

# RES MEDICA

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## The Drife Diaries

**Anonymous**

**Humour**

### Abstract

As readers will be aware, Teviot Row is alive with rumours that an ex-Edinburgh medical student is threatening to publish the diaries he kept during his undergraduate days in the "Swinging Sixties". His former colleagues, now distinguished medical men, are said to have offered large sums as "hush money" to "Doctor X", and several Edinburgh publishing houses have experienced burglaries and arson attacks, as well as telephone calls hinting at complications should the publisher ever need medical treatment. Undaunted, in what must be journalism's coup of the decade, Res Medica has secured exclusive rights to these manuscripts, and after consultation with our lawyers (who advise us that their authorship must remain a closely guarded secret) we now present the first extracts from The Drife Diaries.

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# THE DRIFE DIARIES



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#### **APRIL 20th**

Got up. Had breakfast. Corn flakes supply getting low again. Must get another gross of 16-oz packets, or learn to cook something different (think Sunday's luncheon-party fell a bit flat after the second course).

V. worried about autobiography - due to graduate next year and still hardly any sex and violence for Chapter One (high hopes re tomorrow night's party, though). Need more s & v if autobiog. is to be international blockbuster. Memo - also need to develop popular style. NBG to write like a medical textbook - just imagine if Shakespeare had been medical author:

#### **MERCY**

##### **Qualities**

- \* not strained
- \* droppeth as the gentle rain  
(ie. from heaven → place beneath)
- \* twice blessed:
  1. him that gives
  2. him that takes
- \* mightiest in the mightiest etc. etc.

Stuff like that won't wow John Menzies and the motorway catts, so TODAY'S RESOLUTION: try out diff. styles to find the best one.

**MAY 26th**

Got up. Had breakfast. Doing Gen. Medicine so plenty of time to read my Sherlock Holmes Omnibus. That reminds me: must practise a new style each day...

I was roused from my slumber at a later than usual hour, and as I opened my eyes I beheld a look of the gravest anxiety on the handsome visage of my old friend and flatmate, Tony.

"Come!" he cried, laying down the ladle and tin basin he had been beating together over my recumbent head. "The game is afoot!"

"Dear heaven!" cried I in a fervour of dreadful anticipation. "Has this accursed thing happened again?"

My friend spoke not a word, yet even as I searched for the neck-hole in my kaftan I could not help but notice his tight-set lips and stern countenance. When he spoke, however, his voice was quiet and perfectly controlled: "Nev has locked himself in the bog again."

The words struck a chill into my very soul. "With the water-pistol?" I stammered.

Tony nodded, grim-faced. "And my catapult". He did not miss the change in my expression. "Yes, my friend," he sighed. "I had thought it well hidden. Would that I had banished it from this flat altogether as you so beseeched me!"

Our little toilet overlooked the garden of Mrs Dalgleish, our worthy but officious next-door neighbour. She it was who, only the previous afternoon, had engaged our volatile flatmate in a discussion of the utmost animation over the question of the rota for scrubbing the common stair. And she it was who, in but a few minutes' time, would carry into the garden a basket of washing, bend over and - unless Tony and I could effect an urgent intervention - suffer unthinkable revenge at the hands of the temporarily deranged Neville.

Twice before he had lost control of himself in this fashion after being bested in a debate by our sturdy neighbour, and she had promised that should a third attack be visited upon her, we would be prosecuted with the full vigour of the law. Who then would come forward to say that Neville's violent nature was but the dark reflection of a brilliant mind? Who then would care that he was destined to become one of Edinburgh's leading hae-



matologists? Naught but disgrace beckoned, unless Tony and I could persuade him to abandon his vengeful purpose.

“Come out, Nev, I’m bursting!” I cried, as we beat with our fists upon the stout oak door.

“Naff off, guys,” came the response from within. “This time she’s going to get it right between the ischial tuberosities.”

Tony and I could clearly see that it was useless to reason with him

further while his mind remained inflamed with fury. Tony's classic profile darkened for a brief moment, and then became resolute once more. "Wait here", he snapped. "I'll wake the Hulk." In an instant he was gone, and there was no sound but a demonic chuckle from behind the closed door, and the twang of elastic as Neville essayed practice shots at Englebert, the Dalgleish tortoiseshell.

In a moment Tony had returned, and with him was the towering figure of our fourth flatmate, Douglas, known throughout Marchmont as the Hulk. In outdoor clothes he was an awesome sight, but now, dressed in his night attire of rugby shorts and anorak (for his was the coldest bedroom) he seemed to fill the tiny lobby with knees and shoulders.

"Kill, Hulk!" snapped Tony, pointing to the toilet door. In an instant the lock was shattered and we three fell upon the astonished Neville as he crouched with catapult poised at the open window. I caught a glimpse Mrs Dalgleish, inviolate and unaware of the titanic struggle being waged on her behalf, but at that moment the Hulk fell on top of me and I knew no more ...

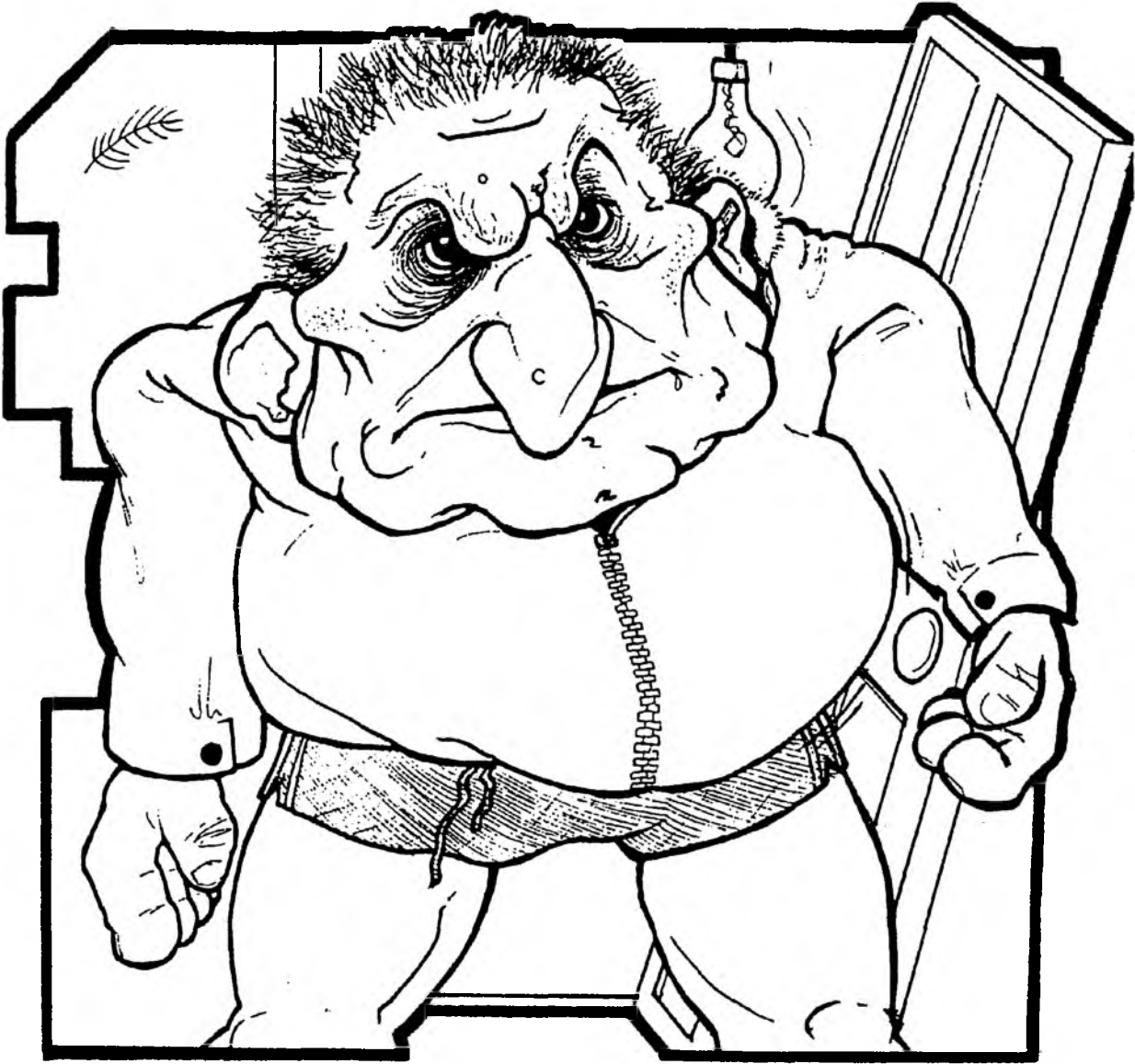
### **JUNE 15th**

Got up. Had breakfast. I'll say one thing for Neurology at the Northern - plenty of opportunities for study. Superb hospital library with several Jeeves books..

With a discreet cough, the ward maid shimmied into Sister's office bearing a salver with a much-needed pick-me-up. "Down the hatch!" I croaked, screwing up the pallid features and downing the steaming brew in a single gulp. For a moment nothing happened, and then all h. was l.l. I felt like a patient whose sigmoidoscopist had suddenly developed St. Vitus' Dance. "I say!" I yipped, gazing around me with a wild surmise and preparing to head for the wide open spaces.

"Steady, lad", said Sister, laying a restraining hand on my knee. "I know hospital coffee takes a bit of getting used to." She gazed at me over her half-glasses and under her bushy eye-brows, and slowly the internal maelstrom subsided. Dunking a thoughtful chocolate digestive, she continued, "I understand you're in a spot of trouble".

Under normal circs., of course, a gallant scion such as myself does not unburden himself to those of the distaff persuasion. Stiff upper l. and all that.



But there was something about Sister - the row of medal ribbons, perhaps, or the flash of Hunting Stewart when she crossed her legs - that invited confidence. "Yes, actually," I stammered. "Well, sort of."

"The election, I believe?" she said, still skewering me with the steely gaze like Rob Roy interrogating a captured Redcoat, It was pointless to resist.

"Mmm, ya", I replied, spraying crumbs of Rich Tea over her starched lap. "I think I've blown it".

“Fiddlesticks!” she snapped, in the voice that had caused sudden loss of tone in many a consultant sphincter. “Would William Wallace have said that? Or Robert the Bruce? Or John Reith?”

“Dash it,” I riposted with spirit. “None of them tried to become Moderator Ludorum Laetitiarumque”.

“Who dares wins,” Sister murmured calmly. “Who else is in for it?”

“Andrew Burton.” I hissed the name between clenched teeth. The ghastly Burton had been my arch-enemy ever since we shared a body in the Dissecting Room. When I tell you that this fiend in human form had nipped up there during a lecture, replumbed the coeliac trunk, and waited sniggering behind his Scotsman crossword while I traced the superior pancreaticoduodenal artery into the gall bladder, I think you will have pretty clear idea of the kind of villain I was up against.”

“Andrew Burton?” said Sister, frowning. “I seem to remember the name.”

“Tall fellow,” I prompted. “Very smooth”.

“Ah yes,” she nodded. “My nurses call him Andrex. Well now, we can’t have a chap like that becoming Moderator Ludorum Laetitiarumque. You’ll have to stop him, laddie!” She prodded me in the solar plexus with a ball-point pen inscribed ‘A present frae Kyleakin’.

“But Sister,” I gulped feebly. “He’s like a cross between Al Capone and Terry Wogan. There’s simply no stopping him.”

“Snap out of it, laddie!” Her tone was chilled steel. “Where’s your backbone? Are you a man or a mouse?” I opened my mouth to protest that this was no time for a Basic Sciences viva, but something in her eye stopped me. I stood up and brushed the crumbs from my cagoul. My jaw was firm. My eye almost certainly glinted. This woman’s words had turned me from a jellyfish into a superbly engineered fighting machine.

“Golly, Sister”, I rapped, “How can I ever thank you?”

She looked up at me and her bosom heaved under the navy-blue serge. “Kiss me, you fool,” she breathed.

**(to be continued in the next issue of Res Medica)**