The House on Harbour Road (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

When Daniel inherited the old house on Harbour Road, he had never even seen a photograph of it. His grandmother had left him a letter, a rusty key and her signature at the bottom of a yellowed page. The lawyer explained the sequence of steps he needed to follow before the property became legally his. It all sounded complicated, but Daniel agreed to everything and booked a flight the same afternoon.

The town was smaller than he expected. He walked from the harbour along a cracked sidewalk where weeds pushed up between the stones. An enormous ship was being unloaded at the dock, and gulls screamed above the cranes. The house stood at the end of the road, its walls bleached by salt and wind. In the afternoon light it cast a long shadow across the garden. Daniel stood there for a while, unable to move, listening to the silence that seemed to fill the whole street.

Inside, the rooms were dusty but sound. He sat down in the shade of the kitchen wall and read his grandmother's letter again. She wrote that her own great-grandfather had been one of the first settlers in the valley behind the town, and that the family had never really left. She admitted the house was not glamorous, and certainly not what an estate agent would call sexy, but she hoped Daniel would love it anyway. He noticed a photograph on the wall: a young woman with a rifle, taken after a shooting competition in 1954. Her grin was unmistakably his grandmother's.

Over the next few days he explored the building properly. The roof was in poor shape and would need replacing before winter. A local builder came round, gave him a rough price and warned him about the shortage of skilled workers in the region. "Everyone's gone to the city," he said. "Shall I put you on the list for spring?" Daniel hesitated, because a short-term repair would cost almost as much as a proper one. In the end he agreed to a temporary fix, on condition that the real work started in April. He also took a shot of the roof with his phone, so he could show it to his sister.

That evening he sat on the steps and watched the harbour lights come on one by one. He had come intending to sell the place quickly, yet something had changed. The house had given shelter to fishermen during storms for over a century, and it seemed wrong to hand it to a developer. His sister called and asked whether he had made a decision. Daniel laughed and said he was thinking of doing something ridiculous. He was going to settle here, at least for a year, and see what happened. In the silence of the following morning, with the sun still low, the idea felt entirely sensible.

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