

D for Dentist

"*WARNING....Diphtheria*" the poster shouts from the bile green walls. I try to pronounce the unfamiliar word and have to ask my Mum what it means.

"*It's a nasty disease*" she whispers.

The place smells horrid. We sit on hard chairs in the waiting room. A girl stumbles into the room through one of the green doors. She's clutching a baby's nappy to her mouth and there's bright red blood! Her mother grabs her by the arm and the door bangs behind them as they go out into the street.

I hear high pitched screaming. Another door opens and a small boy comes in holding the top of his arm. "*There, there it was only a little jab, don't be such a baby*" his mum says.

What kind of place is this? My mum holds me firmly by the hand as my name is called. There's a big man in a stiff white coat with his back to us. He is laying out some silvery things on a tray. A lady smiles at me and helps me to climb into the high leather chair. She presses a lever and the chair goes higher and higher until I think we will reach the ceiling. A bright light shines in my eyes. Then something nasty and smelly and rubbery lands on my face, covering my nose and mouth.

"*Count to 10,*" I hear the man say from somewhere above me. "*That's easy,*" I think....."*1...2.....3....*"

I am outside in the fresh air and tears are running down my face. My mouth is full of something hot and wet. My mum thrusts one of my Dad's soft cotton hankies into my hand.

"*Spit it out, love,*" she says.

I'm horrified. The hankie is spattered with brilliant scarlet spotsblood. My tongue explores gingerly and I find a hole where my tooth used to be.

What did they do to me in that horrible place?