

## **Author's Note. Before We Begin.**

There's one thing I want to make very clear, right from the start, no sugarcoating. This book is mine. It's my memory. It's how I see, remember, and feel - you, myself, our family, friends, events, personalities, scenes, conversations, habits, quirks. It's my perception, my interpretation, the way I connect people, families, generations. Everything I explain here - I'm explaining it first and foremost to myself. Because if one day I lose my memory - this will be my anchor. For me.

If you - whoever you are: relative, friend, curious reader - opened this book and thought, "Ugh, that's a bit much," or "Too sharp," or "Too personal," or "She even swears, how rude..." - I hear you. And I offer a very simple solution: close the book and don't read it. Or - if that truly offends you - feel free to walk away. I won't sugarcoat it. This is how I talk. Not all the time, not for show, but when it matters - because sometimes the truth doesn't need a whisper. It needs a fist on the table.

This isn't a cozy family scrapbook with lace-edged captions. This is a living document. With pulse. With nerves. It's not for approval, not for likes, not for a neat little family legacy. It's my way of holding onto what matters. If someone out there thinks I went too far, misrepresented, misunderstood - okay. This is my version. I don't claim to hold the ultimate truth. I'm simply writing what I feel. If you see it differently write your own damn book. I swear, I'll read it. With interest. With respect. Maybe we'll even cry together over it.

Right now, as I write this, I can already picture my brother's face. He's going, "Why the swearing? Why so harsh?"

And I'm mentally replying: *Because I want to. Because this is me. And if I take that away, smooth it out, hide it - then it's no longer my story. Just someone's watered-down version.*