A Long Wait at Gate 12 (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Nadia had promised herself that she would not cry at the airport. She had said goodbye to her parents in the car, quickly and cheerfully, and had walked into the terminal without looking back. Only when she sat down by the window did a single tear escape and run down her cheek. She wiped it away and opened her book. The flight was already delayed by two hours.

She was nineteen, barely out of her teen years, and this was her first journey abroad alone. Her mother had a tendency to worry about everything, and had checked the paperwork four separate times. Her father, who was calmer, had simply read the terms and conditions of the travel insurance and nodded. Nadia had listened politely to both of them. Now, sitting among strangers, she felt oddly grateful for all that fuss.

The tension in the departure lounge grew as the delay continued. A man in a grey suit complained loudly to a member of staff, using a technical term that nobody in the queue seemed to understand. A child was crying near the coffee shop. Nadia noticed that the airline's announcements were terribly vague, which only made people more anxious. She decided to make a thorough inspection of her hand luggage instead, just to keep herself busy. Her passport, her boarding pass and her charger were all exactly where she had left them.

The timing of the announcement, when it finally came, could not have been worse: it arrived just as half the passengers had wandered off to find food. Boarding would begin in ten minutes. Nadia grabbed her bag and joined the queue, thus becoming one of the first people on the plane. She found her seat, checked her belt thoroughly, and let out a long breath. The engineers, someone said, had spent the whole afternoon testing a faulty sensor.

Once they were in the air, everything felt easier. Nadia opened her book again and read the title of the first chapter twice without taking anything in. The past few months had been tough, with exams, arguments and a great deal of doubt, and she was still tired from them. But every time she looked out of the window at the clouds below, she felt a little braver. By the time the meal was served, she was smiling to herself, thinking that her mother would have been proud of how calm she had managed to stay.

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