

Sharmarke

Sharmake, a young Somali Muslim, is standing at a bus stop waiting to get to hospital to visit his father. He was angry on his last visit and the staff asked him to leave.

Remember to stay calm. Don't let my father down again. Don't get angry again. Try not to be scared again. But he can always see when I am hiding things. 'What is it Sharmarke? What is it you are not telling me?'

I should be at his bedside looking after him. I should be doing my duty as a good son. But instead I make him worry. And what can I say to him? That I am being called up in the middle of the night to be told to come to work. That I worry that somebody will report me; that I'll be sent back, and he'll be left here all alone.

I know I was wrong to react like that, but I was tired, and he looked so weak, and you never know when you get to the hospital how things have been. Maybe he hasn't been able to explain to anyone that he needs the toilet or that he can't eat the food they've given him. And then the Doctor started asking those things to me. How could he use those words? These things are in God's hands! Why were they giving up on my father? Did they need the bed for someone else; someone who comes from this country?

I didn't dare go back for a week after what happened. I didn't even go to the mosque to pray for my father because I had to work. I've never felt so frightened. Thinking that his bed would be empty when I arrived. But there he was sitting up, waiting and worried. What kind of person can do that to their own father? And what happens now? Who can explain to me what is really happening and what am I meant to do?