

When an Assignment Stops Being Just an Assignment

At first, it was just an assignment.

Just another one.

Something I had to write, hand in, and leave behind—like so many things one does in class without realizing that, sometimes, a single page can open a door we didn't know was there.

I didn't think that exercise would turn into something important. I didn't think a story written to meet a deadline would stay with me after I handed it in. Much less did I imagine that a creative writing class would mark the beginning of a chapter in my life that I am still learning to take seriously.

But sometimes, that's how it happens.

Sometimes you walk into a class thinking you're just going to complete a course, and you end up finding a version of yourself that was waiting for permission to emerge.

Professor **Alan Mitnick** was in that class.

I don't know if he realized just how much weight some of his words would carry for me.

Perhaps, for him, it was simply part of the job: reading, commenting, correcting, pointing out possibilities. But sometimes, a remark made at the right moment can live on inside a person far longer than one might imagine.

There are people who don't give you talent, but help you see it.

They don't create the flame from scratch. Sometimes, they simply draw close—carefully enough that you stop trying to snuff it out.

That is what happened to me.

I didn't walk out of that class transformed into someone completely different. It wasn't a dramatic scene, a perfect epiphany, or one of those moments where everything changes to the sound of background music. But something shifted. Something that had seemed shy began to demand space. Something I had treated as a hobby, a private necessity, or a way to organize my thoughts began to look more like a path.

Then came names that hadn't existed before.

Luz.

Flonny.

Elías.

Gabbie.

Characters that began as ideas, exercises, attempts—small doors opened in the middle of a course—ended up becoming signs that I wasn't just fulfilling a class requirement. I was building something.

Some stories are still growing. Some aren't ready to be fully revealed. Some need silence, time, and patience. But others have already found a way out into the world.

What started as an assignment ended up becoming published books:

Despedida sin nosotros.

No es para todos.

El futuro también duele.

Fragmentos para quienes siguieron vivos.

Fragments for Those Who Kept Living.

A goodbye without Us.

Not for Everyone.

It is strange to look at those titles and think that, in a way, they all belong to the same invisible thread that began with a class, an assignment, and someone reading something of mine—taking it seriously before I knew how to do so without fear.

But even those titles do not tell the whole story.

There are works that have not yet gone out into the world but already occupy a vast space within me. Stories that are bigger, more ambitious, more patient. Projects I do not want to rush because I know they need to grow at their own pace.

The Seven Doors for a Soul.

Luz.

The Soul Collector.

And other names still quietly taking shape.

Sometimes I look at those stories and feel that I am no longer writing merely to publish something new. I am building a universe. I am looking beyond the immediate—beyond an assignment, beyond a class, beyond even the initial emotion that drove me to write. I am looking past the stars, toward those works that have not yet arrived but are already waiting for me.

Because some books are published on paper first.

Others are published first within oneself.

I know that many of those stories haven't had their moment yet, but I also know one thing: they weren't born to stay hidden forever.

I don't say this because I believe a single person did all the work for me. Writing is still about sitting down, doubting, erasing, returning, getting tired, persisting, editing, and facing that inner voice that always asks if it's truly worth it. But sometimes, we need someone to look at us from the outside and say—even if just with a simple phrase—"There is something here."

And when someone says that at the right moment, you might spend years trying to prove whether it was true.

Perhaps that is what I am still doing.

Writing to discover just how far something that began as a class assignment could go. Publishing to remind myself that not everything born small has to stay small. Creating characters to understand parts of myself I don't always know how to look at directly. Letting every book, every story, and every page give back to me a clearer version of what I had previously only dimly sensed.

Not all beginnings feel significant while they are happening.

Sometimes they seem like mere tasks.

Sometimes they look like instructions on a syllabus.

Sometimes they feel like a deadline, an open document, a story written with hesitation, just another grade in an ordinary semester.

And then, in time, you look back and realize you weren't simply finishing a class.

You were beginning.

You were opening a door.

You were finding a voice.

And perhaps that is the most beautiful thing about certain tasks: some end the moment you hand them in, but others go on writing themselves within you long after.