

“The noise behind the wall”

It had been raining for hours.

The drops were sliding down the balconies of an old apartment building on the outskirts of Milan.

Luca slowly climbed the stairs with his sister Sofia.

Fourth floor.
No elevator.
A musty smell.

—“It's huge, though...”

Sofia tried to be positive.

Eighty square meters.
Low price.
Nearly central location.

Too low.

The owner opened the door forcefully.

—“Very quiet apartment.
No neighbors.”

That sentence hung in the air.

The apartment was perfectly tidy.

Too tidy.

No personal belongings.
No photos.
No sign of real life.

Like a stage set.

Elena entered a few seconds later.

Dark coat.
Hair tied back.
Unmoving gaze.

She always looked at the unnecessary details first.

Because those were the ones that told the truth.

The living room was silent.

Then:

CT.

A sharp thump.

It came from the wall behind the bookcase.

Sofia turned around.

—“Did you hear that?”

The owner smiled too quickly.

—“Old pipes.”

CT.

Again.

Same spot.

Same intensity.

Elena approached slowly.

She touched the wall.

It was vibrating slightly.

She took out Immobit.

Checklist:

structural noises

utilities

partition walls

neighborhood

insulation

Score:

72.

Then:

64.

—“Who lives behind this wall?”

Silence.

The owner avoided her gaze.

CT.

CT.

CT.

CT.

Three consecutive knocks.

It wasn't pipes.

It was someone.

Elena looked at the bookcase.

Too heavy.

Too wide.

Placed right on that wall.

—"Can we move it?"

—"I'd prefer not to."

Immediate response.

Too immediate.

Luca looked at Sofia.

Now he understood too.

Elena pushed the piece of furniture slightly.

Behind:
a huge vertical crack ran through the wall.

Deep.

Recent.

Poorly covered.

And from that crack came the noise.

Every time the neighbor closed the front door.

The owner slowly lowered her head.

—"The wall needs to be redone..."

Silence.

Only rain outside.

Sofia looked at Elena.

—"How much would it have cost?"

Elena looked at that crack again.

Then she said:

"The worst problems
are those that try to appear invisible."