

Amelia and Robert walked into the office together, holding hands and looking slightly nervous. Mrs Guthrie waved them into two oversized chairs that faced her desk and, smiling apologetically, carried on writing notes from the headset she was wearing.

Amelia was a bit put out, but as they were slightly early for their appointment she let it go. She glanced around the room and leant over to Robert's ear.

"Blimey, look at that!" she whispered. "She's got more letters after her name than she's actually got in it."

Robert nodded in agreement. Amelia had a point. The wall behind Mrs Guthrie's desk was overloaded with a higgledy-piggledy array of framed certificates, each one bearing more letters than the last. He cleared his throat and joked quietly.

"Well, if you have lots of qualifications, you should be a doctor, if they have

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Amelia frowned. She was not in the mood for jokes. She was just hoping that this Mrs Guthrie would be able to help her.

"Hypnotherapist, actually," she said, "and apparently, she is the best in her field."

Robert stretched his mouth into a grim smile.

"Let's hope so," he said. "Someone has to help you beat this spider thing."

He smiled at Amelia, but she looked miffed.

"Actually," she said, "It's sensible to be afraid of spiders, especially ones from Australia. Some of those buggers are poisonous. And they bite!" She looked at him thoughtfully.