

# Stranded

Category: The Exam Room

written by Mary Janicke | September 12, 2025

"Wait here," Dr. X said. "Someone will come and set up your next appointment and give you a copy of your lab results." So I sat down on one of the plastic chairs, took my Kindle out of my purse, and waited and waited in the exam room. The staff must be busy, I thought.

I had chosen Dr. X as my hematologist because he was highly respected in the medical community. He had once taught internal medicine at the medical college, so he was the type of doctor who always enjoyed answering my health-related questions. A true physician! He had a reputation for running late because he spent as much time as needed with each patient. So I always brought something to read to while away the time.

On this particular day, I was his last patient. I waited and waited, but no one came. Finally, I peeked out the door and saw that the hallway was empty! There were no nurses or staff around. Everyone had gone home. I had been forgotten.

Then I looked down the hall and saw my doctor bent over a microscope looking at slides. He invited me to come down and take the other eye piece and look at the slide of my blood. Then, always the teacher, he showed me some other slides and explained what I was looking at. One of them was a peripheral blood smear of thalassemia minor, a condition that runs in my family. He pointed out the target cells that are common with this blood disorder.

My long wait and abandonment was not in vain (not a pun) because I got a tutorial in hematology. Much like this excellent doctor whom I have bestowed on the title of "physician," I too am curious about everything.

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