

The Waiting Room

Amy had been in many waiting rooms. Car service centers, banks, hospitals, etc. But the strangest waiting room she had ever been to was in her doctor's office in one of those professional suites. Amy walked up for her appointment and saw yards of heavy plastic secured around the entrance and outside windows, maybe 20 feet wide. There was a sign on the door.

Please excuse our appearance as we remodel.

We are expanding to serve you better.

An arrow pointed to the right of the door to a temporary entrance. Apparently, her doctor's practice was doing very well.

"I'm here for my 2:30pm appointment; my name is Amy Eng."

The medical assistant looked on her computer screen. "Here you are. I see you're a little early. While we are remodeling, our temporary waiting room is over there." The receptionist pointed to a small room down the hallway.

Amy walked into the room and saw office furniture that was older than she was. Plaid, orange and gray fabric over veneer oak armchairs, a black leatherette couch, a cheesy plastic table and the requisite middle class magazines, none from the 21st century. On the wall were paint by number pictures of clowns in cheap frames, an Ansel Adams photograph that looked like it was taken out of a magazine and one of those certificates proving that the doctor had actually been trained. The rug was industrial grade, tightly woven, charcoal in color with specks of yellow. There were no windows and a stale smell.

A young woman in blue scrubs came in and removed one of the chairs. Amy sat on the couch and watched. The woman returned and took another chair. Amy looked around. Then the woman came back and started removing the pictures. There was no one else in the room to commiserate with. The woman took the plastic table, the magazines and the framed certificate. Soon the only thing remaining was Amy and the leatherette couch. She didn't mind the removal of the eyesore furnishings, the ancient magazines, the clown pictures or the certificate.

Then a man, dressed in green scrubs, came in with the woman, holding a straight back, wooden chair. "We're going to have to take the couch. Would you mind sitting here for a moment?"

Amy acquiesced silently. She realized that this must be someone else's office that her doctor was taking over. She looked around the room, then at her watch. Surely the doctor would be seeing her soon. "Wait a minute," she said to herself, only slightly audibly. "Is this still a waiting room?" She looked down the hallway. "Hello, is anyone here?" No reply or for that matter any sound. Amy walked back to the receptionist's desk. The office was vacant, without life, like something out of a French existentialist story. Then a horrible thought occurred to Amy.

She was missing.