

Whispers from the Head of the Bed

I'm just a pillow. Soft, rectangle, and like a warm hug. My cotton shell is faded from years of sun filtering through the blinds, and my stuffing's a little uneven from being hugged too tightly on hard nights. But I've seen things. I have felt things. Held things that most wouldn't understand.

I live in Room 3 at Wayside House, nestled against the headboard of a twin bed with a comfy quilt. The women who come here are seeking something—peace, healing, maybe just a place to breathe. And I get to be part of that journey.

Some nights, I feel her warm, salty tears. Silent ones that soak into my seams. Other nights, I hear laughter—real, belly-deep laughter that makes me fluff with pride. I've been punched in frustration, clutched during panic attacks, and whispered to like a confidant. I don't mind. That's what I'm here for.

I remember Maria. She used to talk to me like I was her sister. She'd lie on her side, eyes wide open, whispering to me about the mistakes she'd made and the dreams she still had. "You're the only one who doesn't judge me," she said once. I wanted to tell her she was braver than she knew.

Then there was Jasmine. She was quiet. She'd curl up with me and stare at the ceiling, her breath slow and steady. I felt her change over time as her grip loosened, her posture softened. She started sleeping through the night. That's how I knew she was healing.

Every week, the sheets get changed and I get fluffed. The scent of lavender sometimes lingers, and the Florida breeze sneaks in through the window. I hear group sessions through the walls, the clink of coffee mugs in the morning, and the shuffle of slippers on tile. It's a rhythm I've come to love.

I'm just a pillow. But here at Wayside House, I'm part of something bigger. I hold the weight of recovery, the softness of hope, and the quiet promise that tomorrow will be better.