

Your leg bounces as you sit in the waiting room of the dentist's office, not able to get any service to even browse on your phone while in here. With the tooth pain you've been having, you *had* to get an appointment to deal with it, but with your normal dentist out of town, the only option that would get you a solution in a reasonable amount of time was the dentistry you used to go to as a kid. The place was mostly for 10-year-olds and younger, though you'd gone here into high school... having always been more than a bit afraid of the dentist's. Even now, you couldn't deny that this place felt comfier, even if you had to deal with the sounds of the few kids in the waiting area running around. At least the place *did* still do work for adults, even if it was primarily for kids – you weren't completely out of luck.

You glanced around the room as you waited, your eyes caught by the colorful playroom off to the side. You'd never gotten to play in it, by the time you were coming here you were already in middle school – too old for that kind of stuff. Even if you'd always wanted to, but you couldn't admit that to yourself as a kid. It looked comfy, beanbag chairs, the sliding bead toys that seem to naturally spawn in dentist's and doctor's offices, even an old console from your childhood hooked up to a small screen. The sight of the screen... felt like it was drawing you in for some reason... probably because of how bored you were without anything to occupy your mind.

Though as the last of the patients other than you were called back by the staff, leaving you as the only one in the reception area, it became harder to pull your gaze away from that little play area off to the side. It felt strange... but some part of you was just compelled to go check it out. A curiosity that you'd never gotten to sate as a kid, wondering what it was like in there. Feeling like you couldn't quite stop yourself, you slowly stood up and walked over, cautiously glancing around.

The place did feel cozy – small, colorful, with happy decals all over the walls. This place loved its decals, with board game patterns across the ceilings for the kids to look up at while people were taking care of their teeth for them. The beanbag chairs were set up in front of the screen, with the old console running a party game from years and years ago. The controllers sitting on the ground looked like they hadn't been played with in forever. All the kids nowadays just brought tablets with them to play on, so it was a bit sad to see this nice little place going unused.

You crouched down and picked up the three-pronged controller, the worn and loose joystick in the center clearly well-used from the many years it had been here. Without really thinking, you navigated the menu and started up a game with CPUs, picking your favorite character from when you were a kid. While you felt a little bit sheepish about it... something pulled you to sit down in the beanbag chair there and just relax for a bit. So you did, finding it just as comfy as you always thought it looked when you were younger.

Something about it felt so entrancing... playing a simple game that you knew well, just relaxing in this comfy area away from the stress that came with the rest of the dentist's office. Like you could forget

about the worry running through your mind for a little bit. It was comfortable, nice to just look at the screen and... *play*. Playing... it was fun. Sure, the game was mostly luck, and the CPUs cheated at all of the minigames (even if you still had the muscle memory and mashing skills to beat them anyways), but it was nice to just enjoy it for a little while.

The dull ache from your teeth almost seemed to fade away into the background after a little bit, feeling like you were clenching your jaw a lot less than before. It helped that your pacifier felt so comfy in your mouth, something to focus on and keep you from biting down too hard and hurting yourself. It just felt natural to suckle on it while playing the game, happy to have a distraction while you waited for your appointment.

You found yourself getting nice and cozy in the beanbag chair, nestling into it while you adjusted your plushie in your arms so that you were still cuddling them while able to hold the controller just fine. You always had to bring them with you wherever you went, it didn't feel right without your childhood friend in your arms. You remembered sniffing and crying when your parents told you that you shouldn't bring your plushie to the dentist one time... and since then you'd been allowed to. How long ago was that...? You always brought them wherever you went now.

Your attention was pulled away by the sound of someone else stepping into the play area, turning back to look at them and feeling embarrassed for a moment that they'd seen you in here... though you weren't sure where that embarrassment came from. They certainly didn't seem to think anything strange of it. "Ah, there you are! It's time for your appointment, let's get you back and get your teeth all fixed up, alright?" The kind lady smiled down at you, and you felt the nervousness welling up in your chest... but as she reached down a hand for you to take and help you up to your unsteady legs, it felt a little bit better. "Don't worry, you can bring your plushie with you if it helps out."

You held her hand as she led you through the doors, your other arm clutching your plushie close, your walk feeling strange from the waddle you had to do to walk around with your diaper on, to make sure you didn't have any accidents from your fear of the dentist's... but it was dry! At least, you thought it was. You could get a change later if you needed it. You hopped up into the chair she pointed out to you and snuggled your plushie, letting them take the paci out of your mouth so that they could get to work, closing your eyes and focusing on the feeling of the fabric and plush stuffing you were cuddling.

You could be brave and make it through this. Maybe after the visit, you'd even get to have a lollipop for being good!