**My story**

I was born and raised in Rome in a middle-class family, with a brother just a little older than me. I’ve always been a very active and determined person. I started swimming when I was 6 years old, going back and forth in the pool following the blue line at the bottom of the lane until I was 18. I wasn’t in love with the sport itself – I liked the idea of having chosen a cause and fighting for it every single day.

At 14, I enrolled in a classical high school majoring in humanities. It was a rather simple choice since my brother and cousins had all studied there before me. I really enjoyed those years. Through the study of literature and philosophy, I felt like I gained a deeper understanding of human beings - or at least of myself. It was a real training ground for developing logic and critical thinking. I also loved mathematics, which at the time I found quite easy to understand. It gave me a lens on the world that complemented the humanistic one. Studying the classics also taught me to love reading. I wouldn’t call myself a great reader today, but I try to keep up the habit, if only to avoid being completely brainwashed by my phone.

I remember one book in particular that I really enjoyed: *Why Nations Fail (*D. Acemoglu, J.A. Robinson). It explained how the prosperity of nations has always been tied to the presence of inclusive institutions, rather than to geographical or cultural factors. Cities very close to each other, like Nogales, Arizona (US) and Nogales, Sonora (Mexico), ended up with vastly different per capita incomes, even though all other variables were essentially the same.

At the end of high school, I was very unsure about which university path to take. In the end, fueled by the curiosity for social sciences that the book had sparked in me, I decided to enroll in an Economics degree. I stayed in my city because there was a good university and I could save on rent, but I always had the idea of gaining experience abroad. From the very beginning, I aimed for a high GPA and when the opportunity came, I applied for an Erasmus exchange to spend a semester abroad. I put Amsterdam as my first choice, where I had a few contacts studying, and I was convinced I’d get it. I had everything in mind already: the university, the courses, the group of friends, the trips. But life surprised me.

I ended up in a small university town in Sweden, where I faced the cold, the dark and a culture very different from my own. Soon this experience it turned out to be a game-changer for my personal and professional life. I met ambitious students eager to make their mark in the world. Over time they became close friends and we’re still in touch today. By being around them every day, I realized how important it is to surround yourself with a network that motivates you to take one more step toward your goals. Back in Rome, I felt a huge desire to push myself even further. I sent countless CVs all over Europe, but it seemed like no one was interested in my profile. And yet, I had worked hard to get good grades and build meaningful extracurricular experiences.

Almost at the last moment, and to my great surprise, I landed a summer internship at one of the world’s leading financial firms. For the first time, I felt like I had achieved something off the beaten path, something the people around me hadn’t expected. I spent three amazing months in Poland, in a young and stimulating professional environment. During that summer, I had the chance to deepen my knowledge of financial markets and attend high-level conferences with the company’s global management teams in London and New York.

Motivated by these experiences, I decided to continue my studies in Rome with a Master’s in Finance. From day one, I approached my studies differently. I wanted to give practical meaning to what I was reading, from asset pricing to international economics. I started reading newspapers and took my first steps in investing. Even during my Master’s, I went abroad through Erasmus and spent a semester in France at one of the most prestigious business schools in the world. What struck me wasn’t so much the quality of teaching, which felt similar to what I was used to, but the quality of the students. At barely twenty years old, many of them already had incredible experiences: some had worked for top banks, others in startups and a few had even founded their own companies with their friends. Listening to those entrepreneurial stories opened my eyes. I realized that what I wanted to maximize in the years ahead wasn’t my salary, it was my technical skills.

When I returned to Rome, I started an internship in Mergers & Acquisitions, convinced it would be a great training ground for an ambitious young guy like me. I thought that by working twice as much as a regular employee, I would learn what I wanted in half the time. But after a few months, I realized that path wasn’t for me and I had the courage to change direction. Then, I graduated and began working at a major Italian financial institution, where I still work today, promoting and executing investments for the group.

Now, as I write to you, dear Lit Investor, I am 25 years old. And despite all the experiences above, I’m still at the very beginning of my career. With this blog, I don’t intend to teach anyone lessons – I simply want to share my journey, both human and professional, in the hope of inspiring others to be more intentional and self-aware in their financial choices.

* *A*