

# PROJECT: ME



This isn't a story with a neat beginning and end..  
This is a book made of fragments—pieces of  
me I've carried quietly for years.

## GHOST

## Prologue

This isn't a story that follows a straight line.

It's not neat. It's not wrapped up with a ribbon. It doesn't have a happy ending waiting on the last page — or a tragic one, for that matter. It just... is.

This book isn't about villains or heroes. There are no big dramatic moments here, no bruises or broken bones, no one scene you can point at and say, "That's when everything changed."

What you'll find instead are pieces.

Little pieces of me. The ones I usually keep quiet. The ones I never said out loud because silence always felt safer.

Some of these pieces are heavy.

Some are sharp.

Some are softer than I expected them to be.

But all of them are real.

I don't know what you'll see when you read them — maybe yourself, maybe someone you used to know, maybe no one at all.

What I do know is this: these pages hold the version of me I don't always show. The version that stayed quiet for years, the version that carried more than anyone saw, the version that sometimes wanted to vanish and sometimes fought to stay.

And if you're here now, reading this, maybe that version of me has something to say to the version of you who needed to hear it.

## Chapter 1 – The First Ghost

I was never the kid with bruises you could point at.

Nobody ever raised a hand to me. That almost made it harder.

Because when there's no marks, no one asks questions. No one looks twice. And the hurt doesn't look like hurt to anyone else — it just looks like you being "difficult," or "quiet," or "a problem."



But there was a moment. I can still feel it like it's fresh.

It wasn't shouting. It wasn't violence. It was silent.  
The kind that swallows a room whole.

I remember standing there, realising no one was coming for me.  
Not that day. Not the next. Not ever.

And something happened inside me.  
Like a click. A snap. A quiet sort of breaking.

That's the day the first ghost showed up.  
Not a shadow. Not an imaginary friend.  
A version of me that could take it.  
The version of me that would smile when I didn't want to. Stay quiet when I want to scream.  
Pretend it didn't matter when it really did.

People saw me, sure.  
But they didn't see me.

They only ever saw the ghost.

## Chapter 2 – The Things I Learned Too Early

I didn't grow up hungry.  
I wasn't the kid people whispered about, the one with bruises or broken bones.

From the outside, you'd think I had what I needed. And in a lot of ways, I did. Food on the table.  
A roof. Clothes that fit.

But I still learned things too early.

I learned what it feels like to be surrounded by people and still feel like you're standing in an empty room.

I learned how to keep my thoughts to myself, not because anyone told me to, but because I figured out early that no one was really listening.

I learned that silence can be louder than shouting.  
That a look can hurt more than words ever could.

And maybe the hardest thing I learned was this:  
You can have the basics — food, warmth, a bed — and still feel like something vital is missing.

I couldn't name it back then.  
I still don't think I can now.

But I felt it.  
And once you feel that kind of hollow, you never really unlearn it.

## Chapter 3 – The Mask

I can't remember the first time I put the mask on.  
Not the kind you wear for Halloween — the kind you build quietly, piece by piece, until it feels like skin.

I think it started small.  
A smile when I didn't feel like smiling.  
A “yeah, I'm fine” when I wasn't.

It was easier that way. People don't ask questions when you're fine.

The mask grew with me. Every year it got heavier, thicker, harder to take off. By the time I realised I was even wearing one, I couldn't remember what my own face looked like underneath.

I became good at being whoever people needed me to be.  
Polite enough. Quiet enough. Easy enough.  
The “good” version of me, the one that didn't cause trouble, the one that made other people comfortable.

The problem is... you can only pretend so long before you forget you're pretending.

I'd look in the mirror and see the mask looking back.  
And some days, I'd wonder —  
If I ripped it off, would there be anything left underneath?

Or did I wear it for so long,  
that maybe the real me just faded away?

## Chapter 4 – The Quiet Rooms

There are rooms in my memory that feel louder than the noisy ones.

The quiet ones.

The ones where nothing happened — at least, nothing anyone would notice.

I remember sitting in those rooms, feeling the walls press in. Not because I was in danger, not because someone was screaming, but because of the nothingness. The silence that weighed more than any words could.

You start to think strange things in rooms like that.

Like, if I disappeared right now, would anyone notice? Would the walls care? Would the air shift?

I wasn't unloved.

But I felt unseen.

And there's a difference.

Because love without being seen feels like shouting into an empty space. Like someone hugging a version of you that isn't even there anymore.

Those quiet rooms shaped me. Not with pain you can point to — but with the kind that just... soaks in.

I carry them with me even now.

Sometimes, when a room goes too still, I swear I can feel that old silence breathing again.

## Chapter 5 – The Hollow

There's a difference between being empty and being hollow.

Empty is something you can fix — fill a glass, fill a plate, fill a room with noise. Hollow is different. Hollow is when the space inside you feels carved out, scraped raw, like something was scooped out years ago and never replaced.

I don't know when the hollow started. There wasn't a single day I woke up and felt it — it just crept in, quiet, until it was part of me.

The worst part is no one saw it. How could they? I laughed, I talked, I existed like I was meant to. On the outside, I was just... fine.

But inside?

It felt like someone had built a house in me and left it unfurnished. Like there were rooms inside me with nothing but echoes.

Sometimes I'd wonder if people could hear it, that hollowness. Like if I spoke too loudly, the sound would rattle around and give me away.

Here's the thing about hollow, though — you learn to live with it. You decorate it with little distractions. You convince yourself it's normal to feel like this.

But at night, when it's just you, you know.  
You always know.

## Chapter 6 – The Weight

It's strange how heavy nothing can feel.

I didn't grow up with bruises or broken bones, but I did grow up with something I can only call weight. It wasn't put on me all at once — no big moment, no single word. Just a steady, invisible pressure that built and built until one day I realised I'd been carrying it for years.

The weight of keeping quiet.

The weight of pretending I was fine.

The weight of trying not to take up too much space, even in my own head.

It's the kind of weight you can't explain to people. You can't point to it, can't hand it over, can't even name it half the time. So you just carry it.

And you get so used to carrying it that when someone asks if you're okay, you shrug, because you don't know how to tell them you've been holding the sky on your shoulders for so long it feels normal.

But it's not normal.

The weight bends you, slowly.

And one day, you realise you're not standing up straight anymore — you haven't been for a long time.

## Chapter 7 – The Nights That Wouldn't End

Nights have always been the hardest.

Daytime has distractions — noise, movement, other people breathing. But at night? Nights strip everything away. It's just you and your thoughts. And some thoughts don't like being alone.

There were nights when the clock didn't move. I'd lie there, staring at the ceiling, feeling every second drag across my skin. Sleep wouldn't come, not because I wasn't tired, but because my brain wouldn't shut up.

Some nights I thought about the past.  
Some nights I thought about the future.  
Some nights I thought about nothing at all — and that was somehow worse.

It's strange how the dark can make your own head feel like an enemy. You start asking questions you don't want the answers to. You start remembering things you tried to bury.

And sometimes, if I'm honest, I didn't want the night to end. Because the morning meant I had to get up and wear the mask again.

There's a special kind of exhaustion that comes from surviving nights like that — the kind no amount of coffee or sleep can fix.

I still feel it.

## Chapter 8 – The Things I Don't Say

I've always been good at not saying things.

Not because I don't want to talk, but because somewhere along the way I learned that some words are safer when they stay in your throat.

I don't say when I'm overwhelmed.  
I don't say when I feel small.  
I don't say when my head feels like it's caving in.

People ask, "Why didn't you tell me?"  
But the truth is, I did.  
In the pauses. In the quiet. In the way I pulled away or stayed too still.

I told them in every way except words.

But words are heavy. And once you put them out there, you can't take them back.

So I learned to swallow them instead.

Now, some days, I can feel the unsaid things stacked inside me like bricks. They've built walls I didn't mean to build.

And the longer I stay quiet, the harder it is to remember how to speak.

## Chapter 9 – The Things I Lost Without Knowing

There are pieces of me that went missing before I even realised they were gone.

Not big dramatic losses — no one ripped them out of me. It was quieter than that. Slower. Like sand slipping through my fingers while I wasn't paying attention.

I lost the version of me that trusted easily.

I lost the part that thought people always meant well.

I lost the ability to believe I could just... be.

It wasn't one person, or one moment, or one sentence that took those pieces. It was a slow erosion. A little bit here, a little bit there, until one day I looked at myself and thought, "When did I stop feeling whole?"

I didn't even get to say goodbye to those parts.

And the worst thing about losing pieces of yourself quietly is that nobody notices. They keep talking to you like you're still the same, not realising you've been rearranged into something else entirely.

## Chapter 10 – The Quiet Rage

People think rage is loud. They imagine shouting, fists slamming on tables, plates breaking against walls.

But the rage I know is quiet.

It lives in my chest, under my ribs, and it doesn't scream — it hums. Like an electric current you can't switch off.

It's not rage at one person or one thing. It's at everything. At the unfairness. At the things that happened. At the things that didn't. At the people who could have helped but didn't.



It's rage at myself, too. For not speaking sooner. For not knowing how. For letting silence swallow me whole when I should have clawed my way out.

But the thing about quiet rage is it doesn't go away.  
It doesn't burn out like fire — it just sits there, smouldering.

And some days I wonder what would happen if it finally caught.

## Chapter 11 – The Boy I Left Behind

There's a boy I used to be.

He's still here, somewhere — small, wide-eyed, waiting for someone to come back for him.

I think about him a lot. The boy who laughed differently. The boy who still thought life might turn out like the stories. The boy who didn't know yet what silence could do.

Sometimes I want to go back and shake him.  
Tell him what's coming.  
Tell him to run, or to fight, or to hold on tighter.

Other times, I just want to hold him.  
Tell him it's not his fault.  
Tell him he deserved more than he got.

But I didn't hold him then.  
And I can't hold him now.

So he waits.

And sometimes, when I'm really quiet, I swear I can hear him asking the same question over and over:

"Why didn't you come back for me?"

## Chapter 12 – The Conversations I Have in My Head

Most of my talking doesn't happen out loud.

It happens in the spaces no one sees — in my head, in my chest, sometimes in the middle of the night when I should be sleeping but my brain is holding another meeting without me asking for it.

I replay moments that happened years ago.  
I rewrite conversations I never actually had.  
I tell people how much they hurt me — but only when they're not there to hear it.

Sometimes I argue with ghosts. Not the kind that haunts houses, but the ones that haunt me. People who left, people who stayed too long, people who didn't mean to leave scars but did anyway.

The worst are the conversations I have with myself.

There's the me that's harsh, sharp-edged, the one that says, "You should've been better. You should've done more."

Then there's the me that's softer, quieter, the one that whispers, "You were just a kid. You did what you could."

They fight.

And I sit there in the middle, listening to both voices, not sure which one I believe more.

The conversations in my head are endless.  
But the words almost never leave my mouth.

## Chapter 13 – The Days That Blur

There are days that feel like they don't even count.

They slip by in silence. Not good, not bad — just... nothing. The kind of days that leave no mark.

But they add up. One blurred day after another. You blink, and weeks are gone. You look back, and whole months are just blank spaces in your memory.

People say, "What did you do last week?" and I don't have an answer, because I don't remember doing anything. Breathing, maybe. Existing, kind of.

Sometimes I think about how many of those blurred days I've had, and it scares me.

Not because they were awful, but because they were empty.

Because one day, I know I'll run out of days.  
And I wonder how many I wasted just letting them blur.

## Chapter 14 – The Things I Still Don't Know How to Say

There's so much I still don't know how to say.

Not because I haven't thought about it. God, I think about it all the time.

I think about how to explain the way silence can bruise, even without hands.  
I think about how to tell people what it feels like to be surrounded by love and still feel alone.  
I think about how to say, "I'm not okay," without it sounding like a joke, without someone rolling their eyes, without the awkward pause that always follows.

But every time I try, the words dry up.

I've spent years speaking in half-truths.  
"I'm fine."  
"It's nothing."  
"I'm tired."

But those aren't lies, not really.  
They're just the safe version of the truth.

Because if I told the full version, if I said every word I swallowed, I don't know what would happen.

I don't know if the people I said them to would stay.

Or if they'd run.

## Chapter 15 – The Weight of Memories

Some memories don't stay in the past.

They follow you, like shadows you can't shake off. They show up when you least expect them — a smell, a sound, a certain kind of silence — and suddenly you're back there, in a moment you thought you'd outgrown.

Not every memory is sharp. Some are just... fog. Blurry edges, faded colours. But even the faded ones carry weight.

It's the weight of the things I didn't understand at the time but do now.  
The weight of words I thought were harmless but turned out to cut deeper than I realised.  
The weight of moments I wish I'd handled differently, even though I couldn't have known how.

And then there are the memories I don't talk about.

Not because they're some big, cinematic trauma, but because they're the quiet kind — the ones that don't sound like much when you say them out loud, but they left marks anyway.

Sometimes I wonder if I carry my memories,  
or if they carry me.

## Chapter 16 – The Quiet Things That Broke Me

I used to think pain had to be loud to count.

Like it had to come with shouting, with slamming doors, with something dramatic enough to point to and say, "That's when it happened."

But mine wasn't like that.

It was quiet things.  
The kind that sneak in without anyone noticing.

The way someone didn't look at me when I needed them to.  
The way nobody asked the right questions, even when the answers were right there, just waiting.  
The way I felt like a ghost in rooms full of people — not hated, not hurt, just... unseen.

It's strange how those little things can stack up, how they can hollow you out without ever raising their voice.

I didn't shatter in one moment.  
I wore down, slowly.

Like a stone turned smooth by water —  
not broken, just... unrecognisable.

## Chapter 17 – The Smile I Learned to Fake

I don't even remember teaching myself how to fake a smile.  
It just happened one day, and then I never stopped.

At first, it was small. A twitch of the lips when someone asked if I was okay. A little mask I could slip on so no one would look too closely.

But after a while, it became automatic. Like blinking. Like breathing.

And the strangest thing is how easily people believe it.  
They see the curve of your mouth, not the heaviness in your eyes. They hear the laugh, not the crack in your voice.

The fake smile became my passport into every room.  
It made people comfortable.  
It made me invisible.

And somewhere along the way, I realised I'd been wearing it so long that sometimes I'd catch myself in the mirror, smiling, and feel nothing behind it.

That's when it hit me:  
I wasn't pretending anymore.  
The mask had melted into my skin.

## Chapter 18 – The Questions That Never Stop

My head is a machine that doesn't switch off.

Questions. Always questions.  
They buzz around like flies, impossible to swat away.

Why did that happen?  
Could I have stopped it?  
Was it my fault?  
What if I'd said something?  
What if I'd stayed quiet?

The worst ones aren't the loud ones — they're the quiet, looping ones. The questions you ask yourself at 3am when the world feels paper thin.

I hate those nights.

Because you know there aren't any answers, but your brain keeps digging anyway, like maybe if you tear yourself apart enough, you'll find one buried deep inside.

But there's nothing there.  
Just more questions.

## Chapter 19 – The Times I Wanted to Vanish

I've never wanted to die.

But I have wanted to vanish.

To just... not be here for a while. To slip out of my own skin, disappear from the noise, and see if anyone even noticed.

There's a difference between wanting to die and wanting to disappear, but it's a thin line — and I've stood on it more times than I can count.

It wasn't about ending everything. It was about pausing. About finding some kind of off-switch for the constant hum in my head.

But there is no off-switch.

So instead, I learned to disappear in quieter ways.  
Pulling back. Hiding in music. Hiding in silence. Hiding in a version of me that smiled while the real me was somewhere else.

I've been vanishing in pieces for years.  
I'm not sure anyone noticed.

I'm not sure I'd even know how to come back if they did.

## Chapter 20 – The Rooms I Outgrew

There are rooms I used to feel small in.  
Rooms that felt too big for me, too heavy, like I had to shrink myself just to fit.



I don't go in those rooms anymore. Some don't even exist now — moved houses, time passed, walls got painted over. But they still live in my head.

I can still see the corners.

I can still feel the way the air sat heavy in them.

Sometimes I think about how much of myself I left behind in those spaces — versions of me that didn't survive past those walls.

People say you “grow out of” things, like clothes, like shoes. But nobody talks about the rooms you outgrow — the ones you leave, but they don't quite leave you.

## Chapter 21 – The Silence That Stayed

There's silence, and then there's Silence.

The first is simple. The quiet after a song ends. The pause between two sentences.

The second is the one that stays. The one that fills up your chest and lives there, like smoke that won't clear.

I learned that kind of silence young.

The kind where you don't say the thing because you don't know how, and nobody asks, so it just... sits there.

Years later, you find that silence hasn't moved. It's turned solid inside you. It's the weight behind every “I'm fine.”

And even when you do speak, even when you try, the silence doesn't leave.

It's become part of the architecture now —  
the walls inside me built with bricks made of things I never said.

## Chapter 22 – The Parts I Keep Hidden

Everyone has parts of themselves they keep back.

Little things.

Weird quirks.

Thoughts you don't share because they'd make someone tilt their head at you.

But my hidden parts aren't little.

They're whole versions of me that almost nobody has seen. The me that isn't smiling. The me that's angry for reasons I can't always explain. The me that's still that kid, waiting, wanting.

I keep them locked away because letting them out feels dangerous. Because what if someone doesn't like them? What if they look at me differently?

Or worse —

what if they don't look at me differently at all?

What if they shrug, turn away, and leave those parts of me standing there, bare and unwanted?

So I hide them.

And some days, I wonder if I've hidden them so well  
that maybe even I don't know where they are anymore.

## Chapter 23 – The Things People Don't Notice

People think they see you.

They think a smile means you're okay. They think turning up means you're coping. They think if you were really struggling, they'd know.

But they don't notice the little things.

They don't see the way you flinch at sudden noises, not because you were hit, but because you've lived on edge for too long.

They don't see the way you zone out mid-conversation, because your brain has slipped somewhere safer.

They don't see the way your "I'm fine" isn't fine at all — it's just the easiest answer.

People don't notice when you start pulling away either. When you stop messaging back. When you laugh less, talk less.

And maybe that's the part that stings the most.

Not that you were hurting.

But that you were hurting quietly — and no one heard.

## Chapter 24 – The Versions of Me

Sometimes I wonder how many versions of me exist.

There's the me people see. The one who gets up, smiles, answers questions, makes jokes.  
There's the me in my head — the one who overthinks, replays, unravels.  
And then there's the me I don't even have words for — the one that just feels.

They don't always match.

Some days I feel like I'm flipping between them too fast, like cards shuffled in a deck. Other days, I feel like I'm not any of them — like I'm just empty space between who I was and who I might be.

The truth is, I don't think any of those versions is the "real" me.

Or maybe they all are.

Maybe I'm just pieces now, and that's okay.

## Chapter 25 – The Things I'll Never Get Back

There are things I'll never get back.

Not objects. Not things you can hold in your hand.

I'm talking about moments.

The kind that only happen once, and if you miss them, they're gone.

Like the last time I laughed as a kid without thinking about how I sounded.  
Like the last time I trusted someone fully without wondering if they'd drop me.  
Like the last time I felt safe without needing to explain why.

The hardest part is not knowing those were the last times.

You don't get a warning. No one says, "This is the last time this will feel easy."

You just wake up one day, and it's already over.

And all you can do is hold the pieces of what you lost,  
and hope you learn how to live without them.

## Chapter 26 – The Way People See Me

I've learned over the years that people don't really see you.  
Not properly. Not all of you.

They see the version that's easiest for them to accept.

Some see the quiet one — the one who doesn't cause trouble, who smiles and nods and stays in their lane.

Some see the strong one — the one who can "handle anything," the one they can lean on without ever wondering if he has anyone to lean on himself.

Some see the broken one — and that's all they see. They label you, pin you down like an insect in glass, and never look any further.

But almost no one sees all of me.

They don't see the kid who learned to shrink himself so people wouldn't notice his edges.  
They don't see the nights I spend awake, talking to my own thoughts, hoping they'll stop screaming.

They don't see the ache that runs under everything, the feeling that I could disappear and maybe nobody would even blink.

It's not always their fault. How can you see what's hidden so well? But there's a sting in it, all the same.

Because the truth is, there is a version of me behind the glass — pressing his face to it, fists against it, silently screaming to be seen.

And all they see is the reflection of who they think I am.

## Chapter 27 – The Moments I Stayed Silent

There are so many moments I should've spoken.

Moments where I should've said, "This isn't right."

Moments where I should've said, "I can't handle this."  
Moments where I should've said, "I need you."

But I didn't.

I stayed silent.

Sometimes I stayed silent out of fear — fear of the reaction, fear of being brushed off, fear of being told I was wrong for even feeling what I felt.

Other times, I stayed silent because I didn't even have the words. How do you explain something you can barely understand yourself?

And then there's the habit — that's the worst one. Silence becomes a habit. Once you've learned it, it's hard to unlearn.

Every unsaid word has weight. And when you don't speak them, they don't vanish. They stay inside you, settling in your chest, stacking like bricks.

You carry them everywhere. You feel them pressing down when you wake up, when you lie down, when someone asks how you are and you smile and say, "I'm fine."

The truth is, silence is heavy.

And after years of holding it,  
I think I've forgotten how to put it down.

## Chapter 28 – The People Who Should've Noticed

I don't think about them all the time.

But sometimes, the thought creeps in, sharp as glass:  
They should've noticed.

The teachers who saw the signs but called it "just a phase."  
The neighbours who saw me retreating further and further into myself but decided it wasn't their business.  
The people close enough to see the cracks — and chose to look away.

Maybe they did notice. Maybe they saw everything and just didn't want to get involved.

Maybe they thought someone else would step in.

Maybe they thought it wasn't serious enough.

Maybe.

But all those maybes don't change the result.

No one came.

No one said the thing that needed saying.

No one pulled me aside and said, "Are you okay? Really?"

And that leaves a special kind of hurt.

Not the hurt of what happened.

But the hurt of what didn't.

It's the empty space where someone should've stood,  
but didn't.

## Chapter 29 – The Way I Disappear

I don't disappear all at once.

I don't slam a door, cut every tie, vanish in some big dramatic way.

I disappear quietly.

Piece by piece.

First, I talk less.

Then, I reply slower.

Then, I stop volunteering pieces of myself. The things I share shrink, become smaller, safer.

I still show up. I still smile. I still do all the things I'm "supposed" to do.

But the version of me people get? That's the shell.

The real me — the messy, raw, too-much one — slips further into the shadows, until even I'm not sure where he's gone.

People rarely notice it happening.



One day they might realise I'm gone — not gone gone, not dead, just... not really here anymore.

And here's the part I don't like admitting:  
I'm not sure if I even want someone to pull me back into the light.

Because if they do, they'll see all of me.

And I don't know if anyone could look at that and stay.

## Chapter 30 – To The One Who Thinks They're Too Much

I've been told I'm too much before.  
Too sensitive. Too emotional. Too intense. Too... whatever word they wanted to use that day.

For a while, I believed them. I started to shrink myself. I learned how to keep my voice lower, my feelings quieter, my pain hidden. I made myself smaller because I thought maybe then people would stay.

But here's what I've learned: I was never "too much."

The truth is, they just couldn't hold me. They couldn't hold my emotions, my depth, my way of feeling things in full colour instead of grey.

And if you're reading this and you've been told the same thing — that you're too much — I want you to know something I wish someone had told me sooner: you don't need to shrink to make people stay.

Because the right people won't see you as "too much."  
They'll see you as exactly enough.

## Chapter 31 – To The One Carrying Too Much

I've carried things I didn't know how to put down.

Not just memories, but guilt. Expectations. Silence. All of it sat on my shoulders for so long that I stopped noticing how heavy it was — it just became part of me.

I thought I had to carry it all alone. That asking for help would make me weak, or a burden.

But I've learned that sometimes, saying "this is too heavy" is the strongest thing you can do.

If you're carrying too much right now, I get it. I know how crushing it feels. But I also know this — you don't have to carry it by yourself.

Even if it's just one person, one moment, one breath — let someone share the weight.

Because the weight might not disappear overnight, but it will stop crushing you. And you deserve to know what that feels like.

## Chapter 32 – To The One Who Feels Invisible

I've felt invisible more times than I can count.

I've been the person who sat in a room full of people and felt like a ghost. I've been the one who spoke and wondered if anyone even heard. I've been the one who realised it almost didn't matter if I was there or not.

But here's something I've had to teach myself — being unseen doesn't mean I don't matter.

And if you feel invisible right now, I need you to hear this from me: you do matter.

Your presence changes things, even if nobody says it. You've made ripples you don't even realise. Someone has smiled because of you. Someone has felt lighter because of something you did.

I know how easy it is to think you don't count. But you do.

And one day, someone will see every part of you — even the ones you've hidden away.

## Chapter 33 – To The One Who Wants To Disappear

I've wanted to disappear before.

Not to die. Just to... vanish. To step out of my own life for a while, like walking out of a room and closing the door behind me.

I didn't want to end everything — I just wanted the noise to stop. I wanted the world to spin without me for a bit, just so I could breathe.

But here's what I've learned: I didn't actually want to disappear. I wanted to rest.

And that's not the same thing.

If you feel like that now — like you want to fade out — know this: you don't have to erase yourself to find peace.

You're allowed to stop. You're allowed to step back. You're allowed to take up less space for a while and then come back when you're ready.

The world will still be here.

And the people who care?

They'll be here too — waiting, holding your place.

## Epilogue

If you've made it here, you've seen the pieces.

Some of them were sharp. Some of them were heavy. Some of them probably made you pause and sit with them for a while.

I didn't write this to make sense of everything — because I'm still figuring a lot of it out myself. I didn't write it to tie things up neatly either. Life doesn't work like that, and I'm not going to pretend mine does.

What I did write were the truths I don't usually say out loud.

The quiet ones.

The hard ones.

The ones that sat in my chest for years and needed somewhere to go.

If you saw yourself in these pages, I hope you felt less alone for a moment.

If you didn't, then maybe you just saw me — and that's enough too.

I'm still here.

Still figuring it out.

Still carrying some of the same weight, but lighter now, because I finally set some of it down here.

And maybe, if you're holding something heavy too, you can set a little of it down now as well.

Because that's what this was always meant to be — not an ending, but a place to rest for a while.

## Final Chapter

You've read ME.

Not every piece, not every corner, but enough to know the shape of me. Enough to feel the cracks, the weight, the silence I've carried.

But here's the thing — this book was never just about ME.

Because if you've seen yourself in even one line, one sentence, one ache, then you've seen more than me — you've seen you.

So now I'll leave you with this:

When you close this book,  
when the words fade and you're left with your own thoughts —

Who are YOU when nobody's looking?

Is the version you show the world really you?

Or is there a part of YOU still waiting,  
just like there was for ME,  
to finally be seen?

—Ghost 🧛