

## Nino's Broken Threads

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Nino was nine years old and had an impressive collection of perfectly sharpened pencils. He tidied his notebooks to the nearest millimetre, never dared to write without a ruler, and spent hours choosing the right word before even starting to write. He couldn't stand erasures, dog-eared pages or even a forgotten comma. For him, every detail counted.

But what Nino really had was a knot in his stomach. A knot that tightened every time the teacher wrote an exercise on the blackboard. Every time someone said to him: "Try it". Because for Nino, trying meant risking making a mistake. And getting it wrong was like breaking something invisible and precious inside him. A little thread, very thin, that linked his heart to his confidence.

"What if I don't succeed? What if it's wrong? What if everyone sees it? What if they laugh at me?" he thought, often without daring to raise his hand. Even when he knew the answer, he froze.

Little by little, Nino stopped trying. He'd rather hand in a blank sheet of paper than make a mistake. He smiled when people said "You're too discreet", but deep down he felt trapped by a fear he didn't understand. This fear told him that if he failed, then he would be worthless. And that it would be better not to start at all.

His friends thought he was just shy. His parents thought he was studious. The truth is that Nino was afraid of not being up to the job. A fear that gnawed at him in silence, even when he had the answer.

And this fear didn't stop at the classroom door. It followed him to the park, home and his cousins' houses. When he got on his bike, he hesitated, dreading a fall. He only rode on the pavement, slowly, never letting go of the handlebars. When his father offered to help him build a tree house, he declined, fearing he wouldn't do it right or he'd nail it wrong. He said he preferred reading, but that wasn't true: he was just afraid he wouldn't be able to do it. Even when it came to choosing a disguise for the carnival, he went round in circles, afraid that the others would make fun of him. He often ended up not wearing anything at all.

It's as if every area of his life had gradually become entangled in the same fragile thread. A thread that prevented him from trying, from exploring, from dreaming out loud. He remained wise, calm, invisible. But inside, his heart was crying out to try.

One evening, when Nino was pretending to be asleep, he saw a strange light dancing on the ceiling of his bedroom. It was a golden thread descending from the sky, as supple as a vine and as bright as a moonbeam. It wound through the air like a magic ribbon, throwing little sparks at the walls.

And hanging from that thread was... someone. A sort of woollen animal, half fox, half cloud, with mischievous eyes and a coat sewn with multicoloured buttons. It had a thin muzzle, a soft voice and its movements were reminiscent of a slowly unwinding ball of yarn. He looked old and new at the same time, like a cuddly toy you'd loved at first sight.

"Good evening Nino," said the creature. "I am Filou, the weaver of errors."

"Error weaver?" Nino repeated incredulously, rubbing his eyes.

"Yes. I help children stitch up what they think they've damaged. And I think you've left too many broken threads in your head, don't you?"

Nino sat up in bed. It was true. He felt the knot in his stomach tighten a little more. He lowered his head.

"But... I don't know how to do it," he muttered.

"Then follow me," said Filou, holding out his paw, "I'll show you how to repair invisible wires."

Without really understanding how, Nino grabbed the golden thread. He felt a gentle current run through his fingers, like a comforting warmth.

Nino and Filou climbed up the golden thread. After a few moments, they landed in a surprising place: an entirely woven landscape, as if everything had been knitted by a giant hand. The trees had felt leaves, the rivers flowed in shimmering blue threads, and the sky seemed to be sewn with cottony clouds.

"Welcome to the Kingdom of Attempts," announced Filou with a smile. "Here, no one laughs at those who try. On the contrary, we celebrate every attempt as a treasure."

Around them, children were weaving on large floating looms. Some were concentrating, their tongues sticking out in the effort. Others laughed when they saw that their thread had slipped or that a pattern was crooked. But no one stopped. Everyone kept going. The rugs they created were full of colour, bumps and sometimes holes, but also surprising inventions: a zigzagging sun,

a word embroidered askew that formed a funny new word, a mountain that was all twisted... but unique.

Nino watched a boy who had dropped his ball of yarn. It had cascaded downwards, all the thread tangled up. Instead of panicking, the boy laughed and said: "It looks like a river! I'm going to make a stream! And he enthusiastically continued weaving.

"You see," says Filou, "here we learn that mistakes are not an obstacle, but a different direction. Sometimes better."

They approached an old, somewhat abandoned loom. The threads were dull and tangled, and some looked torn. Some areas were completely empty.

"It's yours," Filou breathed. "It stopped the day you started thinking that cheating on yourself was a failure, not a step."

Nino felt a lump in his throat. He reached out and touched a loom. A small flicker appeared. Then another, in an area he thought he'd forgotten.

"Remember the time you dared to raise your hand to ask 'I didn't understand'? It's that thread. It's strong."

"And this one," added Filou, touching a green thread, "is when you helped your cousin do her jigsaw puzzle. You were afraid you were going to do it wrong, but you tried. And you had fun."

Nino stared at his work for a long time. It wasn't perfect. But it was his. And he wanted to start again.

Filou guided Nino to the edge of the Kingdom. There, a suspension bridge, made of intertwined wires and flickering knots, stretched over a cottony void.

"This is the Bridge of Trembling Thread," says Filou. "Anyone who wants to leave with a new thread must cross it. But be careful, it reflects your thoughts. If you doubt, it wavers. If you move forward, it stabilises."

Nino looked at the wires. Some were as fine as hair, others more solid. He put one foot down, then the other. The bridge began to shake gently. As he moved forward, words materialised around him, woven into the air like floating strips.

"You'll make a fool of yourself." "Everyone's better than you." "You can't do it."

He'd been hearing these phrases in his head for years. They had followed him in silence, like shadows glued to his footsteps.

"They keep telling me I'm going to fail!" cried Nino, tears welling up in his eyes.

"Then answer them," murmured Filou, perched on an arch of the bridge. "With new threads, woven from your own words."

Nino closed his eyes. He concentrated. And out loud, he said:

"I can learn even if I'm wrong." "Mistakes aren't a disgrace, they're a step forward." "I'm not perfect, but I'm brave."

With each sentence, a thread of the bridge became firmer. Colours appeared, as if the words were creating new weavings beneath her feet.

Suddenly there was a gust of wind. It was no ordinary wind: it was the gust of shame. It brought with it very specific memories: the day Nino had misread in front of the whole class and some of the pupils had laughed. The day he'd fallen off his bike and two older children had whispered when they looked at him.

Nino staggered. The bridge wobbled violently.

"I'm going to fall!" he shouted.

"Remember your thread!" said Filou. "That thread around your wrist, it's there to anchor you."

Nino took a deep breath. He placed his hand on the imaginary red thread around his wrist, the one he wore in his dreams. Then he said:

"I have the right to be afraid. But I also have the right to try."

The wind died down. The bridge became stable. Fireflies of light floated around him, illuminating the end of the passage. Nino took one last step. He was on the other side.

"You've just crossed the bridge that many adults never dare to cross," says Filou respectfully.

Nino felt bigger. Stronger. And above all, free to try.

On the other side of the bridge, a valley opened up. Wide, peaceful, bathed in golden light. In the centre stood a huge wooden structure, like a giant loom, its threads stretching to the sky.

"This is the place of the Great Weaving," explained Filou. "This is where you can start to tell your story. A story where every attempt counts. Where mistakes are part of the pattern."

Around the structure, other children were busy weaving their own webs. Some were flamboyant, others still under construction, others darned and patiently mended. One girl had sewn hearts where she had first drawn lightning bolts. A boy had transformed his knots into colourful spirals.

Filou guided Nino towards an empty frame, standing on two large wooden legs. A basket filled with balls of yarn was waiting beside him: red yarns for courage, blue yarns for accepting mistakes, and green yarns for making attempts, however small.

"You can choose whatever colours you like," says Filou. "But know that the most important thing is not that it's pretty. It's that it's real."

Nino hesitated. Then he picked up a pale yellow thread, a little rough. He threaded it through the needle, and with a slightly shaky movement, began his first stitch. The thread got stuck. He had to pull it out, then start again. The first line was crooked.

He looked up, a little worried. But nobody was laughing. Filou winked at him.

"Take a good look. You've started."

So Nino continued. Then he chose a sky-blue thread, representing a memory: the time he had helped his little sister tie her shoelaces, even though he was afraid of doing it wrong. Then an orange thread, for the day he dared to climb a little higher up the tree in the garden.

Each thread became a memory, a discreet victory. And when a mistake was made, when a stitch was missing or a thread broke, Filou taught him how to pick it up again, how to knot it differently, how to make a new loop, a surprise pattern.

Little by little, Nino saw a landscape taking shape on his canvas. There was a winding river, like his learning path. Mountains with frayed peaks, like the fears he had faced. And a twisted but brilliant sun with a red heart at its centre.

"Is that my story?" he asked.

"It's your story in the making," replied Filou. "And it's only just beginning."

Nino stayed there for a long time. He would have liked to weave all night. But the sky was already changing.

"It's time to go home," says Filou. "But don't forget: you're now wearing a red thread on your wrist. It will never leave you. It's the thread of your courage."

In the morning, daylight filtered through the curtains. Nino opened his eyes slowly. For a second, he wondered if it had all been a dream. The golden thread, Filou, the weaving children... Was it all in his imagination?

But as he stretched, he felt a slight tickle around his wrist. He looked down. Nothing was visible... and yet he felt something. Like a soft warmth, an invisible thread, right there, beating like a heart against his skin.

On the way down to breakfast, he passed the mirror. He stopped. There was something different about his reflection. He wasn't taller, or stronger. But his shoulders seemed a little less tense. And his eyes, a little brighter.

At school that day, the teacher asked:

"Who wants to come to the blackboard to solve this problem?"

Nino felt his stomach contract, out of habit. But this time, he discreetly placed his hand on his wrist. The red thread... it was there. Invisible, but very real.

He raised his hand. Not high. Not abruptly. But he raised it. He approached the blackboard. His heart was beating fast. He miscalculated. He felt his cheeks heat up. He heard a murmur. But he breathed in. He corrected. And he finished.

The teacher smiled. She made no comment. She noted something else on the blackboard. But for Nino, it was a huge moment. He had gone to the blackboard. He had stayed on his feet. And he had finished despite the mistake.

That afternoon, in the park, he got on his bike. He pedalled a little faster. He let go of the handlebars for a second, just once. He laughed. He was no longer frozen.

And that evening, in his diary, he wrote a sentence at the very top of the page:

"Today, I dared. And even if it wasn't perfect... it was me."

Nino's thread was no longer broken.

It was imperfect, but alive, colourful, woven from attempts, falls and recoveries.

And that is the most beautiful of fabrics.

And now, when he hesitates to get on his bike, try a new game or say "I don't know", he feels his little red thread around his wrist... and he remembers: he has the right to try.