Snow on the Mountain Road (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

The road to the village wound through the forest like a grey ribbon, turning left and right for almost twenty kilometres. Tomas had driven it a hundred times, but never in weather like this. Snow had been falling since dawn, and the radio warned that conditions in the mountain zone would get much worse before evening.

He stopped at a small petrol station to withdraw some cash, since the village shop had never accepted cards. The woman behind the counter told him that the storm was more widespread than anyone had expected; three valleys had already lost their electricity. She advised him to turn back. Tomas thanked her politely and drove on anyway. Later he would admit that this was probably the worst decision he made all winter.

Twenty minutes further up, the snow grew heavier and the light began to fail. Then, in the middle of the road, he saw it: a grey shape standing perfectly still. It was a wolf, thin and calm, staring straight into his headlights. Tomas braked and the car slid sideways into a bank of snow. His head hit nothing, but he felt a sharp pain in his wrist where it had struck the steering wheel. When he looked up again, the animal had gone.

He could not open the driver's door, so he climbed out on the other side. The car was not badly damaged, yet the situation was serious: no signal, no traffic, and the temperature dropping fast. Tomas took a scarf from his bag and began to wind it around his injured hand. His grandfather's wisdom came back to him then, an old sentence about never fighting the mountain, only waiting for it. Panic, the old man used to say, makes everything worse.

So Tomas waited. He kept the engine running for short periods and watched the snow bury the road. He thought about how small he felt, no more important out here than a worm in the soil. Around eight o'clock, headlights appeared behind him: a farmer with a tractor and a chain. The man had witnessed the accident from a field above the road and had spent an hour preparing to come down. Tomas apologised for taking the wrong road on the worst day. The farmer only laughed and said the trip was worth making, because now he had a story to tell in the village bar for the rest of the winter.

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