The House by the River (B1 · English B1)

Tekst / Transcript

Anna had always wanted to live near water. Last spring she finally left the city and moved into a small house by a slow brown river. The house was old and the roof needed work, but the garden was long and green. Her friends thought she was crazy. They asked her how she would earn enough money so far from the office.

In fact, Anna made a good living from her drawings. She sold them mainly to travellers who stopped at the village café, and sometimes to shops in town. Her old life in the city had felt like a bubble: warm, shiny and closed. Inside it, she had never noticed the price of things or the noise of the traffic. Now she paid attention to everything. She counted her coins, and she also counted the birds on the water each morning.

The loss of her old salary was real, of course. Anna could no longer buy a new coat whenever she felt bored. A weekend in a hotel became a luxury instead of a normal plan. Still, her mental health improved quickly. She slept deeply, she walked every day, and she stopped worrying about things she could not change. Her doctor told her that fresh air was the cheapest medicine in the world.

The local people were friendly, though a little curious. An old farmer helped her measure the garden for a vegetable bed, and he showed her how to bury potatoes in the soft ground. Anna wanted to grow tomatoes too, but her first plants stayed a medium size and never grew tall. She laughed and promised to try again next year. Meanwhile, she learned to bake bread, mend a fence and fix a bicycle chain.

One evening in autumn, she sat outside with a cup of tea and watched the mist rise from the river. A neighbour walked past and asked if she missed the city. Anna thought about the question for a long moment. Then she said that she missed the cinema and one very good bookshop, but nothing else. The neighbour smiled and said that this was a good answer.

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