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## The Drife Diaries

Anonymous

### 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 second instalment of the first extracts from The Drife Diaries.

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HUMOUR

# THE DRIFE DIARIES



*Artwork by Donald Davidson*

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**JUNE 16th**

Got up. Had breakfast. Nev. has graciously lent me his Damon Runyon book - says it was made into a very successful musical, and I should try the style. (Nev reckons if my autobiog is blockbuster he'll be famous: little does he know I intend to change all names, sexes, towns of origin and perversions to protect my royalties.) Anyway here goes ..

This fine evening I am sitting with a group of prominent citizens on the steps of the Royal Infirmary, speaking of this and that and watching the broads with the bedpans going about their business, when all of a sudden I notice four guys approaching me on the sidewalk. They are four very well known characters up and down Lauriston Place, and one is a very tall and very obnoxious guy known to one and all as Andrex. Andrex is giving me a cold stare which suggests strongly that he is sorer than a prolapsed haemorrhoid at me for running against him for the Moderatorship, and the three fellow citizens with him are wearing expressions of such sorrowful reproachfulness that I begin to feel distinctly nervous. Andrex raises his voice above the sound of knuckle-cracking and tries the diplomatic approach:

"Listen, frog-face," he says, "Ever since I am a tiny baby on my mummy's knee I cherish the ambition that some day I will be Moderator Ludorum Laetitiarumque, and I do not care for some greasy schmo to try and blow it away. Furthermore my companions here are so touched by my aspiration that they are investing a substantial number of potatoes on the outcome of the impending election."



*They are four very well known characters ...*

I think it disrespectful to reply from a sitting position but it is no easy matter to rise when I have Andrex's pal Broncho standing on my left hand and Gertrude the Gorilla standing on my right hand.

"Believe me", say I. "I have no wish to make myself disagreeable to peaceloving citizens such as yourself but my white-haired mother's heart is set on seeing her flesh and blood installed as Moderator and being as I am an only child what else can I do?"

I can see that Gertrude the Gorilla is touched by my filial devotion for he blinks his one good eye and eases the pressure on my right mitt. The fourth member of the deputation, Slit-mouth Charlie, ceases swishing the air in a meaningful fashion with his rolled-up *Evening News* and turns to look at Andrex.

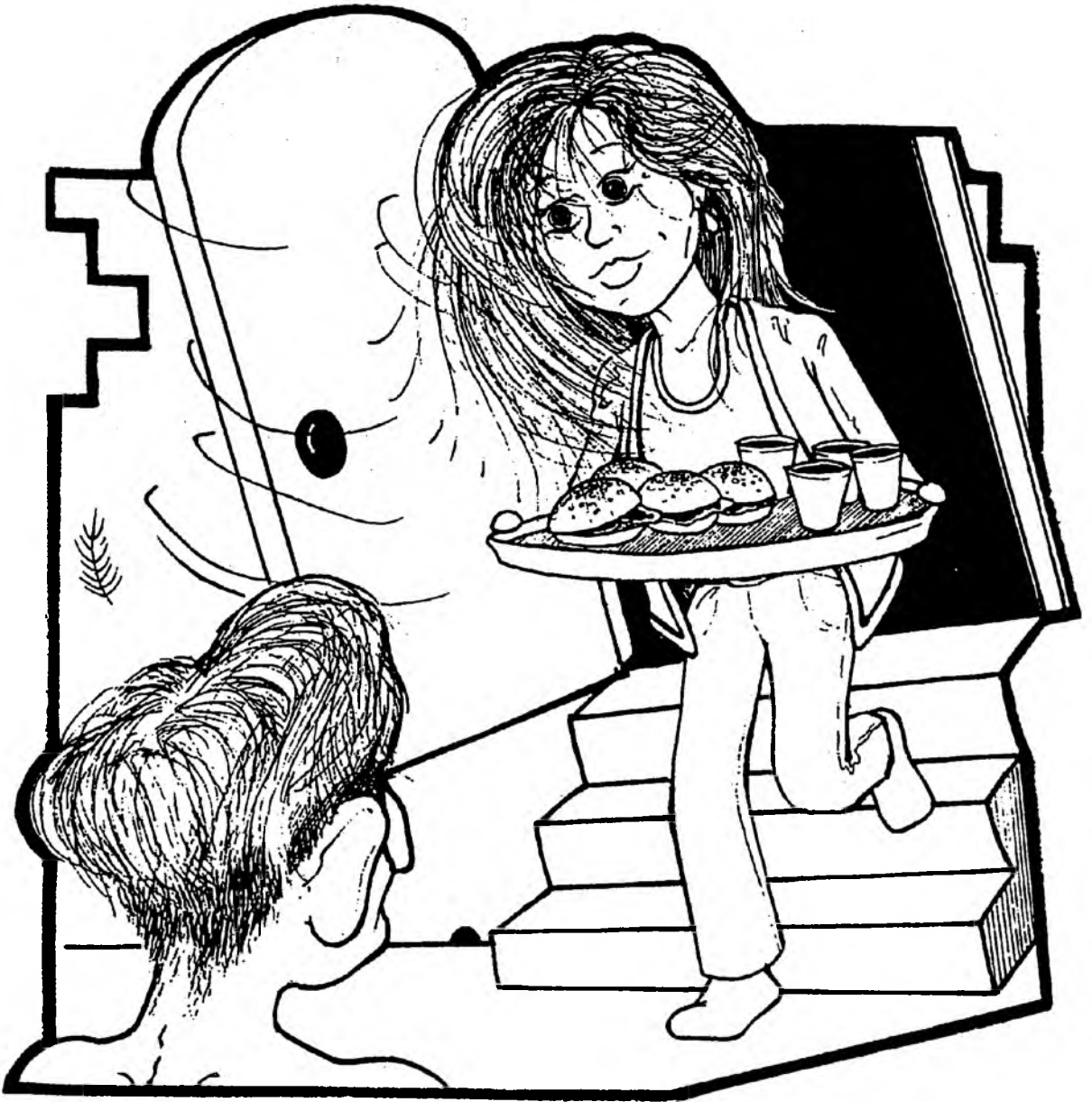
Andrex snaps his fingers and his henchmen back off. "In that case," says he, "I have a proposition. I suggest that we and our advisers meet in equal numbers to discuss our differences. Shall we say Thirlestane and Spottiswoode at midnight?"

Well, five minutes of midnight sees Nev, Tony and me dragging the unwilling Hulk towards the corner of Thirlestane and Spottiswoode. "I am missing my beddy-byes", wails the Hulk. "I am going without my hot chocolate." Rarely am I seeing the Hulk so seriously displeased. "My hotty-bottle will have cooled down by now. Teddy is missing me." Nev and Tony and me smile satisfied smiles at the sound of Hulk working himself into a homicidal frenzy. In the distance we can see strung out across Spottiswoode a line of shadows.

"Two bob says Hulk will not put 'em all in A & E without us doing nothin' but wind him up", whispers Nev.

"You made me miss my bedtime story!" roars Hulk, beating his chest. You see, all week we were putting it about that Hulk is on his elective in Borneo so we figure we have the advantage of surprise. I am therefore more than a little astonished that the shadows do not disappear as soon as Hulk lets off his first yell, and I begin to suspect that Andrex has invited many of his old cronies to join the congregation. Up ahead I hear a high-pitched laugh. "You bums are surrounded!" he shrieks. "This evening my colleagues and I are spreading the word around the neighbourhood that the Marchmont Sharks are planning a surprise attack. The Warrender Jets are somewhat displeased and offer to escort us safely home. Renounce your candidacy, Wimp, or my allies will turn you into an oatmeal porridge."

Behind us we hear the creaking of the leather jackets of a dozen Jimmies. It dawns on me that the Hulk is very silent and when I look at him I see he is now asleep standing up. When this happens nothing west of Krakatoa wakens him, and accordingly I come over somewhat thoughtfully and watch my life floating in front of me. All of a sudden I hear a doll's voice from a nearby doorway. "In here!" says the voice, and figuring and undignified retreat is preferable to three months in traction, we duck up the close, prop the somnolent Hulk against the door, and let the Jets bruise their toecaps kicking the other side.



*Her tiny delicate hands trembled ...*

**JUNE 17th**

Got up. Tried to work out what we were all doing asleep in a close. Had breakfast brought down the stairs by the most beautiful girl I've ever seen. This must be love. I may have said that before (*Editor's note: See Jan 5th, Feb 26th, March 4th and 19th, April 28th, etc etc*) but this time it's for real. It's like something out of Mills and Boon.

Her tiny delicate hands trembled as she shyly held out the bacon butty, and for a moment, as I took it from her, our fingertips touched. In that instant a thrill like an electric charge ran through me, and I shivered involuntarily. Her cherry-red lips parted and her clear brow furrowed in a worried little frown. "Are you cold?" she whispered solicitously.

"It's nothing," I laughed, my twinkling blue eyes making fun of her concern.

"It's just that .. I mean, I couldn't help noticing that your friend has taken your cloths," she said, flushing prettily as she averted her gaze.

"Hulk likes to keep warm," I explained, rolling modestly over onto my flat, well-muscled tummy as I tried to unwrap my trousers from around his neck. He had put all three pairs of Y-fronts over his head, and though I desperately wanted to choose her favourite colour I decided it would be quickest to don the outermost pair".

"Can I turn around now?" she whispered tremulously, her eyes screwed up tight and her heart beating wildly in her bosom.

"Just a moment", I answered, deftly flicking my old Cumnockian tie into place. "There!"

She turned and gasped involuntarily as her eyes fell on my broad shoulders, slim hips and long athletic limbs. The little laughter lines crinkled around my piercing blue eyes as I grinned boyishly but tenderly at her. Trembling, she lifted a hand to brush a speck of dust from my lapel.

"Aren't your friends cold?" she asked. "They have gone a funny colour".

"I'll give them back their shirts," I replied and masterfully I ripped the flimsy material from the Hulk's heaving chest. "By the way", I added, "You haven't told me your name".

"It's Edwina", she replied, and as a shaft of sun from the fanlight caught her flame-red hair I thought for the thousandth time how beautiful she was.

"Mine's .."

"I know", she replied. "I've seen your picture on the election posters."

"Then .." I breathed, a wild hope rising in my bosom. "Does this mean .. does this mean I can count on your vote?"

"Oh!" her voice suddenly broke into a wild sob. "O would that it did!" I stared at her, aghast and uncomprehending. "You see," she continued. "I am but a poor Psych and Soc student. Yes, and proud of it too!" Her little jaw lifted and her eyes flashed with spirit. "But a grand gentleman like you would never be seen with

the likes of me. We are two worlds which can never meet. To see each other again would only cause untold pain and suffering, so .. farewell, my love!"

Choking back a sob, she turned and fled like a faerie spirit up the stairs. Ere I could follow, a door slammed above me, and a great weight pressed upon my heart. I knew I could never win her back unless some miracle happened. Wearily I turned back to my recumbent colleagues, squeezed their ear-lobes, rubbed their sternums and waited until they dressed - or in the Hulk's case, undressed. What had Edinburgh to offer me now? The crown of Moderator Ludorum Laetitiarumque - even if I had won it - seems hollow, and as we stumbled into the sunshine of Spottiswoode Road, I realised that without love, life's glittering prizes are but tinsel.

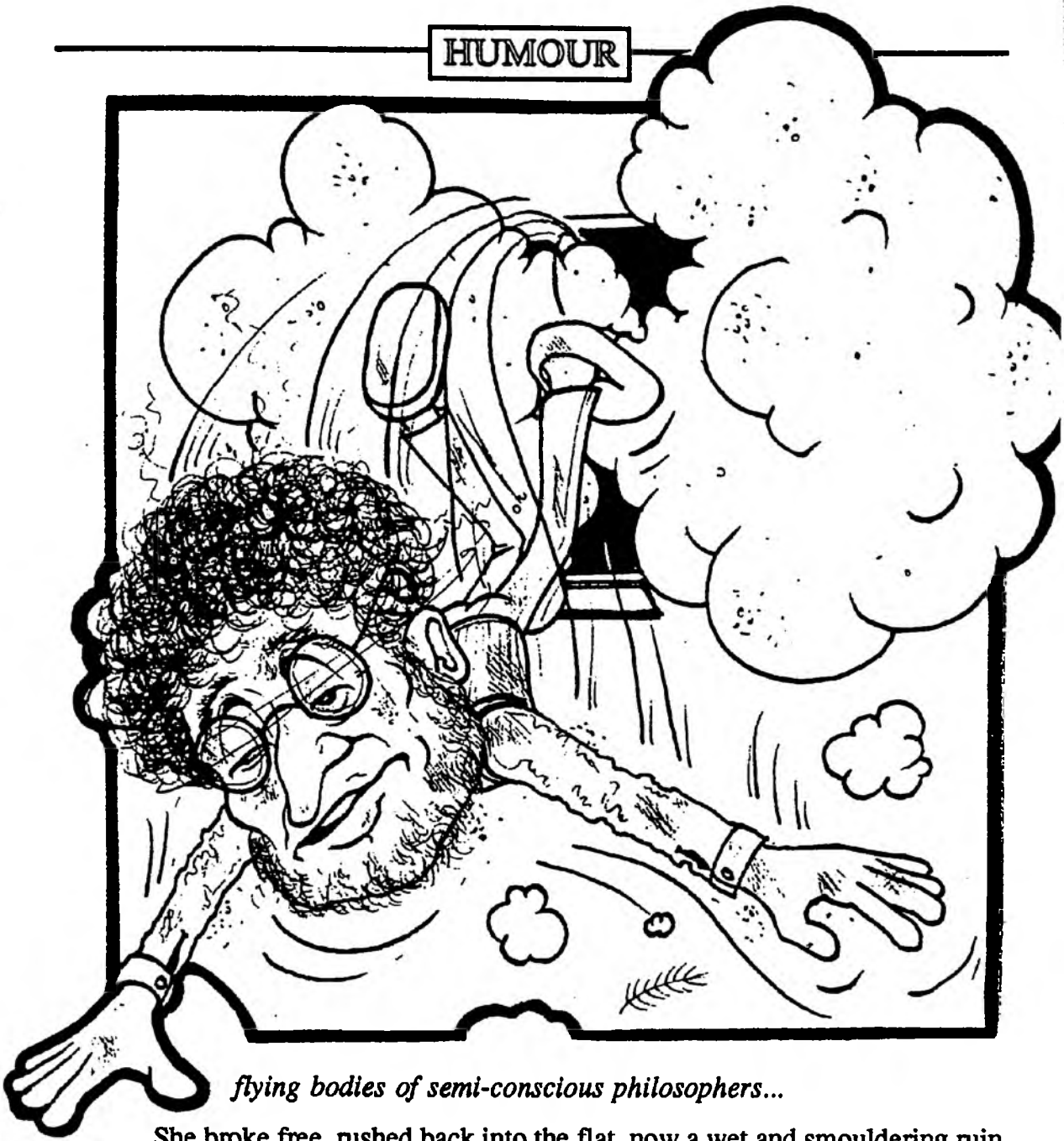
At the corner of the street, I turned for one last glimpse of a happiness that had nearly been mine, but when I did so my heart leapt into my mouth in horror. Smoke! Smoke was drifting in a thin stream from the doorway we had so recently left! My mind was in a whirl as we rushed breathlessly back along the street. Had the poor darling child been so distraught that she had allowed her own bacon butty to burst into flames under the grill? She was a girl of too much spirit to resort to deliberate self-immolation, however deep her despair. We reached the doorway and heedless of our own safety rushed into the smoke-filled close and up the stairs to a door with a dozen hand-written cards stuck to it. My heart went out to the lovely girl forced to live in such squalor, probably with students of politics, philosophy or even, though I shuddered inwardly at the very thought, Eng Lit. Great clouds of smoke billowed under the door and through the letterbox but in a trice the Hulk had put his shoulder to the door and charged into the flames beyond. I tried to follow but I was beaten back by the flying bodies of semi-conscious philosophers as Hulk unceremoniously emptied the flats of its occupants. I waited in an agony of suspense for what seemed like hours and then my heart leapt in my bosom as I saw, dimly through the smoke, the Hulk with Edwina's limp form under his arms. He had somehow found a tap and was dousing the burning walls. "Catch!" he yelled and a deftly threw the elfin child into my outstretched arms. She lay there motionless.

"Is she .. is she ..?" gasped Nev and Tony.

"Are you .. are you ..?" I choked, full of grimmest foreboding.

Edwina stirred and her eyelids fluttered open. "Am I .. am I ..?" she breathed faintly, then her little body began to struggle. "Put me down," she cried. "I must go back to him!"





*flying bodies of semi-conscious philosophers...*

She broke free, rushed back into the flat, now a wet and smouldering ruin, and threw her arms around Hulk's waist. His snooty anorak was torn, and she reached up shyly to touched the singed hair on his manly chest. "My hero!" she cried, and I could see from the way that she and the Hulk gazed into each other's eyes that there was no place for me now in her life. I turned away, my eyes moist with unshed tears.

"Don't take it hard, man," said Tony, who had experience in these matters. "She's got fat legs."

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