The Night Shift at Ward C (B2 · English B2)

Tekst / Transcript

Daniel had worked night shifts in the old hospital wing for three years, and he still found the silence unsettling. Ward C stood at the far end of a corridor that nobody used after ten o'clock, which made it feel isolated from the rest of the building. The heating pipes knocked. The lift complained. He had learned to ignore both.

His job was mainly to watch monitors and record readings at regular intervals through the night. To open the medicine cupboard he had to insert a plastic key card into a reader beside the door, and the machine responded instantly, with a green light and a small satisfied beep. Most of his interaction with other staff happened by text message, because the two nurses on duty were busy at the other end of the wing. He liked the quiet, though he sometimes went whole hours without speaking to anyone.

That Tuesday, something was wrong with the electrical system. The lights in the corridor dimmed and brightened at uneven moments, and for an instant the monitors went dark before flickering back. Daniel reported it, and the duty manager promised that an inspector would come in the morning to check the wiring. Nobody seemed worried. Faults in the old wing were treated as an ordinary issue, not an emergency, since the building was due for renovation anyway.

At two in the morning a woman appeared at the ward door. She was not a patient, and she was not wearing a visitor's badge. Daniel stood up to ask who she was, but she raised a hand to interrupt him before he could finish the question. She explained that she had been a nurse in this wing thirty years earlier, that her mother had died in the corner bed, and that she had come back because she could not sleep. Daniel hesitated. Rules existed for good reasons, and he was not supposed to let anyone in.

Still, he did not want to isolate a grieving woman in a cold corridor. He made her tea and let her sit near the window. Over the next hour she talked, and what she said gave him a genuine insight into the way the hospital had changed. There had been more time then, she said, and staff were expected to interact with patients rather than with screens. She described one instance when a boy with a broken leg had taught the whole ward a card game. Her memories were not sentimental; they were precise, and they were surprisingly critical of the old system too.

When she left at dawn she thanked him. Daniel wrote a short account of the visit for the internal report, expecting trouble. Instead, his manager read it twice and asked whether he would speak at a training session. The talk had never been intended as anything important; it was simply a night that would not leave him alone. Yet it went on to inspire several younger colleagues to spend more of each shift away from their monitors, and the story of Ward C was repeated for years afterwards.

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