
WILKINSON SWORD
WILKINSON SWORD
WILKINSON SWORD

Lady Wilkinson Sword

THE WILKINSON SAGA

Life is never a collection of opportunities.

Life is one single opportunity that never comes twice.

That is how it was for me.

During my years in Italian Freemasonry, recognized in its rituals and traditions by the United Grand Lodge of England, I had the opportunity to take part in a rather unusual gathering.

I was already in the Third Degree, yet I arrived with the right mindset: that of an Apprentice.

It was not a ritual meeting.

There were no aprons, no symbols, no words to memorize.

It was simply a dinner.

A dinner in London.

One of those evenings that seem ordinary while you are living them and become extraordinary only many years later, when you finally understand their meaning.

London had its usual charm.

History seemed to look out from every building.

The Crown.

The City.

The private clubs.

The institutions.

The traditions that survive longer than the men who created them.

It was through my previous professional experiences within Gillette, and in those places, that I encountered, almost by accident, a story far older than myself.

A story that did not belong to Freemasonry.

Nor did it belong to business.

It belonged to England.

Its name was Wilkinson Sword.

Or perhaps it would be more accurate to call her:

Lady Wilkinson Sword.

Because some companies generate profits.

Others create history.

She had done both.

Her accent was English, her manner elegant, her style refined.

She smiled through the years she carried.

She knew she was no longer young.

She had lost the lightness of youth, but not her clarity of mind.

Her intellect remained strong.

Her ideas remained sharp.

Whenever she spoke to me, she used that almost romantic tone of an old cat purring by the fireplace, and she always pronounced my name with a slight imperfection:

“Fernando...”

She never needed an introduction.

She only needed to enter the room.

She carried the weight of history with her.

She had lived through wars, kings, queens, industrial revolutions, acquisitions, and board meetings.

She had seen men become rich.

She had seen empires disappear.

She had seen managers convinced they were immortal.

And yet, she was still there.

Elegant.

Quiet.

British.

At that moment, I understood that some companies are not companies at all.

They are institutions.

Some belong to shareholders.

Others belong to history.

Lady Wilkinson Sword belonged to the latter.

And I was beginning to belong, just a little, to her as well.

Ferdinando Frega