

Doctor Desmond

Prologue to "Kyle" novel

+

a short S-F story **"Hesus"**

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Appropriate for all ages.

Doctor Desmond

I've spent my entire life in this place. It was a village off the beaten track, a typical farmer one, but not based on one or two multi-generational families. We even had a shop and a blacksmith, a children's nursery, a small bar, as well as a person dealing with our diseases, as long as they did not require a visit to the hospital – Miss Gobbins. I deliberately don't call her a doctor. Still, neither do I call her a witch doctor(although most of her treatments were based on herbs). She was a registered nurse who spent a lot of her professional life in a large hospital in Pigeon Forge. She came from here and returned here to take care of her infirm mother and our sorrows.

On the side of the road leading to our village, slightly uphill, hidden behind a row of trees of a wild orchard, was a house belonging to old Henry. Henry was not liked in the village. His own children scattered around the world, whether because of his lousy character or looking for a career other than a farmer growing corn yearly. Suffice to say that when he passed, apart from the pastor from the neighboring larger village (where the cemetery was), maybe a few people bid him farewell.

You could venture to guess that the expedition of a nine-mile journey with a horse-drawn cart was more tedious than the satisfaction that the brief moment of witnessing the dirt covering the coffin of that dude with your own eyes could bring.

I can't remember when exactly, but a few years later, when my children were no longer constantly messy kids, on the shelf for milk canisters, on the way to Henry's old house, his rusty bicycle appeared along with the inscription. It was an arrow on a wooden plate nailed to a tree - "Desmond Tisawarga - Doctor". The name had no relation to the previous tenant and sounded very exotic. It aroused our curiosity, which we satisfied with an observation from Miss Gobbins' property. Her fence bordered Henry's house, and high, not cut grass and wooden, quite dense rungs of the fence guaranteed privacy.

He was an older, short and stout man with a moustache, dressed mostly in white. Actually, after a few days of observation, we had the impression that he did not change at all. He walked in a medical smock or in something very similar to a white robe. However, we were a tad too far away to assess it precisely.

Miss Gobbins spoke to Dr Desmond first. She gave us information at a Sunday Mass introducing the new host of Henry's estate to us. That turned out to be a modest doctor from a big city, wanting to take a break from its hustle and bustle. The doctor bought the property from Henry's inheritors. He did not back up his practice with a pile of diplomas and acknowledgements but intended to prove his skills in practice. Gobbins received not as much information about his previous work. Still, the plaque was clearly hung because the physician wanted to help the locals in his free time. He quickly reached an agreement with our nurse. The following week she invited the patients, not to herself, but the sympathetic, as she said, Dr Desmond. Over time, the distrust was overcome. Even the most hardened supporters of framed diplomas of concierge doctors started to trust our doctor, seeing how effective his treatments were.

Though the village was not that populated, the doctor began to have many patients in a short time. The more they knew that his treatments were adequate, the easier they remembered about ailments and honestly talked about their healing. It was enough to listen to gain absolute certainty that Desmond didn't find his diploma in a barn. He offered an effective treatment if only he was at home. In fact, his occasional, random absences were more of a headache than our diseases - because these were managed perfectly. In a few years of practice,

maybe a dozen patients were sent to the hospital in Pigeon Forge. He treated and cured everything else until complete recovery. Nobody died.

We guessed that he had to ride a bike, the old lady's bike on which Henry rode. It stood, rusty, under a large tree, at the turn to the property. When the bike was gone – there was no use looking for help. It meant that the doctor drove it to a neighboring town or even further. The latter assumption came from the fact that he did not conduct any practice in the nearby city. He wasn't seen there, or even occasionally noticed, despite his characteristic appearance. He was never at the Saturday's market, where the commodity exchange flourished and where you could get to know and buy fashion novelties from the big world.

I didn't keep any closer contact with Desmond, but when my son got hurt, and I assumed he could have eaten some poisonous fruit in the woods, I immediately rushed to him. On the way to his house, I met Miss Gobbins, pushing her mother in a wheelchair. I have not seen old Mrs. Greta for several years.

"Good morning, though maybe not entirely good," I struck up a conversation. "Will the doctor save my son?"

"For sure, there is no one at him now."

I offered help in pushing the chair, and Gobbins took the hand of my staggering firstborn and went inside. A few minutes after I finished setting the chair against the wall of the house so that the sun did not shine in the old woman's eyes, my son stood in the doorway with a very baffled expression. He was followed by the doctor.

"It is good that you came quickly, Mr. Thomas. The kid ate poisonous mushrooms. But I already gave him medicine. Here, you have the second dose. Please give it to him tomorrow – he handed me a paper bag with one white tablet at the bottom.

"Has he already improved? He vomited unbelievably..."

"He has improved. Of course, he is not at full strength yet because he is dehydrated, but the poison is neutralized. Let him drink and eat as much as possible. And just ask him to play without any stupid ideas to eat everything he encounters," He did not address his last sentence to me, but to my son who nodded all the time, head turned up and tears in his eyes.

"How much do I owe you?" I asked hesitantly, surprised by the rapid and successful development of the situation. Still, the doctor waved his hand, entered the house, and closed the door.

"He doesn't take money from anyone," grandmother Greta said. "He despises it. It's bad that you didn't ask my daughter or me."

"Mrs. Greta, forgive me, how could I have known that or even make such an assumption? Nowadays, you pay for everything. Luckily, the water in the well is for free..."

"Only if you dig it yourself," she laughed.

I watched in disbelief as my son ran as if nothing had happened onto the main road because he heard the inviting shouts of his older colleagues. They probably followed us and waited for the result of the treatment. Probably one of them egged the boy on, and then they were afraid that he would die – I thought.

"It helped him incredibly quickly," I concluded.

"I only took four pills from him and see how much I've improved – I'm getting out of bed. The beloved doctor promised that if I exercise persistently, I would even walk by myself."

"My mother was lying for a long time," Miss Gobbins said from behind my back. "The doctor found a heart defect and paralysis from the spine and administered the treatment, and as you can see and hear – it's working. I never believed in these modern pills, but I was wrong."

"Does he treat heart disease with pills?"

"The doctor treats everything with pills. So modern. He has them from the city for almost every illness."

It was hard for me to comment on it somehow - it really helped my son right away. I gave him this second tablet, although he did not want to take it and claimed that he felt magnificent. I thought I'd ask a few neighbors what they thought about the doctor, but I didn't find anyone among my friends who weren't talking about him in superlatives.

Maybe a few months passed, and misfortune happened in autumn. During the hay carting, the kids helping in the field always climbed to the top of the haystack on the cart. Because in my childhood, I thought it was fun after a considerable effort for a teenager, thus I allowed it and even encouraged them to see the world from above.

Unfortunately, when crossing a wooden bridge over the water, one of the platform's planks leaning on the stone slope collapsed, and the jolt threw my son into the pond. Mud offered good cushioning, but unfortunately, while sliding off, he must have caught his hand on the buttress wall and seriously damaged his elbow. There was an audible crack of a bone. He cried out loudly, all black with mud, bleeding, and sore. Since the doctor's house was maybe a few hundred yards away, I ran with my beloved victim of the accident in my arms, hoping that Desmond would be home.

Luckily, he was. He was sitting in a rocking chair offered to him by our carpenter. He argued fiercely about herbal medicine with Miss Gobbins and her mother, this time with her strangely sitting straight at the table next to her daughter. There were a kettle, cups, and cake stands with cookies on the table. They were definitely having an excellent time.

Of course, I knew I was interrupting their talk, but my son needed help. I wasn't a gat expert, but it looked like a severe fracture. Desmond behaved precisely as I expected. Seeing the bloodied child, he jumped from the chair and immediately invited us inside, opening the door. He walked behind us, pointed me at the bench at the side, and then took the kid to the oversized white medical chair next to him. He looked at the wound on his elbow and forearm.

"Did he fall?"

"Yes, from the cart to the shallow pond, but he had to bump against a wall or a plank."

"It explains why he's so dirty."

Desmond looked closely at the forearm. He touched it in many places and moved it slightly. Finally, he concluded:

"The ulna bone is shattered, but the elbow is unbroken".

I was terrified for my child, and I never had my nerves frayed like now. Through my teeth, I uttered:

"That means it's broken in more than one place?"

"In a few, but it can be fixed."

"No need for an x-ray at the hospital?"

The doctor took off his glasses and looked at me calmly. He had unusually green irises. "There's no need for that. Trust me. If it doesn't heal, you can go to the hospital to complain about me. For today, I see that it can be cured with appropriate dressing and medicine that accelerates healing." He reached into his drawer and dug out a white pill, then turned to my sobbing son:

"Here,, have some candy. You. You will feel better immediately."

This candy clearly reminded me of one of his medicines. "Stop, stop!" I cried. "Doctor, you gave him a pill instead of candy. Don't eat this, son!"

Desmond looked at me and, at the same time, took the candy away from my boy. He then looked at it, bringing it closer to his eyes. "You are vigilant, Mr. Thomas, but all is well. This is not a medicine but a peppermint candy. In fact, they are now similar to medicines. They do that, so children take medicine without any problems. I will give one to you too, for tasting."

Desmond gave my son's candy to me. Then he dug another one from the drawer. I tasted the one he offered first – it was really a mint.

I nodded to my son, and he took the candy with his healthy hand and put it in his mouth. Let's say I was nervous and, at the same time, skeptical. But not so uncertain as to prohibit my son from devouring the candy. And I guess I was wrong before – judging from the smiling face, the youngster liked it even more than the candy from the store. Desmond looked at us for a while. Clearly, the boy calmed down. Moreover, I felt much more confident.

"Now, young hero, it's time for a stiffening dressing. It's like building a house."

The doctor brought from the backroom a kind of bandage and a can without a label. I thought the boy would cry up a storm when the doctor wrapped his arm, but he even didn't. Desmond was constantly telling something about travelling and the Universe - arousing curiosity and dismissing the kid's worries. Finally, he opened the can and covered the whole bandage with a greenish liquid. He made sure that all the material disappeared in the fluid of quite an unnatural color, washed his hands, and said to the boy:

"Does it hurt?"

"No, sir."

He turned to me with a smile:

"It'll be okay, Mr. Thomas, but the tablets will also be needed for the bone to mend in a jiffy. Two days and this whole thing will be history, and this bio-hydrocolloid resin will be removed a few more days later."

"Hydro-what, Doctor?"

"Oh, I mean the dressing, this green one."

There is no doubt - the newcomer had an idea about his work. I was not surprised that his fame spread quite quickly to the town. Even further away - sometimes people really battered with illnesses - be it their own, or their children or parents – came. Our doctor helped with most cases. It is also impossible to say that he was solving all instances. He was obviously not a miracle worker - sometimes he sent people to a hospital in the city, especially after setting the fractures. Once, he even said that he did not know how to handle it. Well, that's life.

I especially remember the case of Mrs. Hopkins (please don't confuse her with Mrs. Gobbins), who taught at a high school in our nearby town. She was a humanist. There was no strong specialization at that time, and the humanities subject was compulsory in all secondary educational fields. She was a friendly and very feminine-looking teacher. She loved digressions outside the main topic proposed by the educational regime. All pupils liked her, happy that she told the stories from the history of the world and the United States and did not require dates, events or poems to be memorized. As I remember (because I went to this school myself after graduating from elementary school), her lessons were a short but pleasant holiday.

When her youngest son brought her by car to us, I didn't recognize her. We guessed it was a terminal stage of cancer: sunken face, grey complexion, and seizures in her clawed hands. Many years passed, I barely remembered her appearance, and I didn't even recognize her kid. When I went to school, he was a stripling in trousers with suspenders, sometimes running into school hand in hand with his father for a "quick hug" from her, and that's it.

Desmond seemed very worried when he went out to the sick woman and realized the situation. After a preliminary assessment, reviewing delivered papers from previous treatments, and listening to a brief report from her loved ones, Mrs. Hopkins was brought into the office. The doctor asked everyone to leave, and in the waiting room, the nervous silence reflected the state of affairs. Do not be surprised that all of us were sitting here - whether former students or friends and her son. I think we did not expect miracles from Desmond. No one in their right mind would count on healing from metastatic cancer (which was already

known since she was treated by a hospital in the city) but at least on relief from pain. Overall, it was a very dramatic situation.

Although her prognosis in the medical records was grim – she survived. Desmond wasn't sure if the therapy would succeed – I knew it from Hopkins. During her treatment, she had close contact with another former student from the village and me and the whole pack that moved to the town. We besieged her like mosquitos, a sun lounge's attender over the pond in June.

You won't believe it, just as the doctors in the city did not believe - he was treating her with pills that clearly helped her. She just recovered, or perhaps more honestly - she has improved and got better, and after a few weeks, she went to the city for further tests. But she was no longer that dried-up, dying woman brought to Desmond - it was our spirited former teacher.

I talked a lot with Desmond at the time because I respected Mrs. Hopkins, and he helped me more than once with my son. I had full confidence in him. He was also very invested in the situation. He told Mrs. Hopkins that after the tests and treatment in the city, waiting for her with a rocking chair, blankets, and a good wine. He also asked that, regardless of the recommendations and treatment, she remembered also his pills. We sat together at tea time many times, with Mrs. Gobbins but also alone. I lived close to him, actually, after her house, it was the next one. He was a talkative guy. He loved to talk about nature, the Universe, and many dimensions - although I had no knowledge of physics. His tales, accompanied by the tea or beer, were so vivid that I really felt like someone who understood what, where and why he was. Good news also came from the teacher by letter. Apparently, the metastases had disappeared wonderfully, and the primary tumor was already suitable for surgery. Even her appointment for that had already been set.

Soon after that, our doctor became incredibly popular – you could see the power of word of mouth. People from the nearest town started to arrange visits, and soon - even from a larger city located more than 30 miles from our family house. Queues began to form outside Desmond's house, and the doctor himself asked Gobbins and me to bring order.

I remember one particular case when a boy of about ten years was brought by his father in a beautiful black Studebaker. At that time, I was personally on duty as a helper. Besides that, I also know many of the stories cited here from Gobbins, but I treat them as a fact because she is a sincere person. Moreover, work in agriculture is very seasonal - during this period, I was glad that I could serve our physician instead of being bored. Returning to this case - together with the boy and the father came the grandpa, very grey and partially bald, with longer hair at the back. They announced a broken leg, and the kid sobbed and moaned. The doctor examined the leg, looked at the upset father, and then stated:

"It can be cured. For treatment, we will use an oxygen dihydrogen mixture first."

"What exactly?" The father asked. "Is it safe for a child?"

"Are you kidding me?" The grandfather exclaimed, offended.

"It's ordinary water," Desmond rubbed the kid's leg with water, soaped a little muslin pad, and wiped the surface of his knee. After that, it looked ordinary, as if nothing had happened. No wound. "And as you can see, the problem is solved," Desmond stated.

"Benny does not need any pills?" - father of the kid asked.

The doctor pointed the youngster and his grandfather in the direction of the door to the hallway. After they left, he said to the man:

"The only thing I could prescribe here is a pill for you, mister, for wisdom. You can't let yourself be kicked around by a disgruntled child. He was fine; he painted these wounds and abrasions."

They quarreled for a while, and finally, they left offended, took the teenager, and drove away.

I perfectly remember this last quiet evening - we sat in front of Desmond's house, playing cards - he, Mrs. Gobbins, her mother, and me. We talked about dreams, about their fulfilment in real life. For our doctor, dreams have always been something of an alternate reality - he talked a lot about it. It was hard to comprehend, but in the end, I also sometimes dreamed of uncreated stuff and nonsense. Once I was a cowboy in the Wild West or even a doctor. I told several stories that I remembered from what I dreamed of.

"That's how it is, Mr. Thomas," Desmond summed it up. "Dreams are just as rich in content as reality is, but when we wake up, we only remember as much as our brain was able to control that dream. When we dream passively, it does not imprint on our local reality. I once heard such a theory that we can only dream of what we have seen before - in the form of collages, compilations.

But the truth is that with a bit of training, we can take control over a dream, meet other dreamers in it or move to a completely different world. We can also be someone else, look completely different than in our reality. What's more - our dreams can be even more creative than our lives. See how many inventions were discovered during the night while sleeping? This is just one of the fantastic properties of the brain. Living in our dimensions, we can appear at night in others because our brain is a gate not only to knowledge but also to other dimensions and worlds."

I understood that, more or less. Maybe Desmond's brain could do that, but I was a humble man, and I was not fit to be someone who could move smoothly around in his theories. To be honest, when I slept, I just slept. That evening, I listened a little more, but I felt drowsy when the conversation moved on to herbal medicine. After saying goodbye, I marched home.

They came the next day at six in the morning. No, not to my place - but to Desmond's. They also occupied the village. Willys MBs appeared everywhere, and surprisingly - they were accompanied by the well-known Studebaker limousine. The doctor's house was surrounded by the army and unknown service members dressed in black. I was outside at the time, maintaining the equipment, but I ran home. As soon as I got my nerves under control, I went to the cordon. I was not alone; the action literally put the whole town on full alert.

Nothing could be seen. We stood there in a large group for quite a long time, but at one point, I was pointed at by someone, then the other one asked about my first and last name, and then I was taken to Desmond's house. I cannot say that I was not afraid - the whole situation was so unusual for such a quiet village like ours that everyone would be scared.

Inside, I found Miss Gobbins in a chair brought from the waiting room. A similar one was waiting for me. I sat down, led by the arm by the soldier.

Desmond was handcuffed in a patient's chair. Inside, apart from a few armed men, commanded by an officer, there was also the upset grandfather of the boy with a painted wound. The grandfather, dressed in a grey suit and contrasting blue medical gloves, said :

"Are you finally going to speak now? We have fulfilled your conditions."

Desmond nodded and spoke quietly: "Yes, now I'm going to speak. I will repeat it again - I just want those who helped me be aware of the situation. I would not like to leave them with questions, uncertainty, and concerns."

"Well, then let's go back to the beginning. First question - what right do you have to claim that you're a doctor?"

"You can find my diploma in the left drawer of the dresser behind me."

The grandfather nodded, and the soldier came over and took a roll of thick paper from the drawer. He handed it to the grandfather, who unfolded it, took the glasses out of his pocket, and began to read.

The commanding officer spoke to the soldiers in a raised voice :

"Soldiers, if I command you to conduct a thorough search of the room and you do not notice a large roll of paper in the drawer, this is extremely unprofessional behavior. I understand the stress; I can forgive a lot, but not such mistakes."

"I don't think that it is their fault ..." - said the doctor, but the commander interrupted him:

"Stop speaking without permission! Answer the professor's questions".

"This diploma is completely falsified!" The grandfather, who turned out to be a professor, red in the face, said in a high-pitched voice. "Even the university seal is fake. Science & Space Tech, that's a good one. It should actually be Agriculture & Commerce - after all, I graduated from this university, and I'm a professor. The University of Tennessee doesn't have such faculties! Similarly, there is no medical faculty."

Desmond stared straight ahead. He did not address the accusations. The professor passed the diploma to one of the soldiers, who put it in a plastic bag and carried it out. Then, walking around the room, he continued:

"One thing is already clear – you are a fake doctor. Now tell me what your treatment method is. Everyone gets pills—almost everybody. What's more - we know, and you probably also know, that they even work on metastatic cancer. Where did you get them? Do you know how they work?"

Desmond sighed. "I know how they work; I'm a doctor, after all. I understand that you do not believe that, but it does not change the fact that their pharmacology is known to me. Where do I get them from? Well, from the drawer, left, in the desk."

"What a funny guy you are, but in your situation, I would give rather more honest answers," the professor hissed.

"Simply open the drawer and see that this is true," Desmond seemed to be the peak of composure.

The professor pulled out the drawer. It was full of pills in unlabeled jars.

The commanding officer flushed red, but before he could say anything, one of the soldiers spoke unprompted. "I swear it was empty, Colonel!"

Desmond nodded. After a moment of silence, the professor said, embarrassed:

"Or are you maybe from ... outer space?"

"Everyone is from space. If you mean if I'm an Earthling, yes, of course. I am an American citizen."

"By what miracle did the medicines appear in the drawer?" The professor asked.

"That's very simple. I wanted these pills to be there."

"What would happen if you would not want them to be?"

"Then this drawer would be empty, just like others when you searched them,"

Desmond stated.

"This is either witchcraft, which I don't believe in, or some unbelievable hoax. Are there hidden compartments installed there?"

Desmond was silent. After a long time, the Colonel ordained:

"It would be best to take him with us, bring the professor's cage. We have too many civilians outside."

One of the soldiers ran out, and in a moment, they brought a metal cage with a dense steel-strings mesh and handles to carry on the sides.

"This is about to fail," Desmond said. "I will disappear. I understand your intentions, professor, and I'm impressed with how much you saw through me, but it won't work. In my dimensions, this frame is just a dimensionless point. You won't keep me here."

"Where are you taking our doctor? He did nothing wrong ..." Gobbins sobbed.

"The new Houdini, very funny" -the professor chuckled, but somehow without conviction.

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