

WAITING ROOM

by

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WAITING ROOM

Characters

BILLY, 30s, a guy in good health.

ALAN, his brother, five to 10 years older, a man in need of a working kidney.

SHERYL, Alan's wife, same age as Alan.

DOCTOR

NURSE

Time

Present.

Setting

A doctor's office and waiting room outside.

WAITING ROOM

Lights up on a waiting room outside a doctor's office, which remains in the dark.

ALAN, wearing slippers and his own bathrobe over a flimsy hospital gown, sits in the waiting room with his haggard wife SHERYL and his younger brother BILLY, who paces nervously. SHERYL and BILLY wear street clothes, which for BILLY includes a light jacket.

SHERYL

Billy, you OK?

BILLY

Yeah, sure.

BILLY continues to pace.

ALAN

Billy, will you sit the fuck down? You're getting on my nerves.

BILLY, hugging his jacket around him, takes a chair that puts SHERYL between him and his brother.

ALAN (CONT'D)

(Resentfully.)

Aw, will you look at him.

SHERYL

Alan, please...

ALAN

He acts like he's the one sick.

(To BILLY.)

Jesus Christ!

SHERYL

We're all a little on edge.

ALAN

Yeah? Well, I'm the only one deserves to be. Fucking drama queen over there.

They sit. BILLY starts jigglng his leg. SHERYL and ALAN watch with disbelief (her) and barely suppressed rage (him).

BILLY notices, forces himself to stop. SHERYL looks from one to the other, gauging her best moment to say something conciliatory or disarming...

SHERYL

Doctors make everybody nervous.

BILLY

Exactly.

SHERYL

I think it's those pictures they got in their office, of body parts with the skin off. Why they have to display that stuff is beyond me.

BILLY

To show everything that can go wrong with you. To make sure to get their money's worth of a college education.

ALAN

Yeah, well, I'm kind of counting on getting my money's worth of their college education, you know?

BILLY

Hey, me too.

Lights up on doctor's office. NURSE enters the waiting room with a chart.

NURSE

(Reading.)

William Forster.

BILLY rises.

NURSE (CONT'D)

This way.

NURSE leads BILLY to the doctor's office, ushers him in.

NURSE (CONT'D)

The doctor will be with you momentarily.

NURSE exits.

BILLY

In a moment. The doctor will be with me in a moment.

Lights down on doctor's office.

SHERYL

(To ALAN.)

It's a routine procedure now. You'll both be all right.

ALAN

(With growing indignation.)

You know, all my life I been paying for his mistakes. Remember I told you when Billy took my bike without my permission and left it in the park and it got stolen. I never got that bike back. Like he left my baseball glove out in the rain. Like he still owes me over three thousand dollars. Typical Billy. And now I need something from him, and it's my last chance. Jesus. I believe that is the definition of ironical.

SHERYL

(Dutifully, without enthusiasm.)

You have always been a good big brother.

ALAN

Fuck. Rather I never been a big brother at all.

SHERYL

You don't mean that.

ALAN

Are you serious? If I'd had a choice, I wouldn't've signed on. Day after day making excuses for him, covering his bullshit? He owes me. Big time.

Lights down on waiting room. DOCTOR enters office in high spirits. BILLY looks up but doesn't rise.

DOCTOR

Don't get up. I have good news: You're a match!

BILLY

(Ambivalent.)

Great.

DOCTOR

So you'll be able to safely give your brother one of your kidneys.

BILLY

That's why I'm here.

DOCTOR

(Reading from a chart.)

Yeah. Blood compatibility is fine--you're B, he's AB. But what we especially like to see--the tissue typing shows only one matching antigen. That greatly reduces the possibility of rejection.

BILLY

That's good to know. Do I get to pick which one? To give up?

DOCTOR

(Laughs.)

I'm sure you have plenty of questions. We'll sit down and go over everything with you. For now, I just want to get you two on a pre-surgical preparation schedule. I'm going to get started on the paperwork right now. My nurse will bring in a consent form, momentarily, which we'll need you to sign before you leave. OK?

DOCTOR exits without waiting for a response.

BILLY

In a moment. Momentarily.

BILLY sits for several seconds, his jacket pulled to him protectively. The he slowly gets to his feet and exits the doctor's office into the waiting room. BILLY stops to listen to SHERYL and ALAN, who don't notice him standing there.

SHERYL

We'll know soon.

ALAN

Why'd I have to be the one to get this, instead of him? Dialysis three times a week? It ain't fair. My life depends on a loser.

SHERYL

You can't hold it against Billy. What we all want has nothing to do with it, it's up to the test results, which Billy has no control over.

ALAN

Tests. He always did shit on tests. Another one of his reliable qualities.

ALAN and SHERYL sit, each staring into a private space. Then they turn, recognizing the forlorn younger man. SHERYL rises half-way out of her chair to ask BILLY...

SHERYL

Well?

BILLY
(Beat, this is difficult.)
 No. No match.

SHERYL gasps, ALAN pounds his chair.

Shit!

ALAN

ALAN stands to exit, pauses and turns to BILLY.

ALAN (CONT'D)
 I shouldn't've got my hopes up. Thanks for trying. See you around.

ALAN exits.

SHERYL
(Tearfully.)
 He is so grateful, Billy. It's just hard for him to say.

BILLY
 That's my brother.

SHERYL
 I'm going to need your help, Billy. With all of this. With Alan.

SHERYL embraces him.

BILLY
 Don't worry. I'm here for you. Here for both of you.

BILLY puts his arm around SHERYL, who huddles against him, sobbing quietly. He helps her to her feet, then toward the exit as lights fade on the waiting room. At the same time lights come up on the doctor's office. A few beats, then NURSE enters...

NURSE
 Mr. Forster, I--

NURSE stops when she realizes the office is empty. She looks about in surprise. Freeze. Fade quickly to black.

THE END