

NUMBER 7 • BONUS STORY

Il-gurnata tat-tabiba

Monday of festival week, the day you fall ill, seen from the other side of the desk: forty patients for Rita, the village doctor, no lunch, three calls from her mother, and a daughter who is waiting.

ANSWER KEY

LISTENING & UNDERSTANDING

L1) WHO SAYS IT?: 1b, 2c, 3c

L2) TRUE OR FALSE?: 1a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5a

L3) PUT THE STORY IN ORDER: 1: 32514

L4) ANSWER THE QUESTIONS: 1c, 2a, 3a

Translation

Monday of festival week, half past seven in the morning. The waiting room of the Hal Ġebel practice is already full.

Monday, the thirteenth of April. Doctor Rita is already at the practice. She always comes in early.

■ Good morning, doctor! We've got forty patients today.

○ Forty? Then we work until seven. First patient, please!

An old man with a walking stick comes in very slowly and sits down with a happy sigh.

▲ Good day, doctor! It's me again.

○ Oh, Mr Ġużeppi! You come here twice a week. How do you feel?

▲ Bad. My back hurts. And my leg. And my head too.

○ Your head too? All right. Take a deep breath... Once more.

▲ Doctor, my children are far away. The house is too quiet.

○ You aren't ill. Your house is just too quiet, that's all.

○ Here's my prescription: every morning, Lina's café. Coffee, cake and people.

▲ Cake, not tablets? I like this prescription very much!

He goes off, smiling. The receptionist shakes her head.

○ Sharon, he doesn't need medicine. He needs people.

More patients: a cough, a cut finger, a baby who will not stop crying. At eleven, a student comes in with a heavy rucksack.

● Good day. My head hurts. Every day.

○ How many hours do you sleep?

● Four. I have an exam on Friday, so I study at night.

○ Four? Too little. A tired head learns nothing.

- Drink a lot of water, and sleep eight hours every night.

One o'clock. The waiting room is still full. The receptionist puts her head round the door.

- Doctor, no lunch again today?!

- I haven't got time, Sharon. Maybe later.

- Your mother is on the phone. The third time today. What shall I tell her?

The doctor sighs, smiles and picks up the phone.

- Rita, you're not eating again. I know: Sharon tells me everything.

- And at four my new neighbour is coming to see you. They're ill.

- I know, Mum. I know everything too.

- And this evening? Ella is asking when you're coming.

- At seven, Mum. To your place.

- You always say seven. And you come at nine.

Afternoon: more patients, more tea, still no lunch. At four, the new neighbour from number 7 comes in, with a sore throat and a story about a trumpet. At half past seven, the last patient goes home.

Eight o'clock, in Marija's living room at number 7. Ella sits at the table with her yellow sketchbook. A dish of baked macaroni is waiting.

△ Mum! It's eight now, not seven!

○ Sorry, Ella. There were forty patients today.

△ Forty patients! And me you only see in the evening.

□ Sit down, my girl. Eat. A doctor has to eat too.

○ Mum, I'm not a little girl. I'm forty-four!

□ You're my daughter, and you need to eat.

△ Mum, why are you a doctor?

○ When I was little, like you, Grandma was a teacher. She was at school all day.

○ In the evening she was very tired, and I wasn't happy.

○ So I was the doctor. Grandma was my patient, and my doll was the nurse.

□ Yes. And the prescription was always: tea and bed.

○ I like it when people feel better. That's why I'm a doctor.

△ And on Saturday, the eighteenth of April, I'm singing with the children! Are you coming?

○ On Saturday? On Saturday I work until...

△ Mum! You're always working!

Rita looks at her daughter, then at her mother. For once, Marija says nothing.

- All right. On Saturday I'm not working. The whole family is coming to the festa, even your little brother.
- And me? I'm always at the festa. I see everything and I know everything.
- And now eat, both of you! You're too thin.

All three of them eat baked macaroni. Rita is very hungry.