

The Amazing Adventures of Macro-Microbe

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Macro-Microbe parked his car and proceeded on foot, which was a misnomer because he had no feet. Typical for Manhattan, no one gave him a second glance except for a homeless woman who tried to sell him hand-sanitizer. Macro-Microbe locomoted himself inside the building of NextDrug Corporation, and soon faced a receptionist, which was another misnomer because Macro-Microbe had no face.

"I'm here for a job interview," Macro-Microbe said. "I have an appointment with Mr. Smith."

"I'll buzz you in," the receptionist said, not even bothering to look up. "Turn right as soon as you go through the door. His office is the second one on the left."

"Good morning,"? Macro-Microbe said once inside Mr. Smith's office. "Sorry I can't shake your hand."

"Because you have no hands,"? Mr. Smith said pleasantly. "Not to worry. We don't discriminate against the handicapped."

He had the beady eyes of a rat well versed in the labyrinths of corporate politics, and Macro-Micro liked him instantly. But not enough to ruin his plan.

Mr. Smith pulled out Macro-Microbe's resume. "I just noticed that your name is hyphenated,"? he said. "Are you foreign-born? Do you have the right to work in the US?"

"I was born and raised in Trenton, New Jersey,"? Macro-Microbe said. "I hope it qualifies."

"Sure,"? Mr. Smith said. "Sure. Let me introduce you to Dr. Novitsky, the head of the antibiotic lab. Should we hire you, she would be your boss."

"What do you think?" Mr. Smith asked Dr. Novitsky three hours later when Macro-Microbe had already departed.

Dr. Novitsky smoothed her skirt. Her eyes sparkled, magnified by her thick glasses.

"He seems well-qualified," she said. "A Ph.D. from Harvard. Fieldwork at McDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King. Five years of biotech experience. Seven patents. Eleven publications. Well-cultured. Pretty smart for someone who has no brain and pretty handsome for someone who has no eyes. And he's so funny."

"I see one problem," Mr. Smith said. "Someone without a neck can't face the customers, that's for sure."

"Would this argument stand in a court of law if he sues us for discrimination?"

Mr. Smith sighed. "Let's see if he passes the drug test."

A week later, Macro-Microbe deposited himself into the company of his new co-workers by the water cooler.

"To deny drugs to people who can't pay is inhumane," Bill Lewis from the sales department said. "Can we afford to be inhumane? My consciousness keeps me awake at night."

His eyes were colorless and light; like pure, deadly alcohol.

"Unfortunately, charging something for what we do is the necessity of life," Dr. Novitsky said.

"If drugs were free as you've suggested, Bill," Macro-Microbe said, "what are we drug researchers going to eat, then? Hunger will keep you awake at night instead of your consciousness. Not all of us can rely on photosynthesis."

Dr. Novitsky laughed and everybody, even Bill, followed.

A month later, Macro-Microbe and Dr. Novitsky shared a table at "La Banlieue."

Piano music, perfume and the aroma of expensive food laced with very few bacilli filled the air. People with phobias or weak stomachs who couldn't handle the splendor of Macro-Microbe's physique had already left.

"I feel so safe with you in this crazy city,"? she said, placing her hand on his flagella. "I know that if someone attacks me, all you need to do is to release a bunch of toxins."

He finished the last drop of his chicken bouillon and chuckled. "A knight in shining armor is nothing to sneeze at."

She laughed but then turned serious. "I adore you. Let's go to my place."

"I'd love to,"? he said. "Nothing toxic to be released. I promise."

"Then I won't spray you with Lysol."

The next day, two men in black suits entered the lab.

"Mr. Macro-Microbe?" the taller one asked.

"This is he," Macro-Microbe said, turning away from the microscope. "What can I do for you, gentlemen?"

"FBI. You are under arrest. You have the right to remain silent."

"What's going on?"? Dr. Novitsky cried. "Macro! Darling! Don't hurt him!"

"Oh, shit,"? the other man said. "How am I going to handcuff him?"

Two hours later, Macro-Microbe sat on the bench in a cell, which was a misnomer because he had no buttocks. He fell into a complete stupor. His universe was collapsing all over him, compressing to the point of a hypodermic needle, and he was still far from his goal.

He was awoken from the stupor by the creaking of the bench, and saw a gorilla dressed in tattered jeans and a shirt, unbuttoned all the way down to his navel, sitting next to him.

"What are you here for, butch?" the gorilla said.

"Industrial sabotage," Macro-Microbe said. "And my name is not Butch."

"What the hell is 'industrial sabotage', sweetie?"? the gorilla said and placed his paw on Micro-Microbe's flagella.

Macro-Microbe felt a wave of toxins rising inside him but at this very moment, a cop came and took him away. In the next room, Dr. Novitsky was waiting behind the glass wall.

"Tell me that you're innocent, Macro, and I'd believe you,"? she said through the receiver.

“Your PermaCillin would exterminate my race,” he said after a pause. “What choice did I have?”

Without waiting for the answer, he returned to his cell, straight and proud, ready for anything that the human race had at its disposal. And he remained straight and proud until his dying day, which came swiftly. While he was sleeping, his cellmate cut his outer membrane with a razor, splashing his cytoplasm all over the walls.

They buried Macro-Microbe in an unmarked grave. Soon tall grass grew on it, and drug-resistance bacteria frolicked on the blades, waiting for a passer-by. They had all the time in the world on their hands, naturally, which was a misnomer because they had no hands.

