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WITH GIULIANO COMPAGNO

FROM THE MOON TO RHINOS

Story of a Geologist, a Manager
and a Conservationist

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PROLOGUE

It was winter over ten years ago. I can't recall why, but I decided to put some order in my home, which, at that point in my life, had become a museum.

In a closet, I found a blue box buried among a cluster of memories – things like newspaper clippings and Olympic pins. On the cover was an image of the lunar surface. I remembered the NASA photos hidden in the box quite clearly: my parents had glued them onto wooden panels to protect them from weathering. Yet I had forgotten all about the box. I opened it, and facing me were other photos not pasted on wooden boards. Suddenly, I gasped in surprise at the story they brought back to life.

Giancarlo Masini was the Science journalist of the Italian newspaper “Corriere della Sera” where my uncle Leopoldo worked. Masini had generously gifted me with his popular science books enriched by his dedication, together with a precious box coming straight from Cape Canaveral, where he had just been to report an Apollo launch.

Opening it after so long, I discovered the rough edges of the paper I had wrinkled as a kid, and more importantly, next to the rough edges were the autographs of the three legendary astronauts – Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins. I also realized that the box of original NASA photos had been offered by Omega, which was and is a NASA partner, thanks to its legendary Speedmaster.

Something suddenly clicked in me, launching me back to the early 70s: that little boy who had received a NASA/Omega box without even understanding what it meant, so not truly deserving it, 30 years later became President of Omega. The serendipity of this anecdote shook me and made me ponder the unknown paths of life and the meanders of roads to be trodden and, at times, interrupted. In short, it wasn't just about finding an heirloom but diving into deep consideration I had never faced until then.

Meeting my writer friend Giuliano after a few years of (unnecessary) distance and long conversations on life, women, friendship, and work led me to consider expressing such reflections and feelings. What emerged was the chronicle of various and varied life experiences, a life like many others with numerous paths, as if to prove that everything truly took place, emotions included.

Without Giuliano, this book would have never been written, and my stories would have remained mine alone. With him, the writing found its artist, and my thoughts a written path.

As you will soon discover, my story is linked to Nature. I was born in it, eventually studied Geology, and now, after years of a managerial career, I'm fighting to protect it. A circular path spotted with personal and professional strides beyond the circle. The message I would like to leave my niece and nephew and the younger readers of this story is to follow their passions and never give up, bravely plunging into the venture of life in empathy with Nature by loving and protecting it.