

THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT ARE PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

THE GP

by

THE HOLGATE BROTHERS

SECOND DRAFT
MAY 2006

© THE HOLGATE BROTHERS

1. INT. MEDICAL CENTRE RECEPTION

JACOB WHITTEN, an awkward teenager, and his mother, KATHERINE WHITTEN, enter the local medical practice. Patients are scattered around the perimeter of the waiting room.

As Mrs. Whitten makes inquiries to the receptionist Jacob walks towards a vacant seat. He feels uneasy as he makes eye contact with an attractive girl. With his back towards the girl Jacob, self consciously, wipes his nose. Seated, he glances quickly towards the girl but she is consumed by a celebrity gossip magazine.

KATHERINE
(in a raised voice)
Jacob.

Jacob is startled by Katherine's inappropriate call and quickly makes his way towards the desk fearing another outburst from his mother.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
(serious)
You need to fill in this document. By law I'm not allowed to do it for you.

Jacob looks at his mum blankly. Katherine and the receptionist look over Jacob as he picks up a pen from the desk and starts to fill in the form. Jacob stumbles attempting to spell the word 'February' regarding the question 'State your last visit'?

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
February is spelt RU, not UR.

Jacob shakes his head and sighs. The receptionist glances at Jacob as he crosses out the spelling error and begins to write the word again. He hands back the form to the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
Please take a seat,
Dr. Higgins will be
with you shortly.

Katherine and Jacob slowly exit the frame.

2. INT. MEDICAL CENTRE WAITING ROOM

Jacob and his mother sit in silence. Katherine is flicking through the pages of an old issue of 'Gardening Australia.' Jacob, biting a callus on his hand, sits angry and embarrassed. Katherine looks up briefly from her magazine.

KATHERINE
Jacob, Don't.

Jacob continues biting his callus.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
I thought your spelling was improving, maybe we should enrol you at Kip McGrath next semester?

Jacob's reaction is immature as he scrunches his face the way a small child does. He looks directly towards his mother.

JACOB
(through clenched teeth)
I'm not going back to that place, it's for retards.

Katherine ignores Jacob and continues to read her magazine.

Meanwhile at the reception desk an elderly man, who just exited from DR. HIGGINS office, is paying his bill. Dr. Higgins, who Jacob recognizes despite seeing him infrequently, is searching through manila folders in the filing shelves. He grabs what he is looking for and whispers to the receptionist. Before heading back to the office Dr. Higgins scans the waiting room hoping to recognize his next patient. Observing Dr. Higgins, Jacob recognizes what the doctor is doing and looks away. Dr. Higgins walks towards his office.

RECEPTIONIST
Jacob, Dr. Higgins is ready to see you now.

3. INT. DR. HIGGINS OFFICE

Dr. Higgins sits at his desk reading over the contents of the manila folder when he hears the door to his office squeak open. Jacob slowly opens the door only enough to squeeze through. Dr. Higgins spins around in his chair and

stands to greet Jacob.

DR. HIGGINS
Jacob, HI, come in and
have a seat.

The doctor notices Jacob's awkward behaviour.

JACOB
(softly)
Thanks.

4. INT. MEDICAL CENTRE RECEPTION

Meanwhile Mrs. Whitten stands at the reception desk.

KATHERINE
Will Dr. Higgins require
the document Jacob filled
out earlier.

RECEPTIONIST
Not really. It's only used for
administrative purposes.

KATHERINE
(nodding)
Right...

5. INT. DR. HIGGINS OFFICE

Jacob fidgets with his shoes as Dr. Higgins sits typing at his computer.

DR. HIGGINS
Sorry Jacob I'll be with
you in a second.

Jacob acknowledges looking up from his shoes. Dr. Higgins swivels around to face Jacob.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
So how can I help you
today?

Suddenly the door extends all the way open and Katherine enters the office. Jacob doesn't make eye contact with his mother but looks directly at Dr. Higgins implicating his frustration. Dr. Higgins was not expecting Mrs. Whitten, because of Jacobs age, but acts normal sensing Jacob is

already embarrassed by his mother's presence.

KATHERINE
(addressing the doctor)
Jacob forgot his card!

Katherine hands Dr. Higgins the form Jacob filled out earlier.

DR. HIGGINS
Thank you Mrs. Whitten.

Dr. Higgins places the card on his desk and looks towards Katherine who continues to stand in the doorway.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
Please take a seat Mrs. Whitten.

Dr. Higgins closes the office door as Jacob and his mother sit patiently waiting for the doctors instructions. He takes a few seconds to decide upon the best way to approach the situation.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
How is collage going?

Jacob still avoids eye contact with his eyes fixed on the ground.

JACOB
It's OK.

KATHERINE
Jacob is struggling with the work load a little bit, aren't you dear.

Jacob does not respond in any way. Dr. Higgins senses the frustration in Jacob and attempts to appease the situation.

DR. HIGGINS
Year 12 can be quite a stressful time, especially around the HSC, or the AST I think they call it now in Canberra...

KATHERINE
Oh Jacob won't be applying for university, he thinks he may do an apprenticeship through ADF.

JACOB
(sharply)
When did I ever say that!

Dr. Higgins swivels back to his desk looking over the form Katherine gave him waiting for Jacob's comment to pass.

DR. HIGGINS
Your previous visit was in February last year, there hasn't been anything out the ordinary since. No colds, fevers, headaches, shortness of breath, anything like that.

Jacob shakes his head.

KATHERINE
(proudly)
He's always been a healthy boy.

DR. HIGGINS
Well that's great. I would still like to run a routine check just to be sure. I'll start by taking your blood pressure, so if you don't mind Jacob could you please remove your shirt.

Dr. Higgins begins to open the bottom draw of his desk to reveal a blood pressure cuff but is abruptly interrupted by Jacob.

JACOB
I'm not taking my shirt off whilst she's in the room.

KATHERINE
Oh don't be silly Jacob.
(looking at Dr. Higgins)
I'm sorry Dr. Higgins he's not usually like this.

KATHERINE (CONT'D)
(looking at Jacob)
Dr. Higgins is trying to help you.

JACOB
There's nothing even wrong with me.

KATHERINE
(Raising her voice)
Take off your shirt
and stop..

JACOB
(Shouting)
Not until you leave the room.

Dr Higgins closes the bottom draw of his desk.

DR. HIGGINS
Jacob if you don't mind can
you please ask the
receptionist, if she has a
blood pressure cuff, mine seems
to have gone missing.

Jacob gets up from his seat and leaves the office closing
the door behind him.

6. INT. DR. HIGGINS OFFICE

Dr. Higgins swivels his chair to face Mrs. Whitten who is
embarrassed by her son's behavior.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
Puberty is an extraordinary
hormonal event. It is perfectly
normal for boys at Jacobs age to
be self-conscious about their
body, especially in front of their
mother.

KATHERINE
(nodding)
Yes, yes...

DR. HIGGINS
In addition Jacob is going
through a process of maturation,
it can be a very confusing time.

Dr. Higgins carefully chooses his words conscious not to
insult Katherine. She shows no sign of understanding what
the doctor is implying.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
I know it seems silly Katherine
but would you mind waiting outside
whilst Jacob removes his shirt.

7. INT. MEDICAL CENTRE HALLWAY

Meanwhile Jacob stands hesitantly outside Dr. Higgins office. The receptionist looks at Jacob confused. Suddenly Dr. Higgins opens the office door and invites Jacob in.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
Jacob please come in.

Katherine smiles at Jacob as they pass in the doorway. As Jacob returns to his seat he hands Dr. Higgins the cuff. Dr. Higgins lets the door swing closed on Katherine peering in.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
Thanks. I must have
missed placed mine.

Jacob takes his long sleeve shirt off and reveals his pale skinny body. Dr Higgins wraps a soft arm cuff around Jacobs upper arm and pumps air into it temporarily interrupting the flow of blood. Unsure of where to look Jacob notices a framed photo of Dr. Higgins and a female companion dressed in safari clothing hanging on the adjacent wall.

JACOB
(nervously)
Is that you in Africa?

DR. HIGGINS
No, actually that photo
was taken in Venezuela last
year. We had a really good time there

The cuff around Jacobs arm slowly deflates, letting the blood flow again.

JACOB
I don't know
why she thinks I want to do
an apprenticeship.

Dr. Higgins is surprised at Jacobs sudden attempt at conversation.

DR. HIGGINS
Have you given any thought
to what you would like to do
after collage?

JACOB

Naw, not really... a guy in my class does animation... That would be pretty cool.

There is a silence as Jacob looks towards the photo on the wall again contemplating life after collage. Dr. Higgins examines the reading on the pressure gauge.

DR. HIGGINS

Well your blood pressure is normal, which is great...
(Sincere but casual)
Can I ask you a question Jacob?

Jacob is still looking towards the photo.

JACOB

Yeah.

DR. HIGGINS

How have you been coping lately Jacob? With School, at home, with friends?

Suddenly there is a knock on the office door followed by an immediate opening. Katherine sticks her head into the office just as Jacob is pulling his shirt over his shoulders.

KATHERINE

All done.

DR. HIGGINS

Yes, Come in Mrs. Whitten.

Again the atmosphere changes as Mrs. Whitten re-enters the room. Jacob doesn't reply to Dr. Higgins question nor does Dr. Higgins wait for an answer. The doctor swivels back in his chair documenting the details of Jacobs examination. Jacob's mother sits contentedly in the room. She looks to the photo Jacob commented on earlier.

KATHERINE

Africa is an amazing continent isn't it!

There is a silence while Dr. Higgins and Jacob process Mrs. Whitten's statement.

JACOB
(coldly)
That's not Africa.

Mrs. Whitten does not respond feeling embarrassed but trying not to show it.

DR. HIGGINS
Physically, you are in good shape Jacob. The only suggestion I will make is to make sure you're getting enough physical exercise, at least something each day.

Jacob nods.

DR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)
OK, then unless you have any more questions I think were done.

Katherine begins to stand.

KATHERINE
Thank you for your
Patience with Jacob

JACOB
To answer your question
Dr. Higgins, I haven't
Been feeling that great.

Dr. Higgins and Mrs. Whitten stop what they are doing and look at Jacob.

JACOB
I feel like I can't do
anything right! Like I'm always...

DR. HIGGINS
So you have negative
thoughts about yourself?

JACOB
Yeah. Yeah. Like in english
yesterday we had to read our
book in front of the entire
class and Mr. Thomson always
picks me and I get so nervous
my vision goes blurry and I
tell him I need to go to the
toilet. But in the toilet I
can read it fine.

Katherine is shocked by what Jacob is confiding in the doctor.

KATHERINE	DR. HIGGINS
Jacob what is this	PLEASE Mrs. Whitten.
Story?	

Katherine and Jacob are surprised by the doctors outburst.

DR. HIGGINS
Sorry. And how often does
this occur?

JACOB
(mumbling)
I don't know. A fair bit.

Jacob begins to get frustrated with himself as if he is failing the doctor.

DR. HIGGINS
Jacob who do you talk to
about these feelings?

Jacob pauses for a moment and then glances to his mother. Katherine stands looking down at the doctor and Jacob.

KATHERINE
OH Jacob.

Katherine begins to address the doctor.

KATHERINE	JACOB
Jacob is not depressed,	(shouting)
It's just his hormones,	Don't talk about me like
He's going through a	I'm not here, I can talk
Process of maturation.	For myself, I'm not a retard.

Dr. Higgins intervenes the domestic argument, moves in and concentrates on Jacob.

DR. HIGGINS
Jacob, I'm not a psychiatrist
I'm a medical doctor. I don't
specialize in emotional areas
but I can refer you to a good
friend of mine who does.

KATHERINE
Thank you doctor but...

DR. HIGGINS
I can even make the
Appointment for you.

Dr. Higgins reaches into his desk draw and grabs a business card.

KATHERINE
(in a stern voice)
That's not necessary. We
will discuss it as a family
and do what we think is
best, come on Jacob.

Dr. Higgins hands Jacob the business card as Jacob and his mother leave his office.

8. INT. MEDICAL CENTRE RECEPTION

Jacob and Katherine stand at the reception desk whilst the receptionist prints out the bill. Without his mother seeing Jacob grabs a pen from the counter and writes the phones number of the receptionist on his hand. Jacob hands his mother the card and begins biting his callus again.

KATHERINE
We'll think about it, OK.

THE END