

SOMEONE VERY KIND

Doctor Manfred Glazer, 79, once an outstanding dentist but now retired, had taken advantage of the generosity of the local coffee shop in providing a narrow room for those urgently requiring private relief. He was seated comfortably, relaxing and humming tunes from “Oklahoma,” when the door burst open and an astonished intruder stumbled in. He was a tall fellow, about fifty years of age, whose good-natured face was now deeply red in embarrassment. “I beg your pardon, Sir,” he said, horribly apologetic. “I had no idea”! “The fault is mine”, replied Dr. Glazer, acquitting the distressed gentleman ceremoniously. The fact was that he had forgotten to lock the door. He knew that this was simply another instance supporting the tests recently given by his physician, who gently told him that there had been some significant decline in his cognitive faculties, and that he would have to be very careful to avoid blunders of this kind.

But as Dr. Glazer began to take the full guilt upon himself, the tall fellow’s expression suddenly went from embarrassment to a look of awe. “You’re Dr. Glazer, aren’t you?” he said incredulously. “My dental work has never been the same since you retired!”

“I’m sorry that you haven’t received the necessary care,” said the doctor gravely. “I don’t quite recall you...”

“Edward Block. Midland Oil. Look,” he said, “Would you be willing to come to my house and look me over? Tomorrow? I’ll send a car for you. Say, ten thirty?”

I’d be delighted!” He quickly gave Edward a card recently ordered as his doctor suggested, providing personal details intended, not for personal exchanges, but to assist the police and others if he forgot his identity. Meanwhile, heavy knocks had been pounding in growing outrage against the door. It was time to part. “I’ve taken up too much of your time,” Edward said reluctantly. ”I’ll see you then!”

The next day, Dr. Glazer was (*thank heaven!*) ready for Edwards’s car, a heavy black Mercedes, driven by someone who seemed to avert his face and never spoke to him unless required to answer a question and then to reply only in monosyllables, which swept him from Foggy Bottom to the oil magnate’s house in McLean, Virginia. It was a magnificent brick structure, well back from the road, flowing gracefully behind the trees as though it were embarrassed by its enormous size and sought to conceal it.

Edward met Dr. Glazer at the door, and both preferred to begin at once on their dental investigation. With Edward guiding him, they passed through a series of quiet, dim corridors that ultimately-and none too soon for Dr. Glazer, who had grown weary of the journey – arrived at the elaborate workout room, where seats and broad lighting were more than ample to allow a dentist to probe where necessary. During the session, Dr. Glazer was occasionally distracted by what seemed to be someone at the outside darkness, looking briefly at them, and then falling away.

The examination being over, Dr. Glazer advised him that his teeth did need a good deal of work, and that he'd mail his conclusions to a dentist whom he could rely upon. Edward seemed delighted. He seized his guest with a hard grip, saying, "Doc, I want only the best, and that means you." And despite his expostulations, Edward would not hear of anyone else. "I am in your debt, Sir!" he chortled. "There's plenty of writing stuff in the Orchard Room, right down the third corridor. Turn right there. Meanwhile, I'll get up a lunch that'll knock your socks off!"

It was in the Orchard Room that he met Mindy, a lovely young woman, with dark, curly hair surrounding her deep violet eyes, who had been gazing out of a bow window at a brilliant swath of lawn. She turned with a broad smile. "Oh, there you are, Dr. Glazer. I'm so glad to see you!" Her long, green dress whispered along the floor as she came over to him. "I have a surprise. Look." She pointed to an open box on a coffee table: "It's the Leap Frog game, we call it, but it's Candyland for you. Will you play it with me?" He couldn't help but agree. It was a simple game of luck, dice determining the movement to be made, which he loved in his youth as a child, and which the sight of it now thrilled him as before. She was soon shrieking in delight at the vicissitudes of the game, and at one important point, she looked over at him joyously. She said, "You're making this a very exciting day, which is so rare here. I will never forget it."

"Oh, but I'll be coming back!" he announced proudly. "Edward's asked me to."

She dropped the little pasteboard which she was about to move. “Did he say that?” she seemed much in dismay. She cleared her throat, saying, “You mustn’t put too much in Edward’s words, Dr. Glazer. He doesn’t remember things.”

“Neither do I,” he said shyly.

“I know that.” She paused. “It’s my move!” and rolled the dice for a small gain. “Oh, darn!”

She gave the dice to Dr. Glazer and watched him move the dice. “It’s nice to forget the things that happen, isn’t it? That’s why Edward wanted to see you. Because you can forget, and” she said, smiling affectionately at him, “you’re nice.” Then, she laughed with excitement. “See?” she pointed at the game. “ You could jump over my place, and you wouldn’t!” She made the advantageous additional move for him. “That’s nice but naughty!”

But then her face darkened, and she looked for a moment like someone very old.

“But there are some things we can’t forget.” The very bad things we did. Edward and I. Those we can’t forget. We must stay here and forever remember.”

She smiled brilliantly. “My dear friend. You should go now.”

He had become very upset. “But your brother! He’s preparing a lunch for us.”

“No, he isn’t.”

“No?” he said, plaintively.

“I’m afraid not. We don’t eat much here. Sometimes, not for eons – so it seems. And he won’t remember. He tries not to remember anything at all. But it seems you can get lots of food at the main intersection. Just go across the lawn, and bear to the left. It’s not so far. Please. It will be bad for us if you stay.”

He suddenly became aware of the vast silence surrounding them.

“Can I see you again?”

“You know, don’t you?” she said, sadly. “Now I want to do something for you, for coming here. At Pimlico, tomorrow, at play ‘Angel’s Home’. Eight to One.” She laughed this time, like a young girl. “And think of me.”

And so he left, and the next day he watched Angel’s Home win going away.

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