



# Being Melvin: The Thin Line between Fiction and Reality

*Vittorio De Agrò*

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BEING MELVIN

The Thin Line between Fiction and Reality

Synopsis

Parents, school, friends, feelings, commitments trace a path along which Melvin, a young landowner of Sicilian origins, tries hard to venture. He has been in conflict with his family's aspirations and projections since childhood. The use of his imagination, odd braggadocio, and lies seems to be an escape from a reality perceived as unsustainable. However, it merely drags him slowly into a dimension where the real world constantly slips into the imaginary one, producing relentlessly irreconcilable contrasts in personality development and emotional relationships with women despite being constantly surrounded by them. The virtual rites of the web and digital communications lead him to obsessively participate in a forum dedicated to the starlet of a television drama, the Diva. A genuine feeling grows between the two of them, only to magnify Melvin's crisis, consequently creating a split personality and an increasingly dramatic, psychotic and self-destructive drift. He is forced to undergo a mandatory medical treatment. Melvin asks for help from the Gleam, a unique but lucid psychiatrist, to whom he runs when the weight of memories and the feeling of guilt for betraying someone's trust will be unbearable, to the point of further restricting the already narrow margins of his psychic survival. His memory, having suddenly reappeared after prolonged amnesia, allows him to retrieve incidents and situations – which he calls files - and to explain them, with great detail, to his therapist. The result is a discussion between doctor and patient, in many ways fruitful and enlightening, but not at all a prelude, as one might expect, to a predictable and comforting ending. That is because we are not facing fiction, but an intensely experienced story on a person's own skin and at the risk of his own life. Therefore, no invention, no artifice, no hypocritical censorship, no qualms to strip. It offers the reader testimony that a conformist reserve would prefer to bury in the basement of removal and modesty. Melvin is a true story. For real.

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