

Synopsis: Stories for Not Disappearing

Some people do not disappear all at once. First, they stop asking, speaking, and taking up space. These stories begin just before they finish erasing themselves.

Stories for Not Disappearing bring together characters shaped by absence, quiet guilt, delayed farewells, and small acts of resistance. They are people who arrive too late, remain silent for too long, apologize even when they have done nothing wrong, and learn to make themselves smaller so they will not lose the place they have.

Through hospital rooms, shared cups of coffee, letters that ask for no reply, broken objects, family memories, and pages that refuse to remain silent, each story explores memory, loss, identity, belonging, and the dignity of what may seem insignificant.

This book does not try to explain wounds or turn them into lessons. It does not promise to save anyone. It only wants to sit beside those who have ever felt themselves beginning to disappear and remind them that remaining is not always a grand gesture. Sometimes, all it takes is a conversation, a letter, a story, or one small and imperfect way of still being here.

The Page That Wouldn't Let Him Disappear

The first notification arrived at eleven twenty-three at night.

Flonny was sitting in front of the computer with a cup of cold coffee on his right, a glass of lukewarm water on his left, and a blank page open in the center of the screen, as if someone had spread a clean sheet over a bed he still did not dare lie down in.

He was not writing.

He had spent almost an hour pretending he was.

He had opened the document with discipline, typed the title, changed the font, fixed a comma in an old paragraph, looked up the meaning of a word he already knew, and checked his email three times for no reason.

All of that was also a way of not writing.

A rather elegant one, if you wanted to lie to yourself with style.

The notification appeared in the corner of the screen.

Your story made me cry. Thank you.

Flonny read it.

Then he looked at the blank page.

Then he read it again.

He did not know the person who had written it. Their name was an initial, a blurry photograph, and a country he could not immediately place. It could have been anyone. A woman in a dark living room. A man on a bus. Someone lying beside a person they no longer loved. Someone in a bathroom, in silence, trying to breathe without making a sound.

That was the dangerous thing about publishing something.

You threw a sentence into the world, and then that sentence entered homes you would never know.

Flonny placed his fingers on the keyboard.

He wanted to reply:

Thank you for reading.

Too little.

He wanted to reply:

I'm glad it kept you company.

Too proper.

He wanted to write something better. Something from a grateful, humble, radiant author. Something that sounded as though he knew how to receive affection without becoming nervous.

He could not.

He closed the notification.

The page remained blank.

At eleven thirty-one, another one arrived.

I felt like you wrote this for me.

Flonny let out a short laugh.

Not because he was mocking it.

Because he was afraid.

Every time someone said something like that, he felt two things at once. First, an immense tenderness. Then a kind of shame, as though he had been caught cheating.

Because yes, he wrote to keep people company.

Yes, he wrote so that someone out there might feel less alone.

Yes, he wanted his words to reach places his body could not.

But he also wrote because, if he did not, there were nights when he did not know where to put himself.

That did not fit inside a public reply.

No one wanted to read:

Thank you. I don't really know how to live with this either.

Or perhaps they did.

Perhaps some people were only waiting for someone to dare to say it badly.

Flonny stood up from the chair.

The room was untidy in a small way: a shirt over the back of a chair, two books on the floor, a notebook lying open facedown, a folded bill beneath the keyboard, as if even debt needed to participate in literature.

On the wall was a photograph of him as a child.

It was not a special photograph. Just a boy smiling with that absurd confidence some children have before they learn to ask permission for joy. His eyes were alive, his hair poorly arranged, and his smile too wide for someone who still had no idea how much it would cost him to preserve it.

Flonny avoided looking at that photograph when he wrote.

That night, he looked.

“Don't start,” he told him.

The child did not answer.

He had that advantage.

Children in photographs do not defend themselves, but they do not obey either.

Flonny walked into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator without being hungry. There was half a lemon, a bottle of water, rice in a plastic container, and a piece of cheese wrapped in a bag that no longer closed properly.

He shut the refrigerator.

Opened it again.

Closed it once more.

Sometimes you checked the food so you would not have to check something else.

The phone vibrated on the table.

This time it was a private message.

I don't know how to explain it, but your piece made me feel like I wasn't crazy for still missing someone who is no longer here. Thank you for putting it into words.

Flonny read the message while standing in the middle of the kitchen.

He did not cry.

It made him angry that he did not cry.

There were days when emotion arrived late, like a guest who got lost on the way to the house and showed up after everyone else had already left.

He wrote:

Thank you for trusting me with that.

Deleted it.

He wrote:

You're not crazy. Missing someone is also a way of continuing to love them.

He looked at it.

Beautiful.

Too beautiful.

He deleted it.

He placed the phone facedown.

Then he returned to the computer.

The page was still open.

The cursor blinked with an offensive kind of patience.

Flonny sat down.

He rested his hands on the keyboard.

He wrote:

Sometimes I write hope because I don't know where to buy it.

He stared at the sentence.

He hated it a little.

He liked it a little.

That was the worst part.

Sentences you like too much are always dangerously close to becoming lies.

He deleted it.

He wrote:

Today someone told me my words saved their night. I did not know what to say, because mine was still lying on the floor.

He did not delete that.

Not yet.

He leaned back in the chair.

The night beyond the window was still, but not peaceful. There was a difference. Stillness could simply be accumulated exhaustion. Outside, a car passed with loud music. Someone shouted something he could not understand. Then the silence returned.

Flonny looked at the sentence again.

Mine was still lying on the floor.

It seemed dramatic.

But also true.

That was the problem with certain truths: they entered the room dressed as exaggeration.

He opened the reader's message. Read it again.

"Thank you for putting it into words."

Putting it into words.

People said that with gratitude, as though words were blankets.

And sometimes they were.

But other times they were small knives.

Or matches.

Or bags where you stuffed emotional garbage so it would not smell so bad in the middle of the living room.

Flonny returned to the document.

He wrote:

I don't know whether words save anyone.

I would like to say they do.

It would be beautiful. It would be useful for my biography. It would make a good sentence for an interview no one has asked me to give yet.

But I don't know.

There are nights when I write a luminous sentence and then sit in front of it like someone staring at a candle from the other side of a window.

It gives light.

Yes.

But it does not always give warmth.

He stopped.

He did not know whether it was a story.

He did not know whether it was a confession.

He did not know whether it was an excuse with better punctuation.

He continued.

Tonight, several people thanked me.

One said she cried.

Another said she felt less alone.

Another told me she missed someone and that my words gave her permission not to feel ridiculous for it.

I read all of that with one hand on my chest and the other close to deleting the page.

Because there is a strange kind of shame in being useful to others while you are still searching for yourself beneath the bed.

Flonny smiled.

Beneath the bed.

That was ugly.

He left it.

You also had to trust ugly sentences when they said something the beautiful ones wanted to disguise.

He looked at the child's photograph again.

"You didn't know anything about this, did you?"

The child kept smiling.

Flonny stood up, walked to the wall, and took down the photograph.

He did not do it solemnly. The small nail fell, he had to bend down to look for it, he hit his knee against the desk, and he cursed, ruining any possibility of a sacred scene.

Better that way.

He sat down again and placed the photograph beside the keyboard.

The child was left staring at the screen.

"All right, then," Flonny said. "Supervise."

The word made him laugh.

Supervise.

As though the child could review the page and give it a grade.

The laughter did not last long, but it was enough to move something.

He wrote:

When I was a child, I smiled as though life were going to wait for me.

Then I grew up and learned other things.

I learned not to take up too much space.

To apologize before becoming a bother.

To make jokes when something hurt.

To disappear a little before anyone had to ask me to.

I also learned to write.

I don't know whether that saved me.

Perhaps it was only a more elegant way of hiding.

Perhaps it was the only door that never closed completely.

The page began to fill.

Not quickly.

Not like in movies where the writer, touched by some higher force, pounds at the keyboard until sunrise and emerges with a masterpiece.

No.

Flonny wrote two lines and stopped.

Deleted one.

Left the other out of exhaustion.

Drank cold coffee and grimaced.

Checked his phone.

Hated himself a little for checking his phone.

Returned.

Writing was also that: returning, even after doing ten stupid things between one sentence and the next.

At twelve sixteen, another message arrived.

I don't know whether you'll read this, but thank you. Today I needed not to feel invisible.

Flonny read it.

Then he looked at the child in the photograph.

“Well, look at that,” he said. “They’re discovering us.”

This time he cried.

A little.

With an almost irritating clumsiness.

First his eyes filled with water, and he kept pretending they had not. Then one tear fell onto the desk, near the folded bill. It was not a beautiful tear. It mixed with an old coffee stain and looked more like a household accident than a revelation.

Flonny wiped his face with his sleeve.

It was not elegant.

It did not need to be.

He wrote:

Perhaps that is all I am trying to do.

Not disappear.

And if someone reads this and feels that they do not disappear either, even for a few minutes, then perhaps the page did something.

Not save.

Not cure.

Not put the mess in order.

Only leave a light on in a room where someone thought no one was left.

He stopped.

The sentence was beautiful.

Too beautiful.

He almost deleted it.

He did not.

Sometimes you also had to let a beautiful sentence live, even if it embarrassed you to admit it.

The phone lit up again.

He did not look at it.

That was new.

Not heroic.

New.

He kept writing.

There are days when a person does not want to die.

But they do not want to live with too much enthusiasm either.

They only want not to have to explain the weight.

They only want someone to say: yes, I have been there too.

And perhaps that is why I write.

Not because I have answers.

Not because I have learned how to live better than anyone else.

Not because my pain is special.

I write because once I felt so alone that I would have been grateful to find a sentence that did not try to fix me.

A sentence that simply sat beside me.

Like an awkward friend.

Like an old pet.

Like a neglected plant that still insists on living.

Like a chair you repair even though it starts wobbling again.

Like a wrong note striking someone else's piano.

Flonny stopped.

He had written too close to other stories.

That frightened him.

Then he understood that perhaps it was not repetition.

It was family.

Stories had siblings too.

They did not all resemble one another because of a lack of imagination.

Sometimes they resembled one another because they came from the same house.

He looked at the page.

It was no longer blank.

That did not mean it was good.

But something had happened.

The screen held paragraphs, crossed-out lines, sentences that might embarrass him the following morning. It held a truth sitting in one corner, hair uncombed, unsure where to put its hands.

Flonny opened the reader's private message and wrote:

Thank you for reading. You are not alone in that. I hope tonight treats you with a little care.

It was not perfect.

He sent it before he could regret it.

Then he answered another:

Thank you for telling me. Sometimes you write without knowing how far the words will go. I'm glad they reached you there.

And another:

I'm sending you a hug from here.

He stared at that last sentence.

I'm sending you a hug from here.

It seemed insufficient.

It also seemed true.

Sometimes you could only embrace someone from where you were.

The early morning moved forward without asking permission.

The coffee finished dying in the cup.

The glass of water remained lukewarm.

The city lowered its volume.

Flonny saved the document under a temporary title:

The Page That Wouldn't Let Him Disappear

He looked at it.

He laughed.

“Dramatic,” he said.

He did not change it.

He turned off the lamp.

The room was illuminated only by the screen.

For a few seconds, he thought about closing the computer. It was the normal thing to do. The orderly thing. The responsible thing. Close everything, sleep, begin again tomorrow with a less crooked back and less swollen eyes.

But he did not close it.

He left the document open.

Not because of hope.

The word felt too large for him that night.

He left it open just in case.

In case the child in the photograph wanted to look again.

In case a sentence needed to remain there, breathing.

In case some part of him grew tired of hiding during the night and needed to find its way back.

Before going to bed, he took the child's photograph and placed it beside the computer.

Not facing the wall.

Not hidden away.

There.

Where he could see it when he woke up.

Then he went to bed without washing his face, his sleeve still damp, a quiet shame resting in his chest.

The phone vibrated once more.

Flonny did not get up.

He smiled faintly, with his back to the screen.

He did not know whether he would still want the page the following day.

He did not know whether he would delete it.

He did not know whether anyone would ever read it.

But that night, at least, he did not close it.

And sometimes staying begins like that.

Not as a grand promise.

Not as salvation.

But as an open page in a dark room, waiting without demanding anything from anyone.

Author's Note

I wrote *Stories for Not Disappearing* with those people in mind who are still present on the outside, but who have slowly stopped feeling like part of their own lives.

These stories were not born to offer answers or turn pain into a lesson. They were born from silences, delayed farewells, small gestures, and moments when someone was on the verge of erasing themselves without anyone noticing. Each story looks at a different form of absence, but also at an imperfect way of remaining.

Perhaps some of these stories will feel close to you. Perhaps others will make you think of someone who once stopped speaking, asking, or taking up space. My hope is not that you find a solution in these pages, but that you find companionship. That a scene, a sentence, or a character reaches you in time to remind you that you are still here.

Because sometimes a story does not change the world.

Sometimes it simply keeps someone from disappearing.

Noel H. Hodgson