The Photograph in the Garden (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Martin had promised himself a quiet weekend, and for once the weather agreed. He carried his camera into his grandmother's garden, hoping to capture the light that fell through the old apple trees just after sunrise. His grandmother had died two years earlier, and the house was about to be sold. He wanted one good photograph before strangers moved in.

The garden had grown wild. Long grass covered the path, and a huge bush that his grandmother had once trimmed every spring now leaned over the gate like a sleeping animal. Martin pushed through the branches and stopped. In the middle of the lawn stood the wooden bench where she used to sit with her tea. It was still there, grey and cracked, and the morning sun cast a soft shadow across it.

He took his first pictures quickly. They were technically correct but completely lifeless, and he knew it immediately. Something was missing. He sat down on the damp grass and waited, telling himself that patience was part of the job. A bug landed on his sleeve, a small green insect with impossibly thin legs, and he watched it climb towards his elbow before it flew away. The air smelled of wet earth and smoke; somewhere in the neighbourhood a farmer was burning old branches, and a thin grey line rose above the roofs.

His phone buzzed. It was a brief message from his sister: three words and a question mark. She wanted to know whether he had finished. Martin replied briefly, promising to call later, then switched the phone off entirely. He had explained his plan to her the night before, though only broadly, because he had not wanted to sound sentimental. Broadly speaking, she understood him anyway. She always did.

At around eight o'clock the light changed. The sun rose above the neighbour's roof and suddenly the whole bench glowed, warm and gold, exactly as he remembered it from childhood afternoons. Martin lifted the camera and pressed the button once. He did not check the screen. Instead he stayed sitting there in his old jacket and casual trousers, listening to the birds, letting the moment finish itself. Later, when he finally looked at the image, he found that he had got what he came for.

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