The Paper Cranes Workshop (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

The community centre had advertised a Saturday workshop on paper folding, and Nadia signed up without thinking too much about it. She had spent the whole winter behind a screen, and the idea of using her hands again appealed to her. When she arrived, twelve strangers were already sitting around a long wooden table covered in coloured squares. The teacher, a quiet man called Ivan, said almost nothing for the first ten minutes.

Then he held up a square of blue paper and told everyone to fold it exactly along the diagonal. Nadia's first attempt was crooked, and she laughed at herself. "Nobody makes a perfect crane at first," Ivan said calmly. He explained that origami looks simple but is actually a serious challenge for beginners, because every small mistake at the start becomes a large one at the end. Nadia decided that a slightly untidy bird would still be acceptable for a first morning.

The room was warm and unusually silent. Nadia noticed how completely her mind seemed to absorb the instructions once she stopped worrying about the result. Ivan spoke about geometry, about angles and symmetry, and about how the finished shape existed as an abstract idea long before the paper moved. Some of the students nodded politely; others simply kept folding. An hour passed without anyone checking a phone.

Halfway through the session, someone at the far end of the table accidentally knocked a glass of water across the paper. There was a short moment of alarm as three people jumped up, but the damage was small and everyone laughed. Ivan replaced the ruined sheets and continued as though nothing had happened. Nadia liked him for that. She had expected a strict artist and had found a patient teacher instead.

By midday the table was covered with small birds arranged in a loose formation that looked almost like a flock in flight. Ivan told them that the weather forecast promised rain all afternoon, so nobody was in a hurry to leave. He offered tea, and the group stayed talking for another half hour. One woman admitted she had felt like a fool walking in, convinced she would be the only person who had never done this before. Almost everyone at the table said quietly that they had thought exactly the same thing. The following Saturday, eleven of the twelve came back.

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