

## Touches of Humors

Between 460 B.C. and 1858 A.D., Before modern science, humans believed in a medical system based on the Greek physician Hippocrates' beliefs. His studies relayed that the human body comprised four humors or temperaments: Blood, Phlegm, Yellow Bile, and Bile. Each humor had a specific body part associated with it and was believed to control personality and health. Due to expansions in the understanding of medicine and science, people rendered these beliefs antiquated. Still, this story creates a myth around them, personifying them to explain the phenomenon of the seasons.

Long ago, a conference was held by the humans that made up the human bodies. It was Phlegm who had called their cousins all together to discuss a topic brought to her attention by their 2nd youngest cousin, Yellow Bile. Yellow had come to Phlegm in a fury over a very important topic to all the humors: human sadness. During this time, the Earth had been plunged far into the winter season, and the cold and dry had produced little smiles on anyone who lived there, but one Black Bile was responsible for the winter season. Yellow had come to Phlegm because she was the wisest humor, and Yellow demanded that they make the winter be over by allowing their other cousin, who was responsible for Spring, to come early. Phlegm responded to Yellow, saying that she hadn't noticed Winter's effect on the humans but that they had just passed through their season and were resting. But Phlegm looked out after heavy convincing from Yellow and saw that it was true what she had said. Humans walked the streets with red, stuffy noises, and their hands plunged into their pockets with their heads down. They never had time to greet anyone or wish anyone a good day. Phlegm was usually unmoved in every aspect of life, but looking down at the humans, they knew something must be done.

Phlegm sent out a boisterous announcement beckoning their cousins to meet at the great hall to discuss the issue of human sadness. Their cousin, Blood, received his notice from his mailbox in the jungle he lived in. It was hot and moist, and the letter dropped as Blood opened it. He read the contents quickly and rushed off to the great hall. He was the fastest and most lively of the cousins, and although the youngest, he was well in tune with his emotions and those of the people that the humor was responsible for and wanted to help in any way he could with what Phlegm and Yellow wanted to discuss.

Black Bile received her notice while she sat on her throne in the northern ice plains. She stared at the notice for a while, just thinking. She knew it was the season she was responsible for, and she had little knowledge of their feelings about the matter, and neither did she care. She scoffed at the notice and thought she was just doing her job. She then prepared a ship to depart to the great hall to fight her case.

Phlegm and Yellow sat evenly spaced apart at the round table, and they lay in the center of the great hall, waiting for their two cousins to join them—yellow thought of her home in the desert. The Great Hall was a nice temperature, but nothing beats the heat of the desert and the

feeling of the waves on her skin. The Great Hall had filled her corner with sand and Cacti to remind her of home, but she couldn't take her mind off the real thing.

Blood rushed in to interrupt any thoughts that Phlegm and Yellow were having. He rushed to his chair, nearly knocking it over, but caught it before it toppled and sat down. Yellow barked at Blood about being more careful. Blood blushed out of embarrassment. Yellow rolled her eyes and crossed her arms, returning to her daydreams.

Phlegm smiled at Blood, who sat across from them. Blood cheerfully smiled back and waved with both hands. Phlegm put a meager hand up in response. It would be a while until Black arrived. She wore a veil, a long black robe, and a small golden crown that was given to the one who was responsible for the current season. She walked around the entire length of the table before settling in her seat, and she did it all with an unimpressive speed. She apologized apathetically for her unpunctuality.

The meeting started with Phlegm reminding everyone of the topic to be discussed: the noticeable sadness in humans. They let Yellow start the discussion, and she began by demanding that Black relinquish the crown and title of czar of the season to Blood and allow for the warmer season and life to be ushered in to revive human happiness. The great hall was silent for a moment. It was a ridiculous idea through everyone at the table; Black was supposed to have control for six more weeks, and at no point in history had any czar shortened or elongated their season. Blood's hand was over his agape mouth, Phlegm looked pensive with her hand on her chin staring up, and Black began to weep silently.

Yellow cursed under her breath at her weeping cousin. She had not cried once while she made humans freeze in the cold. Why now? Blood came to Black's defense and argued that Black was doing her best. Phlegm responded with a remark that shocked all.

Phlegm agreed with Yellow. Phlegm had seen the human condition, which was drastic; they needed help. Phlegm had already created an explanation that could be introduced to humans to make them not question why spring was early that involved a groundhog. They stood up and asked the great table if they all agreed for Blood to become Czar early to revive the happiness in the human spirit. Phlegm raised their hand, and Yellow raised hers. Black did not look up at any of them and continued to let out bouts of breaths to show her sadness. Blood smiled at the two with raised hands and began to stand up.

Blood cleared his throat and, with a smile, asked for the attention of his cousins. He argued that Humans were more resilient than Phlegm, and Yellow took them for. Humans were a species of adaptation, and their beautiful binds could lead them out of Winter, Blood brought up. Blood strongly believed that the best help they could give the humans was not to. Blood bowed after his speech and sat down, kicking his legs and staring at Phlegm.

Phlegm's hand once again returned to underneath her chin, and she looked up. She thought for a while, a little longer than the first time, and then she let out a response that shocked them all.

Phlegm agreed with Blood now. Phlegm had seen the human condition and realized they were strong. They didn't need help. Winter should stay as it always has for hundreds of years

without change. She now smiled back at Blood, allowing her teeth to show even. She stood up and asked the great table if they agreed that humans should continue without any external force helping them. Phlegm raised their hand, and Blood raised his. Yellow scoffed and crossed her arms, turning away from Phlegm. She thought it was unfair that they could change their minds, so she kept her hands firmly within her pits. Phlegm and Blood looked over to Black, who had ceased her crying.

Black looked up at Phlegm and began to take off her veil. Her bony face cut through the air and was absent of all color. She put her hand to her face, finding it bone dry. She then stood up and called Blood's and Yellow's plans childish. Black acknowledged that humans may be strong and this Winter may be harsher than normal, but she stated winter would remain. Year after year, winter would take up the fourth of the year, so humans just had to get used to it, and this inspired Black's idea: extend the winter.

The rest of the table looked at Black in shock, but she continued to speak, explaining her reasoning. She argued sadness and hardship were just as human as Blood's hope and Yellow's concern, and they needed to feel this. Humans had to learn these qualities through hardships like long winters, so Black proposed she keep the crown for just a little past usual. If they experienced winter more, they would appreciate the other times more and be more prepared. Black bowed after his speech and sat down, staring at Phlegm, looking through their eyes. Phlegm's hand returned underneath her chin, and she looked up. She thought for a while, a little longer than her first time and the second time, and she let out a response that shocked them all.

Did phlegm agree with THEM ALL? Phlegm had seen the human condition; it was drastic and strong. It needed Winters that were shorter. It also needed Winters that were longer. But most of all, it needed Winter. It needed all of them. There needed to be a balance between the seasons, and that was the day all the humors got together and let the groundhog control the seasons.