

# TAGLIAMENTO AND ISONZO: THE RIVERS TELL THEIR STORIES

## *Overture*

Roberto is already at the lectern. The others approach the lectern one at a time. Giuliana, arriving at the lectern, reads the title "Tagliamento and Isonzo." Alessio, arriving at the lectern, reads "The Rivers Tell." Raffaella, arriving at the lectern, reads the first subtitle, "The Tagliamento."

## PANORAMIC PHOTO OF THE TAGLIAMENTO

ROBERTO - For me, it was the third hairpin bend, climbing from Forni di Sopra to the Mauria Pass. The steering wheel of my dad's car, without power steering, required strong biceps to master. Despite the effort, he didn't forget to remind me, a few meters ahead, to look left.

## 1 SOURCE PHOTO TAGLIAMENTO

ALESSIO - Did you see the mouth of the Tagliamento?

ROBERTO - "Yes, I saw it," I lied. In truth, I only saw a sign, in the shade of a grove whose overhanging branches tickled the suitcases on the rack. The Tagliamento. (*brief pause*) For me, the Tagliamento was the lively stream of crystalline water that flows under the Apache Bridge, at the foot of Cima Cuta, the mountain that competes with Clap Varmost for the backdrop of the splendid Forni di Sopra.

ALESSIO - Don't bother searching for the Apaches Bridge on Google Maps. If you really want to find it, look for Puont dal Sirai, not far from the Varmòst chairlift parking lot.

## 2 POONT DAL SIRAI

GIULIANA - In ancient times, during the floods of the Tagliamento River, Puont dal Sirai was the only reliable crossing between the two banks. The bridge was made of wood, like those seen on television in movies about cowboys and Indians fighting.

ROBERTO – That's why my father called it the Apache Bridge. For me, it was fun, an adventure, crossing it and watching the Tagliamento River flow through the cracks in the wooden planks.

ALESSIO – And I could see how excited you were, but I kept watching you.

ROBERTO - Until one day, when I was a little older, I walked there from Forni di Sopra, to the third bend. And I finally saw the source of the Tagliamento.

RAFFAELLA - The Tulent is the longest river in Friuli Venezia Giulia.

ROBERTO - The teacher explained at school.

ALESSIO - Those were times when there was a hyphen between Friuli and Venezia Giulia, and Friuli, which for the people of Trieste begins after the Timavo, was still made of white, edgeless stones, used as bricks for sad, lifeless houses, empty of poverty and empty of emigration.

ROBERTO - The spring is a trickle in spring, a handful of drops in summer, frozen pearls in winter. At least that's how it was during the seasons of my adolescence, but today it's different: they call it climate change. I couldn't believe that that water, more imagined than real, could become a river. Once I grew up, I made up my own story. I'll try to explain.

ALESSIO - The spring is located in the Veneto region, a few meters as the crow flies from La Munt, the Mauria pass, once heavily

trafficked by cars and motorcycles, now a desolate borderland between two regions.

### 3 MONTE-FORTE MIARON

RAFFAELLA - Mount Miaron, 2,132 meters high, rises above the Mauria Pass. Near the summit is a fort built in 1911, an excellent vantage point between Cadore and the upper Tagliamento Valley.

GIULIANA - During the retreat of the Royal Army after the defeat at Caporetto in World War I, in October 1917, Italian Bersaglieri positioned at the fort delayed the Austrian advance from Casera Razzo. The Bersaglieri suffered 16 killed and 80 wounded, while the Austrians suffered 26 killed and 110 wounded.

ROBERTO - Well, I liked to think that the drops from the Tagliamento's source were the tears of the dead Bersaglieri. And also those of their Austrian contemporaries. Only, over time, that river of tears was dried up by oblivion.

ALESSIO – It is said that the true mouth of the Tagliamento is up there, at Campo Ross, the bottom of an ancient lake not far from the summit of Cima Cuta.

ROBERTO - To get there, you have to climb the Lavinal canyon, which becomes a raging river during the snowmelt. In summer, it barely flows, a trickle.

ALESSIO – I too am convinced that the Lavilan is the true offspring of the Tagliamento. There have often been discussions about river mouths. Consider the Piave, which originates at the foot of Mount Peralba, above Cima Sappada, while some consider it the Cordevole, which springs in the upper part of the Visdende Valley.

GIULIANA - To make everyone agree, they called it Piave di Visdende.

### *Musical interlude*

ROBERTO - Stories of rivers. I'm reminded of the old man Angelo, Mauro, and Alessandro met at the Cridola tavern, between Forni and Mauria. The Cridola, the rocky outcrop where the Dolomites begin.

Angelo Floramo, Mauro Daltin, and Alessandro Venier have co-authored a book entitled "The River on Board." A journey through the sources and mouths of the Tagliamento and Soča/Isonzo rivers aboard a battered van they nicknamed Molly.

### 4 PHOTOS OF THE OVENS ABOVE

ALESSIO - (*plays the old man*) "I'm curious about your van. It looks like it came out of the '60s."

GIULIANA - "She's from the '80s. Her name is Molly."

ALESSIO - "A van with a name. That's already a story."

GIULIANA - "Do you know many?"

ALESSIO - "I used to know better. I've lost my practice. But I do know one thing. There used to be more activity. Every day, two couriers would leave from Tolmezzo and go up beyond the Mauria River and take people to the eyeglass factory. That was the case until 2000. And before that, they took the plants all the way up the Piave River."

GIULIANA - "On the Piave female".

ALESSIO - "There's a strong connection with Cadore. Always has been. Forni di Sopra looks to the Veneto, Forni di Sotto to Carnia. All economic, social, and friendship relationships are through Munt, Mauria."

GIULIANA - "And what is the relationship with the Tagliamento?"

ALESSIO - "For us, it's Tuliment."

GIULIANA - "So male."

ALESSIO - "It's an unbreakable bond built on hard work and toil. For those older than me, it was a source of sustenance. It was also a means of passage. During the First and Second World Wars, those leaving here for Friuli never passed through Tolmezzo. Too many complications, checks, Cossacks. They passed through Caprizi, Mount Rest, the Tramontina Valley, and all the way down to Spilimbergo."

GIULIANA - "It's also a pastoral path. The ancient shepherds followed it. The patriarchal path, of the Patriarch of Aquileia."

ALESSIO - "And those damned Savorgnans, who sold the mountain to Venice."

### *Musical interlude*

RAFFAELLA - In 1966, the Tolina River, which flows from the hills east of Forni di Sopra, swollen by rain, sought refuge in the Tagliamento River in vain. There was too much water, there was no room for more. Then the Tolina took offense, overtook its old banks, and swept away several houses.

ROBERTO - The Tagliamento defended itself by saying: I'm a torrent too, not a river. But it's clear he's a bit ashamed, and every now and then, when someone reminds him, he hides under his bed and disappears. It flows deep, far from prying eyes that don't know of its generosity.

RAFFAELLA - Down there, it supplies its water to a myriad of underground streams, which converge to emerge in the Codroipo area. These are the springs, where the Stella River rises and where the Akilis River, which gave Aquileia its name, once emerged. The Akilis was none other than the ancient Natisone, the now-extinct river that flowed into the sea at the Roman city's harbor.

*Musical break (SONG THAT EVIL A NEGATIVE EVENT)*

ALESSIO - Raging foam, waves rushing upstream, maddened trout, rocks, boulders, trees that outrage him. He, the old Tagliamento, doesn't know what's happening. From the clock of some bell tower, he can see the time: 9:12 PM. It's the evening of May 6, 1976.

RAFFAELLA - At that moment, the Orcolat erupted, as it had done a few centuries ago, and will do so again. A fault line, a condemnation. Half a century after the earthquake in Friuli, there's only one place where you can still see and touch it.

## 5 PHOTOS OF OLD PORTIS

GIULIANA - Old Portis, along State Road 13 Pontebbana north of Venzone. Residents can no longer live here because the area remains vulnerable to rockfall from the nearby mountain. The town has been rebuilt elsewhere in the municipality.

ROBERTO - It remains a ghost town. In the houses, marked by deep cracks, you can glimpse the interior rooms through the shattered window frames, where a few pieces of furniture remain as a reminder. Those who lived there before 1976 can continue to cultivate vegetable gardens and use a few shacks as tool sheds.

ALESSIO - Portis Vecchio has now become a training center for the SERM Academy, an international training school for seismic emergency response management.

GIULIANA - It's hard for me to enter these empty shells and not try to record something through a photo, a note, a story when I get home. Or simply to share with someone what's come to mind. That's what always happens with Portis Vecchia. It seems inevitable.

RAFFAELLA - There are trees pointing at the second-floor windows. The door is off its hinges and you could easily push it open by hand to step inside and travel back to 1976. One step and you're fifty years in.

ALESSIO - Finding yourself faced with ruins can be overwhelming. It can move you, provoke anger, frustration, sadness, and fierce melancholy.

GIULIANA - Here in Portis Vecchio, the Tagliamento ends its horizontal line; it has crossed Carnia parallel to the Alps, cutting across a land. This is the river's right angle, the sharp bend from which another direction begins, another river, another world. Up to this point, water has been work, transporting timber, sweat, and toil.

ROBERTO - The river represented the people of Carnia, it overlapped with the people's character, with their common feeling.

RAFFAELLA - Now it gathers the waters of the Fella, its blood brother, and together they become something else. No longer mountain water, but a river of the plains. It begins its vertical journey, heading straight for Lignano. Heading for the sea. The riverbed widens, and at times the water will be hidden from human sight.

### *Musical interlude*

ROBERTO - The Tagliamento changes direction but not its name. Unlike the Isonzo. That's the only difference between the two rivers, aside from their length. The Tagliamento and the Isonzo share stories of tenacious, proud, multifaceted people, who simultaneously love and hate the waters of both rivers. Placid waters to caress communities, to water fields and animals. Raging waters of floods and wars. There you have it, war.

ALESSIO - In the Great War, the Isonzo was the front, the twelve battles, the water turning red with blood, the Royal Army advancing

at the sound of thousands of young lives sacrificed to sacrifice the enemy. In the Great War, the Tagliamento was instead the rearguard, the tragic defeat of Caporetto with the Italians retreating to the Piave, blowing up the bridges and transforming the river like the toothless mouths of the old men of old.

ROBERTO - Stumps in place of bridges. But they spring up again like mushrooms after every destruction. Bridges are the glue of civilization. The Tagliamento and Isonzo rivers are a lesson.

GIULIANA - We're heading, like this, toward the sea. Below us, there's always the Tiliment, as they call it around here. A very ancient name. According to some linguists, it derives from Talimu, meaning brother in the Akkadian language. The Greek Strabo tells us about it, saying that it descends from the Alps, marking the border between the Veneto and Aquileia.

RAFFAELLA - Pliny reveals that there are two, one greater and one lesser: Tiliaventum maius and Tiliaventum minus. And Ptolemy, in the learned halls of the library of Alexandria, Egypt, among papyrus and parchment, precisely calculates the distance between the mouth of his Tilautu and the city of Ravenna.

GIULIANA - And it's right there, at the mouth, that we're heading. The river is somewhere, even if we can't see it; it stubbornly remains hidden, but it gives us its blue breath, its voice among the rocks.

RAFFAELLA - But we're not alone: riding alongside us are the tsar's thirty thousand Cossacks, led by Generalissimo Suvorov, who passed through here in 1799 pursuing Napoleon. Swords drawn, horses with smoking rumps, knee-high valenki boots and fur hats. Shadows, only shadows. It's the magic of the trail.

GIULIANA - We're near the extreme limit. The ultimate meaning of all truth. Here appears the signpost for Latisana. Land of good

wine, says the traditional villotta, where the grapes are harvested according to the season. Here, the Tagliamento is not a friend; it's frightening. And the very high banks demonstrate this. You'd think they were ancient grassy mounds erected in a magical embrace, capable of containing the fury of the demon, who in 1966 harvested his dead in these countryside. They gathered them under the menacing mud that remained when the monster's coils retreated within the confines of the ancient furrow from which they had emerged with a cruel roar.

RAFFAELLA - According to the inquisitors, the Benandanti roamed these countrysides during the ember nights. They hunted witches and sorcerers so that the harvest would be plentiful and the calf wouldn't die. But now let's move on to the next stop, Cesarolo, where the most beautiful girls in Friuli are said to live, even though Cesarolo isn't actually in Friuli.

### *Musical break*

ALESSIO - From Cesarolo to the sea is a succession of reclaimed marshes, where the reeds comb their hair in the wind, like lyres singing a welcome to tourists heading to Bibione.

ROBERTO - In 1956, work began to transform Bibione into a tourist destination. The construction of the first hotels and shops led the island, to the right of the Tagliamento River, to become, within 50 years, a major family resort.

RAFFAELLA - Fishing valleys surround holiday homes and hotels, and the long coastline competes with Lignano Riviera for sand brought by the Tagliamento River. These grains are all that remains of the Carnic rocks that the water has ground down over the centuries and carried downstream.

## **6 PHOTOS OF THE BIBIONE LIGHTHOUSE**

ALESSIO - The Tagliamento River follows its course, dividing Friuli Venezia Giulia from the Veneto region, and it is precisely on the Veneto bank, at the mouth of the clear waterway, that the Bibione lighthouse is located: the symbol and history of the city.

GIULIANA - Built in the first decade of the 20th century, the Bibione lighthouse features a simple, linear architecture characterized by a tower and a small rectangular house adjacent to yellow and white paintings.

ROBERTO - Destroyed and rebuilt after the First World War, the lighthouse is now a cultural site. It can only be reached on foot or by bicycle. From 1943 to 1945, exiles from Istria arrived on makeshift boats.

ALESSIO - And exhausted, the Germans, now surrounded by partisans, threw themselves onto the sand. I wonder if Adriana came too, to walk barefoot on the fine sand that tickles the lighthouse?

*Musical interlude*

## 7 PHOTOS ADRIANA IVANCICH

ROBERTO - Yes, Adriana. It may be true that the girls from Cesarolo are more beautiful than those from Friuli. But it is certain that a beautiful, indeed very beautiful, girl lived in San Michele al Tagliamento. Her name was Adriana Ivancich, the third daughter of the nobleman Carlo Ivancich and Dora Betti, a member of a Venetian family of shipowners from Lussinpiccolo in the Kvarner Gulf. Adriana's brother, Gianfranco Ivancich, was a hero of the African war and later of the Resistance, while their father was murdered by bandits disguised as partisans.

GIULIANA - I was born in 1930 and was sent to the Brillantmont boarding school in Lausanne to improve my French. I had seen the atrocities of war, but in 1948 I was a beautiful girl who frequented the finest Venetian society. My family owned a palazzo designed by

Sansovino on Calle del Rimedio in Venice, and a large villa in San Michele al Tagliamento, destroyed by Allied bombing. In 1948, I met Ernest Hemingway, who would define my life. The American writer had come to Venice with his fourth wife to gather material for a new novel, which would later be published as "Across the River and Into the Trees."

ALESSIO - It tells the story of a mature officer and a young noblewoman who falls in love with him among the streets and the lagoon. The old officer was him, or as he saw himself, and the girl was none other than Adriana. These are all places that form the backdrop to Ernest Hemingway's novel, just as Adriana is the book's muse and the model for the character of Renata.

GIULIANA - My relationship with Ernest lasted seven years, until 1955. I was subjected to widespread gossip. They also attributed to me the source of the episode involving a Venetian girl having an erotic interlude in a gondola with the colonel. In reality, Ernest had had this experience with Marlene Dietrich, not with me. Ernest regretted having spoken of it and banned the book from being published in Italy, where it was actually published only in 1965, four years after his death.

ALESSIO - The meeting between Ernest and Adriana illuminates and shapes both their lives. Ernest rediscovers in his love for Adriana the inspiration that had withered. Adriana blossoms as a woman and a poet, accompanying Ernest to his full potential as a writer.

GIULIANA - Just as Ernest's life had a tragic ending, my existence did not have a happy ending either.

ROBERTO - On March 24, 1983, he hanged himself from a tree on his estate in Giardino, between Capalbio and Ansedonia. He was 53 years old.

GIULIANA - For anyone who would like to place a flower on my grave, please look for the burial place of Adriana von Rex Ivancich Biaggini in the Porto Ercole cemetery on Monte Argentario, in the area reserved for foreigners.

RAFFAELLA - Meanwhile, before us, the river we saw rise is about to die. A supreme frontier, in every sense, a powerful metaphor that makes us similar to it. Here it is, the uncertain step. I watch the waters blend into a whirlpool of currents and colors, hues and scents. We too will pass away like this, perhaps when the time comes, in an embrace that tastes of infinity.

## END OF PART ONE

*Long musical break*

## PART TWO

ROBERTO – *(reads)* “The Isonzo”

### PHOTO OF THE SOCA ISONZO SPRING

ALESSIO - We're between Trenta and Bovec. The water is a shade of green and blue. We cross a rickety wooden bridge. The height and fragility of the bridge make us slowly approach the exact center of this wooden beam, which somehow softens our heavy steps. A strong wind channels itself through this river valley and hits us in the face. We have to hold on to the bridge, but as we do so, it wobbles even more, and so do we.

### 8 PHOTOS JULIUS KUGY

GIULIANA - Below us, a deep gorge and flowing water. We look up at Mangart, Jalovec, and Kanin. Land of Julius Kugy, the legendary Kugy who reigns supreme here. A man who, at these

latitudes, has statues in his honor, botanical gardens named after him, and his sayings carved in wood above houses and in village squares.

ROBERTO - Before reaching Bovec, we take a road on the right and after a few kilometers we come to the large fortress. This outpost was built in 1472 by the Venetians. A few decades later, it fell into the hands of the Habsburgs. In 1797, the French army attacked the fortress from an unexpected angle; the defense corps blew up the bridge over the gorge, sending countless French soldiers tumbling into the stream. But then it capitulated, and the surviving French troops set fire to the fortress.

## 9 PHOTOS OF BOVEC FORTRESS

ALESSIO - After over a century of abandonment, the Austrians rebuilt it from scratch, and it resisted the entire Battle of the Isonzo during the First World War. It was also used in the Second World War and later became one of the most significant national monuments of the Great War. Within these walls, the history of the last six hundred years of this part of the world could be written.

### *Musical interlude*

ROBERTO - History, this damned history that has mocked humanity for centuries. It, the teacher of life, enchants us with wisdom and knowledge, but instead of making us soar on the wings of culture, it hurls us into recurring tragedies, of peoples forced to hate and war. What we need is a good, cold beer to quench our thirst and dilute the poison of history. Yes, beer. There too, printed on the bottle label, history returns to torment us.

## 10 BEER PHOTOS

ALESSIO - The beer bottle's label features a white chamois with golden horns. Zlatorog is the protagonist of one of Slovenia's most

important folk legends. In fact, perhaps the most important of all, given that even the national beer has chosen it as its logo, exported worldwide.

GIULIANA - And if we consider that the chamois lives on the peaks of Mount Triglav, the symbol depicted on the Slovenian flag, we can understand that the story of the white chamois here is a very serious one. A story of love and death, of suicide and inaccessible mountains.

RAFFAELLA - We arrive in Kobarid, at Napoleon's Bridge. Yes, Caporetto. It makes you think it's just a name, one of many, like Srebrenica or Chernobyl, swallowed up by the gluttony of history, condemned to be tied to a single fate, most often tragic and irreversible. No longer a town or a city, but a chapter to be studied, the name in bold at the edge of a school textbook, capable of erasing everything else.

GIULIANA - Europe's first partisan republic, the Kobariška Repubblica, was born here in 1943, even before the glorious Carnia republic. And we erased it from our memory, because we were the bad guys back then. Roundups of civilians, summary executions, burned villages. We didn't miss a thing.

ALESSIO - Along the road that for long stretches follows the flow of the Soča River, we travel the ancient road of the patriarchs. The true trail that for centuries has united peoples of diverse speech in the heart of a pluralistic Friuli, where borders have always intersected in the accents, tones, and chants of the languages that were bastardized on merchant caravans, in the quick pace of pilgrims, and in the more vagabond pace of wandering clerics. From the Muda station, below Raibl-Cave del Predil, down to Cividale and Gorizia.

RAFFAELLA - Most na Soci-Santa Lucia suddenly appears, its houses hugging the arch of the bridge that gives the town its name. It seems to have come straight out of a rabbinic fable.

*Musical interlude*

**11 PHOTOS OF ELIO VITTORINI**

ROBERTO - The Kanal-Canale Bridge, instead, comes from a story by Elio Vittorini. Built in 1580 out of wood, the bridge has been demolished and rebuilt several times throughout its history.

GIULIANA - It was first destroyed in 1805 by the French trying to reach Austria. The bridge was repaired and destroyed again after the French left.

RAFFAELLA - It was rebuilt in 1816, but the war once again decided the bridge's fate: it was mined and destroyed on May 25, 1915. It assumed its current appearance after its renovation in 1920. The Second World War spared it.

ROBERTO - Among the laborers who rebuilt the bridge was Elio Vittorini, who had fled to Gorizia to marry Rosa Quasimodo, sister of Salvatore, a Nobel Prize winner for literature. Destitute of money and, at the time, still far from the literary heights he would later reach, Vittorini had to roll up his sleeves and accept a job as a bricklayer offered by the Mattirolli company of Gorizia, which had won the contract to rebuild the bridge.

**12 PHOTOS OF THE SQUARE**

ALESSIO-VITTORINI – I see you know about me. Yes, it's true. I lived in Gorizia between 1927 and 1930. At 19, I married Rosa Quasimodo, Salvatore's sister; he was a mere accountant at the time. Who would have thought he'd win the Nobel Prize in 1959?

ROBERTO – Are you a little envious?

ALESSIO-VITTORINI – What are you talking about? The Quasimodos were good people. They helped me, especially my late father-in-law Gaetano. He worked on the railways as a stationmaster. After he retired, he opened a radiotelephony shop at 6 Corso Vittorio Emanuele, which was later renamed Corso Italia. Son Ettore found work at the Prefecture.

ROBERTO - Another son, Vincenzo, opened the city's first radio station at Corso Verdi 32, in the entrance corridor, coincidentally, of the Savoia-Centrale cinema.

ALESSIO-VITTORINI – Vincenzo also enjoyed writing. He had a successful radio advice column in Squille Isontine, a newspaper edited by Sofronio Pocarini. At the time, there were very few radios in the city, a dozen or so. At the end of the broadcasts, users were greeted one by one.

ROBERTO – And what can you tell me about Piazzutta, Mr. Vittorini?

ALESSIO-VITTORINI – Piazzutta, impossible to forget. What a beautiful glimpse of Gorizia. Yes, I lived there with my in-laws in the house with the arched doorway, at number 16 if I remember correctly. Rosa and I lived on the first floor, but to be honest, it was just me and my papers.

ROBERTO – It didn't end well with Rosa...

ALESSIO-VITTORINI – What a nuisance this question is. The fire of writing burned inside me. And everything around me burned... Poor Rosa. I wandered off, first to Florence and then to Milan. But

the bricklayer's calluses never disappeared from my hands. And then you know how it ended.

ROBERTO – Yes, we know. And we also know that you died on February 12, 1966, in Milan. On Via Gorizia, to be precise. Talk about coincidence...

End of new text

GIULIANA - Unaware of this and other stories, every year in August, hundreds of people gather for the traditional "Bridge Jump" event. You can't live on culture alone.

### *Musical break*

ALESSIO - The journey toward the mouth of the Isonzo continues. The Soča takes its final, darting trajectories of bends and hairpin bends. Suddenly, near Anhovo (pronounced Ankovo)—Salona d'Isonzo—the air becomes heavy, and it's hard to breathe.

RAFFAELLA - This cursed place was the Casale Monferrato of Yugoslavia. The equivalent of Eternit was produced in the local Salanit cement factory. Asbestos has killed and is still killing here.

### **13 PHOTOS OF ROMANA PAVESI**

GIULIANA - How can we forget Mrs. Romana Blasotti Pavesi, who died at 95 in 2024. Her life was marked by family losses caused by asbestos and by the fight for truth. She was always on the front lines seeking justice for the community of Casale.

RAFFAELLA - (Romana) Asbestos took away my husband and son. We were deceived and suffocated by the Eternit factory. We lived chasing prosperity, but asbestos laid a fatal ambush for us. With the complicity of so many men. Imagine how barbaric and ruthless fate can be. I was born in Anhovo, which at the time was called Salona d'Isonzo, then Italian territory. But those were hard times, with increasingly difficult coexistence between Italians and

Slovenians. So here I am, suitcase in hand, leaving for the city that has become a martyr in Piedmont. From one cursed place to another, in the name of asbestos, the most ruthless killer in the history of humanity. I have died many times, but the most painful and fatal was not being able to fully win my battle for the truth.

*Musical break*

GIULIANA - (*sings*) Oh Gorizia, you are cursed by every heart that feels conscience; your departure was painful, and for many there was no return.

ALESSIO - This is what they sang here, in 1916. When Europe was massacring itself, sending its children to die in the midst of so much beauty.

GIULIANA - It's disconcerting to realize that the most horrific tragedies have always occurred in beautiful places. Dying here at twenty. Perhaps arriving from Sicily or Molise. Can you believe it?

*Musical interlude*

ALESSIO - The Soča River now flows slowly, with no desire to be trapped in the Solkan Dam. After the 1975 Treaty of Osimo, the Yugoslavs built the last of many dams on the border with Italy.

RAFFAELLA - Shortly before, the river, foreseeing its sad ending, consoles itself by reflecting itself in the magnificent Transalpine railway bridge, also built and rebuilt, still today the largest stone arch in the world.

## 14 PHOTOS OF THE SALCANO WALKWAY

GIULIANA - After the Solkan Dam, the Soča River is no longer the same; it seems exhausted, but it still offers whirlpools where kayaks roam wild. Further down, the new bridge, the pedestrian and cycle

path that connects Solkan to the slopes of Mount Sabotin, in the San Mauro area.

ALESSIO - And this is where the Isonzo River comes in, placid and reassuring despite its tragic history of wars, yet generous with the factories of Straccis and Piedimonte, and since 1905 with the Dottori Canal that flows from Sagrado to Monfalcone. A work that changed the fate of the lower Isonzo River, the Bisiacaria.

RAFFAELLA - The Isonzo must have taken something from the Soča. Just as Slovenian water has carved out imaginative bends and deep gorges, so the Isonzo has changed its course and mouth a thousand times over the centuries.

## 15 MILITARY PHOTOS VILLESSE

ROBERTO – A few kilometers from the sea, the Isonzo seems tired. With the sirocco wind, the sea bass swim upstream almost to the Pieris Bridge to swell with groundbait. The Isonzo lets them do their thing, enjoying their tickling.

ALESSIO – Shortly before, the river waters had stumbled upon the rocky outcrops of the Cassegliano ford, the historic border between the Austrian possessions and the Venetian Republic. On the left bank, a testament to that era is Villa Sbruglio, named after the family that until the 18th century collected tolls for the passage of people and goods on the Isonzo.

RAFFAELLA – On the right bank stands the onion of the bell tower of Villesse, the town with its feet soaking in both the Isonzo and the Tor, as the Torre is called in these parts.

GIULIANA – The Torre is a strange torrent. A stretch of stones that, in a flash, when it rains, transforms into a hysterical and unstoppable torrent.

RAFFAELLA – But the Torre is generous in its own way. Guardian of ancient stories. In 2008, nine stone artifacts were discovered on its shore: six milestones, two column fragments, and a base obtained from the reuse of an upturned votive altar.

GIULIANA – Precious finds, worthy of display in a museum. Perhaps alongside other Torre gifts?

ROBERTO – And what does the Isonzo have to offer? Evocative experiences, which are no less important. But now let's rest for a moment on the Island of Elba. It's the land located where the Torre River supplies the Isonzo. An ancient place name, perhaps deriving from the time of the French campaigns in Italy.

*Break*

## 16 PHOTOS OF CAMARGUE HORSES

GIULIANA - Since the beginning of the twentieth century, it has flowed into the estuary at Punta Sdobba, an ancient fishing village on the right bank, opposite the island of Cona, where the white Camargue horses seem to wave goodbye, with their tails flapping, to the great river in its embrace with the Adriatic Gulf of the Dalmatian Sea, to use the words of the Uskok pirates.

## 17 CAREGON PHOTOS

ALESSIO - There is no lighthouse to greet the Isonzo, but not far from Punta Spigolo, the last land bathed by the river, the caregon rises from the water, corroded by the years, all that remains of the reinforced concrete structure that once served to measure the take-offs and landings of the record-breaking seaplanes built in the Monfalcone shipyard.

*Musical interlude before the finale*

ROBERTO - We were thinking of taking a trip along the two great rivers of Friuli Venezia Giulia and, if you think about it, the Tagliamento rises in Veneto and the Soča rises in Slovenia and then in Italy changes its name to Isonzo.

ALESSIO - And the Venetian Piave rises in Friuli.

RAFFAELLA - Dancing geographies like identities.

GIULIANA - This is what the rivers teach, this is what our rivers teach.

*(Emphasize the ending in some way with movement.)*

**END**