

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION



WAITING

Sleepy, slitty eyes in the thin, red face seemed in a distant place – certainly not here. His presence was not present. The prominent nose found the floor, an ominous fine and clear tube taped to one nostril, waiting its call. Despair? Worry? Given up? Waiting rooms in hospitals can do that to you. He was alone – was that deliberate?

His answer was ‘ok’, though it took some time for me to decipher. The jaunty hat another hiding place for a head, not for show. He resumed looking down, what stood for a face now propped by an equally red mass of gnarled fingers that showed signs of a hard life outdoors and osteoarthritis in his paws. This barrier now stood between us. Closed. No openings here. No social niceties... ‘don’t talk to me’.

I don’t think he breathed – a rufous statue with occasional slow changes of position – like those greyed-out street performers at tourist spots. But him? Not designed to entertain; resigned to wait; resigned to fate?

A thought wandered slowly across his face – he moved – checking his cards with the deliberate, slothful slowness conserving energy. Medicare was there! The copper statue returned. No sighs; no smiles; withered red silence.

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