

# “HOSPITAL HORRORS”

by Harold Cooper

Nearly everyone has had the privilege of spending at least a few unforgettable hours in a hospital. If you were old enough to remember your stay, you are on of those with a storehouse of memories. For there is NO place like a hospital. I know! I've been in my share of them, but I think I'd better straighten one thing out right now. Not one of those hospitals was a mental hospital. That comes after you've been discharged from a regular hospital.

When I first entered this “compassionate care facility,” I was feeling about as bad as one person could feel. My nose ran and my feet smelled, and everything else was upside-down, too. But before long, I began to get better – I found I had to in order to survive in the hospital.

Those girls at the admitting desk are mighty sly. There was one elderly receptionist who kept flapping her arms and going, “Aaw, aaw ... What do you want? Aaw, aaw ... Do you have insurance?”

And when I handed her my insurance form, she screamed, “Aaw, aaw ... Oh, goodie! Unlimited protection!”

She made me sign a slip so they could do anything they pleased to me without it being their fault, and then she gave me a nameband. I cherished that nameband because I could always be sure of at least one thing during my stay at the hospital –my name. If I forgot it, which I did quite often, I just looked at my wrist and there it was. Actually, the name game was quite a scandal among the hospital personnel. A lab technician came into my room and inquired whether I was Herman Leffkowitz. A quick glance at my name band confirmed that I was indeed Herman Leffkowitz. Who else? But I asked, “What do you want?”

He replied in his Transylvanian tongue, “I want to take your blood. Mooaaaw...” To which I responded, “No, I'm not Herman Leffkowitz. He's in the next room, idiot.” Our bloodthirsty lab technician ended up dashing through the halls from room to room trying to find Mr. Leffkowitz, as everyone in turn told him, “He's in the next room, idiot, in the next room.”

I must tell you about my nurse, known as Killer – and she was a killer indeed. Russian born, she formally went by the name of Chornaya Karova . Later I learned that she was a retired Volga Boatwoman who originally came to the U.S. as an offensive tackle for the Chicago Bears. But back to our meeting – I was sitting in the lobby minding my own business when I heard a low rumble off in the distance which slowly increased in intensity. Above all the clamor came the song of the Volga Boatman: “Ay ookhnyem ... Ay ookhnyem ...” the floor began to shake ... The walls began to shake ... The pictures fell off the walls ... Then the plaster...

By now Killer was at the door. She kicked it open ... she was a BIG woman, about seven feet tall. She measured forty-five inches around – from her nose right on down to her feet. With a little black mustache and a heavy beard, she had her dress on backwards, just to show how tough she was. And she turned out to be one of the prettier nurses.

Killer picked me up, pressed me over her head twice, and carried me under her arm to my room, complete with bed pan. Somewhere in the hospital codes or the Hippocratic oath there must be a passage which reads: “The optimum operating temperature for all bed pans is thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit – or below!” The first time I had need of the thing, I mistakenly asked Killer, whereupon she immediately went to chill it in dry ice to below thirty-two degrees so I could get the maximum effect.

Anyone who believes indecent exposure has come along within the last few years has never visited a hospital. The garb I had to wear was what I shall call a “humility gown,” a terrible contraption looking like a gunny sack with a head hole cut in one end and an open seam in the back that fastened with ties which felt like giant boulders when I tried to lie down. It wouldn’t have been as bad, but my particular model was made for a pygmie and hardly covered the “bare” necessities.

Long after I was admitted, a nurse came in with what every red-blooded American boy looks forward to – dinner! The try was covered, so I sneaked a peek under the edge. Convinced that my eyes were deceiving me, I took the cover completely off. I couldn’t believe it. How can anyone ruin Jello? The main dish was like nothing I had ever seen before, but being hungry, I forced myself to eat some. It tasted like nothing I had every eaten before. When the njrse finally took the try out, I heard her say to her flunkie, “How about that! We finally found

someone who will eat our hammered frogs. We'll give the poor fool the same thing tomorrow!"

By now the day was pretty well over, but I found that nighttime also held a few surprises. At 1:30 a.m. Killer was shining a 20,000 candlepower light in my eyes as she growled, "Oy, is you 'dere, boy?" At 3:00 a.m. I was rudely awakened and given a sleeping pill. At 6:00 a.m. I was again awakened when Killer shoved a thermometer in my – well, not in my mouth – and the day's activities began AGAIN!

I finally got discharged from the hospital, cured of the symptoms that took me there. My nose no longer runs and my feet no longer smell; instead, I have insomnia, nausea, and hypertension – and I've developed this nervous tick in my left eye. If you'll excuse me, I'd better run. I've got an appointment at the funny farm. Ha Ha Hee Hee Ho Ho!