

# Elsa

By Kit Dwyer

Dressed appropriately, I hoped, I had my resume printed out and my toddler was safely with a sitter. I found the doctor's office on the third floor, tentatively opened the door, and stepped in, excited to learn about the open position. There were eight chairs and few end tables in the small reception area.

Classical music was playing in the background.

There was a blonde woman at the reception desk making an appointment for someone on the phone. I stopped a few yards back from her desk to wait until she was finished with her call. There was only one other person in the reception room, seated and looking at a magazine. I watched the woman on the phone, trying to imagine working with her.

Her voice was calm yet melodic, and she was attentive to her conversation on the line. She wore a floral silk dress that was puckered just below her bodice. Her hair was strikingly long and beautiful, falling gently past her shoulders in fluffy soft ringlets, no bangs. I wondered if the curl was natural or a from a perm. Her lips were sweetly demure and coated with a pale peach gloss. Manicured nails and cheeks glowed with a blush that matched her lipstick perfectly. When her call was finished, she greeted me with a friendly tone. "Hello! I'm Elsa." She said as she got up and reached over the high counter with her hand to shake mine. "How can I help you?"

Her eyes looked directly at me with a sparkle. They were kind eyes, with a wisdom or secret that made me want to know more about her. It was obvious now that she was at least 7 months pregnant.

"Hi! My name is Kit, I scheduled a time for a job interview today. Is the position still open?"

"Hi Kit! Yes, I was the one you spoke to earlier on the phone. Did you have any trouble finding a place to park?"

“I found it easily, thank you. I got a spot on the street in front.”

“I’ll get let Doctor Perlov know you’re here. He is with a new patient, so it might be a few minutes.

Could you fill this out, and attached your resume, please? She handed me a clip board.

“Sure”, I said and took a seat across from the other woman in the small reception area.

Elsa left her post for few minutes while I filled out the application. When she came back, she escorted me to another room. “Let’s talk in here for a few minutes while we wait for Doctor Perlov to get free.”

For the next 30 minutes, Elsa chatted with me amicably about my life situation, our names, her pregnancy and due date, my goals for finding a job, what the office schedule was like, and why they were looking for someone and that I might like working there. I had no experience, but she put me at ease instantly and within those 30 minutes. I felt like I had made a new friend. When she left the room to see if the doctor was ready to interview me, he opened the door and offered me the job within 15 minutes.

Elsa and I worked together for the next 12 years. We became fast and steady friends in and out of work. Our children played together. Our families celebrated life events together. We hiked mountains and rode bikes together. We both love dogs and children, nature, and spiritual experiences. Elsa is one of my unsung heroes, though I sing her many praises loudly. She was the one who invited me to stay in her basement bedroom for months when I was splitting up from my first husband. Elsa was the matron of honor at my second wedding. We have continued to share deep and meaningful conversations regularly ever since we met. My friend, Elsa, is one of the dearest people in my life.