

Presentation

After the promise comes the fall. After the fall comes the question: what now?

The Glass Tiger: Cemetery of Illusions is the volume in the trilogy where the game stops being the protagonist and gives way to people. Men and women who reached the edge not from moral weakness, but from believing in an escape that never existed.

In this book, the reader follows a support group made up of people addicted to digital betting games. Each meeting reveals a different story: how they discovered the game, what they did for a living, where they believed they were in control — and the moment they realized they were only trying to outrun their own pain.

This is not a book about turning ruin into spectacle.

It is a book about awareness.

By listening to these accounts, the reader understands that the game doesn't destroy only finances — it warps the perception of time, of hope, and of human relationships. The promise of easy

money reveals itself, in every story, for what it truly is: a postponement of pain that returns multiplied.

With a psychological, humane, and responsible narrative, *The Glass Tiger: Cemetery of Illusions* shows that rock bottom isn't a single place — it's a silent process. And that getting out doesn't depend on luck, but on recognition, voice, and collective support.

Although set in Brazil, this is a universal story. Because the mechanisms of digital addiction cross borders, cultures, and social classes. And because the illusion of control is a global trap.

This book serves a clear purpose within the trilogy: to teach, without moralizing, that escape doesn't pay. That the game isn't worth it. And that facing pain, as hard as it is, costs less than vanishing in the attempt to avoid it.

The Glass Tiger: Cemetery of Illusions is the book in which the reader understands, definitively, that there is no possible victory in this game — only the chance to break the cycle before it takes everything.

Enjoy reading!

Book III: IN RUINS...AND NOW?

— CHAPTER 1 —

THE ARRIVAL

Part 1: Arriving Too Early

Ricardo arrived too early.

He knew it before he looked at his watch — not by intuition, but by aversion. Arriving early meant brushing up against an interval. And an interval was the one thing his system had always tried to eliminate.

The gap arrived before thought. And when it did, something in him tightened—a brief, almost physical discomfort he'd learned to cut off before it could take shape.

He turned off the engine, but he didn't get out.

Across the street, the building looked like it had been designed not to be found. No sign. No promise. No visible effort to seem welcoming. No *you're not alone*. No *today your new life begins*. Nothing.

It irritated him in a specific way: the way it irritates someone used to being seduced by a well-rehearsed script. He stared at the facade the way you stare at an interface that refuses to show buttons.

“A place that doesn’t try to capture you...” he murmured.

The line came out dry, without a trace of charm—more diagnosis than praise.

“You didn’t come looking for comfort,” Livia didn’t arrive as a thought. She arrived as a fact.

Ricardo tightened his grip on the steering wheel. The leather pushed back against the pressure like a small defeat.

“I came because they told me to.”

“You came because you ran out of any argument worth a damn,” she shot back. *“And because, for the first time, your cold histories didn’t explain you.”*

Ricardo smiled — a short smile, humorless.

The records accounted for people. They didn’t account for the void

His monitors showed hours, spikes, dips, returns. They showed patterns of compulsion as if they were weather events: *rain at 03:14, storm after an argument, return in 48 hours*. They showed people reduced to a line.

But the line didn't show the moment before the click. It didn't show the second the hand stops. It didn't show the shame before it became routine. It didn't show the way a hand trembles before lying to someone you love. It didn't show the body begging for anesthesia.

And that was what he'd come to find—not to help, but to complete the model.

Ricardo drew a deep breath, as if calibrating an internal sensor.

“What are you going to do?” Lívia asked. *“Open the room and turn it into a dashboard?”*

He ignored her.

Ignoring Lívia was a way of keeping the world clean: without morals, without faces, without emotional blood smeared across the floor. Just data.

Only since the denunciation by his own conscience, her voice no longer obeyed the mute button. The mute button had been his — and the eviction, too.

“You didn’t dismiss me with elegance, Ricardo,” she said, low.
“You discarded me like a bug.”

“Bugs don’t argue,” he replied — then realized he’d spoken too loudly.

The silence inside the car swallowed the sentence and returned an old discomfort: hearing himself.

He opened the door.

The cold outside didn’t wake him. It only touched him. A damp cold, without conviction. Ricardo crossed the street with measured steps, like someone walking through a corridor of blind cameras: not out of fear — out of habit.

Glass gives you back to yourself without asking permission.

Glass is civilized violence: it gives you back to yourself with honesty without asking permission.