The Voice on the Radio (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

When Nadia joined the regional radio station, she believed that journalism would be a quiet, dignified profession. Within a month she understood how wrong she had been. The newsroom was noisy from six in the morning until late at night. Phones rang, printers jammed, and someone was always shouting about a missing recording. Nadia's first job was simple: she had to check the audio files before each programme went on air.

Her boss, Mr Okonkwo, was the chairman of the station's board as well as its most experienced presenter. He had worked as a broadcaster for almost thirty years, and his deep voice was recognised in every village in the region. He also had a slight Irish accent that listeners loved, although he had left Ireland as a teenager. When he was pleased, he said nothing at all. When he was not pleased, everybody knew.

One Tuesday, a serious story reached the newsroom. A local factory had been dumping waste into the river, and a government spokeswoman had promised an investigation, but nothing had happened for eight months. Nadia collected documents, spoke to farmers and recorded interviews. She stayed late three nights in a row. Mr Okonkwo listened to her material twice, then asked her to chair the meeting where the team would decide what to do. She had never led a discussion before, and her hands were shaking.

The programme was broadcast on Friday evening. Reaction came quickly. The factory's spokesman appeared on television the next morning, insisting that all rules had been followed. A well-known critic wrote in a national newspaper that the station had been unfair, and the station received several angry letters. Nadia read every one of them. Some of the criticism was rude, but a little of it was fair, and she made notes about what she would do differently next time.

Mr Okonkwo refused to criticize her, even in private. He simply pointed out that the strongest stories always attract attention. The station's press officer, a cheerful spokesperson named Grace, said the affair had brought them more publicity than any advertising campaign could have done. Listener numbers rose sharply, and a small publishing house asked Nadia whether she would write a book about the case. She thought the offer was flattering, but she was critical of her own work and wanted more experience first.

Six months later, the river was being cleaned and two managers had lost their jobs. Nadia looked critically at her early recordings and noticed a dozen small mistakes. Even so, she kept the tape of that Friday broadcast in her desk. The publication of her first article followed a year afterwards, and she dedicated it to the farmers who had trusted her with their story.

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