The Waiting Rooms

Eve Smith
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In the near future of Eve Smith's novel *The Waiting Rooms*, antibiotics no longer work, and people don't often make it to their golden years.

Following The Crisis, antibiotic-resistant strains of diseases have overrun the world, killing millions of people. Those who survive adapt, taking strict precautions against getting sick. Directives have been adopted by each country to determine who has access to antibiotics; few live past seventy.

Kate is a nurse, tending to patients who have opted for assisted suicide over slow deaths from disease or infection. In addition to this work, Kate struggles with the death of her mother, her more and more rebellious daughter, and the shocking revelation that she was adopted at birth. As she searches for her birth mother, Kate dips into a mystery that will blow the lid off of The Crisis.

Switching between Kate's present and the years prior to The Crisis, when Kate's birth mother, Mary, was a botanist in South Africa, the story becomes that of a world on the edge of breakdown. Mary's relationship with a married man leads to more than just a baby: it could also be the key to unlocking the world's future.

The Waiting Rooms is engrossing and eye opening. Fascinating glimpses of news stories and advertisements shed light on the new reality that the characters face. As Kate strives to find her mother, Mary thinks back to her past and all that she regrets. Character studies contrast with heart-stopping plot twists, showing what everyday life would be like in a world wherein medicine no longer cures even the simplest infections. Characters adapt, resulting in a disturbing new reality with an atmosphere of impending doom.

The Waiting Rooms is a stunning medical thriller set in a terrifying possible future.

ANGELA MCQUAY (July / August 2020)

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