

**From Prague To Florida And**

**Back:**

**A Diary Of Dreams And Reality**

**By Lux Lucens**



**ISBN:**

978-80-11-06835-6 (PDF)

978-80-11-06836-3 (ePub)

978-80-11-06837-0 (Mobipocket)

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Published 9.7.2025 by Prime Enterprises Media, Prague

First Edition

“This book isn’t about perfection. It’s about the  
courage to face the truth, and to return to yourself.

Gently. With respect. And without shame.”

Lux *Lucens*

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who have allowed me to become the person I am today. You showed me the kind of life that speaks to you, and at the same time, you respected my right to live life in my own way.

## Disclaimer

This book is a work of fiction inspired by personal experiences and is intended solely for educational and awareness purposes. The content explores themes of family conflict and domestic violence in a broad, human context. It does not aim to represent or criticize any specific culture, religion, government, or legal system. All characters and events are either fictional or depicted in a non-identifying manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or deceased, locations, or events is purely coincidental. The author fully respects the laws, traditions, and values of the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and the Czech Republic. The purpose of this work is to encourage dialogue, healing, and understanding.

## Introduction

This book was born out of silence. Out of the years spent pretending everything was fine. That “it’s not that bad.” That if I just tried harder, understood more, forgave more, it would stop eventually. It didn’t. I’ve been there. In the words that make you doubt yourself. In the looks that make you feel like you’re losing your mind. In those moments when you smile on the outside while your voice is slowly dying on the inside.

Writing this book was my way of reclaiming myself, piece by piece. And, just maybe, it can become your way too. Not because we share the same story, but because we know the same silence. Because we might carry the same fear. And the same hope. I’m not a therapist. I’m simply a person who decided to speak. Loudly. To tell you this: You are not alone. You are not too sensitive, weak, or wrong. You are perfect as you are, a unique soul.

There is no one like you, and there never will be. Maybe you're reading this book in secret. Maybe you're still in it. Maybe you've left, but inside, you still feel lost. Wherever you are, allow yourself to read slowly. Allow yourself to feel it. And allow yourself to believe that a world can exist for you too. A world where there is peace. Where silence is not punishment. Where love doesn't hurt. This is the beginning. The beginning of coming back to yourself.



## CHAPTER 1

### FROM PRAGUE TO FLORIDA

Jana was thirty, with five-month-old twin girls and a life that, from the outside, seemed fine. But she lived in constant tension. Her husband, Carl, an Austrian by birth and a trained economist, was often at work, and when he came home, it was usually late. He often passed out on the couch, reeking of alcohol.

Increasingly, she could feel the distance growing between them. Whenever she tried to talk, he shut down or got defensive. Sometimes he wouldn't speak to her for days, punishing her with silence. When she explained how hurt she felt when Carl didn't keep his word and ruined their plans, he brushed her off with a smile, and in that moment, she felt small, exposed...foolish forever opening.

Jana understood the message clearly: Don't ask again. But the problem didn't disappear just because it wasn't discussed. It lingered, unspoken. The weight of his unresolved past, especially the emotionally unfinished relationship with his ex-girlfriend, Agatha, who still held an oddly strong grip on him, crept between them like a silent shadow, slowly dimming the light they once shared. Agatha claimed she was fine. Her messages were polite on the surface, but behind the perfectly timed texts, there was only one thing driving her, revenge. Jealousy wrapped in charm. Anger disguised as closure. Agatha didn't want him back, if anything, she wanted him to hurt, just like he had made her hurt. She wanted him to feel bad for how he'd treated her.

One day, Carl announced a new plan: they would move to the United States and open a German restaurant. For him, it meant a fresh start because he liked cooking, an escape from everything he didn't want to face in Prague. To Jana, it sounded like yet another one of his overly ambitious, impulsive dreams. She said no. Carl ignored her answer. The arguments grew more frequent, the exhaustion deeper, and the sense of suffocation more constant. She began to see things differently. Eventually, she apologized, not because she believed in the dream, but because she was tired of

fighting. In the end, she agreed, but not because she believed in his vision of living in warmth and working in a restaurant. She needed to leave. She wanted to breathe. Without conviction, but with determination. She didn't expect miracles. She just hoped that, in a foreign world, she might find at least a bit of the peace she was missing at home. She loved warmth and imagined beautiful weather within a calmer life.

and a safer environment. Florida seemed like the perfect place for a childhood full of movement and sunshine. Her husband flew to the United States first. He said he needed to prepare everything, find a location for the restaurant, secure housing, arrange for lawyers, and start the visa process. He settled in Southwest Florida, in a rented apartment, but his plan was to buy a house with their joint investments. Soon after his departure, Jana received a video from Florida. Her husband appeared in the video, enthusiastic and calm. He spoke about the new beginning, the energy he felt from the place, and the restaurant he had found, an old house for rent, closed for several years.

She hoped that Carl would take care of the family, as it was his dream, just as he had told her. Jana never fully believed him. There was always a small but. But after months of misunderstandings, scenes, exhaustion, spite, arguments, unspoken resentments, and uncertainty about where their relationship was really headed, she no longer had the strength to fight. She was drained. Two small children, the daily chaos, and the feeling that she was standing still. So, she decided, she would give it a try. A few months later, she was sitting on the plane. It was humid outside, hot and noisy inside the cabin. The children screamed and cried the entire way. Fellow passengers gave her angry looks. Questions swirled in her mind. The start of a new life didn't look anything like a dream.

## CHAPTER 2

### A NEW BEGINNING, OLD SHADOWS

The apartment Carl had rented for them was part of a low-rise complex in a community with palm trees, an outdoor pool, and a small playground, just a few minutes' drive from the main road. Everything looked clean, neat, almost idyllic, if you didn't look too deeply. The apartment looked nothing like the photos. When Jana stepped inside, the air felt thick, stale, and heavy with disappointment. The place hadn't been cleaned, not even out of courtesy. Dust coated every surface; the fridge door was stuck with grime and mold. The washer didn't work. The AC, clogged and wheezing, pushed out more dust than air. She tried calling the real estate agent, but it was clear the deal had been sealed the moment Carl signed the contract. "It's yours now. Ask the owner to fix it," they said. The bed frames were broken. Splintered wood jutted out like old wounds barely healed. The nightstands tilted on damaged legs, useless. Nothing had been painted, no fresh start offered, just the dull, tired walls of someone else's neglect. Jana didn't cry. She rolled up her sleeves. She found a cleaning company and booked them to deep clean the carpets, the stained sofa, and the beds that reeked of stories she didn't want to know. If this was her new beginning, it came wrapped in dust and silence. But it was hers to reclaim.

The restaurant Carl had found in the meantime was nearby. An older, single-story building with a peeling façade, a large parking lot, and a rusty sign holder from the previous business, swept away by a hurricane. Inside, everything was covered in dust. The air conditioner hummed, and an old refrigerator still stood in the kitchen with a sign that read "Do not unplug." But it was a place where someone could come, sit down, and eat. And for now, that was enough. Jana got to work with the cleaning, ordering, and paperwork. He handled the bureaucracy, organizing the renovations, negotiating with suppliers, and talking

about the concept. It was supposed to be a simple menu, authentic recipes, no extravagance. The specialties would be German sausages, schnitzels, and beer. Although the name of the restaurant sounded a bit like a joke, Jana didn't comment on it. She had other concerns.

Surprisingly, people started coming early on. Locals, curious tourists, and Germans who had settled in the area. They liked the food. Some returned, bringing their friends. The atmosphere in the restaurant was lively, sometimes even family-like. Flags waved outside, and real German sausages, made by the butcher-owner, were served. Homemade apple strudel and Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte were also on the menu. It seemed like a success. In the pictures, one could say they were happy. But at home, things were boiling over. Cigarettes and alcohol became Carl's closest companions. He would leave for work in the morning, and by noon, he'd had just enough to dull whatever pain he was carrying. At first, Jana believed that if she mirrored his behavior, he might see himself more clearly, maybe even stop. She started smoking as well. One evening, she drank until she passed out in front of the TV, just as he did almost every day. However, he didn't seem to notice. If anything, he appeared more comfortable than ever. She tried to talk to him. Gently at first, choosing the right moment, the right words. She asked if he was okay, if something was wrong, and if they could try to fix things together. He admitted his fault and promised he would stop drinking, but those promises were just meant to calm her down. The truth was, he had no real desire to stop drinking, or to confront the patterns that kept him stuck. He promised only to manipulate Jana. After a few weeks, every evening he disappeared to the back terrace of the restaurant, a cigarette in one hand and vodka in the other. He was tired, irritable, and sometimes completely detached. They hardly spoke. He already had a friend to talk to: Agatha. When Jana tried to reach him, he brushed her off with a joke, a shrug, or silence. And when she pushed harder, he would get irritated or simply leave the room. It was like talking to a wall, one that drank, smoked, and felt nothing.

Jana sat on the apartment's porch, listening to the hum of the air conditioner, the cicadas, and the muffled rustling of the palms bending in the wind from the ocean. She wondered if she was really starting over in this town, or if she had simply escaped from one trap into another. It had already occurred to her that Carl had a problem with alcohol. She wanted to help him, but she didn't know how to address it. However, Carl didn't really want her help. Long ago, he had made a quiet decision, to retreat into his inner world, numbing the outer one with alcohol and cigarettes. Running from himself, from his responsibilities, was easier than facing reality. She thought that if she could convince his father and sister, they might help her get Carl to try professional treatment. Carl's sister, Doreen, answered politely but ignored every email Jana sent. No advice. No support. No help. Just a vague dismissal cloaked as concern: "Carl has always struggled with depression. That's the real issue," she said. But she offered no support. No path forward.

Over time, Jana began to see it clearly, maybe Doreen didn't care about her brother at all. She never lifted a hand to help him. Never reached out to Jana. Never stood up, even when it mattered most. Because, in truth, Doreen preferred Carl to be broken. She was battling her own crumbling marriage, and his suffering gave her company. It made her pain feel less lonely. A silence that screamed louder than words. His father tried to talk to him, begged him, got angry, but nothing helped. Carl had made up his mind. He didn't want to change. He wanted to be the person he was when he was fifteen, without responsibility, without commitments. He didn't want to move forward, only to stop or eventually move backward. At first, he acknowledged that he had a problem. But over time, he convinced himself that the problem wasn't him.

The problem was Jana. She was the one who was never happy, always unsatisfied, always complaining. And somehow, he never saw the mistakes caused by him. Because a narcissistic Carl never asked what he did wrong or why she was complaining. He painted the future, but delivered a nightmare.



### CHAPTER 3

## A HOUSE WITHOUT KEYS

One morning, while Jana was home with the kids, the doorbell rang. Standing outside was the apartment's landlord. Without calling ahead, without an apology, she announced she had "forgotten something in the closet." Without waiting for permission, she stepped inside, saying she was the owner and needed to pick up something. She continued walking to the bedroom, opened a locked wardrobe, grabbed what she needed, and left without a word of thanks.

Jana stood frozen. A stranger had just walked through their private space, uninvited. A foreign country, a rented apartment, no privacy, no safety. That evening ended in a fight with Carl. Everything boiled over, housing, work, money, alcohol, the kids. "I'm flying back to Prague," she said firmly. Carl stood up, clenching his fists. "You're not going anywhere," he snapped. When she began searching for tickets, he ripped the laptop from her hands and locked her in the bedroom. "Buy it, and you'll see," he muttered through clenched teeth and raised his hand. He struck her lightly on the shoulder, not with force, but with meaning. A signal of a threat, that he could escalate.

Jana froze. One question echoed in her head: Where is the line, and what may happen next? Sitting on the bed in silence, she realised this wasn't about an argument. It wasn't even about the alcohol. It was about power. About control. And yet, somewhere deep down, she still hoped there was love left in all of it. That he still cared. She didn't leave. She stayed quiet, pretending it hadn't happened. A few days later, they argued again, this time in the restaurant's back office. A small room with thin walls. Carl sat at the desk, drinking wine. Jana stood, folder in hand, upset that he hadn't ordered supplies. The freezer was empty. Chaos was coming. "You're acting like a general," he said coolly. She slammed the folder on the desk. "I'm not playing boss. I just want things to work." Carl jumped up and started yelling. Words flew. Outside, silence. The staff had gone quiet. Then he shoved her hard, and she hit the wall. Not injured but warned.

The force said it all: I'm in control. In his eyes, she no longer saw an intimate