# The Morning of the Exhibition (B2 · English B2)

## Tekst / Transcript

The weeks of preparation before the exhibition had been longer and harder than anyone expected. Clara had spent every evening in the small studio behind the library, sorting drawings into boxes and writing labels by hand. Her friends thought she was working too much. She simply answered that the show was her highest priority that spring, and that everything else could wait.

The morning of the opening arrived cold and grey. Clara had asked the printer for a print copy of the catalogue three days earlier, and she checked it now for the tenth time. There were sixty-four pages, each one listing an artist, a title and a date. The principal reason for her nervousness was not the crowd but the catalogue itself, because a single wrong name would embarrass everyone involved. She read the last page twice and finally allowed herself to breathe.

At ten o'clock she went down to the hall to print the final list of prices for the front desk. The machine jammed twice, which felt like a bad sign. A short meeting preceded the opening, and during it the director thanked the volunteers warmly. Clara noticed that he never mentioned the number of hours they had given, though she decided not to mind. Her prior discussions with him had already taught her that he was generous with praise and vague with details.

Guests began to arrive at precisely six o'clock, which surprised her, since art openings usually start slowly. An elderly collector came first, wearing a heavy coat and carrying a small notebook. He asked for precise information about a painting in the second room: the size, the materials, the year. Clara answered every question calmly. The old man smiled and said that he had a strong preference for artists who could explain their own work. His presence in the room seemed to make the other visitors braver, and soon the hall was full.

By nine o'clock three paintings had been sold, and Clara felt a quiet pride that she had not expected. Most of the buyers were, she noticed, primarily people from the town rather than dealers from the city. That pleased her even more. Later, when the lights were switched off, the director handed her a small box containing a fountain pen. It was not precious in the sense of being expensive, but she kept it on her desk for years afterwards.

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