

THE FIRST TO RISE

A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE, REINVENTION,
AND REDEMPTION



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The First To Rise

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Dedicatio n

For Those Who Held Me Up—Mj Familj.

To my wife, **Sara-Jeanine**—your calm strength, your endless grace, and your belief in who I could become saved me in more ways than I can count. You were the mirror that showed me my better self. Your love was never loud, but it was always present, always unshakable.

To my children—**Nunzio, Maximo, Adira, and Alessandra**—you are my greatest purpose, the truest legacy I will ever leave. I see the future in your eyes and the best parts of myself in your hearts. Everything I built, everything I became, was for you. I hope my journey shows you that it's never about being perfect—it's about rising, again and again, no matter how many times life tries to push you down.

To my parents—**Nunzio** and **Maria**—your sacrifices are the foundation this entire story stands on. Papà, your silence was louder than any applause. You showed me that love is in action. Mamma, your tenderness was the compass that always pointed me home. You both taught me to be strong, to be proud, to never break even when bent. I carry your wisdom with me daily.

To my brother, **Raffaele**—you were my mirror, my partner, my anchor. You reminded me of where I came from when I started to forget. I never had to face a storm alone because you were always there, without question.

This book is for you. Because this life—this climb—was never mine alone.

“La famiglia è tutto.”
(Family is everything.)

Prologue

Before the Climb

Every rise begins with a reckoning.

Not the kind that arrives with applause or a title, but the kind that happens in silence—when you realize no one is coming to save you, and it's up to you to change your story. That's where I began. At the bottom, with nothing but will in my chest and pressure on my shoulders.

I wasn't born into fortune. I was born into fire. Into long days, thick air, and quiet sacrifices. Into a world where love wasn't spoken but shown in labor, in loyalty, in the way we showed up for one another even when we had nothing left to give. What I lacked in privilege, I inherited in purpose.

There was no straight path, no easy road. Only obstacles that tested everything I claimed to believe about myself. I was humbled. I was hardened. But I never stopped. I couldn't. There were people depending on me—people who had given everything just to give me a chance. I climbed because I had to. Because standing still wasn't survival—it was surrender.

This isn't the story of a man who had it all figured out. It's the story of a man who refused to be defined by where he started. Who carried his past like a torch, not a chain. Who made a promise to rise—and did.

If you're looking for perfection, you won't find it here. But if you're looking for truth—truth born in hardship, refined by struggle, and lifted by love—then you're holding it now.

This is for those who come from little but dream of more.

For those who were told to stay down.

For those who rise anyway.

Because the climb is hard.

But the view is earned.

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Section - 01

Roots and Foundations

Chapter - 01

The House Near the Tailor Shop



Me as a Newborn

If I close my eyes, I can still smell the faint scent of fresh fabric and hear the rhythmic hum of my father's sewing machine. The house near Nunzio's Tailor Shop in Peekskill, New York, was the world I knew. From the outside, it was just a modest two-family house, but to me, it was everything. That shop—its hum, its smell, its very essence—was where I learned the true meaning of family, hard work, and perseverance.

It wasn't just a building; it was where my parents lived, breathed, and built a life for us.

The hum of my father's sewing machine was the soundtrack of my

childhood, its rhythmic click-clack echoing through the rooms, blending with the sound of scissors cutting fabric. Every day, without fail, I'd hear that steady rhythm—so constant and unwavering—that it became a part of me, ingrained in my memories like the heartbeat of our home. The shop wasn't just where my father worked; it was where our family thrived. It was where dreams were stitched together, quietly, one piece at a time.

I watched my father, Nunzio, with a sense of awe. He wasn't a man of many words, but his actions spoke louder than any words could have. Every day, he poured himself into his work—cutting, stitching, pressing, with a meticulous focus that left no room for distractions. There was a quiet intensity about him, a drive that was palpable even in the silence. It was the kind of work that demanded patience, attention to detail, and a deep sense of responsibility. As a young boy, I didn't fully appreciate the weight of his sacrifice, nor did I understand the toll it took on him. He never spoke of his past, the hardships he faced when he first arrived in America, or the long nights he spent working just to make ends meet. But I could feel it. I could feel it in the way he worked, in the quiet strength that radiated from him, in the way he carried the burden of providing for us without ever complaining.

Then there was my mother, Maria. She was the heart of our family. While my father worked tirelessly, she was there beside him, sewing with her own hands. She didn't speak much either, but her love wasn't expressed in words—it was in everything she did. The meals she cooked with care, the way she kept the home warm and inviting, the love she poured into every little detail. Her laughter, soft and gentle, was the thread that held us together, even when everything else felt uncertain. Where my father's love was shown in silent dedication, my mother's love was shown in warmth and comfort, in the way she made our home feel safe and nurturing. I never fully understood it back then, but now, as an adult, I realize that my parents' love for us wasn't always loud, but it was constant. It was unwavering. It was in every action they took, in every sacrifice they made.

My father's silence wasn't coldness; it was his way of showing love. He didn't need to say "*I love you*" because every hour he spent working, every stitch of fabric, every garment he crafted, was his way of saying, "*I love you*." And my mother, with her warmth and tenderness, showed love through the simple acts of care—preparing meals, making sure we were well, offering a quiet word of comfort when things got tough. Together, they created a home, a foundation that I would grow from, even if I didn't fully understand it at the time.

Back then, I took it for granted. I didn't see it as anything special. But now, with the clarity of time and experience, I see it for what it was—an extraordinary gift. My parents didn't just build a life for us; they created a legacy. They worked tirelessly, not just to provide for us materially, but to give us something deeper—a sense of purpose, a sense of worth, and a strong foundation built on love and hard work.

There were times when I resented their relentless drive. The long hours spent at the shop, the focus on work that sometimes overshadowed everything else, the times when I longed for their attention, for their time. I didn't understand why they seemed so focused on work—why it often felt like the shop came before everything else. I wanted more of their attention. I wanted to hear them say how proud they were of me, how much they loved me. But looking back, I realize their work wasn't just about earning a living. It was about creating a future for us, a future where I could stand on the shoulders of their sacrifices. Their commitment to us, though unspoken, was the strongest form of love they could give. Every long hour at the shop, every stitch in a suit, was a step toward something greater—a life that I would one day carry forward.

Their love, though silent at times, was the strongest force that shaped me. It wasn't something that was spoken loudly—it was in every action, in every gesture. It was the foundation of everything I am today. I now see that the work they did, the silent love they showed, laid the groundwork

for everything I would become. And I see that the greatest gift they gave me was not just the life they built for me—it was the values they instilled in me: the importance of family, hard work, resilience, and love.

In those moments when I felt the weight of their sacrifice, I didn't understand it. But now, I know they were teaching me how to rise. They were showing me that no matter how hard life gets, no matter how difficult the road, the key to overcoming it is to keep moving forward. They were the first to rise for me—my father with his quiet strength, my mother with her unspoken warmth—and they taught me that I, too, could rise. I, too, could face life's challenges with courage and resilience. I now understand that their sacrifices weren't just about providing for me; they were about teaching me how to rise, how to persevere, and how to make a legacy that would carry on through me.

And now, as I reflect on my own role as a father, I realize that the same responsibility rests with me. It's my turn to rise—for my children, for my family, for the future we are building together. I rise because I know they need me, and I rise because I know that every choice I make today will shape the future we leave behind. It's not just about providing a material life for them—it's about giving them the tools, the values, and the strength to rise on their own. It's about showing them, by my actions, that they too can face life's difficulties and rise above them.

I am so grateful for the foundation my parents gave me. It wasn't always easy, but it was always rooted in love. Their silent sacrifices, their hard work, and their unwavering belief in me are the greatest gifts they ever gave me. And now, I pass that gift on to my own children.

So, to my family, I say this: You are my legacy. You are the reason I rise every day. And I will always rise for you—just as my parents did for me.

Chapter - 02

Mamma's Hands and Papà's Rules



Mj Beloved Parents And Brother

My mother's hands were magic. They moved with such grace and purpose—whether she was stirring a pot in the kitchen or stitching together the fabric for a new dress. I remember the way she would hum to herself as she worked, her voice a soft, soothing melody that filled the house with warmth and love. It wasn't just the meals she prepared, though they were always delicious—it was the love she poured into everything she did. Whether she was cooking, sewing, or simply tending to us, her hands were always in motion, always giving.

The scent of fresh bread or garlic would often waft through the air as she prepared dinner, and even the smell of cleaning soap had a sense of comfort to it. My mother's presence was a constant in a world that sometimes felt unpredictable. When I would come home from school, feeling overwhelmed by everything, she would stop what she was doing for a moment, touch my forehead, and ask, "*com'è andata la tua giornata, amore mio?*" ("*How was your day, my love?*") Her care for us was evident in everything—how she always made sure we had enough, how she kept the house in order, and how she made sure we never went to bed hungry or feeling unloved.

Her love wasn't in grand gestures or big proclamations—it was in the small things, in the everyday moments of care. She made every meal feel like an event, every evening together felt like something worth remembering. There was always a calmness to her, a peace that she exuded despite the chaos that could often surround us. It was her laughter that brought life into the room. When things got hard, when life threw challenges our way, it was my mother who found joy in the simplest things—a song, a shared moment, the sound of us all sitting down for a meal together. I came to admire her ability to find light even in the darkest of times.

In contrast, my father, Nunzio, was different. There was no easy warmth about him, no spontaneous affection. He was a man of few words, and when he spoke, it was always with purpose. There was no room for small talk in his world—he believed actions spoke louder than words. My father's love wasn't shown through hugs or smiles, but through the way he worked tirelessly, day after day, building his life, and in turn, providing for us. He had a relentless drive to succeed, to give us everything we needed. He was unwavering in his commitment to us, even when it seemed like he was emotionally distant. I didn't always understand it, and at times, it felt like he was distant, even cold. But now, looking back, I realize that his stoicism was just another form of care. He wasn't the type to say "*I love you*" often, but his work, his quiet strength, spoke it louder than any

words could.

As a child, I wanted more from him—more affection, more attention. I wanted him to tell me how proud he was of me, to show me he cared in the ways my mother did. But his silence left me feeling distant from him, even though deep down, I knew that his silence wasn't a lack of care. It was his way of loving me—he was preparing me for life, teaching me that the world wasn't going to hand me anything. Everything, every ounce of success, had to be earned. I now realize he was shaping me into someone who could stand on their own two feet. His lessons were never overt, never gentle. They were embedded in his actions, in his refusal to rest, in his quiet determination to build a future for us.

It took me years to understand the depth of his love. I couldn't see it at the time, wrapped up as I was in my own desires for validation and attention. But as I grew older, I began to see that his silence was not a sign of absence, but of a commitment to something greater. His love was in the sacrifice, in the long hours at the shop, in the way he set the foundation for our family's future. His love was in every calloused hand, every tired step, every moment he worked past his own exhaustion.

Now, I realize that his lessons weren't just about hard work or discipline—they were about survival. My father wanted me to understand that the world doesn't hand you anything on a silver platter. You have to earn it. The drive, the quiet strength, the refusal to let the world get the best of him—that's what he wanted me to learn. And he did it without ever saying a word, never needing to remind me. His actions spoke volumes.

But as I grew older, I started to see the cracks in his armor. One night, after a long day at the shop, he came into my room, sat at the edge of my bed, and for the first time in my life, I saw his vulnerability. His posture sagged as he looked me in the eyes with a rare softness. *"Don't waste time,"* he told me softly, his voice breaking for just a moment. *"Life's short. Work hard, and Never stop. I did it all for jou."* It was the most heartfelt thing he had ever said to me, and it felt like everything that was unspoken between us had finally

come to the surface.

And that was the moment I understood—His toughness wasn't just a way of life—it was his way of loving me.

THE FIRST TO RISE



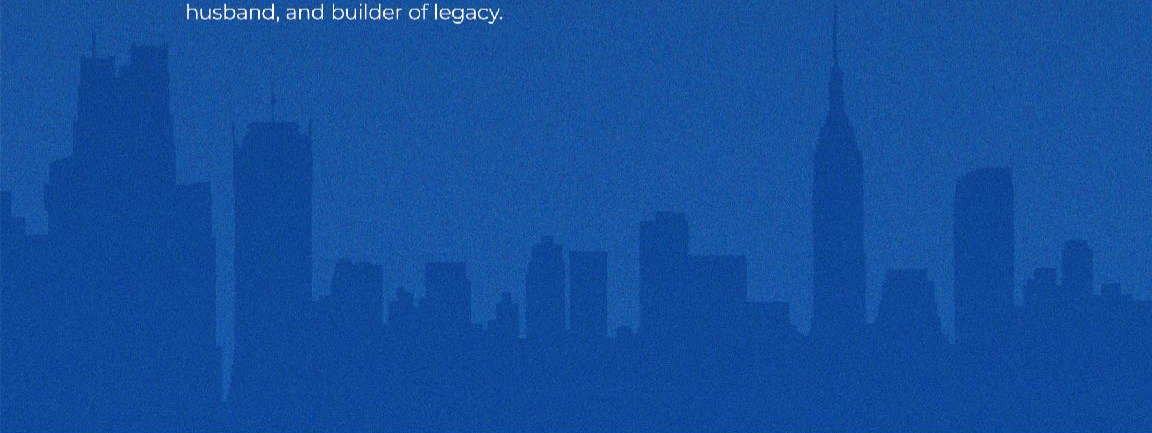
"Success is measured not by what you earn, but by what you build—for your family, your clients, and the generations after you."

Biagio Maffettone is a man who rose from humble beginnings to become a successful force in the real estate and mortgage financing industry—and a living example of resilience, leadership, and heart. For over twenty years, he has served clients with dedication, helping individuals and families turn dreams into homes and goals into milestones. But his success has never been

defined by title or trophies—it's been defined by the lives he's impacted and the deep relationships he has fostered.

Biagio is known for his deep financial expertise, leadership, and unmatched commitment to work. He has earned numerous accolades and has held senior roles at top institutions. Yet at his core, he is a family man—driven by love, grounded in loyalty, and devoted to building something greater than himself.

Whether mentoring young professionals, guiding clients through pivotal life moments, or simply being present at the dinner table, Biagio leads with purpose and humility. He lives in New York with his beloved family, where his journey continues—not just as a business professional, but as a father, husband, and builder of legacy.



The Journey Has Just Begun...

You've now had a glimpse into the extraordinary beginning of "*The First To Rise*." This is more than just a story; it's a testament to the power of resilience, reinvention, and redemption—a journey that will inspire you to navigate your own challenges and unlock your fullest potential.

Don't let the rest of this transformative journey remain untold.

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Thank you for being part of this journey. We eagerly await you experiencing the full climb.

THE FIRST TO RISE

A JOURNEY OF RESILIENCE, REINVENTION,
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