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MENTORIS
PROJECT

FERMI'S GIFTS

A NOVEL BASED ON THE LIFE OF
ENRICO FERMI

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Chapter One

THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

“**Y**ou’re standing on the exact spot where Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake,” said the stocky young boy with the bright blue-gray eyes.

“No, it can’t be,” said Giuseppe Bondi, the bookseller. “You’re saying right here? How long ago was this?”

“It’s 1914, so about three hundred years ago. Right where your feet are standing,” the boy said with utter confidence.

Bondi glanced up at the statue of Bruno, which looked down on the busy market day in the Campo de’ Fiore in the middle of Rome. “Now, why would they do a thing like that?” he asked.

“They said he was a heretic,” the boy said. “He believed in many universes and in Copernican astronomy and probability—”

“Wait, wait, wait. Before you begin your lecture, Professor, what did you call that word? Probab...probab...”

“Probability. The number of ways event A can occur divided by the total number of outcomes.”

“I see. I see. Yes, yes,” said Bondi, scratching his chin. “What is the probability that Julietta, the meat-pie seller, has two of those delicious things left this late in the day?”

“I’d say very excellent. See, you divide the number of people here at the market by the time of day and then—”

“Stop jabbering and run! She’ll sell them two-for-one!” said Bondi, handing him two coins.

As the boy ran away in search of meat pies, Bondi scanned the horizon. The Campo de’ Fiore teemed with marketers, who had set up their stalls at sunup. Each Wednesday at 5 a.m. precisely, Bondi arrived, bringing his cart full of old books and a wooden plank for a counter. He had retired from being an elementary school principal, and his wife constantly said, “Why do you need to sell old books? What do you get from it? You are retired. Stay home and rest!”

He supposed she was sensible and right. But Bondi loved the Wednesday market. He found life in the colors of the antique fabrics, the smell of freshly-baked bread, the chatter of the sellers, the glistening of the olives in astounding varieties. The market represented the coming together of the needs of the people of Rome and those who provided food, clothing, fresh perspectives, gossip, and perhaps, in his case, a good read.

His favorite reason for selling was the thirteen-year-old boy who had just run off for meat pies. He had been coming to Bondi’s stall each Wednesday for the past year, usually with his elder brother. Giulio, older by a year, and Enrico, for that was the younger boy’s name, had a warm and loving relationship. It was sometimes as if the rest of the world didn’t exist. They often arrived arm in arm, deep in discussion, or jostling one another, racing to see who could get there first.

Giulio was the typical eldest: confident, loud, and ebullient, making all the decisions, snatching the bag of pignoli cookies Bondi kept under his counter for just this purpose, running away with them and teasing Enrico to come and get

them. He flirted easily with the daughter of the olive oil peddler in the next stall.

Enrico, though forty years younger than Bondi, shared with the bookseller a curiosity about life and a hunger for education. He had an astonishing ability to drink in all the information in a book, retain it, and explain it to Bondi in a manner that made even the most complicated ideas simple to grasp. Giulio was always teasing and running.

Enrico was still growing, but now just entering the passage into manhood. He had dark hair and blue-gray eyes with a probing intensity lightened by his way of looking at the world, an energy that acted as a spark. Thoughtful and introspective, he stood back slightly from life and allowed his older brother to take the lead.

“I’ll bet you I can get the daughter of the baker to give me two anise cookies,” Giulio would brag.

“I’ll bet you will buy them and say she gave them to you,” Enrico would say. Then Giulio would snatch his brother’s cap off his head and run away, taunting him.

“Leave the old books and get some cookies!” Giulio would call over his shoulder, nearly bumping into a rack of hanging chickens. His momentary absence would give Bondi and his young friend moments to catch up.

And so it went, every Wednesday. Bondi grew to love the two brothers, who reminded him of his relationship with his own brother, now long gone. There was nothing like the comfort of a brother.

One Wednesday in January 1915, as Bondi scanned the cobblestone street and noticed the shadow made by the Bruno statue lengthening, he saw no Enrico, no Giulio. The routine had become such a part of his weekly life he hadn’t realized how

much he enjoyed it. Enrico's absence gave Bondi an uneasy feeling. He had only a vague idea where the boy lived, even though they had shared many confidences.

Enrico first appeared late one Wednesday, just as the market was beginning to close. When Bondi asked the boy if he had anything special in mind, Enrico explained that he was looking for math, science, and physics books.

"Shouldn't you be in school, young man?" Bondi asked.

"Sir, my homework is done, and I'm looking for math and science books. I want to be a scientist, and I am especially interested in quantum theory. I would like to see any books about that. Do you have any?"

"Just for special people," Bondi said. He had confidence in his judgments of people and their character, and he liked this forthright and unpretentious young man immediately.

During what soon became their regular Wednesday visits, Enrico told Bondi about his family. The Fermi family sounded admirable. Enrico's mother, Ida de Gattis Fermi, was an elementary school teacher, like Bondi had once been. Enrico told Bondi that she created her own pressure cooker when she couldn't find one in the store. Enrico had a deep respect for his mother, who worked and taught each day while managing a household that also included his father, Alberto, Enrico's brother, Giulio, and their older sister, Maria. Alberto worked for the Italian railroad and was a civil servant, an administrator.

Whenever possible, the Fermi family visited their paternal grandparents, Stefano and Giulia Fermi. Stefano had been a civil servant for the Duke of Parma. They lived on a small parcel of

land outside Caorso, and the children loved to play soccer on the wide lawn.

Enrico told Bondi about one especially memorable visit.

“Enrico, Giulio, Maria!” their grandfather called. “Come inside. I have something special to show you.” The three grandchildren dutifully trooped inside. Stefano unfolded an old uniform and showed them the polished brass buttons with the Duke of Parma’s shield stamped into them. “I was given this for my years of service,” he told them. “Service. Duty. Don’t ever forget that they are what make a man, and they make a country great.” Enrico was impressed.

Dedication and hard work ran in the family. Previous generations of Fermis had been farmers, and as Enrico said to Bondi many times, the practicality never left them. Enrico explained, with the humor characteristic of his personality, that no scrap of food was ever wasted in the Fermi home. Roasted meats were the fare at Sunday lunch. Monday dinner was stew from the roast, the bones were used to flavor a broth for Tuesday, and so forth. Enrico’s father saw no reason to buy something when it could be fashioned with ingenuity from materials already available.

The life of the Fermi family was solid and predictable. Ida and Alberto were not particularly religious, but they had three children in quick succession and baptized them all to please Alberto’s parents, who were devout Catholics. Being the third child in as many years, Enrico was sent to a wet nurse for the first two years of his life. When he was brought back to his birth family, he cried. Ida admonished him to stop crying. “We do not allow naughty children in this household,” she said. Enrico dried his tears and was soon back in the fold, following his older brother.

The Fermis believed in the values of honesty, hard work, and dedication to duty. Stefano Fermi came from Piacenza, in

the Po Valley, and was the first to abandon farming to become a civil servant. He had the stocky build of Fermis after him and was known for his thrift and positive, robust nature. Enrico was only five years old when Stefano died. But he remembered taking vigorous hikes in which his grandfather, though hobbled by arthritis, kept up such a pace that the young boy had to run to keep up.

“My father doesn’t have a university degree,” Enrico told Bondi one day, as they shared an apple tart from the stall across the street. “And yet, through hard work, he reached the position of division head. He’d never tell you that himself, though. He can’t stand braggarts.” Enrico explained that his father’s work took him all over Italy until he finally settled in Rome. “My mother is younger than my father, but just as tough,” he said with a laugh.

Through Enrico and his brother, Giulio, Bondi came to understand this family of five, with two working parents, much love and devotion, and a steady, balanced, and calm daily life.

Ida Fermi patted each of her children on the head when they went to sleep and when they left for school. She gave them short hugs and pots of soup. Giulio, the middle child, was her favorite. Enrico accepted this. Everyone seemed to love Giulio’s warmth, his outgoing personality, and the tricks he played. His favorite trick was quaffing Stefano’s glass of wine while the old man snored through his afternoon nap. He snatched pieces of his mother’s freshly-baked bread and danced her around the tiny kitchen. His charm and good humor brought life and light to the Fermi home.

Giulio and Enrico were inseparable, like two pieces of a puzzle that fit together perfectly. Giulio was outgoing, full of action, always at the center of a gaggle of friends. Enrico admired his

older brother's popularity. Giulio included his younger brother and opened the world to him. Enrico was more reserved, but Giulio emboldened him to contribute his own suggestions. All these things Enrico told Bondi when he visited on market days.

One afternoon in January 1915, during an impromptu soccer game, Enrico suddenly grabbed the ball and ran off. The other boys were not amused.

"Get back here!" "Idiot!" "What's he doing?" "You're stopping the game!" "Giulio, speak to him. Grab him!" Soon the entire team was chasing Enrico down the cobblestone street. Enrico kept just ahead of them and seemed to be doing something with the ball.

The sweaty, rowdy boys converged on Enrico and began pummeling him. "What do you think you're doing, stealing our ball?"

"Listen to me!" Enrico said, scrambling away. "I have a theory. I read about it in one of the books I got from Bondi. If some of the air inside the ball is displaced—in other words, if you let some of the air out—the ball will have a much greater trajectory."

"What is he saying?"

"I don't get it. Give it back!"

"No, listen to him," Giulio said. "My brother knows. Let him show you."

The boys backed away, and Enrico kicked the ball. As if by magic, it flew through the air with much greater speed.

The team was jubilant. They were playing a neighborhood team the next day, in a tournament. "We are sure to win tomorrow!" they cried. "We will crush them!"

Giulio was quick to give Enrico the credit, and the boys clapped him on the back. They all made their way home with much excitement.

Enrico and Giulio finished their homework quickly and efficiently, with Enrico explaining several math problems to Giulio. Though Enrico was far advanced in the subject, he never let on or teased Giulio. Instead, he found examples in life to make the problems crystal clear. Soon his brother understood, homework was done, and the two began work on their true passion: building a small airplane engine.

They spread out the parts on the living room floor, with Enrico carefully instructing his brother where to put each piece. He consulted a carefully constructed plan of action. Giulio was the lead in their social life, but Enrico was the lead in their scientific life.

“Today, my brother, we are going to test out wing materials,” Enrico said.

“Let’s just put on some paper and be done with it,” Giulio answered, always looking for a quick way out.

“It will be easy,” Enrico urged. “I have built several small models and we can use different materials to cover each one. Then we can measure the distances they travel when we propel them and know the best materials to use.”

Giulio settled in and went along with Enrico’s plan. In matters of math and science, Enrico was always right. They had found the instructions in one of the books Enrico bought from Bondi. Enrico had made the parts from bits of wire and pieces of wood he found on the streets, then made separate boxes for the materials, neatly labeling each part.

Side by side, the brothers worked quietly, efficiently, and with total absorption as the shadows of evening fell and the tem-

perature dropped. Meanwhile, Maria did her homework at the small wooden table that served as a desk for their father when he was home. The apartment had no heat, and the children paid no attention to the chill in the air.

The stillness was broken by the arrival of Alberto Fermi from work. Ida Fermi appeared immediately from the kitchen with a pot of fagioli made in the pressure cooker. In moments, all traces of the airplane engine had disappeared, stored beneath the boys' beds. The family sat down to eat their nourishing dinner, laid out on a starched white linen tablecloth. It was six o'clock. All was well.

Giulio woke up coughing in the middle of the night. His mother made him tea and put pillows behind his back. "We are taking you to the doctor tomorrow," she said.

Giulio protested loudly, waking the entire household. "We are playing our soccer tournament tomorrow! I'm the goalie and our team can't win without me!" To Enrico, his brother's voice sounded hoarse and unnatural.

As usual, Giulio got his way, and the next morning, the two brothers walked to school, heads together, discussing defensive soccer strategy.

The school day over, the boys repaired to the cobblestone street just outside their school. As the whistle blew, the game commenced, with Giulio crouching behind the makeshift goal. Enrico, as sweeper, watched intently as the first kick neared his brother's goal. Giulio jumped out of his crouch and crumpled into a heap.

Enrico was the first to reach his brother. Giulio clutched his throat. "I...can't...breathe," he gasped. Two boys ran to fetch

Father Antonio. Enrico knelt beside his brother, terrified. He saw the fear in Giulio's eyes. "You'll be all right," Enrico said, trying to reassure him. The blood had drained from Giulio's normally ruddy face, and his skin had a ghostly pallor.

Giulio was helped home by his friends and held up by his brother Enrico, who never left his side. The boys from the team and Enrico half-carried him up the stairs to the Fermi apartment.

Ida, who had no idea what to expect, stood at the top of the dark stairway. When she saw her beloved eldest son heaving and gasping for breath, she exclaimed, "My baby! What has happened to my child? God, save him!" The doctor was called and an appointment was made for early the next day.

Later that night, lying still in the next bed, Enrico could see Ida bent over his brother, stroking and patting his forehead, dipping a cloth in water and smoothing back his hair. In the morning, the family took Giulio to the Santo Spirito hospital, where doctors determined that he had a throat abscess that had to be surgically removed.

Santo Spirito is an ancient hospital, and as the family waited anxiously during the operation, Enrico stared at the Cross of Lorraine, its coat of arms, symbolizing discipline and unselfishness. The Fermis were not an observant religious family. But as they waited, they said silent prayers for Giulio.

Enrico went over in his mind the events of the past two days. The chill in the air of the apartment. The hoarseness in his brother's voice. The coughing. The collapse. He considered what had happened and whether anything could have been done differently. He decided not and was content with this.

The doctor appeared, ashen-faced. "I'm so sorry," he said. "We did what we could. He passed away as we were admin-

istering the anesthesia.” Ida Fermi screamed and slid off the wooden hospital bench onto the stone floor, which had felt the feet of centuries of supplicants. The Fermi family was never the same again.

Chapter Two

THE GIFT OF GRIEF

For days after Giulio's death, Enrico paced up and down in front of the hospital, retracing in his mind the steps from the soccer game back to their home and then to the hospital, trying to understand through reason something that defies understanding. He retreated, finally, to his room at home, the room the two brothers had shared.

Enrico pored over science and math books he had collected during the past year. He found comfort and solace in the concrete nature of solving problems—that which is tangible, knowable, and provable. In the next room, the incessant sobs of his mother reminded him of the unknowable.

He hoped to find some answers in his texts. He stayed in his room for hours at a time, stacking up books on his brother's now empty bed. He knew there were answers to be found, if only he asked the right questions. With enough determination and skill, preparation and consideration, these things could be understood, measured, and ultimately solved. Or so went his youthful reasoning.

There was no solution to the well of human grief in the Fermi household. The outer shell of life's activities finally resumed. They had to.

Ida Fermi went back to teaching. But the spark of definition and lightness of step had left her. Some nights, she came home and went directly to her bedroom, quietly closing the door with a click. Soon her wails pierced the late afternoon silence and floated through the windows of the courtyard. When the food brought over by well-meaning neighbors was gone, they often had only bread for dinner. The grief seemed to act on Ida as a weight that enveloped her soul.

Alberto Fermi became more doggedly determined to carry on, but did so with an increasingly grim visage. He clung to his job like an anchor and left home earlier each morning. Enrico suspected he was glad to begin the walk to his office and escape their forever altered family life for the day.

Enrico walked back and forth in front of Santo Spirito, trying to prove to himself that he could feel, then overcome the grief that evoked. Eventually, he lost himself in books and study. At school, he paid less attention to the rowdier boys he had once tried to emulate. He stopped playing soccer and took rambling walks all over the city of Rome.

As he walked and felt his own loneliness, he noticed the life around him, in constant motion. He saw the clouds floating over Vatican Hill, the wheels of the carts rumbling over the cobblestones, the swings of the children in the park sailing back and forth. His brother had disappeared into the world of the spirit, the whisper of memory. And yet, a physical world remained that was full of wonder.

One day, Enrico stopped near the edge of the River Tiber and watched the movement of the water. He wondered: What

was its density, and how could it be measured? He found a discarded soup can and crouched on his knees near the shore. As he bent over to fill the can, an arm reached around his waist as if to push him into the water, but quickly grabbed him back.

“Gotcha!” Enrico Persico said with a guffaw. “You almost went in. But I saved you.”

Enrico Fermi had to laugh. It had been a long time since he had laughed. Persico had been a friend of Giulio’s but was not athletic. He had not been part of the soccer team. Fermi remembered him with a book in his hand. He was holding one now.

“Are you thirsty?” Persico asked, nodding to Fermi’s soup can.

“No. I’m thinking of doing an experiment.”

“What kind of experiment?”

“I want to know the density of this water. I plan to figure how much flows through this area at one minute, and at what speed.”

“I’m doing the same with cumulus clouds,” Persico said. The two Enricos began walking and stopped for gelato in Villa Borghese park. Watching children play with tops, they quickly discovered a common interest.

“I can’t figure it out,” Fermi said. “Why does a spinning top remain vertical?”

“And what stops it from falling over?” Persico responded. He was immensely attracted to the way his new friend thought. He had never met anyone like Enrico Fermi. As they continued walking and talking, he discovered that Fermi’s ideas were always precisely stated and full of clarity. What impressed Persico most was not only Fermi’s facility but his conviction that knowing a theorem was not good enough. One had to be able to put it to practical use.



Giuseppe Bondi had worried for weeks about the whereabouts of his friend Enrico Fermi. Another market day was ending when, just as the sun began to set behind the head of Giordano Bruno, the boy appeared.

At first, Bondi was overjoyed, then astonished by the change in Enrico's appearance. He was thinner, and dark circles ringed his eyes. The young man with him was not his brother.

"My brother Giulio is...is gone," Enrico said, struggling to get the words out. Bondi was shocked but understood immediately. He put his arms around his young friend. Enrico accepted the gesture, then nodded toward Persico and made introductions.

Bondi brought out the books he had been saving for Enrico, wrapped in burlap to keep them safe. He presented them with a flourish and saw Enrico's eyes widen. Bondi had found for him the *Elementa physicae mathematicae*, in two volumes, by Andrea Caraffa, a Jesuit priest who wrote about all the classical physics the world knew in 1840.

Even though the books were in Latin, Enrico immediately sank to the curb at Campo de' Fiore and began devouring the pages, each one steeped in the confluence of science and religion. The world went away, and the sounds of the market faded, along with his sadness.

He read until Persico knelt beside him and quietly said, "The sun's almost down." Fermi looked up and saw the eyes of the Bruno statue staring down benevolently. From that moment on, he knew that even though he might never unlock the spiritual mystery of his brother Giulio's death, he could unlock the physical mystery of the world around him.

As Fermi and Persico hurried home, their conversation was more lively than anything Persico had ever experienced. Some

kind of light had turned on within his new friend. Each physical thing they passed touched off a new area of inquiry. As they walked by the River Tiber, Fermi wondered again about the density of the water and how it could be measured. He laid out his theory on the gyroscope and its motion. He mentioned the engine he had been working on, and the pieces in boxes under his bed, neatly labeled.

As they rounded the corner to Via Principia, the turn to the Fermi apartment, Enrico clapped Persico on the shoulder and bid him a good evening. Persico watched his friend sprint home, clutching the two precious volumes. He couldn't help smiling.

Andrea Caraffa valued curiosity and education as Godlike qualities. Written at a university level, his *Elementa physicae mathematicae* includes chapters on optics, acoustics, astronomy and calculus. Enrico had to be called twice to dinner by his exasperated mother, and his eyes bore a faraway look as he ate. Here, at last, was the opening to the world he craved. Time fell away after dinner as he pored over the texts, making notes in the margins and committing whole passages to memory.

The Caraffa book and his friendship with Persico brought about noticeable changes in Enrico Fermi. He was emboldened by friendship and passion.

One day, he announced to his father, "Papa, I want to walk home with you. Your office is on my way home from school. Can I meet you there?"

"Don't you want to play soccer with the other boys?" Alberto Fermi asked, surprised.

"I would rather spend the time with you," Enrico said.

Alberto was touched and welcomed the chance to spend more time with his remaining son. This turned out to be a fortuitous decision for many reasons. One of Alberto's coworkers, Adolfo Amidei, was a principal inspector in the Ministry of Railways. The two men shared an interest in science and mathematics, and they were in the habit of walking partway home together after work.

The first time Alberto introduced his son to Amidei, the boy had a question. "Is it true that there is a branch of geometry in which important geometric properties are found without making use of the motion of measure?" Enrico wanted to know. Astounded and intrigued, Amidei answered, "Yes. It is known as projective geometry."

Enrico's next question was a hallmark of the thinking for which he would later become world-famous. "But how can such properties be used in practice—for example, by surveyors or engineers?" It wasn't enough to merely understand the principal; he wanted to know how it could be put to practical use.

Amidei was happy to loan him a book on the subject. A few days later, Enrico returned it.

"You can keep it for a while, Enrico. I don't need it."

"But I have finished it," Enrico said.

"What do you mean, finished it?" asked Amidei, who had been working on some of the problems for years and had finally given up. "I can't believe it. Let me look."

Sure enough, Enrico had solved the more than 200 problems at the end of the book.

On a rainy February day in 1918, Adolfo Amidei and Alberto Fermi waited under the awning outside the Ministry of Railways.

Soon Fermi's son, with the short, stocky legs and bright eyes, came around the corner, and a new conversation began. The two older men flanked the teenager, and they kept a brisk pace.

Enrico hardly seemed to notice the rain. He had, as Amidei suggested, read a book on theoretical mechanics, and at last the mystery of the gyroscope had been solved. Amidei suggested they stop on the way home for a cup of chocolate.

His time with Enrico had become a highlight of Amidei's day. Over the past three years, he had loaned Enrico books on trigonometry, algebra, and calculus, along with theoretical mechanics. He was eager to discuss the latest book on vector mechanics. The chocolate shop beckoned.

"We must push on," Alberto said. "Ida is expecting us. She's...she is not doing so well."

Amidei knew what this meant. "Let Enrico go inside for just a moment," Amidei said. He turned to Enrico. "Buy a sweet on me." Enrico didn't wait to be asked twice.

When the two men were alone, Amidei said to Alberto, "You must know that your son is a prodigy. You do know that, don't you? When he reads a book once, he knows it perfectly. He is learning the German language on his own so that he can read their physics papers."

"He's a good enough student, I suppose," Alberto answered with a shrug. "But none of his teachers in high school have said he is a prodigy."

Amidei shook with frustration. He understood that grief over Giulio's death had blinded Enrico's parents to the potential of their surviving son. But as a religious man, he felt that God had put him here to help the boy. Not long ago, Amidei had asked Enrico about his dreams. Without hesitation, Enrico had said, "I want to be a physicist."

Amidei hatched a plan. He knew that Scuola Normale Superiore, a university in Pisa, had a burgeoning physics department, a thorough and impressive library, and a competition for exceptional students. He also felt that studying in Pisa, away from the depressing atmosphere of his home life in Rome, would allow Enrico peace and freedom.

At first, Ida Fermi was against Amidei's plan. "I have already lost one son. I can't bear to lose another for four years," she said when the idea was proposed. But gradually, steadily, and with much appeal to her own professional life as an educator, Enrico and Amidei were able to convince Ida—and Alberto—to let him take the acceptance examination.

For weeks prior to the examination, Enrico finished his homework quickly and headed for Rome's public library to study for his exams. Passing the large globe in its stand, almost sliding over the smooth parquet floor, he delved into the entrance essay. The theme that year was "Characteristics of Sound." In his essay, Enrico derived and solved the partial differential equation of a vibrating rod, using Fourier analysis, applying eigenvalues and eigenfrequencies. He had become fluent in German and made use of this ability to read current work by the most forward-thinking German physicists. The essay would have been beyond impressive for a doctoral candidate, let alone a high school senior of 18.

Not long after submitting his essay, Enrico was called in to meet with Giuseppe Pittarelli, a professor of mathematics and Rome's chief interviewer from Scuola Normale Superiore. One-on-one meetings were not the norm, and Enrico didn't know why he had been called in. He wondered if something was wrong. No, that wasn't possible. He had gone over every word, every theorem with his usual careful, thorough style.

Pittarelli was a kindly man who had interviewed many applicants. He beckoned the dark-haired, bright-eyed young man into his office.

“Did you write this?” he asked, indicating Enrico’s essay.

“Yes, sir. Every word.”

“In all my years, and there are many, I have never seen anything like this,” Pittarelli said. “You are not only admitted, we are honored to have you. You will be a world-renowned scientist someday.”

Pittarelli’s words fell on Enrico’s ears like rain on parched soil. Finally, he had an impartial assessment of his potential, a sense of his place in the world.

Enrico left Pittarelli’s office floating on air and anticipating his future. He would understand the physical world from the smallest aspect to the largest. He would overcome his shyness and make friends the world over, many friends, and they would share discovery and understanding freely. He would have a happy home. He would keep his brother alive by doing the things Giulio would have loved. He would make his brother proud.

These things Enrico Fermi vowed to himself as he hurried toward Campo de’ Fiore and his old friend Giuseppe Bondi, the bookseller. It happened to be market day, and he had news to share.