

# THE MONK WHO SOLD HIS FERRARI

A FABLE ABOUT FULFILLING YOUR DREAMS  
AND REACHING YOUR DESTINY

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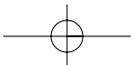
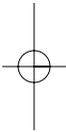


*Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.*

**George Bernard Shaw**

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## CHAPTER ONE



# The Wake-Up Call

He collapsed right in the middle of a packed courtroom. He was one of this country's most distinguished trial lawyers. He was also a man who was as well known for the three-thousand-dollar Italian suits that draped his well-fed frame as for his remarkable string of legal victories. I simply stood there, paralyzed by the shock of what I had just witnessed. The great Julian Mantle had been reduced to a victim and was now squirming on the ground like a helpless infant, shaking and shivering and sweating like a maniac.

Everything seemed to move in slow motion from that point on. "My God, Julian's in trouble!" his paralegal screamed, emotionally offering us a blinding glimpse of the obvious. The judge looked panic-stricken and quickly muttered something into the private phone she had had installed in the event of an emergency. As for me, I could only stand there, dazed and confused. *Please don't die, you old fool. It's too early for you to check out. You don't deserve to die like this.*

The bailiff, who earlier had looked as if he had been embalmed in his standing position, leapt into action and started to perform CPR on the fallen legal hero. The paralegal was at his side, her



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long blond curls dangling over Julian's ruby-red face, offering him soft words of comfort, words that he obviously could not hear.

I had known Julian for seventeen years. We had first met when I was a young law student hired by one of his partners as a summer research intern. Back then, he'd had it all. He was a brilliant, handsome and fearless trial attorney with dreams of greatness. Julian was the firm's young star, the rain-maker in waiting. I can still remember walking by his regal corner office while I was working late one night and stealing a glimpse of the framed quotation perched on his massive oak desk. It was by Winston Churchill and it spoke volumes about the man that Julian was:

*Sure I am that this day we are masters of our fate, that the task which has been set before us is not above our strength; that its pangs and toils are not beyond my endurance. As long as we have faith in our own cause and an unconquerable will to win, victory will not be denied us.*

Julian also walked his talk. He was tough, hard-driving and willing to work eighteen-hour days for the success he believed was his destiny. I heard through the grapevine that his grandfather had been a prominent senator and his father a highly respected judge of the Federal Court. It was obvious that he came from money and that there were enormous expectations weighing on his Armani-clad shoulders. I'll admit one thing though: he ran his own race. He was determined to do things his own way — and he loved to put on a show.

Julian's outrageous courtroom theatrics regularly made the front pages of the newspapers. The rich and famous flocked to his side whenever they needed a superb legal tactician with an aggressive

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edge. His extra-curricular activities were probably as well known. Late-night visits to the city's finest restaurants with sexy young fashion models, or reckless drinking escapades with the rowdy band of brokers he called his "demolition team," became the stuff of legend at the firm.

I still can't figure out why he picked me to work with him on that sensational murder case he was to argue that first summer. Though I had graduated from Harvard Law School, his alma mater, I certainly wasn't the brightest intern at the firm, and my family pedigree reflected no blue blood. My father spent his whole life as a security guard with a local bank after a stint in the Marines. My mother grew up unceremoniously in the Bronx.

Yet he did pick me over all the others who had been quietly lobbying him for the privilege of being his legal gofer on what became known as "the Mother of All Murder Trials": he said he liked my "hunger." We won, of course, and the business executive who had been charged with brutally killing his wife was now a free man — or as free as his cluttered conscience would let him be.

My own education that summer was a rich one. It was far more than a lesson on how to raise a reasonable doubt where none existed — any lawyer worth his salt could do that. This was a lesson in the psychology of winning and a rare opportunity to watch a master in action. I soaked it up like a sponge.

At Julian's invitation, I stayed on at the firm as an associate, and a lasting friendship quickly developed between us. I will admit that he wasn't the easiest lawyer to work with. Serving as his junior was often an exercise in frustration, leading to more than a few late-night shouting matches. It was truly his way or the high-way. This man could never be wrong. However, beneath his crusty exterior was a person who clearly cared about people.

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No matter how busy he was, he would always ask about Jenny, the woman I still call “my bride” even though we were married before I went to law school. On finding out from another summer intern that I was in a financial squeeze, Julian arranged for me to receive a generous scholarship. Sure, he could play hardball with the best of them, and sure, he loved to have a wild time, but he never neglected his friends. The real problem was that Julian was obsessed with work.

For the first few years he justified his long hours by saying that he was “doing it for the good of the firm,” and that he planned to take a month off and go to the Caymans “*next* winter for sure.” As time passed, however, Julian’s reputation for brilliance spread and his workload continued to increase. The cases just kept on getting bigger and better, and Julian, never one to back down from a good challenge, continued to push himself harder and harder. In his rare moments of quiet, he confided that he could no longer sleep for more than a couple of hours without waking up feeling guilty that he was not working on a file. It soon became clear to me that he was being consumed by the hunger for more: more prestige, more glory and more money.

As expected, Julian became enormously successful. He achieved everything most people could ever want: a stellar professional reputation with an income in seven figures, a spectacular mansion in a neighborhood favored by celebrities, a private jet, a summer home on a tropical island and his prized possession — a shiny red Ferrari parked in the center of his driveway.

Yet I knew that things were not as idyllic as they appeared on the surface. I observed the signs of impending doom not because I was so much more perceptive than the others at the firm, but simply because I spent the most time with the man. We were

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always together because we were always at work. Things never seemed to slow down. There was always another blockbuster case on the horizon that was bigger than the last. No amount of preparation was ever enough for Julian. What would happen if the judge brought up this question or that question, God forbid? What would happen if our research was less than perfect? What would happen if he was surprised in the middle of a packed courtroom, looking like a deer caught in the glare of an intruding pair of headlights? So we pushed ourselves to the limit and I got sucked into his little work-centered world as well. There we were, two slaves to the clock, toiling away on the sixty-fourth floor of some steel and glass monolith while most sane people were at home with their families, thinking we had the world by the tail, blinded by an illusory version of success.

The more time I spent with Julian, the more I could see that he was driving himself deeper into the ground. It was as if he had some kind of a death wish. Nothing ever satisfied him. Eventually, his marriage failed, he no longer spoke with his father, and though he had every material possession anyone could want, he still had not found whatever it was that he was looking for. It showed, emotionally, physically — and spiritually.

At fifty-three years of age, Julian looked as if he was in his late seventies. His face was a mass of wrinkles, a less than glorious tribute to his “take-no-prisoners” approach to life in general and the tremendous stress of his out-of-balance lifestyle in particular. The late-night dinners in expensive French restaurants, smoking thick Cuban cigars and drinking cognac after cognac, had left him embarrassingly overweight. He constantly complained that he was sick and tired of being sick and tired. He had lost his sense of humor and never seemed to laugh anymore.

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Julian's once enthusiastic nature had been replaced by a deathly somberness. Personally, I think that his life had lost all purpose.

Perhaps the saddest thing was that he had also lost his focus in the courtroom. Where he would once dazzle all those present with an eloquent and airtight closing argument, he now droned on for hours, rambling about obscure cases that had little or no bearing on the matter before the Court. Where once he would react gracefully to the objections of opposing counsel, he now displayed a biting sarcasm that severely tested the patience of judges who had earlier viewed him as a legal genius. Simply put, Julian's spark of life had begun to flicker.

It wasn't just the strain of his frenetic pace that was marking him for an early grave. I sensed it went far deeper. It seemed to be a spiritual thing. Almost every day he would tell me that he felt no passion for what he was doing and was enveloped by emptiness. Julian said that as a young lawyer he really loved the Law, even though he was initially pushed into it by the social agenda of his family. The Law's complexities and intellectual challenges had kept him spellbound and full of energy. Its power to effect social change had inspired and motivated him. Back then, he was more than just some rich kid from Connecticut. He really saw himself as a force for good, an instrument for social improvement who could use his obvious gifts to help others. That vision gave his life meaning. It gave him a purpose and it fuelled his hopes.

There was even more to Julian's undoing than a rusty connection to what he did for a living. He had suffered some great tragedy before I had joined the firm. Something truly unspeakable had happened to him, according to one of the senior partners, but I couldn't get anyone to open up about it. Even old man Harding, the notoriously loose-lipped managing partner

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who spent more time in the bar of the Ritz-Carlton than in his embarrassingly large office, said that he was sworn to secrecy. Whatever this deep, dark secret was, I had a suspicion that it, in some way, was contributing to Julian's downward spiral. Sure I was curious, but most of all, I wanted to help him. He was not only my mentor; he was my best friend.

And then it happened. This massive heart attack that brought the brilliant Julian Mantle back down to earth and reconnected him to his mortality. Right in the middle of courtroom number seven on a Monday morning, the same courtroom where we had won the Mother of All Murder Trials.