

Wally in the Waiting Room

Wally sits in the waiting room of a Doctor's Office.

What the hell are you looking at?

Would you like to know what you're looking at? I'll tell you what you're looking at. You're looking at a dying man.

That is the unfortunate truth of my situation. I am dying.

Don't look so surprised. Who did you expect to run into in a hospital waiting room?

Of course, we are all dying, aren't we? Nobody lives forever. We're all on a collision course with death, it's as unavoidable as the clap was in Korea during the war. The real tragedy is when a person discovers just how close they are to the final checkout, when you're told that it's happening today or tomorrow, that's when it's shit-your-pants time.

I don't know why you're here, I'm sure it's not good but even without knowing what exactly is wrong with you, I'm willing to bet hard cash money that I'm closer to dying than you are. Bet you right now, give you three to one odds, too. Not interested? Smart. I'd of taken your money even though I don't have the time to spend it.

You know how far away I am from death?

He holds his fingers up, about an inch apart.

That far. Yessir. Shit my pants? You bet. Just found out, too. Last week. Shit the pants, and now I spend what little time I have left sitting in these fucking waiting rooms, waiting for a test, waiting for the doctor to look at the x-rays, waiting for the nurse to stick her head out the door and ask me to come in. You'd think they'd try to pick up the pace a little bit, seeing as that I'm on a limited budget of days left. Don't even know why I'm here, should just say fuck it and go to a bar. What's the difference if it's tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, right? But I guess nobody wants to go before they have to.

I'm not even old. I'm a fairly young man, really. Just beat my body all to shit, basically. Screwed the internal engines up beyond all repair. I guess it was the drinking,

drugging, fucking and all the fried food, that's what did me in.

Had fun, though, boy did I have some fun. I was a merchant marine, I've been everywhere in the world. Top to bottom. I've seen sights that'd frost your ass, trust me. I've had so many adventures, seen so many perfect things, it's almost unbelievable. In my circle, I'm something of a legend for all the scrapes I've gotten in. I've brawled, I've chased and been chased, I've gotten the girl more than once and I've saved many a day with my buddies when they were in a jam. I can honestly say that I've lived a life full of excitement and adventure.

Of course, sitting here waiting to die isn't nearly so exciting as it is nerve-racking. Most of my friends are out at sea, won't even know I'm gone till after the funeral. My mother passed away while I was at sea. I never made it to her funeral. I should have gone.

Always thought about writing them down, my adventures, when I retired, write a book or something and maybe sell it to the movies. You could make a bunch of movies out of stuff I've done, get Bruce Willis, make a pile of money. And I'd be immortalized forever on film. Always thought about maybe doing that.

Reminds me of something, something I haven't thought of in a long time. I remember when I was a kid, long time ago, I was eight or nine, I went to the beach with my mother. Private beach, owned by some fella my Mother was dallying with, so I had the whole beach to myself while they had their lemonade in the shade. Hadn't really been to the beach before, my first time, and so I set myself to making the king of all sand-castles, I mean I created a beautiful monster, that sand-castle, it was elegant in design and detail, had a drawbridge and moat, five towers and a flag, it was a work of art. I spent the whole afternoon on that castle.

Went looking for Mom so I could show off what I'd done. Ran everywhere, up and down that beach, looked around the fella's house, couldn't find her anywhere. Ran around looking for quite awhile, started to get scared. Finally She heard me yelling and came running, her and the guy, afraid I was drowning or something. Both looked a little flushed. I grabbed Mom's hand and dragged her down toward my sand-castle, pretty damn proud of what I'd done.

Of course, being that young, I didn't yet know anything about tides. Tide had come in while I was looking for her and washed the whole castle away. I was pretty upset. Mom just ruffled my hair, said she was sure it was beautiful and I could build another one whenever I wanted. Then she went back to the fella, standing over in the shade.

It always frosted me that I'd made something so beautiful and yet the only one that seen it was me. I did it and then it was gone. I remember that.

Nurse gestures for him to come in.

There she is. Guess it's my turn.

He gets up and begins to exit, stops and looks at the Man.

You should have seen my sand-castle.

Wally exits.