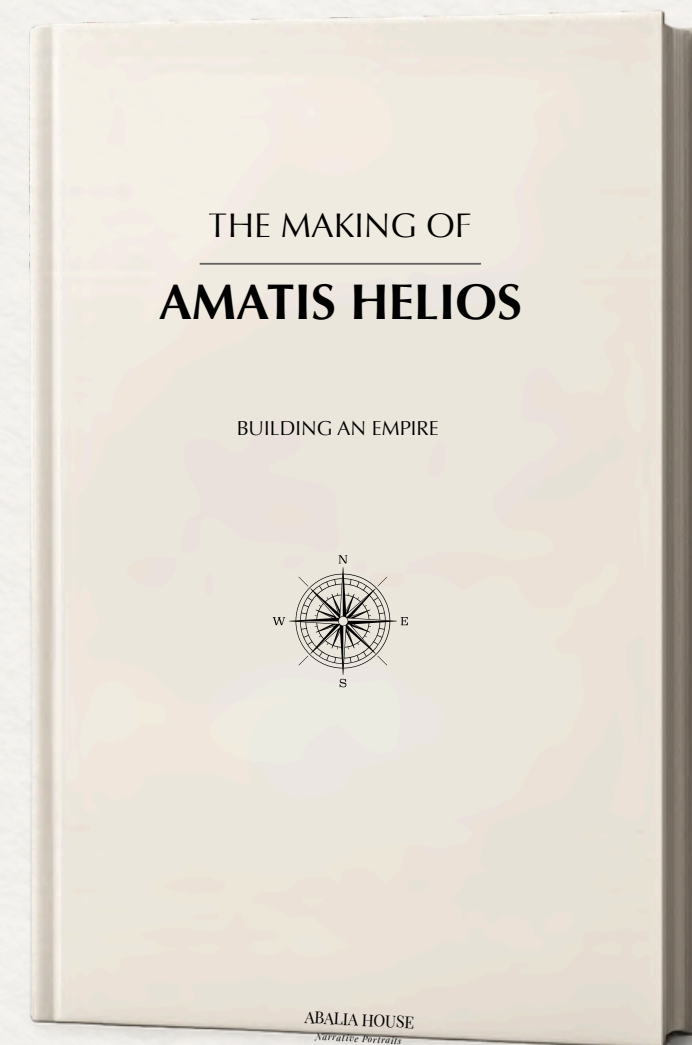
The Making Of explores the person behind the project.

Every success has an official version.

We reveal the story of what shaped it.

Illustrative example :

« *The Making of Amatis Helios* »



CHAPTER 3

The Boy Who Watched the Horizon



Piraeus, May 1991. "One day, I'll stand on the other side of the harbour..."

Most dockworkers watched the ships. Amatis watched something else. He watched decisions. Who gave the orders. Who chose the destinations. Who decided which cargo crossed the Mediterranean and which one crossed the world.

He listened carefully. He noticed patterns nobody seemed to notice. He wasn't dreaming about travelling. He was dreaming about deciding where the ships would go.



The Notebook

At first, the notebook looked almost empty. A departure time. A ship's name. A loading sequence. Nothing anyone would have considered important. But every evening, another page was filled. Another detail was added. Another lesson was quietly stored away.

One day, without noticing, Amatis stopped carrying a notebook. By then, he had memorised the harbour...

The Dockworker Pass

The badge opened no important doors. Only the gates of Pier 4.

Most men clipped it to their jacket every morning without a second thought. Amatis never did.

Before every shift, he turned it over in his hands for a few seconds, as if reminding himself that one day he would no longer need it.

For now, it was enough. It gave him a reason to be exactly where he wanted to be.



Shipping Routes

He never crossed these routes. Not yet. But he knew them by heart. Long before he ever set foot on one of those ships.



Old Binoculars

Long before he could board the ships, he learned to watch them. Distance never stopped curiosity.

The Port Was His Classroom

Every evening, after unloading the last container, he stayed. Long after everyone had gone home.

He memorised routes, company names, flags, loading procedures, the rhythm of the port...

He possessed no degree, no influential family, no fortune. Only an unusual ability to observe.

Sometimes the foreman caught him staring at the departing ships.

"Kid! Stop dreaming! Get back to work!"

Amatis smiled. He always went back to work. But never stopped looking at the horizon.



Most dockworkers watched the ships. Amatis watched something else...



Three years later, **everything** changed...

IV. Corporate & Institutions

Introduction

A company is not defined solely by what it has achieved.

Over time, a collective story takes shape; one of ideas and expertise, decisions and transformations, successes, turning points and, sometimes, reinvention. Gradually, an identity, a culture and a distinctive way of evolving emerge.

Narrative Portraits for Companies & Institutions explore this journey as a whole.

Archives, personal accounts, images, anecdotes and defining moments come together to reveal what has shaped an organisation, guided its transformations and continues to set it apart today.



PART III

From Conversation to Legacy

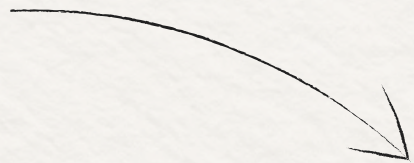
How It Works

01



Conversation

We begin with conversations.
Not questionnaires. Not forms.
Real conversations.

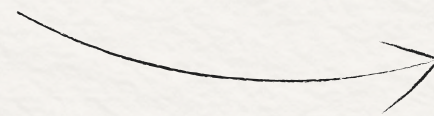


02



Discovery

Together, we discover the
editorial language that best
reveals the person.



03

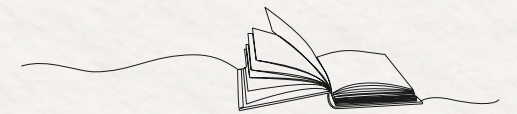


Creation

Writing. Illustration. Design.
Every detail is created
from scratch.



04



Edition

The result is a beautifully printed
object designed to be kept,
shared and passed on.

About the Studio

ABALIA HOUSE Narrative Portraits is an independent editorial studio devoted to creating bespoke narrative books for people, families and founders.

Every project is researched, written, art directed and developed by one person.

Not because it couldn't be delegated.
Because stories deserve a single voice.

No templates.
No production line.

One story.
One editorial language.
One book at a time.



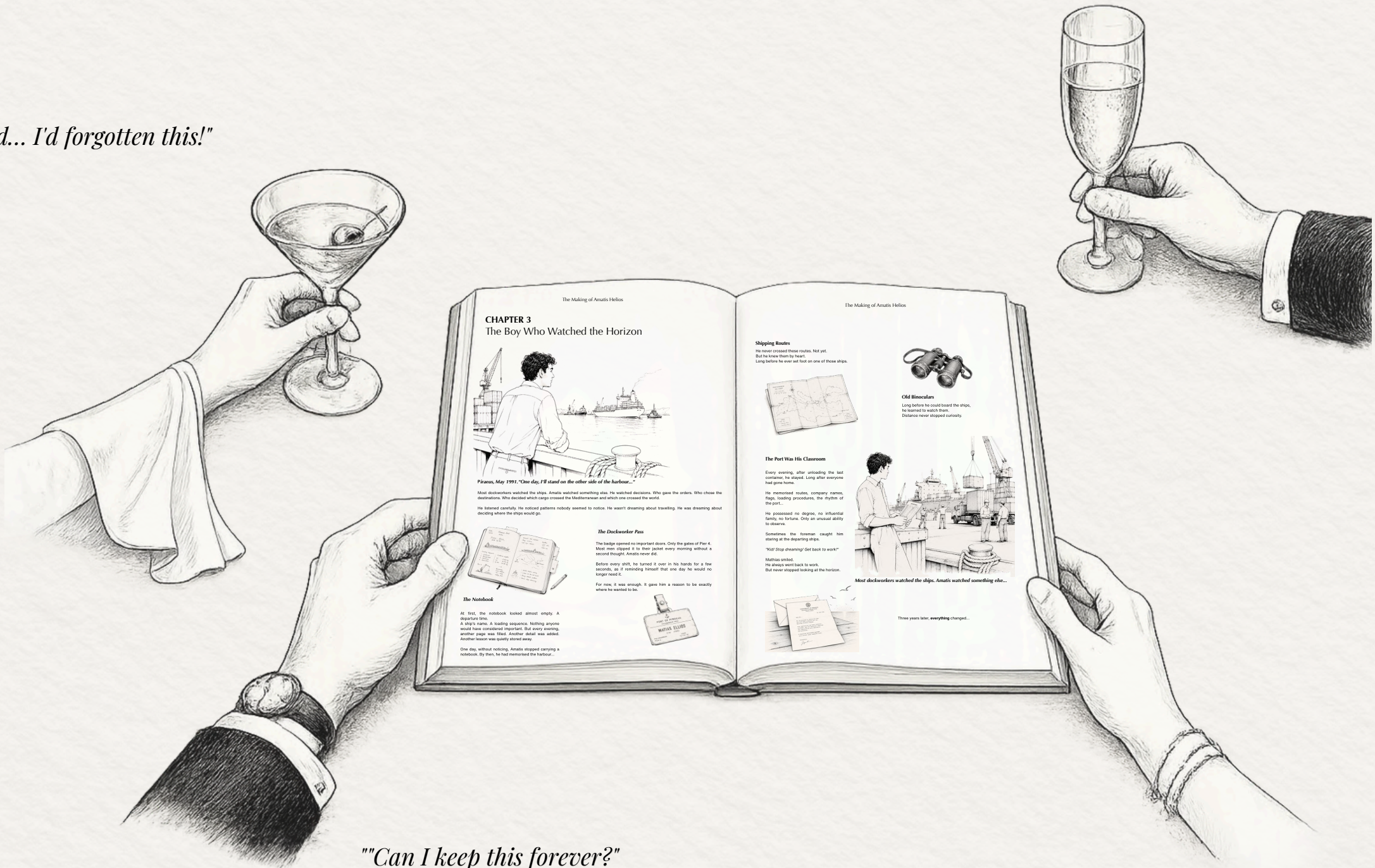
Elisa BOURGEOIS,
Founder

And then, the book arrives...

Everything until this point was creation.
Everything after this becomes memory....

“Wait! Look at this page!”

"Oh my God... I'd forgotten this!"



""Can I keep this forever?"

"You actually remembered that?"

PART IV

Pricing & Services

Pricing

Every Narrative Portrait is created individually.

The final investment depends on the editorial scope of the project, the complexity of the story, the level of research involved and the artistic direction developed for each commission.

The collections below provide an indication of our starting prices.

Portrait

Starting at €1300

A concise editorial portrait built around one of our signature collections.

Designed for shorter stories, meaningful gifts and memorable milestones, while preserving the same editorial care and attention to detail.

Up to 16 pages.

Curated editorial concept. Streamlined editorial development. Refined art direction.

Printed and digital edition.

Signature

Starting at €5,500

A more immersive editorial work for stories requiring greater depth, broader research and a richer creative approach.

Every Signature Portrait is conceived as an original work, combining narrative, design and artistic direction to create a truly distinctive keepsake.

Up to 60 pages.

Extensive editorial development. Bespoke visual language.

Premium production. Printed and digital edition.

Essential

Starting at €2,900

A bespoke editorial portrait created around a unique individual, couple or family.

Each project is shaped through editorial research, conversations, memories and carefully selected material before being transformed into a beautifully crafted book.

Up to 32 pages.

Bespoke writing. Tailored editorial direction.

Printed and digital edition.

Exception

From €10,000

Created for exceptional commissions whose scope extends beyond our standard collections.

Family legacies. Founders and entrepreneurs. Memorial books. Private archives.

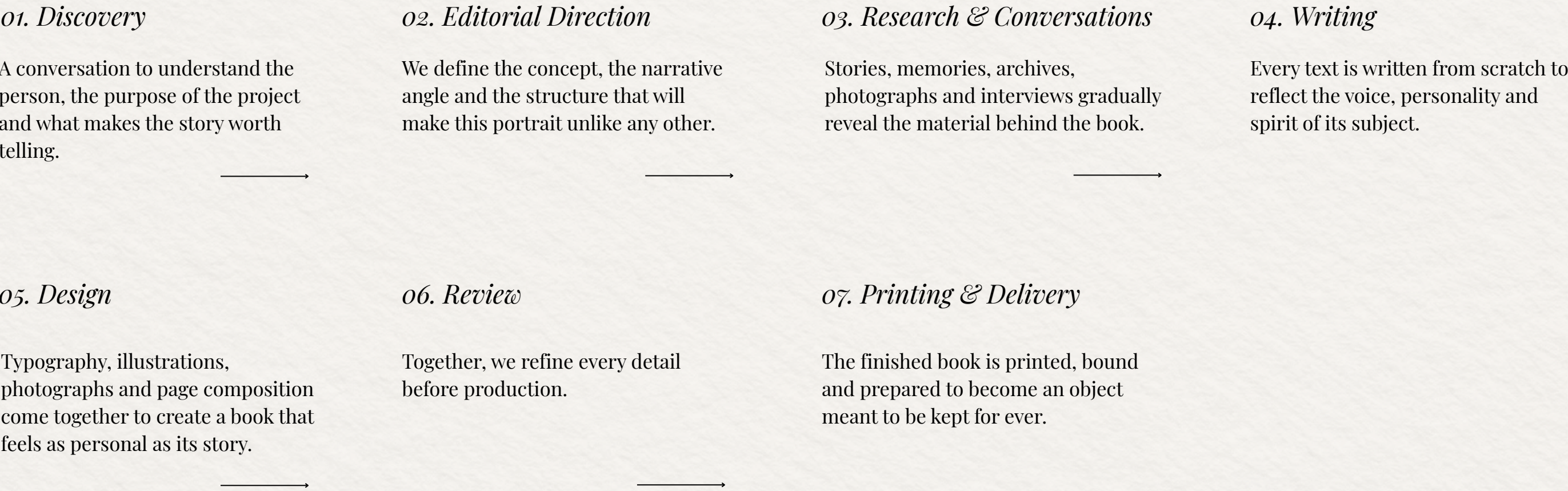
Anniversary editions. Multi-generational stories. Completely original editorial concepts.

Every Exception edition is quoted individually according to the nature and ambition of the project.

The Editorial Journey

Every Narrative Portrait follows its own path. So does every collaboration.

Here are the different stages that shape the creation of a book, from the first conversation through to its delivery.



Included

Each Narrative Portrait includes :

- Editorial concept
- Personal interviews
- Research & story development
- Original writing
- Art direction
- Custom layout design
- Image preparation and integration
- Print-ready production files
- Premium printed edition
- Digital edition
- Two rounds of revisions

Optionnal

The book can be enhanced with additional services, including:

<i>Editions</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Research & Creation</i>
-Additional printed copies -Collector editions -Luxury presentation box	-Translation -Bilingual edition	-Additional interviews -Photography -Archive digitalisation -Bespoke illustrations

Timeline & Terms

Each project follows a timeline defined from the outset, allowing every stage the time and attention required for its completion.

Timing

Most Narrative Portraits are completed within **6 to 8 weeks**, depending on the complexity and scope of the project. If your portrait is intended for a specific occasion, we recommend getting in touch as early as possible.

Terms

A **50% deposit** is required to confirm your commission and reserve production time. The remaining balance is due prior to printing.

Every story begins with a conversation...

A portrait often takes shape from a few words, almost always the same:

“I don’t know where to begin.”

Let us write the rest with you...

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Narrative Portraits