THE WITNESS WHO CHOSE SILENCE



FERDINANDO FREGA

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Everyone knew the story.

Everyone had seen something.

Everyone remembered.

And yet nobody spoke.

In the hallways the truth walked in a low voice.

In the documents it slept, waiting for a hand.

In private conversations it breathed behind closed doors.

In public, however, it had no name.

For years the silence was stronger than the facts.

No lies were needed.

No threats were needed.

It was enough for each person to wait for someone else to speak first.

And every wait, added to the others, became a wall.

It was then that he understood a fundamental difference.

In the twentieth century it was called omertà, and it wore the face of fear.

In the 2000s it wears a gentler face: it is called common sense.

My city was not only a place to live in.

It was a place where you learned how not to see, with elegance.

Truth does not die when it is attacked.

It defends itself, it holds its ground, it finds allies.

Truth risks dying when it is left alone.

Every age produces its own witnesses.

Some speak, and pay the price.

Others keep silent, and pay another one, a slower one.

Many think that silence is neutrality.

But silence is not a neutral place. It is a choice, and like every choice it leaves a signature.

Time records everything.

Even the words that were spoken.

Above all, those that were never said.

Ferdinando