

THE QUIET HOURS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. ST. BRIGID'S HOSPITAL – ER SUPPLY ROOM – NIGHT

Fluorescent hum. Shelves in perfect order. MARA VOSS, 44, scrubs the color of deep water, restocks a supply cart – gauze, saline, catheter kits – each item squared to the edge of its bin.

Over the PA, muffled: "CODE BLUE, BAY 2. CODE BLUE."

Mara's hands do not pause. She finishes the row, closes the drawer, and only then moves – fast, controlled – out the door.

INT. ER – NURSES' STATION – NIGHT

Later. Calm restored. IRIS OKONKWO, 50s, charge nurse, all warmth and no nonsense, slides a cup of black coffee across the counter to Mara.

IRIS

Three a.m. Don't say I never give you anything.

MARA

You never give me anything that isn't hospital property.

IRIS

The cup's mine. The coffee's stolen.

Mara almost smiles. She clips her badge holder back onto her pocket. For half a second it falls open – a small folded photograph inside – and she closes it with a practiced thumb.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Schedule came out. You put in for nights again.

MARA

Somebody has to.

IRIS

Somebody does it eleven months running.

A radio CRACKLES at the desk.

PARAMEDIC (V.O.)
 (filtered)
 St. Brigid's, inbound, male late
 thirties, unresponsive, suspected
 overdose. Found in a parked car on
 Delancey. Five out.

Mara is already moving.

INT. ER — AMBULANCE BAY — NIGHT

Doors BANG open. PARAMEDICS roll a gurney: DANIEL REECE, 38,
 gray-faced, an oxygen mask fogging weakly.

PARAMEDIC
 No ID on scene. Empty bottle in the
 cup holder, no label. He was
 parked. Engine off.

MARA
 (taking the rail)
 Bay 6.

As the gurney turns, the work light catches Daniel's throat:
 a cheap SAINT'S MEDAL on a chain, the size of a dime.

Mara stops walking. One full second. The gurney pulls ahead
 of her.

IRIS
 (off her look)
 Mara?

MARA
 (already moving again)
 Bay 6.

INT. ER — BAY 6 — NIGHT

Mara works alone — leads on, monitor up, IV line in, every
 motion exact. On the monitor: a slow, sulking rhythm.

She looks at his face. Really looks.

INSERT — MEMORY, OR SOMETHING LIKE IT

A grainy traffic-camera still. Dusk. A sedan blurred
 mid-frame. Behind the windshield, a smear of jaw and
 hairline. On the dashboard, a pale dot — round, the size of
 a dime.

BACK TO SCENE

Mara lifts Daniel's wallet from the personal-effects bag.
Driver's license: REECE, DANIEL A.

The name means nothing.

She looks back at the medal against his collarbone.

MARA
(barely sound)
Okay.

She files the wallet, logs the time, and pulls the curtain
so it is just the two of them.

INT. ER – SUPPLY ROOM – NIGHT

Door shut. Mara, back to the shelves, phone in hand. She
types fast: "voss hit and run delancey 2023".

Headline glow on her face: "TOMÁS VOSS, 9, KILLED IN
HIT-AND-RUN – DRIVER SOUGHT." Beside the article, the police
sketch she has memorized into uselessness.

She holds the phone next to the intake photo on her tablet.
Jaw. Hairline.

Her breath goes in once. Comes out level.

She puts the phone away, squares a bin of gauze that was
already square, and goes back to work.

INT. ER – NURSES' STATION – NIGHT

Mara hands Iris a chart.

MARA
Give me Six. You take the chest
pain in Two – he asks for you
anyway.

IRIS
You sure? Six is going to be
paperwork all night.

MARA
I like paperwork.

IRIS
(taking the chart)
You're the only one I never have to
check on.

Iris goes. Mara stands a moment with that sentence.

INT. ER — BAY 6 — NIGHT

Mara hangs a new bag. As she reaches for the line —

Daniel's hand closes on her wrist. Weak. His eyes are half-open, swimming.

DANIEL
(rasping)
Don't fix it.

She doesn't move.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Please.

His grip slides off. Under again.

Mara stands very still, the syringe in her hand, the monitor ticking like a clock.

CUT TO:

INT. ER — BAY 6 — 3 A.M.

Daniel, lucid now, propped up, the mask swapped for a cannula. Mara charts at the bedside. The department beyond the curtain is a low tide of sound.

DANIEL
You believe people deserve things?

MARA
(not looking up)
I believe in dosage schedules.

DANIEL
I mean what happens to them. You think it adds up? Somewhere?

Mara's pen stops. Starts again.

MARA
You'd have to ask somebody who sleeps at night.

DANIEL
(quiet)
I haven't slept since before.

She should not ask. She asks.

MARA
Before what?

A long silence. The monitor counts it.

DANIEL
There was a kid.

Mara's face: nothing. Her hand, below the chart where he
can't see it: a fist.

FADE OUT.