

An Awkward Fit

By

Leanne Allen

Character: Kirsty *Female, 30's , she uses a wheelchair*

The agency sent me a new carer today- Trudy. Came bustling through the bedroom door, switching the light on as though I'd been awake for hours. It was 6.30 and I'd been awake for approximately 45 seconds. **She was adjusting her mask behind her ears, as if it wasn't an odd enough experience greeting a stranger from my bed- this stranger was now having to wear full PPE, which did nothing to lighten the mood. Still, starting with forced to be the least social distanced from an individual I could possibly be did mean that the day could only get more distanced as it went on and that was quite a nice thought.**

(LOUD) Morning love, Trudy here, like I was hard of hearing. And I knew immediately what sort of morning I was in for, I'd been here hundreds of times before, patronised and lectured at least 50 times before I'd made it to the breakfast table.

Lovely day outside. she said whipping the curtains apart.

Are you going to try and sit outside, feel the sun on your face a bit? You've got such a pretty face, haven't you?!

"Thanks" I murmured knowing full well I always looked like a bit of squashed fruit first thing, I'm going to work actually.

Oh no love, no you're not. You only get to go to work if your job's really important.

She over enunciated as though I was 3 rather than 30.

There's a virus.

She said, stretching the vowels out so much I thought the word might get stuck halfway.

"I work at the hospital." Trudy stopped.

Do you!? Well, I don't think they'll want volunteers to be going in at the moment." Anyway, you should be isolating, in your condition.

"I'm working on a new COVID-19 trial- 'PRINCIPLE" I said, letting go of the fact that she thought I was a volunteer. You have to pick your battles.

"My disability doesn't necessarily put me at higher risk from Coronavirus. But older people are."

She took a step towards to the mirror and started prodding at the bags under her eyes. I immediately felt bad.

"Oh no, the trial I'm working on is aiming to find treatments for COVID-19 for those well over pensionable age.

You don't have to be old to get it, she said, spinning round my bedroom looking for my clothes.

I know, but we want to find medicines that can help those people with symptoms get better quickly and stop them needing to go to hospital. I'm supposed to give a presentation to my line manager first thing and I'm dreading it.

Hmm? Yes, I work with lots of older people, they're all very frightened. Don't want to end up in the hospital... She said, as she scooped up clothes from the back of the chair

The trial is recruiting participants through our website and through people's GPs." I wasn't sure she was actually listening.

"There's a leaflet over there if you want to read about it."

Trudy whirled over to my desk absentmindedly swinging my trousers round her head and picked it up 'Today's Research is Tomorrow's Treatment' and then she asked me if I really believed that.

"Of course" I told her. All medicines were new once, even them I said nodding at the nicotine patch on her arm

She screwed her eyes up flicking through the pages.

That's not going to get any of the people I know involved. That's just words on a page. Too much. She said before rolling up a trouser leg and trying to squeeze my leg through it.

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It needs pictures or something she said get increasingly exasperated with the human leg-to-trouser leg ratio. *To Break up the text.*

“Right”, I said. More bothered about the fact I was about to lose a foot.

These trousers are not going to go on. She said straightening up.

“They will. They do.” I reassured. Trudy started grappling with my foot again.

What the older people need is someone not only to help to help them digest the information but to help them use the internet full stop

If I said iPad to some of my clients, they’d assume I was talking about incontinence pants.

She half laughed and her own joke and then quickly covered it by saying.

What I mean is, they don’t know how to do anything online never mind navigate a website or get to a sign- up page.

So we need to set something up where someone could link up with them and help with technology ? Like a buddy scheme. I said finally seeing my other foot immerge at the bottom of the trouser leg.

Exactly yes -. She said catching her breath.

Huh. Pretty sure my boss would think that was a pretty brilliant idea- maybe this morning wasn’t going to be that bad after all.

Trudy seemed about to say something else, but then she caught sight of the clock.

Got to get a wiggle on. I’ve gone over the fifteen minutes. She said as she went to sign the care log

“My shoes are over there”, I said pointing to my heels, preparing myself to lose at least three toes.

END.