

NARRATOR

Julia, the practice manager is stopped by Dr McCormack as she comes out of her consulting room. She's irritated because the stock of patient information literature about 'Quitting smoking' has run out and there are no more tissues in her room.

DR MCCORMACK

Oh Julia, do you have a minute? I seem to be running out of supplies in my room today. It's very irritating when I can't put my hands on patient information leaflets when I need them and I just had Mrs Elwood in tears and no tissues to offer her! What's going on, my room is usually so well stocked!

JULIA

Ah, sorry Dr McCormack, that's because Ruth is on annual leave – remember? She's gone back home for her big family reunion so she'll be away for two more weeks! We're trying to share her work between us but with all the tasks she does around here it is hard to keep this place as well stocked, clean and orderly as Ruth does. We're really missing her!

DR MCCORMACK

Oh yes, how could I forget? She's been excited about it for weeks. I guess I missed her last day when I was off at the conference. Oh no, I've just had a thought! Mr Appleby is coming in for his blood tests on Friday isn't he? What are we going to do?

JULIA

I know! Ruth seems to have the knack not only with dealing with Mr Appleby but somehow managing to find a vein to get his blood. She could get blood out of a stone you know! He'll insist on seeing Ruth for sure and he won't be happy when he hears she's not available. I might give him a call and give him the option of postponing his appointment until Ruth is back.

DR MCCORMACK

That's a good idea – that delay won't be a problem in terms of his treatment. Can you imagine what it would be like if Ruth ever decided to leave?

JULIA

That's not something I want to think about!