

He sat in the waiting room with all the others, attempting to focus on some meaningless article in a badly frayed magazine. He scanned the faces of all the rest of those trying to be supportive, but just as powerless as he. Hard to tell what anyone else was feeling. Nervous? Anxious? Numb? Probably wishing this was all some bad dream.

Occasionally, he looked up at the soundless TV monitor, only guessing at the dialogue from the scenes. Pacing served no purpose either, except to build up static. His shirt crackled as he removed his jacket. He was sweating heavily now. ‘What is taking so long?’ he wondered, ‘and why is it so god-awful hot in here?’ came next.

It wasn’t the diagnosis itself that had him perspiring; he was already expecting the worst. He was just sure they weren’t covered under insurance for this. But with his wife so extremely concerned, he went ahead and made the appointment for her. He couldn’t offer any of his usual matter-of-factness to assuage her fear. They would just have to deal with whatever news came. Finally, she appeared.

“Well?” he asked, exasperated.

“It wasn’t the engine after all, just some kind of clog. He says my car actually needs a *lower* oil grade.”

“Thank goodness. Can we go now? I’ve missed half the game.”