

## A late night at the maternity ward

A hospital is never really quiet but the maternity ward comes pretty close at night. Besides muffled soft screams from newborns or muffled sounds of soon to be mothers, the corridors were eerily quiet. As the clock ticked closer to two in the morning a man comes out of one of the rooms. His face is pale and as soon as he finds a seat he uses it. He is breathing heavily and his eyes are unseeing. He doesn't notice the male nurse until he sits down beside him and hands him a glass of water. The man takes it gratefully and sips on it before turning towards the nurse. He is pale as few, an aftermath of too many night shifts at the hospital the man supposes. His eyes are watery, almost like glass marbles and although he gives the new dad a kind smile something just seems off with the man. His hair is kept short, surely for convenience rather than handsomeness and his nails are cut short on his hands.

"How are you feeling, my friend?" His voice is soft and although it is completely quiet in the corridor, the words do not carry particularly good. It almost feels sleazy, slow and with a hint of flirting. He seems to be the kind of man which flirts with everyone, a new father, a post-birth mother or the other nurses. The thing was that he also seemed like a good guy, maybe not so genuine. But his calm, soft voice eased the anxiety the father harbored.

"I..." he stutters. His mind is moving so fast that his mouth can't keep up with it. The nurse puts a calming hand at the father's back. He moves it slowly up and down, a comforting kind of motion. The man tries once more.

"I think I just became a father" he puts his head in his hands. "Oh, god. I think a baby is on its way out of my wife's uterus" the nurse continued with the soothing motions on his back.

"It's okay" when the father's breathing slowed once more the nurse continued in his soft tenor. "It's okay. You're gonna' be an amazing father. But you need to be there for your wife, man. She needs you right now" the man processed this for some time before nodding. He arose and walked back into the room where his child was being born.

They meet again. It's a couple of hours later and the father is standing by the glass window, overlooking all the newborns. He seems calm now.

"Which one is yours then?" the male nurse has once more sneaked upon him. The now father points at one of the babies in the back. "Oh, but isn't he gorgeous. You could almost eat him" the nurse sighed happily. The man agrees. He has never seen anything quite so beautiful.

"They are like a work of art" is the man's response. The nurse nods in eager agreement.

"You really put the words in my mouth" he smiled.

They stood there for a while, this time in comfortable silence. Eventually the nurse patted the man's back and smiled at him through the reflection of the window.

"I'll go check on your wife. You stand here and take it all in for a while" he turned and walked down along the corridor. The man stood there for a long time before returning to his wife.

She was asleep when he entered. The nurse was nowhere to be found. She had a small smile on her face and she seemed really snuggly under the duvet. She did seem paler than she was when he had left her but he supposed that was normal after childbirth.