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Full Circle in Italy

Full Circle in Italy

This week, I had one of those full circle moments—the kind that makes you pause and appreciate just how far you’ve come. And of all places, it happened in Italy, over a long lunch with my friend Theresa and her husband, Brian.

I met Theresa four years ago, not on a cobblestone street or tucked into a hillside vineyard, but in the middle of a frozen Tulsa winter. It was January 21st. I had just finished a 30-hour, non-stop, sleep-deprived drive from the East Coast. We’d signed a lease on a downtown apartment sight unseen (bold move), and I was still shifting boxes around when I decided to work from the little café downstairs.



The place was silent. Tulsa does this thing in winter where the whole city seems to hibernate. Not a soul in sight or sound. —Enter Theresa into the cafe.

She didn’t just enter the café—she *arrived*. The room shifted. She has this way of making a place feel lived-in, even if she’s only been there for two minutes.

We had that slightly awkward, “Are we about to be friends?” moment. You know it: two strangers in a quiet room, unsure if small talk is polite or presumptuous. But we’re both chronic extroverts, so we dove right in. Life stories, where we’d lived, what brought us here—and then the “Wait, you’re in the Tulsa Remote program too?” moment hit. Instant connection.

From there, the friendship just *happened*. Effortlessly. She’s one of those people who shows up for the big things, celebrates the little things, and makes everything in between feel meaningful. We supported each other through life in Tulsa, cheered at the Tulsa Ironman (which is where my triathlon obsession was born—Santa Monica, I see you), and I watched in awe as she launched her own creative business: a brilliant line of games and puzzles called *Crazy Ideas*. Only Theresa could turn quirky ideas into something clever, meaningful, and joyful all at once.

Fast forward to now: we’re both homeowners in Tulsa. I’m running Slate Sourdough and raising my daughter, Aurora. And somehow—life placed us both in Italy at the same time.

So naturally, when a good friend is just a train ride away, you pack up your toddler and go.

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what I didn't realize is that lunch in Italy isn't just lunch. It's an *event*. Breakfast is a quick bite, but lunch? It's sacred. It's long, slow, filled with depth and laughter and those pauses where no one feels the need to rush to the next thing. It felt deeply human.



Seeing Theresa & her husband Brian there, in Italy, felt like seeing a story come full circle. We were no longer those strangers in a cold quiet café—we were older, wiser, still very much ourselves, just with more chapters behind us. Sharing a plate of pasta under the Italian sun felt like the most natural thing in the world.





Of course, in true Lawrence-and-Theresa fashion, the day ended with a dramatic sprint through the train station. I was seconds from buying a new ticket when we found out the train was miraculously five minutes late.



Thank goodness for late trains.

Aurora had the time of her life, and so did I. I'm endlessly grateful—for friends who turn into chosen family, for Italian lunches that linger, and for life's strange and beautiful way of bringing people back together when you least expect it.

For the love of sourdough,
Lawrence

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