The Night Shift Nurse (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Marta had worked night shifts at the hospital for eleven years, and she still claimed that every shift told a different story. That Tuesday began quietly. She checked her list, filled her pockets with pens, and pushed the trolley towards the first ward. An elderly man in bed three was already awake, waiting for someone to talk to.

His name was Mr Oduya, and he had fallen in his kitchen the week before. The X-ray had shown no damage to his skull, which everyone agreed was extremely lucky. However, he had broken his hip, and walking would be difficult for months. He complained that his left elbow hurt too, because he had landed on his arm. Marta helped him sit up and checked the bruises along his forearm.

"Do you know what frightened me most?" he asked. "The sound. When I hit the floor, it was hollow, like a drum." Marta smiled and told him that old houses often sound that way. She wiped his cheek with a warm cloth, and he closed his eyes for a moment. Then she pressed gently into the palm of his hand and asked him to squeeze her fingers. He could barely move his thumb, so she made a note to mention it to the doctor in the morning.

In the next room lay a young woman called Ines, who was six months pregnant and had come in with chest pain. She was frightened, and her husband had not arrived yet. Marta explained that the tests were normal: her heart was strong, and both her lungs were clear. Sometimes a trapped nerve causes pain that feels far worse than it really is, she said. Ines laughed weakly and admitted she had imagined the worst. Marta handed her a tissue from the box on the table, then sat with her for a while and talked about baby names.

By three in the morning, the ward had settled. Marta thought about how strange the human body is: every organ works silently, day after day, and we only notice it when something goes wrong. A patient in the corner had once told her that the tissue under a scar never quite forgets the injury. She had never forgotten that phrase. When the sun rose, an emergency arrived: a swimmer, half naked and shivering, wrapped in a foil blanket after being pulled from the harbour. Marta warmed his hands, checked his breast for a rash, and carried on. It was, she decided, an ordinary night after all.

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