

DR. GLAZER IS NEEDED

Doctor Manfred Glazer, 81 years old and recently diagnosed as having Alzheimer's disease, stood in the kitchen of his apartment looking doubtfully at his cat. Most of the time, he recognized the cat as his own, as he did that evening, but he could not remember whether or not he had fed his orange flecked friend the evening repast of milk and tinned meat. The two gazed questioningly at each other for a few moments, and then, rising from her bed, the cat (he could not remember her name) stood up yawning - it was two AM - and strolled out lazily to leap into her usual chair in the TV room. "Ah ha!" said Dr. Glazer triumphantly, "You wouldn't have gone away if you were hungry, would you?" Humming with satisfaction, he opened the refrigerator and after a long scrutiny, withdrew a carton of orange juice - he preferred coffee but had recently learned that brewing efforts in that direction were disastrous - poured himself a glass and shuffled contentedly to join the cat in the room where the TV set leaped and flared in the darkness.

It was sometime later that a rapid series of knocks sounded at the door, wakening him suddenly from a deep sleep. The light in the TV room suddenly came on; an elderly woman was standing over him. "I had to use the key! Manfred, why didn't you open the door?" Before he could answer (though he really had none), she went on: "Aren't you ready? I told you we had to be there by one o'clock and it's eleven thirty now!" She was plainly upset, and Dr. Glazer, who had been a respected dentist for forty years before his expulsion for odd behavior, knew how to allay the anxiety of patients when they came to his office. "You have nothing to be afraid of," he said soothingly, "you won't feel a thing, I promise you. Just a small pinch."

He rose from his chair to go to what he thought was his office to prepare the Novocain. The elderly woman seized him by the arm. "It's me, Manfred, it's me! Your sister Elaine. We're going to the wedding of your brother's granddaughter, don't you remember?" She shook his arm impatiently, and Mr. Glazer stood there crestfallen. He had always disliked weddings and every other long, tedious ceremonial occasion when there were so many other interesting things to do. But he was an agreeable man, and if this distressed woman claiming to be his sister said that he was obliged to go to this wedding, then he'd go. At any rate, he certainly would not challenge her; he had learned after many previous contretemps of this kind that if he disputed the identity of people who claimed an affiliation with him, the result could only end in a noisy row that could only mean trouble for him.

And it wasn't always a nuisance, either. He'd been dragged on cruises, recently as early as last year, when he had floated down the length of the river Danube, for no charge, all through the courtesy of a man who said he was his first cousin but plainly wasn't. He was once flown to Paris to meet some alleged relatives which had ended badly; somehow he'd become involved with a Frenchwoman who took him somewhere, and then left him in a potato patch, with everyone upset. A wedding, though, a wedding, now this was a classic bore. But he had always been an easygoing guy, a priceless trait for someone in his difficult situation, so if he had to go to a wedding, he'd go.

A long ride to the church, and after receiving a delicate cream white pamphlet which indicated an especially long service, Manfred went down the aisle, firmly under his alleged sister's arm. As they proceeded forward, they marched steadily closer and closer to the pulpit, and he began to fear that he would be asked to ascend and

play a role, perhaps to speak: “When I was a child I acted like a child,” (“*what was next?*”) when Elaine suddenly pulled him into one of the pews and pushed him down. “Don’t move!” she whispered, and disappeared up the aisle. Unfortunately, what she had said was loud enough for a few rows behind to crane their necks at him and say to their companions something about “dementia”.

Manfred heard this, and turned around to a very red faced fat man who was sweating under a blue suit too tight for him. “It’s all a mistake; I’m Dr. Manfred Glazer and I don’t even know these people.”

The fat man laughed, tapping Manfred’s shoulder in emphasis. “I should be so lucky.”

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