The Bridge in the Eastern Valley (B1 · English B1)

Tekst / Transcript

Nadia grew up in a small town in the eastern part of the country. A wide river ran past the houses, and only one old wooden bridge crossed it. Every spring the water rose and the bridge became dangerous. People still used it, because they had no other way to reach the hospital on the far side.

One night the river rose faster than usual. A car stopped right at the edge of the broken planks, and the driver started shouting for help. It was a real emergency, and Nadia's father ran out with a rope and a torch. He pulled the family out of the car in the dark and the rain. Nadia watched from the window and felt a strange mix of fear and pride. She could not name the emotion that filled her that night, but she never forgot it.

The next morning the bridge was empty and silent. Nobody wanted to walk on it again. Nadia decided then that she would study engineering at the university in the capital. Her teachers encouraged her, because she was the best student in mathematics in her class. Her grandmother, however, thought the plan was too expensive and too far away. "The city is not your friend," she said. "It is not your enemy either, but it will take your money."

Nadia made a huge effort anyway. She worked in a café at weekends and studied late at night. At university she learned how to design a bridge that could stand against a strong river. She learned which materials were cheap and which ones were truly effective. Her professor once said that a good engineer solves problems effectively, without wasting time or money. Nadia wrote that sentence in the front of her notebook.

Six years later she came home with a plan under her arm. The town had little money, so she organised a summer festival to collect some. Local musicians played, and a group of students came to entertain the children with puppet shows. The entertainment lasted three days and the whole valley came. In the end the town had enough money to start building. Today a strong concrete bridge stands where the old one fell, and Nadia's name is written on a small metal plate at one end.

Woordenlijst

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