Numbers on the Kitchen Table (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Every Sunday evening, Tomás emptied his pockets onto the kitchen table and counted what was left. It had become a habit during his first year abroad, when money had been tight and every coin mattered. Usually the pile contained a few crumpled notes, a dime or two and several pennies that rolled towards the edge. That evening he found a nickel under the fruit bowl as well, and he laughed at himself for feeling pleased about five cents.

His budget was simple but strict. Rent swallowed the largest part of his income, and only a small fraction of what remained could be saved. The bus fare to work cost him nearly forty dollars a month, which seemed harmless until he multiplied it by twelve. He had also promised himself that he would join the swimming club near the station, although the membership fee was higher than he had expected. Some weeks he managed everything comfortably; other weeks he ate rice for three days and told nobody.

What surprised him most about his new country was the way things were measured. Milk was sold by the gallon, not by the litre, and he never quite knew whether he was buying too much or too little. Recipes asked for a dozen of eggs, and shelves were described as thirty inches long, which meant nothing to him until he held a ruler against the wall. He kept a small conversion table taped inside a cupboard door and consulted it almost daily.

One evening a friend showed him a news article about the national debt, which had passed thirty trillion dollars. Tomás stared at the number for a long time. He could imagine a hundred dollars, perhaps even a thousand, but beyond that the figures stopped meaning anything at all. His friend shrugged and said that on that scale, the money was really just a story people told each other. They argued about it cheerfully for an hour and then went out for pizza.

By the end of the year, Tomás had saved a modest sum of money, and he decided to treat himself to a short holiday. He compared several hotels online, ignoring the cheapest one because its rating was barely two stars out of five. The place he finally chose charged a reasonable nightly rate and stood ten minutes from the sea. On his last morning there, he sat on a wall with a coffee and thought about the coins on his kitchen table at home. Careful counting, he decided, was not meanness. It was simply the price of doing something worth remembering.

Woordenlijst

??????	??????
accommodate	
accommodation	
account	
accountant	
bargain	
bill	
buck	
cancel	
delivery	
discount	

estimate
price
acre
amount
fraction
gallon
inch
dozen
fee
fare
dime
nickel
trillion
sum
scale
rate
rating

.[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] 6 [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

استمع إلى هذه الحلقة عبر الإنترنت :
https://course.interactivelessons.nl/local/podcast/episode.php?id=25866

ابدأ هذه الدورة [illegible]: https://course.interactivelessons.nl/mod/quiz/view.php?id=1752