A Night at the Concert Hall (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Nobody in Daniel's family had ever shown the slightest artistic ability, so his passion for music surprised everyone. His parents worked in a bank, his sister studied law, and their evenings were usually filled with television rather than concerts. When Daniel announced at seventeen that he wanted to study music, his father simply asked how he intended to pay the rent. Yet the boy had already made up his mind.

His first real encounter with the orchestra had happened by accident. A friend's mother worked at the concert hall and offered him a free ticket one rainy Tuesday. He sat high in the balcony, expecting to be bored, and instead found himself unable to breathe properly. Sixty musicians moved together as though they shared one mind. On the way home he kept repeating that the sound had wrapped around him like a warm coat, which was the first metaphor he had ever invented for himself.

After that evening he saved every coin he earned from his weekend job. He went to see an opera about a doomed love affair and understood almost none of the Italian, though he cried anyway. He went to see a ballet and watched the dancers rise onto their toes as if gravity had simply agreed to leave them alone. He borrowed recordings from the library and read biographies of every composer whose name he could pronounce. His teachers noticed the change and encouraged him quietly.

At university he learned that inspiration alone was not enough. His tutor, a patient woman with grey hair, told him that creativity has to be trained like a muscle, not waited for like good weather. She made him compose a short piece every single week, whatever mood he happened to be in. Most of these attempts were dreadful and he threw them away. Still, by his final year, something had begun to take shape. He wrote a piece for strings that he called simply "Rain on Tuesday", and when the student ensemble performed it, the hall went completely silent afterwards.

His parents came to the concert, mainly out of duty. They arrived early and wandered through the foyer, where a large artwork hung near the entrance, a wild painting of blue and gold shapes. His mother said she did not understand it at all. Later, sitting in the third row, she listened to her son's creation being played by real musicians, and she found that she did not need to understand anything. Afterwards, a critic from a small literary magazine wrote three kind sentences about the young composer, and Daniel kept the clipping in his wallet for years.

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