The Evening Before the Vote (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

The town hall was already full when Marisol arrived, carrying a folder of papers under her arm. For weeks the community had argued about whether the old library should be sold to a property developer. Tonight the debate would finally take place in public, and the council had promised to listen before making any decision. Marisol had spent three evenings preparing, and she was convinced that she could change at least a few minds.

The developer's representative spoke first. He was calm, well dressed, and he smiled at the audience as though he had known them all his life. He began by explaining how much money the town would receive, and he chose to emphasize the number of jobs that the project would create. There was, in fact, very little in his speech that anyone could disagree with. Yet Marisol noticed that his entire emphasis fell on short-term profit, and never once on what the town would lose. When he sat down, several people applauded, and she had to acknowledge that his performance had been rather convincing.

Then it was her turn. She did not begin with numbers. Instead she described the reading room on winter afternoons, full of children whose families had no quiet space at home. Only after that did she cite a study from a nearby city, where a similar library had been closed and youth services had collapsed within two years. "I am not trying to imply that our council is careless," she said quietly. "But we should think about what the figures actually mean." The room went very still. A woman near the back asked whether the developer had made any promise about public access, and the representative hesitated a little too long.

From that hesitation, most people in the hall could infer the answer for themselves. Marisol continued, listing the implications of losing the only free public building in the district. She spoke about the elderly readers, the language classes, the job club that met on Thursdays. Her voice was not loud, but it did not shake either. The council leader interrupted once to assure the audience that no final decision had been taken. Several members of the public shouted that they had heard such promises before.

Before the meeting ended, Marisol did something she had not planned. She stepped away from the microphone, looked directly at the councillors, and began to insist that they visit the library themselves on an ordinary Tuesday morning. "Come and see who is inside," she said. "Then decide." A few of them looked uncomfortable, but nobody argued with her. Afterwards, in the cold air outside, her neighbour took her arm and began to urge her to stand for election herself. Marisol laughed and said she was far too tired for politics. Still, walking home under the street lamps, she found that the idea would not quite leave her.

Woordenlijst

Word	Meaning
debate	
convinced	
convincing	
emphasize	

emphasis
imply
implication
infer
cite
acknowledge
assure
insist
urge
prompt
address
appeal
approve
clarify
confess
deny
forbid
forgive
regard
remark
reveal

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