The Market on Baker Street (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

When Amina took over the small food market on Baker Street, she had no idea how much the neighbourhood would change her plans. The previous owner had sold nothing but tinned soup and white bread. Amina, who had grown up between two countries, wanted the shelves to reflect the people who actually lived around her. Within a year, her customers were as diverse as the street itself, and she loved listening to the mixture of languages at the till.

The change did not happen by accident. Amina spent whole weekends visiting suppliers, tasting products and asking questions. She realised that globalization had quietly reshaped even a modest corner shop: spices from Kerala, cheese from a village in Anatolia and coffee from Colombia now arrived through the same delivery van. Some of her older customers were suspicious at first. One man told her that he had eaten the same breakfast for forty years and had no intention of changing it.

Amina simply smiled and offered him a sample. She had learned that patience worked better than argument. Over time she introduced multiple new sections to the shop, each with a clear sign and a short explanation of where the food came from. A nearby primary school began sending classes to visit on Friday mornings, and the children asked far better questions than the adults did. The teachers said the visits taught more about cultural diversity than any textbook could.

Business was not always easy. Rent rose twice, and for several months Amina worked multiple shifts, opening early and closing late. Hiring an assistant was no longer a luxury but a necessity, so she advertised in the window and interviewed six candidates. She was careful to judge them only on their skills, ignoring age, background or gender. In the end she chose a quiet student named Tomasz, who turned out to be brilliant with numbers and hopeless with the coffee machine.

Two years later, a journalist writing for a national newspaper came to interview her about small businesses that survive in changing cities. He expected a story about struggle; instead he got a story about curiosity. Amina told him that she had never planned to build anything special. She had only wanted to sell food that her neighbours actually wanted to eat. The article was published on a Sunday, and by Monday afternoon there was a queue outside the door.

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