

Squeaky Chair

By Kaya C.

Best in Show Winner

Two small light green tennis shoes swing back and forth from a squeaky plastic chair. Lowly under the bright fluorescent lights the howl of cats echo through the building, and the sharp, harsh shrieks of unwilling dogs follow along like a mournful harmony. From across the room the receptionist purses her lips as her nails click away on the keyboard and the little girl hasn't seen her dog in 5 minutes.

A door down a hallway she can't see the end of opens and she lifts her head. Her ears search for the telltale clicks of nails on linoleum. A doctor rounds the corner with a cat in a carrier who grumbles quietly.

The old lady sat two seat away from the girl huffs out a breath and holds her cane out in front of her, exhaling sharply as she rises to collect her cat. Quiet conversation begins between the old lady and the receptionist, and the little girl hasn't seen her dog in 7 minutes.

There's more than just cats and dogs at the vet's office, she knows this because she saw another girl come in with a rabbit, it looked soft. The new girl sits in a chair across the room and pulls out her headphones, she wonders what she's listening to.

She remembers her mom going into the vets room with the dog, but her mom hasn't come out yet. Leaving the young girl to swing her legs back and forth in the squeaky plastic chair, and she hasn't seen her dog in 10 minutes.

On the desk across the room there's a platter of cupcakes, there's a sign in front of them but the girl can't read the words. They're too far away from where she's sitting but the old man who left the vet bought one for his dog who seemed to like it.

The girl who has headphones on her ears perks up when her father comes out of the office with her rabbit in a carrier and a piece of paper in the other hand. She stands up and joins her dad as they quickly talk to the receptionist, and then they leave as well. The little girl hasn't seen her dog in 15 minutes.

On the way to the vet her mom suggests to her to bring some treats for the

dog, pulling out the ones on the very top shelf. Those ones are only used after vet appointments. Along with that she asks her daughter to bring the dog's favorite toy and blanket. The daughter purses her eyebrows but complies and brings the items out to the car. Dirt clings to the corner of the blanket.

The daughter remembers that on the way to the vet she got to ride in the front seat, since the dog had taken up all the space in the back. She even got to pick the music. It's quiet in the office and the girl wishes for some music. She hasn't seen her dog in 23 minutes.

The lights in room 407 are dim, and in the room there is a nice looking doctor, a middle-aged mom, and an old dog. The dog is on the examination table, and is gently being fed its favorite treats as the vet slides a needle into its vein.

The mom wonders how she's going to explain what happened in the room to her daughter, who

had had the dog as a companion for as long as she can remember. She softly strokes the top of the dog's head and sighs. The appointment will be over in 11 minutes.

Although the vet is new to this office, they are not new to watching a family say goodbye to one of its members. And they try their best to reassure everyone that the dog doesn't feel a thing throughout the entire process. They're aware of the fact that there is a little girl who came in with the mom, and who is currently waiting in the office outside. They prepare for the sound of crying.

This doctor is a little weird, they have a jar of Hershey's kisses on the corner of their desk, labelled 'goodbye kisses' and for each and every euthanasia performed they give one to whatever pet is lying on the table. No-one should have to die without experiencing the joys of chocolate. The appointment ends in 6 minutes.

Outside the room, the little girl had started to wander around the office but is now crouched down trying to goad a cat out from its hiding spot in the large structure in the corner of the room. Her attention quickly splits, however, after she hears a door open and the sound of shoes squeaking in the hallway. Her mom and the doctor enter the room but there is no dog with them. The little girl is confused.

In soft tones the mom pays for the vet appointment and quickly swipes her credit card through the reader and presses the 'OK' button, signing her signature. The receptionist hands her a form attached to a clipboard that she

fills out in about a minute. With a nod she walks over to her daughter and holds her hand out for the daughter to take.

"We gotta wait for Goose though." The daughter said indignantly, her face is screwed into a confused expression. The mom just smiles sadly, and gently tugs on her daughter to bring her to the car outside. She follows her mom, but her dog

remains inside the building. The little girl sits in the fur covered backseat of the car, and she just wants to pet her dog. The appointment is over.