

DOCTOR GLAZER RETURNS

“Where did this second cat come from?” puzzled Dr. Glazer once again, stroking the newcomer with a soothing hand. There had always been just one cat awaiting him at home, until last month when there were suddenly two. He suspected his sister, but she had been on a trip to the ruins of Machu Pichu. It pointed loudly to his diagnosis of Alzheimer’s early phase, but he thought it was absurd to think that he would carry a new cat into his own condo without remembering it!

But since both cats were getting along, it really didn’t matter. Besides, after several years in retirement, he was going that morning to surprise his former dental office, where he had served for over thirty distinguished years. He had retired after being rudely asked to leave his position because of certain “aberrations”, particularly the time when he was found reclining comfortably in the dental chair eating ice cream, while his patient was holding the equipment and waiting to be told what to do. But that was in the past, and the doctor had chosen to recall only his long years of eminent achievement in the dental profession.

He carefully locked the double door for fear of additional cats, and went on to the Washington DC Metro, where the trip was the same as it had

always been. The swaying, banging corridor, packed as usual, and as usual someone leaping at him, this time a burly Asian almost frantic with zeal: “do you want to sit?” He then sent Dr. Glazer reeling into the seat even before he could politely refuse. And by the time he entered the waiting room of the dental office, the doctor was pretty well confused as to whether he was retired or still working there as he had been for all those decades.

The matter was decided by the haggard, overworked receptionist, whom he did not know but who seemed to have heard of his splendid reputation. Thrilled when she heard his name, she sang out, “Oh, Doctor Glazer, I’m so glad you’re here!” But unknown to him, anyone sounding the name “Doctor,” such as “Doctor, these pants need pressing”, would have been hired that day. This was so because she had mislaid the list of substitutes desperately needed during the summer crunch for many of the regular dentists who were off on vacation.

“Doctor Glazer,” she pleaded, “would you help Ms. O’Connor? It’s an emergency.” She pointed to a tall, willowy girl, blonde, about twenty, who managed a trembling smile. “You needn’t worry any longer,” he waved reassuringly. “I’ll be right with you.”

After he had changed unnoticed into his scrubs, he gently brought the girl into a vacant treatment room. She looked in, and drew back like a

frightened racehorse. “Boss,” she said in a dark, sultry voice that surprised him, “I hate Novocain. Show me that fat needle and I’m out of here.”

“That’s fine,” he replied, having dealt with such patients innumerable times. “First, let’s see what we have here.” An examination revealed a mundane cavity, but rather a large one. “I think we can do it,” he told her, with the assurance of a skilled artisan, “just let me know if you’re uncomfortable.” She nodded stiffly and he began.

Dr. Glazer’s famous skill was going swimmingly, until he noticed something. Watching her face so closely, the elegant lines of her cheek, the light green eyes, the firm mouth – gradually reminded him of someone else. “It’s amazing!” he thought. “Uncanny!” He paused, removing his mask.

“Are you related to Dr. Bemelmans?”

“What?” She was just rinsing when she heard this unintelligible question.

“Vyashaslav Bemelmans,” he said excitedly. “Are you related to him?”

“Boss,” she gurgled, “I swear on my life, that I never heard anyone say a name like that till you just said it to me.”

“We met in a delicatessen. In 1949. He collected stamps.”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t have the pleasure. I wasn’t born.”

“I know,” persisted Dr. Glazer. “But perhaps you know his family. He was about my height. But an inch or so shorter.”

Scowling, she informed him that “If I were related to a midget, I wouldn’t want anyone to know.” Then she was suddenly contrite, having gone too far to this kind little man. “I’m so sorry. That was mean.”

“No, no, you have enough to think about right now.”

But she jumped up guiltily, and began scrabbling in her large Coach handbag. She came up with what looked like two small, wrapped candies. “Let’s be friends!” she pleaded. “Let’s each of us have one.”

“Are those drugs?” he frowned.

“No way! It’s just candy.” Her pouting was adorable. “Please, it’s my birthday.”

Poor Manfred, so naïve! “*Oh, her birthday! How could he refuse?*”

And so, later, just as he was finishing her treatment, she suddenly said: “I think I know your friend! We call him ...Fat Albert!” She broke into giggles, and kissed his cheek. “ You’re Fat Albert!” This time she shrieked in wild laughter, her legs kicking high. Dr. Glazer too, became convulsed, falling to his knees, rolling to his back, laughing, “No, not Fat Albert!”

The little room suddenly bulged with people, led by the CEO, the man who had fired the doctor. Outraged, he looked down at the still supine,

giggling man, “What the hell are you doing here, Glazer? Get out now or I’ll throw you out!” Turning angrily, he found himself staring into the muzzle of a 38 caliber snub pistol, held by a pretty girl.

“Don’t you ever talk to him that way!” she demanded. “He’s the best dentist in the whole world! Now you get down and say that!” The CEO, his face now as white as his hair, hastened to obey.

Then, dropping a handful of large bills falling like petals on Dr. Glazer’s chest, she blew him a kiss, and fled like a gazelle out of the office, saying: “If you want to live, don’t touch Glazer’s money!”

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