

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW

By Karen Mueller-Bryson

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CAST

PATIENT—a young man

RECEPTIONIST—a young woman

NURSE—a young woman

TIME: On the brink of the new millennium

PROPS

Clipboard with lots of papers

a patient chart

crayon

toy stethoscope

toy thermometer (probably a large one)

a plastic pail

SETTING: The office of Dr. Luis Van de Veer, M.D.

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AT RISE: The RECEPTIONIST is sitting at the front desk of Dr. Van de Veer's office. The PATIENT, a young man, steps up to the RECEPTIONIST's desk.

(Throughout the play, the PATIENT becomes increasingly ill.)

PATIENT: I have an eleven o'clock appointment with Dr. Van de Veer.

RECEPTIONIST: Insurance?

PATIENT: Well...um...let me see...I have my card here somewhere...

(The PATIENT fumbles around for his wallet. When HE finally finds it, HE has some difficulty locating his insurance card. The RECEPTIONIST waits impatiently.) Here it is – American Family Medical Plan.

RECEPTIONIST: Is that an HMO, PPO, POC, PCP, LSD, BBC?

PATIENT: I don't know – I'm not sure.

RECEPTIONIST: You don't know what kind of a plan you're on, sir?

PATIENT: No...well...um...I think it's an HMO.

RECEPTIONIST: I'm sorry, sir – we only see HMO patients on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when they land on an even day of the week, and the third Wednesday of every month that ends in "y."

PATIENT: But I feel really bad. Is there any way I can see someone?

RECEPTIONIST: Look around you. This is a doctor's office. Everyone here is sick and they all want to "see someone."

PATIENT: Please -

RECEPTIONIST: We can override the HMO policy but only with proper authorization.

PATIENT: How can I get authorization?

RECEPTIONIST: You'll need to fill out these forms. ***(The RECEPTIONIST hands the PATIENT a clipboard with a stack of papers the size of a phone book.)*** And I'll need a copy of your driver's license, your social security card, a birth certificate or passport, documentation of any pre-existing conditions and a major credit card – we don't accept American Express.

(The PATIENT steps away with the clipboard and papers. HE sits on the waiting room chair and begins to fill out the paperwork. While the PATIENT tries to complete the forms, HE begins to sweat. HE becomes noticeably sicker.)

PATIENT: ***(walking up to the RECEPTIONIST's desk)*** I hate to bother you – but I really feel bad. Is there any way I can see the doctor?

RECEPTIONIST: Not until you're authorized.

PATIENT: Is there a place where I can lie down for a few minutes?

RECEPTIONIST: I'm sorry, sir, but there is no way I can let you into an examination room prior to your scheduled appointment time. There are no exceptions.

PATIENT: ***(putting his leg on her desk)*** I guess I'll just have to lie down here then.

RECEPTIONIST: There's no need for such drastic measures, sir. I'll find the nurse and see about getting you into an examining room.

PATIENT: Thank you.

(The RECEPTIONIST walks off stage and re-enters with the NURSE.)

NURSE: What seems to be the problem, sir?

PATIENT: Is there anyplace I can lie down – I'm not feeling very well.

NURSE: We're a very busy office. We don't like to put our patients in the examining rooms until their scheduled appointment times.

PATIENT: ***(doubles over in pain)*** Please – I need to lie down.

NURSE: All right – if you insist on lying down.

(The NURSE escorts the PATIENT into the examining room. The PATIENT lies down on the examining table.)

PATIENT: I hope you don't think that just because I put you in an examining room, the doctor will see you before your scheduled appointment.

(The NURSE exits before the PATIENT can respond.)

(The RECEPTIONIST enters carrying the clipboard and paper work.)

RECEPTIONIST: I hope you don't think the doctor will see you without the proper authorization. ***(throws the clipboard and paperwork on the edge of the examining table)***

(The PATIENT picks up the clipboard and begins filling out the paperwork, HE soon finds HE is becoming too ill to complete it.)

(The NURSE re-enters with a patient chart, a crayon, a toy stethoscope and giant thermometer the size of a pepperoni. [all of these props can be mimed, if necessary] SHE is smiling. SHE speaks to the PATIENT as if SHE has never seen him before.)

NURSE: Hello, I'm Nurse Bunkum. Welcome to Dr. Van de Veer's office. I just need to get some intake information from you. First, let me get your temperature. Open wide and say "Ahhh." *(The PATIENT opens his mouth and says "AAHHH." The NURSE takes the giant thermometer and sticks it in the patient's mouth. After a moment, the NURSE takes the thermometer from the PATIENT's mouth and reads the temperature.)* A hundred and seventy-eight degrees. Does that seem a little high to you? You're really cooking, sir. Oh, well. Let's listen to your heart. *(The NURSE takes the toy stethoscope and places it on the PATIENT's chest.)* Isn't that funny. I can't hear a thing. *(The NURSE tries placing the stethoscope in various places on the PATIENT's chest but cannot seem to find a heartbeat.)* Well, you are alive – so you must have a heartbeat. *(The NURSE scribbles in the patient chart with a crayon.)* And what brings you here today?

PATIENT: I'm sick.

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