

The Waiting Room

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

There were very few things that Tim liked less than waiting. His mother was a saint, as far as he could tell, with ridiculous amounts of patience. She could sit for hours without complaining. He could not. Therefore, the worst place in the world for him to have to spend time was the waiting room at any office or business.

Today, Tim sat at the waiting room in the auto shop. His mother had taken their vehicle in early on Saturday morning for an oil change. That may or may not have included a tire rotation, whatever that meant. Tim didn't know much about cars, after all.

Tim had already examined the vending machines. It was a habit of his to put his fingers into the coin returns of vending machines. Some silly people forgot to collect their change, so he often found nickels or dimes along with occasional quarters. That was nice. Today he had found nothing, though.

After that, he had played with the drinking fountain and examined the coffee pot, which was empty. Sugar packets were fun to play with for about five seconds, but then mom told him to stop. So, he put down the pink and blue and white packets and the plastic creamers and went back to sit.

Sitting made him try to see if he could rock the chair back and forth. It was hard to do because the chair had such broad legs. It was a sturdy chair, but that didn't mean it might not have loose screws. He tried to unscrew each with his fingernail, but had no success.

Sighing, Tim wondered what else he could do to waste time until the car was done. The TV was on, but it was on a news channel, speaking of the sort of boring things that adults liked to know about. Mom wouldn't let him climb the counter to get up to the TV to change the channels, either.

Finally, Tim decided to pick up a magazine. They had a lot about popular stars and celebrity news, but he didn't care about that stuff. He finally found one on science and animals. It was actually pretty neat. The pictures were startlingly colorful and interesting. In fact, he got so into it that his mother had to shake him to let him know the car was done.



"See?" She said. "Waiting doesn't have to be boring. You just have to keep yourself occupied. I read a few chapters in my book, too."

Tim nodded and smiled, his head still full of the pictures he'd seen. She was right.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Why is Tim bored?
 - A. he has to wait at the auto shop
 - B. he is at school
 - C. he doesn't like watching tv
 - D. he is sick and tired

2. What does Tim NOT try to entertain himself?
 - A. play with the coffee maker
 - B. check the vending machines
 - C. do homework
 - D. play with the chairs

3. How would you BEST describe Tim?
 - A. anxious and worried
 - B. energetic and bored
 - C. focused and calm
 - D. happy and fun

4. What finally catches Tim's interest?
 - A. TV
 - B. a game
 - C. talking with mom
 - D. a magazine

5. What lesson do you think Tim learned today?
 - A. stay busy, so you don't waste time
 - B. it's boring to wait
 - C. waiting is fun
 - D. listen to your mom

The Waiting Room – Answer Key

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