

"THE WAITING ROOM"

By Rob Biesenbach

CAST

P.A. - Hospital public address system

Sam - 30, tense, tightly wound

Dad - 50, Sam's father, tolerant, peacemaker

Aunt Betty - 44, Dad's sister-in-law boisterous, nutty, bossy

Aunt Martha - 41, another screwy aunt

(Two men, seated. An announcement comes over an intercom, loudly.)

P.A.

Dr. Howard, you're needed in Surgery 4 ... Dr. Howard to Surgery 4.

SAM

Jesus, why does that have to be so damned loud?

DAD

Maybe Dr. Howard's hard of hearing. (Pause) Son, I really appreciate your being here - I know how you feel about hospitals ... but your Mom's gonna be fine.

SAM

Oh, I know that ... I guess. (Pause) But it's not that, Dad - it's her sisters. They're just so ...

DAD

I know, son. Your Aunt Betty and Martha mean well. But everyone deals with these things in their own way ...

(Betty and Martha enter, boisterously. Sam buries his head in magazine.)

BETTY

Oh my God! You should have seen the cafeteria lady!

MARTHA

She looked like Chris Farley in drag!

BETTY

With a hairnet and everything!

BETTY/MARTHA

(Singing) Sloppy Joe, slop-sloppy Joe! Sloppy Joe, slop-sloppy Joe!

(Dad chuckles, Sam looks around uncomfortably.)

BETTY

Okay, we've got ham, roast beef, turkey, tuna ...

SAM

You know, you're not supposed to bring food in here ...

BETTY

I'd like to see them try and kick me out! I've got a sister laid out on the table - I'm a V.I.P. Now how about this ham sandwich?

SAM

I'm not hungry, okay?

MARTHA

Oh, come on, Sam, you've got to eat!

BETTY

Yeah, we'll probably be here all night. You know how those doctors screw up!

DAD

(Intervening) Sam's not really fond of hospital food ...

SAM

Dad ...

DAD

When he was little, someone told Sam that the hospital cafeteria uses left-over body parts.

(The women laugh.)

SAM

Dad!

BETTY

Then it's decided. Sam gets the tuna. No way this came from people!

MARTHA

Soylent Green is people!

BETTY/MARTHA

It's people!! Soylent Green is PEEEEEOOOOOOOOO-PPPPPLLLLLLLLLLEEEEEEE!!

SAM

Just ... give me the roast beef, all right?

BETTY

Roast teeth, coming up!

MARTHA

(Chuckling) Roast teeth! Oh, honestly, Betty!

P.A.

Dr. Howard, you're needed in Surgery 4 ... Dr. Howard to Surgery 4.

BETTY

I tell ya, if Kathleen's in Surgery 4, Dr. Howard better get his ass in gear!

MARTHA

Come on, Dr. Howard, skip the "back-nine" and scrub up, already!

DAD

It's okay, she's in Surgery 3.

MARTHA

Hey, Betty ... I heard a room-ah, Kathleen's got a toom-ah!

BETTY/MARTHA

(Start to sing the Bananarama tune)

I heard a roooooom-AH ...

SAM

(Sternly) The operation's going fine, by the way. The doctor stopped by while you were downstairs getting food.

BETTY

Yes, we caught him in the hallway. Looks like another four hours.

DAD

It's getting around the optic nerve that's the tricky part.

MARTHA

Right, he said he just scooped most of it right out ...

BETTY

And now he's got to go in and get the last little bits ...

MARTHA

With a phaser ...

BETTY

A laser.

MARTHA

What'd I say?

BETTY

You said a "phaser," chucklehead!

MARTHA

Oh my God! Beam me up, Scotty!

MARTHA/BETTY

There's no intelligent life down here!!

(They both erupt in laughter, Dad chuckles, Sam stews.)

P.A.

Dr. Howard, you're needed in Surgery 4 ... Dr. Howard to Surgery 4.

(Sam leaps up, starts yelling.)

SAM

JESUS CHRIST! WHERE THE HELL IS DOCTOR HOWARD? WOULD SOMEBODY FUCKING FIND DOCTOR HOWARD?

DAD

Sam, take it easy, son!

SAM

What the hell kind of place is this? They've been paging goddamned Doctor Howard for half an hour an hour now! Meanwhile, some poor bastard is laying there in Surgery 4 with his chest or his skull cut open!

(Everyone's silent for a moment. Sam sits.)

BETTY

Martha, where'd you get those awful shoes - Dr. Howard, we have a fashion emergency in Waiting Room 2!

BETTY/MARTHA

DR. HOWARD!

(Lights out.)