

Silver Wolf

The Sunday morning sun filtered through the hospital blinds, warming the otherwise cold room. Rishi, forty-eight years old, lay in bed, her body ravaged by breast cancer as she fought for her life. It had been five months since her diagnosis, and now the disease had begun stealing her vision.

"Obiyah... son, are you there?" Rishi asked, struggling to open her eyes.

"Obi?" she called again, her voice growing frantic.

"Yes, Mama. I'm here," Obiyah replied, his raspy morning voice revealing he had fallen asleep beside her bed.

"Obiyah... can you please get a nurse? I can't see. My eyes... I can't see."

"Of course. I'll go right away."

Obiyah rushed from the room.

Moments later, the doctor carefully examined Rishi. As he checked her eyes and monitored her condition, the sadness on his face spoke long before his words did.

"It appears she's beginning to lose the vision in both eyes," the doctor said quietly.

Obiyah slowly lowered himself into a chair.

His heartbeat thundered inside his chest.

Lub-dub. Lub-dub.

"Is that... okay?" he asked, his voice trembling.

The doctor sighed.

"I would suggest getting your affairs in order. If I'm being realistic... I'd estimate she has about one month."

Silence swallowed the room.

"So... she's going to die?" Obiyah whispered. "Like... really die?"

The doctor lowered his eyes.

"Yes... unfortunately. I'd recommend spending as much time with her as you can."

The words hit Obiyah like a freight train.

The room began to spin.

His breathing became shallow.

His heartbeat pounded louder and louder until...

Everything went black.

"Obiyah?"

"Obiyah?"

"Hey, buddy..."

"You okay?"

Slowly...

Obiyah opened his eyes.

He looked up at the doctor.

"Did... did I pass out?"

"You did," the doctor answered, helping him back onto his feet.

Although the dizziness lingered, Obiyah gathered himself.

His mother needed him now more than ever.

As he made his way back toward her room, his heart pounded with fear.

But the moment he stepped inside...

The fear disappeared.

He smiled.

"Hey, beautiful fox. How are you feeling?"

Rishi smiled weakly.

"Oh... you know..."

Just dying."

Obiyah laughed softly despite himself.

Then tears began to fall.

"Come prop up my pillow. I need to tell you something."

Without hesitation, Obiyah adjusted her pillows until she sat comfortably.

She reached for his hand.

"Obiyah...

My sweet boy.

I love you.

I need you to do something for me."

Wiping the tears from his eyes, Obiyah nodded.

"Anything, Mama.

Anything."

"I need you to go home...

...and find your father.

I have something that must be given to him."

Obiyah stared at her in disbelief.

"What?

No.

Hell no.

I haven't seen him since I was fifteen.

I wouldn't even know where to find him."

"I know.

But I need the tradition of the Silver Wolf.

I'm running out of time...

...and I'm losing my vision.

I need you...

...my Silver Fox...

...to help me find the Silver Wolf."

Obiyah looked into his mother's fading eyes.

For the first time since receiving the diagnosis...

He understood.

This wasn't simply a request.

It was her dying wish.

He stood tall.

"I won't let you down.

I promise."

A warm smile crossed Rishi's face.

"You never have."