

No Matter the Scale

"I'm a student no more,"
She thought as she sat,
Diploma in hand,
Tassel on hat.

"Four years of hard work,
Soaking up skills like a sponge,
Private practice awaits me,
It's time to take the plunge."

Flash forward six months,
It's a jam-packed treatment day,
New patients, multiple recalls,
And of course some x-rays.

Her schedule, however,
Doesn't seem quite so tight.
Building a patient pool - she found out -
Doesn't happen overnight.

People hate change.
A new dentist is no exception.
So she sets out to prove them wrong,
To change their perception.

"Mr. Jefferson is in chair four!"
The assistant proclaims.
She's thankful to see a familiar face,
To hear a familiar name.

"Is that crown holding up?
Is the shade just right?
Does it bother you at all
When you speak or when you bite?"

He shakes his head "no",
With a grin that lights the room.
She pats herself on the back
For earning his trust, she presumes.

It's back to the treatment plan.
She checks what's next on the list.
Two amalgam restorations,
With no apparent tricks or twists.

"Sir," she begins,
As her chair spins around,
"Your bottom teeth are my next priority.
Remember that enamel, all broken down?"

She pulls up his radiographs,
Making sure the stories match,
19-MO and a slot prep on 31-M,
She will tackle in the same batch.

As the appointment winds down,
Mr. Jefferson interjects,
"Are you taking new patients?
I know some people who'd like to connect."

"Why yes, of course," she exclaims,
So he offers up his plan,
"Heck, I've enjoyed being your patient so much,
I'm recommending you to everyone I can!"

She's hopeful her patient pool will grow,
Will fill up drop by drop.
One thing of which she is certain,
Word-of-mouth is no trivial prop.

So they set a date for treatment,
December 21st.
"No more than an hour, Mr. Jefferson,
And I promise it won't hurt!"

When Monday morning rolls around,
Her voicemail light is flashing.
There are messages and inquiries,
Mr. Jefferson's promises in action.

"I'm so lucky," she recognizes,
To have a patient who trusts me enough,
To recommend my services,
To all the ones he loves.

Sure as the rising sun,
The tides begin to change.
Her newfound success is quite exciting,
At times stressful, almost strange.

Then that cold December day
Rolls in with a punch,
And the fateful restorations,
Are to happen after lunch.

As she sits chatting chair-side
To let the lidocaine diffuse,
She takes a mental break just long enough
For a few things to be confused.

Although the restorations
Go off without a hitch,
Her heart drops to her stomach
When she grasps what she switched.

19-MO, slot prep on *30-D*,
They're staring her right in the face
"How could I be so careless?
How can this be erased?"

As she gathers her thoughts,
Preparing to admit her mistake,
A devil on her shoulder,
Jumps out and pumps the brakes.

"Are you sure that fessing up
Will work in your best interest?
You're trying to build you name,
Your place as a dentist.

With student loans to pay,
With bills stacking high,
If only for the sake of honesty,
Forget it. Just lie."

Her mind clouds with confusion,
And she's stuck on what to do.
But is it really lying,
To not admit what's true?

Mr. Jefferson won't be the wiser,
He's a businessman not a doc,
Yet armed with the truth of her mistake,
He might punch her time clock.

Since missteps are seen as failures
In her profession, by and large.
Admitting seems terrifying,
Like a dishonorable discharge.

But she knows the road to veracity,
Is one she has to walk.
She takes a breath, taps his arm,
And just begins to talk.

"Mr. Jefferson, I'm so sorry.
I must admit my mistake,
I drilled and filled the wrong tooth.
There are no retakes."

She holds her breath and waits,
For his thoughts on it all,
But instead of anger or disappointment,
There is an air of calm.

"Well thank you," he begins,
"For your honesty is rare.
What is life for anyways,
If not to learn when you err?"

Despite her hunger for success,
And the pressures of new-dentist life,
She knows deep down that what he says
Is a perfect piece of advice.

A non-truth is a lie,
No matter the scale.
But representing one's work truthfully,
Ensures honesty and growth prevail.

"I'm a student for life,"
She thought as she sat,
Shaking Mr. Jefferson's hand,
His head donning a hat.