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THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY

By ROSEL GEORGE BROWN

*The hospital needed Dr. Hisel. He was
a fine physician. He was also a Martian.
And therein lies the problem.*

THAT'S tomato catsup," Quintius Greene, out in Oregon, informed his wife. "Look at those actors! And see—oh, no! A comic character, no less."

Dr. Hisel, his chest bare and his lungs flapping mightily, came pushing through the white-robed circle just as the anesthetist, or rather hypnotist, leaned over to check the patient's blood pressure. She whispered something to Dr. Crayton, who was using his scissors in the open chest cavity.

The audience was not perturbed. Millions of Americans munched on decolorizing bars and thought uplifting thoughts about the grandeurs of science and the state of their own internal organs. And oh, how they loved operations in the round, and particularly in

color! You could practically reach out and let the blood drip over your fingers.

Dr. Crayton did the operation himself because he was a neat, masterful-looking surgeon and he never let blood squirt on his uniform or dropped his operating lenses into the incision. One doesn't do this sort of thing for advertising, but it is uplifting for people with money to leave to medical institutions.

Mrs. Greene eyed Dr. Hisel disapprovingly, finished her decolorizing bar and reached for a chocolate cream. "What's he doing?"

"Following the script," Mr. Greene said, outraged. "Relax. They always end well."

But Dr. Crayton's medicinal calm was indeed shattered. The look he gave Dr. Hisel was enough to turn the Gor-

gon's head into a ceramic fuel tank. He meant business.

Hisel was a much misunderstood man. Mostly because he had a heavy Martian accent and everything he said sounded either hilarious or sinister, depending on how many drinks you had had.

At the hospital the nurses would follow him around surreptitiously just to hear him say things like, "Madam, your schild hhas honly ha bad hattack of whwhhwhhooping schhoughhh." He really went off on something like the "wh" in whooping cough, because when Martians aspire all out they use their extra lungs and you can hear them close with a "flap" before the word goes on.

Dr. Hisel had his faults and surgical nurses frequently collapsed after his operations. As a Martian, Dr. Hisel was accustomed to strong-impulse telepathy, and frequently just held his hand out, expecting the nurse to know what to put in it. And a look would pass from the surgical nurse to the circulating nurse and around among the interns and finally Dr. Hisel would say, "For Hhhwhran's sake! Scalpel!" And then if the nurse slapped the scalpel into his hand, as she had been taught, he'd roar

like a bull, because he peeled off his epithelium before an operation instead of using gloves. And then, he didn't say, "stat," for haemostat, as other doctors do. He said "haemo," which usually came out as a flap of his extra lungs.

So his directives frequently sounded like—Pause. For Hhhwhran's sake! Scalpel. Qcqvttt! Pause. Scissors. Flap. Unprintable word! (Mostly aspirates with uvular overtones).

It was for this and similar reasons, besides a purely personal prejudice, that Dr. Crayton, who was head of Bayside Memorial Hospital, decided that Hisel should be dispensed with.

It is no easy matter to dispose of a staff doctor. Firing is considered gauche. The best method is to find him a better offer from elsewhere. But Hisel did not rise to better offers. He was engrossed in his work and he knew his way around the hospital and he had a good robotic apartment and a good mechanic for his car and a good laundry. It never occurred to him to want anything else. Certainly not money.

"I don't want to leave," he would tell Dr. Crayton. "I like it h(flap)ere. I like you."

And Dr. Crayton, though he had the ice-locked heart required of a good administrator, was still human enough to feel like a heel. He had to wait until Hisel left his office to plan his next move.

With a planetary immigrant there is always a way.

"Your mother," Dr. Crayton told Hisel, "didn't sign your Martian emigration papers."

"I was forty-two," Hisel said, "when I emigrated. My mother was dead."

"I know," said Dr. Crayton, who hadn't really. "It's a technicality. But it's the sort of thing the League for Pure Blood gets hold of and they'll make a stink about it and cause a lot of unpleasantness for you and the hospital."

"I have," Hisel pointed out, "the purest blood in the county. Martian blood is of necessity sterile of Terran bugs. I have growing in my colon the Martian adapted lichen . . ."

"Of course. You miss the point. What the League for Pure Blood means . . . never mind. The point is that perhaps you'd be happier returning to Mars now instead of waiting until . . ."

"I do not intend to return," Dr. Hisel said. "I am happy here. There is so little real dis-

ease on Mars. Mere congenital defects. You have no idea how I rejoiced over my first real appendectomy, knowing it was not a mere synthetic model. Here you have more disease than you can use. For a doctor it is a paradise!"

"Yes, yes. But there's still this legal technicality. There's no getting around it, Hisel. Sorry, old boy."

"How about Whox at Minnesota? I know his mother didn't sign his emigration papers. I was a second generation mutation, but he was one of the few successful flask babies."

"Whox is married to a Terran girl," Dr. Crayton said somewhat hesitantly.

"You are so kind," Hisel said. "I know a hint when I hear one."

Dr. Hisel's courtships were brief. "Will you marry me so that I can become a permanent Terran citizen?" he asked the surgical nurse after a trying operation.

"Qcqvttt!" she said, and left trembling.

On the advice of a sympathetic scrub nurse, who was eight months pregnant, Dr. Hisel tried a more subtle approach.

"It is a lovely night for romance," Dr. Hisel said,

directing his date's gaze to the starry sky.

"But def!" she giggled. "Look at that moon! It looks like . . . like . . ."

Dr. Hisel slipped his arm around her, as he had been directed. "It looks like a gangrenous gall bladder," he supplied tenderly.

It was the same with one girl after another.

"I am not successful with women," Hisel told Dr. Crayton sadly. "Is there no other way for me to become a permanent citizen?"

"Sorry, old boy."

Still, you know, Hisel not only got to be a full-fledged citizen. He created such a stir that the immigration quota for Martians rose forty per cent and the League for Pure Blood couldn't even find a photographer willing to do their microslides.

It was partly pure chance, as almost everything is, if you think about it.

Hisel, who spent his small amount of leisure time reading the medical columns in the micronews and watching medical events on TV, was, of course, watching Dr. Crayton's televised interratrial septal defect repair from the doctors' lounge. It was one of those things that really looks dramatic, but usually goes

pretty easily these days. Ordinarily.

It would have been obvious even to someone not familiar with Martian facial expressions that something was wrong. The massive eyebrows drew together, the cheeks puffed out roundly and then sucked in. The tank-like chest pushed in and out.

"Flap," Dr. Hisel began. "Flap, flap!"

"Hot gall bladder!" the bright-plumed piroquot called from its perch in the corner. "Hemorrhage! Jaundice! Purulence!"

"Flap!"

"Scissors!" said Dr. Crayton.

He began to cut away, ignoring Dr. Hisel who had peeled himself from waist to neck and was using a towel clamp to pull the rest of his current epithelium from his hands.

"Stat," Dr. Crayton barked. "Suture!"

Dr. Crayton turned his head to hear what the anesthetist was whispering in a modulated scream, so that he, but not the television audience would hear.

At this point Dr. Hisel calmly pinched one of the tubes leading to the heart-lung machine, removed the

end of the tube from the balloon-like affair, made a quick incision at his own carotid and inserted the tube. Then he pinched the other tube and inserted into the jugular on the other side of his neck.

"Pace maker!" Dr. Crayton cried, shouting over his shoulder. "It's a transfusion re . . ." He turned and spotted Hisel, who was grinning like something out of a Medieval Bestiary and breathing on all four lungs.

"You may proceed," he said, "with the operation." He was carefully pushing the polyethylene tubes down into his aorta and vena cava. "Otherwise," he pointed out, referring to his own actions, "the patient would probably have died."

Blood from the heart-lung machine had squirted all down the side of Dr. Crayton's uniform and he was damp across the shirt from his own sweat. "Stat!" he demanded finally, routine coming to his rescue.

"MN reaction," Dr. Crayton explained. "But how did you know before we did?"

"The patient," Dr. Hisel said, "was under anesthetic hypnosis. Apparently he had been told not to talk or move. He could therefore neither voice his discomfort nor manifest his chill by tremor or

thrashing of his extremities. In the exigency of the moment, he was able to exert strong-impulse telepathy, no doubt because it was impossible for him to express himself any other way, and I was able to pick up the impulse, amplified by the television. He telepathed one word—"help."

"She," Dr. Crayton corrected. "Suture."

If it had been a closed circuit broadcast, Dr. Hisel would have gotten written up in the Journal of the A.M.A., those hospitals, (like Bayside Memorial) not yet testing for rare blood factors would have started to do so, and that would probably have been the end of it.

The general public, however, takes no such pallid approach to dramatic events. There was an immediate demand not for better blood testing or improved anesthetic hypnosis, but for more Martians.

"Your patient," the now eight-and-a-half-month pregnant scrub nurse told Dr. Hisel, "is a very pretty she."

"She is not my patient," Dr. Hisel said. "She is Dr. Crayton's patient."

"But she wants to see you," the scrub nurse said, duck-walking over to the desk to

switch on an intercom to room 34. "She's not married. Her name is Miss Stancel. And Dr. Hisel, she's *awfully* grateful."

"Ah! I will propose," Dr. Hisel said, ending with a resounding flap!

"Not right away, Doctor. It's so hard to get the idea across to you. The first time, you just talk to her."

Thus began Dr. Hisel's romance and there was about him, the nurses decided, an air of polyethylene, etheric orange blossoms. There was a general softening of the heart concerning Dr. Hisel, even among the nurses in surgery, and Miss Stancel got more service than rich old Mrs. "Three-shift" Carson received.

Miss Stancel (Violet), however, was found in tears on the day of her discharge. The scrub nurse, now on the verge of labor and therefore not allowed in surgery, came prepared to propose in case Dr. Hisel had neglected to do so.

"I told him not to propose right away," she confided to

Miss Stancel. "But I happen to know . . ."

"Gloop!" Miss Stancel sobbed from a soft, white throat. "He *did* propose."

"Well?"

It was easy to see what he saw in her. It was a little harder to imagine what she saw in him. But such is the way of Providence.

"He took it back." Miss Stancel carelessly blew her nose on the lace negligee she had just removed.

"But why, for heaven's sake?"

"He said it was unnecessary to get married."

"That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard of." The scrub nurse glanced at her watch, beginning to time her pains. "Why is it unnecessary to get married?"

"Because . . . gloop . . . he's already been made a permanent Terran citizen."

"Oh, Lord. Look, I'm going into labor. But don't give up. I'll dig into his records when I get out of the delivery room. With a planetary immigrant there is always a way."

THE END