

# Una idea peregrina

The Idea of a Pilgrimage



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'It was snowing that January afternoon, it was cold, very cold. My heart was frozen; the north-east wind frosted my footsteps. Walking along the seaside, I remembered.

It had been a difficult year, hard, very hard. Both my parents had just died after long, debilitating illnesses which prolonged their agony. I thought about death, my present sadness, my future loneliness.'

The flowers that I had just brought to their grave in the small coastal village were the same ones that my mother, who was always so happy, used to bring home. The same home that I had spent the past month emptying, saying farewell to what was left of my childhood. The next day, I'd go back to my small apartment in the big city, cold and distant, where nobody knows who you are. I said goodbye once more to the sea, to the waves that had watched me grow up, where I had spent my best and worst moments. It was then that I understood what I had to do for the miracle of life to go on, for it to flourish amidst sadness and nostalgia: Walk the St. James Way.'

This is the point of departure for a journey that will change the life of Alfonso Biescas, a man who was entirely destroyed after caring for his parents for years. He begins in Roncesvalles, with a profound, enduring sadness and day by day, kilometre by kilometre, St. James' Way worked its miracle. He manages to find his way to the end amongst tears of sadness, emotion and joy.

This is a story told in a very simple style, which includes travel anecdotes, amusing moments with companions who come and go, and profound reflections on how to overcome loss and find beauty in life once more.

It is not a religious book, the author experiences personal growth and the Miracle of the Way but not from a Catholic point of view. Any reader would be able to identify with this journey (he is always, however, respectful of religion and the religious aspects of the Way.) The book is divided into chapters; each one covers a stage in the journey. The chapters are separated by reflections relating to the stage and a stamp that the pilgrim adds at the end of the stage.

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