

# THE APPOINTMENT

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## THE APPOINTMENT

(Wait For It)

AT RISE, A MAN (late 30's) is sitting alone in a waiting room. He's wearing a sweater with pockets. Next to him is a table with an aluminum pot. The man is facing the audience, head down, concentrating on writing.

The room has four chairs facing the audience, a desk with a telephone, and a hall tree with a man's raincoat hanging on it.

There's a sign on an inside door that faces the audience which reads...

## COUNSELING IN SESSION

Please take a seat.

Someone will be with you shortly.

After a few seconds, the door leading to the outside hallway opens.

A WOMAN (early 30's) ENTERS, also wearing a raincoat and carrying a dripping umbrella.

She sees the sign on the inside door, reads it, looks around specifically at the man who is busy writing.

The woman sits down in a chair two seats removed from the man.

MAN

(doesn't look up)

There's tea.

WOMAN

Pardon me?

MAN

Tea.

(reaches over and touches the pot on the table next to him)

Still warm.

WOMAN

How do you know it's tea?

Man holds up the aluminum pot with TEA in big letters.

WOMAN

(laughs)

Looks like he expected us to wait.

MAN

Usually does. Tea's still warm.

WOMAN

No thanks. I hate tea. Do you have an appointment?

MAN

Yes.

WOMAN

For what time?

MAN

Whenever I show up. I'm here often.

WOMAN

What if someone gets here before you? I happen to be late.

MAN

(checks his watch)

If your appointment was for three... yes, you are late.

WOMAN

(looks over at the door with the sign)

So I guess he took someone else.

MAN

He runs a tight ship.

WOMAN

What if someone else comes in?

MAN

I'll wait.

WOMAN

You could be here all day waiting.

MAN

I am, frequently.

Woman picks up a magazine from the table in front of the chairs. She thumbs through it.

WOMAN

So you've been here before. Is he ever late?

MAN

Never.

WOMAN

This is my first session. He sounded nice over the phone.

MAN

Nice?

WOMAN

Helpful.

MAN

I suppose that's as good a quality in a therapist as any.

WOMAN

He came highly recommended. You must know that.

The man doesn't respond.

WOMAN

Would you recommend him?

MAN

For what?

WOMAN

(getting rattled)

For a therapist.

MAN

Your umbrella's dripping.

The woman looks down and sees the puddle.

She opens the hallway door and puts the umbrella out there leaning it against the wall.

WOMAN (cont'd)

I don't suppose I should interrupt the counseling session to ask for a mop.

MAN

No. I wouldn't.

He reaches into his sweater pocket and pulls out a paper towel, then reaches over and blots the puddle with the paper towel.

WOMAN

Thanks. Sorry.

MAN

Leave it there to absorb the water.

They settle into an awkward silence again.

WOMAN

I suppose he asks a lot of questions about family. Daddy issues. Mommy and me stuff.

MAN

I don't think he asks everyone the same thing.

Depends, I suppose, on why you came to see him.

WOMAN

I was ordered by the court.

MAN

I see.

WOMAN

I have anger issues. Little things set me off.

MAN

Little things. Like a dripping umbrella, maybe.

WOMAN

If it were yours and I slipped in that puddle without seeing it, I'd probably get upset, which might lead to my saying something I'd regret, which would probably lead to acting out.

MAN

Which is why you're here.

WOMAN

Right. I'm trying not to "act out" in the future. How did you happen to have a paper towel in your pocket?

MAN

What?

WOMAN

That paper towel. Who carries a paper towel in their pocket just in case?

MAN

Obviously not you.

WOMAN

Are you trying to provoke me?

