

Angels

I don't know if I've ever seen an angel. But as a hospice volunteer, I have felt many angels at the bedside of those close to death.

Sometimes walking through a doorway I've felt overwhelmed by the sheer fullness of the room. Positive, comforting fullness even though only the patient is there. Full of angels. Peaceful and calm. I'm not needed there.

Other times, I've attempted to enter a room and been stopped. Not by evil but more a feeling that there is a battle being fought and my presence is not needed. I feel a struggle. But I don't feel sad when I encounter this. More of a feeling of a normal life event being sorted out. I'm not needed there.

Other times, I can feel the comforting presence that is not so full. More inviting for me to enter and sit bedside and hold a hand or offer words of comfort to a family member or friend. I'm needed there.

Yet other times, I enter a room filled with human tension and fear. The kind you can "cut with a knife." Family and friends surrounding a patient. Listening to them breathe. Waiting in dread for their last breath. Here I am needed and welcome. I can coax a story about their loved one or their favorite recipe. I can encourage laughter and remembering. And then I can slowly disappear and leave with the tension broken and the patient overhearing the pleasant conversation, knowing their family and friends will be ok. Here I was needed and welcomed and invited in by angels. To break the tension and pour out the good to share.