Tomas and the Campaign (B1 · English B1)

Tekst / Transcript

Tomas was nineteen when he joined the town council election as a volunteer. He did not know much about politics, but he wanted to help. The candidate he chose was a quiet woman called Mrs Ferreira, a former teacher. She had no big office and no famous friends. Her whole team worked from a room above a bakery. Tomas made coffee, answered the phone and carried boxes of leaflets.

The campaign lasted eight weeks, and it started very slowly. In the first days, only twelve people came to their meetings. Mrs Ferreira talked about buses, schools and old buildings. Her main policy was simple: cheaper transport for students and older people. Tomas thought it sounded boring at first. Then he listened to the people who came to complain. A woman said she could not afford the bus to the hospital twice a week. An old man said he walked two kilometres to the shops every day.

After that, Tomas worked much harder. He noticed a clear trend in the questions people asked: everyone talked about money. So the team started a small program for free evening advice, where a volunteer explained bus cards and forms. Tomas kept every receipt from the printing shop, because Mrs Ferreira wanted honest accounts. She often said that a town must invest in its young people, not only in new roads. That sentence stayed in his head for years.

The other side had more money and better posters. They promised to cut taxes for local businesses and to build a new factory. They said the factory would raise production and bring three hundred jobs. Mrs Ferreira did not attack them. She said the town needed a real alternative, not only one big promise. She suggested repairing the old market hall instead, so that small sellers could work there. She also asked where the supply of building materials would come from.

On election night, the bakery room was full of people. The result was very close, and nobody spoke for a long time. Mrs Ferreira lost by ninety-one votes. She thanked everyone and said the value of their work was not in the numbers. Tomas went home at two in the morning, tired and strangely happy. Two years later he studied politics at university. His teachers said his written work was above the usual standard for first-year students. He always answered that he had learned everything above a bakery.

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