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Book of the Quarter

FRANÇOIS RABELAIS: GARGANTUA AND PANTAGRUEL

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THE PHYSICIAN WHO MADE MEN LAUGH AND THINK

Good friend who come to read this book,
Strip yourself first of affection;
Do not assume a pained, shocked look,
For it contains no foul infection;
Yet teaches you no great perfection;
But lessons in the mirthful art,
The only subject for my heart.
When I see grief consume and rot
You, mirth's my theme and tears are not,
For laughter is man's proper lot.

Such was François Rabelais's advice to the readers of *The Most Fearsome Life of the Great Gargantua, Father of Pantagruel*, the first of the five books collected in this Penguin Classic which constitute the Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel, the fantastical giants of Rabelais' imagination.

Rabelaisian is an adjective which trips as lightly off the tongue as Shakespearean or Dickensian but while most of us have, at least, dabbled in the writings of Shakespeare and Dickens fewer can claim to have read Rabelais. Rabelaisian is an adjective which conjures up images of bawdy houses, fornication, dissolution and conspicuous consumption of blood-red wine and yet, if the reader will forgive the metaphor, Rabelais is an untapped barrel.

Our liberal, if uninformed, use of his name may have its roots in an early (1653) Scottish translation of his works by Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, a scholar of Aberdeen University, whose facility with Renaissance French was less than perfect. He knew enough to recognise that references to the acts of generation and excretion as well as bibulousness were commonplace in Rabelais's text; when baffled by the language he simply elaborated along these lines in a way which would have delighted the yet unborn Sigmund Freud. Perhaps, as a consequence, Rabelais has been considered to be a little risqué ever since. Perhaps it was simply because Calvin also condemned him as obscene. This status seems out of keeping with his professional standing as a priest and as a physician and his reputation, from the 16th century until this day, as one of the most distinguished humanist scholars of his era.

This review introduces the life of Rabelais and the contents of his five books to those who have not yet had the great good fortune to read them. It concludes by indicating at least some of the many good reasons why physicians should not only be aquainted with, but should also read these works.

RABELAIS'S LIFE

François Rabelais was born circa 1492 at the town of Chinon in the Touraine region of the Loire valley which is frequently referred to in the Gargantuan and Pantagruelian books. His father was a well-to-do lawyer and landowner; one of his disputes with a neighbouring landowner about fishing rights on the Loire

(reminiscent of similar Scottish disputes on the River Tweed) set the scene and many of the characters for the cake-pedlars' war described in the first book of the Great Gargantua. Visitors to the Loire valley today can follow the course of this war through the villages and countryside which still have many 16th century characteristics.

His early education was at the Benedictine monastery of Seuilly and he subsequently became a Franciscan novice at La Baumette. Here he studied theology and by 1520 he was certainly a Franciscan friar. He seems to have been an unconventional Franciscan, pursuing Hellenic studies when Greek (the key to the New Testament) was anathema to the Church of the time. In due course, his 'irreligious' Greek texts were confiscated, but by then Rabelais had friends in high places—King Francis I's secretary was also a Greek scholar. Rabelais obtained a concession from the Pope to move to a Benedictine monastery where his scholarly activities could continue.

It is presumed that Rabelais travelled widely through the French Universities in the 1520s and may even have studied medicine at Paris. He certainly encountered the Parisian scholastic teaching which conflicted with the humanist approach of Erasmus of whom Rabelais can be considered a disciple. The scholastic/humanist clash is painted vividly in Rabelais' first two books and was to cause him some little difficulty with the Sorbonne.

He certainly studied medicine somewhere, for in 1530 his name was entered on the student register in the medical school of Montpellier where, on payment of one gold ecu he graduated Bachelor of Medicine three months later. At about this time he is known to have translated and published the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates and Galen's *Ars Medica*. He lectured at Montpellier on medicine and probably also performed public dissections for his writings suggest an intimate knowledge of human anatomy. In 1532 he was created physician to the Hôtel-Dieu at Lyon where he controlled 200 beds.

Also in 1532, a book of folk tales *Les grandes et inestimable Croniques du Grand Enorme Géant Gargantua* was published. The tales, in line with the old myths of Merlin and Arthur carried down in Breton folklore, were a great success. Rabelais observed that more copies of it were sold in two months than of Bibles in nine years, which is not so remarkable since the Church was against the free reading of the Bible. Rabelais has not been credited with writing the *Croniques* but in the same year he wrote *The Terrible Deeds and Acts of Prowess of Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes* another story of giants, which can be seen as a sequel, Pantagruel being the son of Gargantua. He may have had a keen eye for the market-place. In 1534 he was to publish his own version of Gargantua which, though written and published after Pantagruel, became known as the first book of the five books in the series which he eventually wrote.

In 1533, *Pantagruel* was condemned by the Sorbonne, the butt of much of its humour, as obscene. By then Rabelais was physician to Jean du Bellay, Bishop of Paris, who suffered from sciatica, and accompanied him to Rome to advise the Pope on Henry VIII of England's suit for divorce. By the time he returned from Rome, Rabelais had toned down the antischolasticism of *Pantagruel* but *Gargantua*, published in 1534, so incensed the theologians that Rabelais was forced to go into hiding. A second stay in Rome with the now Cardinal du Bellay put things to rights and in 1537 Rabelais returned to Montpellier to gain his doctorate in Medicine.

His ecclesiastical status was also changed by Papal absolution to allow him to practise medicine as a secular priest rather than as a Benedictine monk. Soon, he was attached, through du Bellay's influence, to the Royal Court of Francis the First, travelling widely in Europe as physician to influential members of the Court.

In 1546 he published his third book, free of theological satire, largely comprising dissertations on the then topical subject of the nature of women; again he was condemned by the Sorbonne. He journeyed once more to Rome with du Bellay in 1547, and on his return the denunciations of his work continued with Calvin joining the ranks of those who condemned him.

Rabelais persevered and in 1549 under the patronage of Henry II, son of Francis I, who had recently adopted an anti-papal policy, he published his fourth book which included the famous visit to Papimania and sardonic praise of the famous papal law-books, the Decretals. Unfortunately, by the time of publication, the Pope and Henry II were good friends and Rabelais's subsequent activities are obscure and not recorded. He succeeded in maintaining a low profile and survived long enough for his death from natural causes to have been documented in Paris in 1553. A fifth book, concluding the voyages entertained in Book 4, may have been written in whole or part by Rabelais and was published posthumously in 1564.

RABELAIS'S FIVE BOOKS

The first book. The Most Fearsome Life of the Great Gargantua, Father of Pantaruel

In the prologue Rabelais asks the question:

> Did you ever see a dog—which as Plato says in the second book of his Republic, is the most philosophical creature in the world—devour a marrow bone? ... follow the dog's example, and be wise in smelling out, sampling and relishing these fine and most juicy books ... you must break the bone and lick the substantial marrow—that is to say, the meaning .... For here you will find an individual savour and abstruse teaching which will initiate you into certain very high sacraments and dread mysteries, concerning not only our religion, but also our public and private life.

The 'individual savour' starts early with a learned account of how Gargantua's birth after 11 months of pregnancy could be both possible and legitimate. His birth passage betrays Rabelais's anatomising and his first uttered words were truly Rabelaisian:

> The child entered the hollow vein and climbing through the diaphragm to a point above the shoulders where this vein divides in two, he took the left fork and came out by the left ear ... as soon as he was born, he cried out, not like other children: 'Mies, Mies!' but 'Drink! Drink! Drink!'—so loud that he was heard through all the lands of Booze and Bibulous.

The child was named Gargantua, his father having exclaimed:

> 'Que grand tu as'—what a big one you've got!—(the gullet being understood)—after the example of the ancient Hebrew custom—since that had been the first word pronounced by his father at his birth.

Subsequent chapters detail Gargantua's diet (several thousand cows supplied his milk), his dress and livery (the latter allowing a lively discourse on the significance of colours), intelligence (discovered by his invention of an 'arse-wipe') and his early pedagogic education in Latin by the sophists (reminiscent of my earlier years at medical school) which make you 'as wise as any man baked in an oven'.

Gargantua was taken off to Paris, picking up the bells of Notre Dame to hang round his horse's neck on the way, to continue his education where:

> the Parisians are such simpletons, such gapers, and such feckless idiots that a buffoon, a pedlar of indulgences, a mule with bells on its collar, or a fiddler at a crossroads will draw a bigger crowd than a preacher of the Gospel.

Gargantua's subsequent stultifying education under the sophists ('early to rise brings little wealth, but early drinking's good for the health') is aborted by a learned physician's 'administration of black hellebore, to cure his brain of its corrupt and perverse habits'. Subsequent education, both intellectual and physical, is multidisciplinary, 'exercising their bodies as they had previously exercised their minds'. Nutrition is attended to:

> Gargantua's dinner was sober and frugal, for he only ate enough to stay the gnawings of his stomach. But his supper was copious and large, for he then took all that he needed to stay and nourish himself. This is the proper regimen prescribed by the act of good, sound medicine, although a rabble of foolish physicians, worn out by the wranglings of the Sophists, advise to the contrary.

Meanwhile, the pedlars' war breaks out back home as:

> the cake-bakers heap insults on the shepherds calling them babblers, snaggleteeth, crazy carrot-heads, scabs, shit-a-beds, boors, sly cheats, lazy louts ...

and King Picrochole makes an unexpected attack on Grandgousier's (Gargantua's father's) shepherds. He also attacks the Abbey and would have destroyed the vineyard but for the intervention of Friar John of the Hashes whose timely admonition to his shaking, chanting fellow monks,

> That's shitten well sung, but for God's sake why don't you sing
> Baskets farewell, the harvest's done?

is followed by a dissection in life of the malevolents and the eventual salvation of the fruit.

Gargantua is summoned home to assist in the mounting affray as Picrochole's dreams of conquest, fuelled by the Duke of Chuckout, Earl Swashbuckler and Captain Dungby, spread to include the rest of the world. The giant's intervention proves timely; he combs cannonballs out of his hair, inadvertently eats 6 pilgrims in a salad (affording them an opportunity to report on his dentition) and, in alliance with Friar John ('a fine good Christian, everyone desires his company'), who prescribes an early morning drink from his breviary (a prayer bottle!),

> the prescription's good. A hundred devils leap on my body if there aren't more old drunkards than old physicians

the battle is joined and won. Friar John disposes of one opponent by,

> cutting his skull over the temple bone and taking off two parietal bones and the sagittal suture, together with a great part of the frontal bone; and in doing this he cut through the two membranes and made a deep opening in the posterior lobes of the brain.

thus confirming Rabelais' anatomical skills. The battle won, Grandgousier and Gargantua are magnanimous in victory, treating their opponents humanely,

> one good turn freely done to an intelligent man grows continuously by his generous thoughts and remembrances.

Friar John is rewarded by the construction of the Abbey of Theleme, which, by his own prescription, should have no walls, no clocks and should be populated by graceful people of both sexes who are 'free, well bred and easy in honest company'. Their life is to be regulated 'not by laws, statutes or rules but according to their free will and pleasure', and an elaborate account of the architecture and necessary entertainments is given. The motto of the Abbey is to be 'Fait ce que voudras (do what you will)'. A prophetic riddle unearthed in the Abbey is interpreted by Gargantua as 'the continuance and steadfastness of Divine Truth'. Friar John sees only a game of tennis wrapped up in strange language, perhaps a concluding reference to Rabelais's game of words and ideas.

Book two. Pantagruel, King of the Dipsodes given in his true character together with his terrible deeds and acts of prowess

Like his father Gargantua, Pantagruel's nativity and childhood proved quite extraordinary, but in due course he visited the Universities of France. At Montpellier,

> he though of setting himself to the study of medicine but decided that the profession was far too wearying, besides being melancholy, and that the physicians smelt of the suppositories, like old devils.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, meeting a Parisian student 'who murdered the French Language' as he,

> transfretated the Sequane at the dilucule and crepuscule; deambulated through the compites and quadrives of the urb; despumatd the Latin verbocination and, as verisimile amorabunds, captated the benevolence of the omnijugal, omniform and omnigenous feminine sex.

Pantagruel journeys to Paris where he lists the catalogue of the famous library of St Victor—6 pages of volume titles including, for example,

> Decretum universitatis Parisiensis super gorgiasitate muliercularum ad placitum (Decree of the University of Paris on the Gorgiosity of pretty women, for pleasure).
> The apparition of St Geltrude to a Nun of Poissy in labour.
> Decrotatorum Scholarium (On the foulness of Scholars).
> Antipericatametanaparbeugedamphicribrationes merdicantium (The Greek prepositions discussed by the Turdicants).

Soon after, he receives a letter from his father Gargantua, such as any university student might expect, extolling the virtues, possibilities and extent of the available new education and concluding with a conventional blessing. Pantagruel takes his father's message to heart and soon 'contended against all the professors, students in arts and turned them all upside down'. His reputation leads to his being called in to judge a case which has baffled the greatest legal brains, even the Great Council of France. Pantagruel hears the double dutch evidence of Lord Kissmyarse, the plaintiff, followed by the gobbledygook of Lord Suckfizzle the defendant and, to the astonishment of all, pronounces equally etymologically absurd, but apparently acceptable, passes sentences on both.

By now Panurge, having introduced himself in a dozen languages (some fictitious) is installed as Pantagruel's bosom companion.

> He was a very proper looking fellow, but for the fact that he was a bit of a lecher and naturally subject to a malady that was called at that time 'the lack of money, pain incomparable'. However, he had sixty-three ways of finding it at a pinch, the commonest and most honest of which was by cunningly perpetrated larceny.

He entrances the company with tales of his escape from the Turks, his lawsuits, and particularly of how he fell in love with a great Parisian lady and how, when spurned, he revenged himself on her. Panurge it is who debates with the great English Scholar Thaumaste by means of signs and wins the exchange.

> Suddenly Panurge lifted his right hand in the air, and placed a thumb inside his right nostril, holding his four fingers stretched out and arranged in their natural order, parallel to the tip of his nose, shutting his left eye entirely and winking with the right, at the same time deeply depressing his eyebrows and lids.

Like his father before him Pantagruel is summoned, with his entourage, including Panurge, to counter an invasion by the Dipsodes into the land of the Amaurots and travels to the port of Utopia. Fantastical engagements ensue including the occasion when Panurge gave Pantagruel

> some devilish drug to eat, composed of lithontripon, nephro-catharticon, quince jellied with cantharides and other kinds of diuretics,

precipitating a huge voiding which destroys a camp of sleeping combatants and floods the country for thirty miles around.

The combat concluded, Pantagruel falls ill, initially with 'the hot-piss', relief of which was the origin of all the hot baths of France. A more serious complaint, of constipation, is relieved by swallowing seventeen great spring-loaded copper balls each containing a man armed with a pick or a shovel. After completing their labours each one returns into his ball and is regurgitated. The second book concludes with an anticipation of the Third where Panurge will seek a wife and an admonition to all to beware the clerics,

> Fly from these men, abhor them and hate them as much as I do, and I swear to you that you will find yourself the better for it. If you want to be good Pantagruellists, moreover—that is to say to live in peace, joy and health, always making good cheer—never trust men who peer from under a cowl.

The third book. The Heroic Deeds and Sayings of the Good Pantagruel

The third book opens with several chapters detailing Panurge's praise of debtors and borrowers including a physiological analogy where:

> the lungs never cease to refresh the heart with their lappets and bellows and in return for this service, the heart gives them of its best blood through the pulmonary artery.

Panurge's enthusiasm for debt is stilled by Pantagruel and he subsequently sets his heart on marriage, concerned only at the prospect of being cuckolded. Advice is sought for Panurge from the Virgilian lotteries, and from dreams;

> Heraclitus said that dreams did not reveal anything to us nor conceal anything from us, but that they gave us a sign and an indication of things to come, fortunate or unfortunate for ourselves or others.

Unfortunately, Panurge's dream does not resolve his cuckolding concerns and a further series of consultations follow; with the Sibyl of Panzoust, Goatsnose the dumb man, Herr Trippa, specialist in geomancy, cheiromancy and every other conceivable kind of—mancy, with Friar John and finally with a meeting of a theologian, a doctor, a lawyer and a philosopher. Panurge doubts the wisdom of the final meeting;

> We put our souls into the keeping of theologians, who are for the most part heretics; our bodies into that of physicians, who all loathe medicaments and never take medicine; and our goods into that of lawyers, who never go to law with one another.

Rondibilis the Physician can only advise him on the five means of restraining carnal concupiscence, namely, by wine taken immoderately; by certain drugs and plants which render a man frigid; by assiduous toil; by fervent study and finally by the venereal act which Panurge proclaims to be the way for him. Rondibilis declares cuckolding to be one of the natural attributes of marriage and declaims on the subject of women:

> in constructing woman, Nature seems to me—to speak of her with all honour and reverence—to have lapsed badly from the intelligence she showed in the creation of all other things.

Panurge's search for a solution continues while Pantagruel attends the trial of Judge Bridlegoose who decides cases by the fall of the dice. Bridlegoose elaborates on his theory of justice, justifies prevarication in matters of law and cites the common proverb that runs,

> He's a lucky doctor who's called in at the end of the illness. The illness, of course, had reached its crisis and was beginning to abate naturally without any intercession by the doctor.

In the same way his litigants were drifting unaided towards an end of their disputes. This sixteenth century strategy seems familiar in matters legal today.

Book four and book five

The last two books decribe the epic voyage by sea in search of the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, and the consequences of consulting it. Along the way the party visits numerous imaginary islands populated by imaginary people whose very existence and activities lift Rabelais to the heights of satirical comedy. Book four, both in its dedication to the Cardinal de Chatillon and in its Prologue is much concerned with health. Rabelais' comment on his Pantagrueline fictions is:

> that my sole aim and purpose in writing them down was to give such little relief as I could to the sick and unhappy.

He refers to Hippocrates, Plato and Averroes who:

> have given particular instructions to physicians as to the language, topics, argument and conversation suitable to the patients to whose bedsides they have been called. Everything that is said must aim at one effect, must be directed to one end: to cheer the patient up, though without imperilling his soul, and in no way to depress him... The question over which we sweat, dispute and rack our brains, is not whether the physician's visage depresses the patient, if he is frowning, sour, morose, severe, ill-humoured, discontented, cross and glum; nor whether he cheers the patient if his expression is joyful, serene, gracious, frank and pleasant. There is no doubt on that score. The real question is whether the patient's depression or cheerfulness arises from his apprehension on reading these signs in his physician's face and from his consequent deductions of the probable course and cause of his disease; or whether it is caused by the transmission of serene or gloomy, aerial or terrestrial, joyous or melancholy spirits from the doctor to the person of the sick man.

Galen too merits quotation:

> For as he says, lib.v, De sanit. tuenda, a physician who is neglectful of his own health will not be easily credited with care for the health of others ... without health life is not life,—is not worth living, life is only the image of death ... The wise men of old have called moderation golden, that is to say precious, universally praiseworthy, and pleasing in all places.

Rabelais concludes,

> It is on moderation, my gouty friends, that I base my hopes. I firmly believe that if it pleases the good God, you will get your health, seeing that health is all you ask for at present.

and with that admonition the voyage commences.

There follows a full account of extraordinary encounters of the travellers with attendant satirical overtones. On the Island of Compliments they are overwhelmed with kindnesses; in the land of Clerkship they meet the Bum-bailiffs whose very lives depend on being beaten regularly and on the Isles of Vacuum and Void they witness the strange death of Slitnose, the Windmill-swallower. They survive a storm at sea, slay a monstrous spouting whale and land on Savage Island to join battle with the Chitterlings before proceeding to Windy Island where the inhabitants drink and eat nothing but wind. On the island of Papimania, they are envied by Greatclod the Bishop for having seen the One and Only whom the Papimaniacs worship through his heaven-sent Decretals (books of Papal pronouncements). Greatclod explains, how, by virtue of the Decretals, gold is subtly drawn out of France into Rome. On leaving Papimania by sea they come upon a host of frozen words which can be heard on thawing and shortly afterwards visit and share the philosophy of Messer Gaster, the first Master of Arts in the World, who only speaks by signs which all the world obeys. In Book Five, the ports of call continue until the Oracle of the Bottle is approached in his Temple by an Underground Way and the Sacred Bottle pronounces the one oracular word 'Trink' or, drink, as it is interpreted by the adventurers, who set out for home well pleased.

WHY SHOULD A PHYSICIAN READ RABELAIS?

Four hundred and fifty years on there is much in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* for the physician to learn about medicine and still more about life. Rabelais's penetrating accounts about matters medical, legal, clerical and, particularly, educational have much to teach us about our modern predicaments in these fields. In an age when a liberal education, far less an education in philosophy, is unlikely to precede engagement in medical school and subsequent medical practice, it is salutory to recognise that Rabelais came to medicine late in life, having spent some twenty years educating himself in the guise of a monk. Throughout the book reference to the ancients abound; whether he is dealing in matters historical, philosophical, biological, botanical, architectural, ornithological, nautical, legal or religious, the extent of his experience and wisdom is plain for all to see. His comments on the practice of medicine are scarce but reflect that experience and wisdom; few would quibble with his emphasis on the qualities of the physician as therapist and on laughter as one of the best medicines. Health educationists would be pleased with his message to physicians to heal themselves first before setting to work on their patients. And the plea for moderation in all things, which might be extended to the practice of medicine, should not fall on deaf ears.

It is for his fervent attack on the scholasticism of the Sorbonne that Rabelais is particularly remembered; indeed, had it not been for his high connections, this might literally have been the death of him. Medical educationists should benefit from his challenge to the prevailing conceit that progressive stultification by book-learning represented education, when it only made one 'as wise as any man baked in an oven'. Deans of Medical Faculties should take note. 'Tomorrow's Doctors' is a current General Medical Council publication, recommending progressive, liberal and educationally sound changes in the present medical

curriculum, but only recently have there been signs that all medical schools are hearing and responding to what it says. It is a sobering observation that the General Medical Council, which can scarcely be described as a Rabelaisian body, has been trying to effect these very same destultifying alterations for decades. It would be reassuring to know that a Rabelaisian oversight of these developments was permanently in place; as Hugh Dudley recently observed in *Proceedings*, 'groups of academics tend to fall out if their own personal patch is threatened, and to react by self-protection, even although this is not in the interests of the organisation in which they work'.[1] Rabelais, as his readers will appreciate, would have none of this.

The principal reason for a medical man to read Rabelais is for entertainment. The sheer joy of the work confirms the Rabelaisian contention that laughter is the best medicine. Humour and creativity, as Koestler observed, go hand in hand and Rabelais is no exception. By his fantastical and humorous creations and commentaries, his farces, his mockeries, his parodies and his satires, Rabelais not only entertains, he also educates us. The educational experience is captured in a display of verbal fireworks which added 600 new words to the French language of the time. And what words; who can ever forget such a word as philogrobolising? The power of such words to entertain, to entrance and at the same time inform must be the secret of Rabelais's success. Laugh, as you will, for you must laugh with Rabelais, but think, as he surely intended you to think, at the same time. Drink of his words, for drinking is Rabelais's communion, or coming together of mankind. The stories of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* have surely, not only a particular historical, but also a universal significance. They are a 16th century French Monty Python's Flying Circus with the pictures and meanings projected in words. *Read, laugh and learn!*

[1] Dudley HAF. I believe... *Proc R Coll Physicians Edinb* 1996; **26:** 265–71.

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MEMORIES OF A SURGEON-LIEUTENANCY EDINBURGH 1941–43: PART IV

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WATCH ASHORE

What stranger's feet may find the meadow
And trespass there and go

A. E. Housman

On a quiet moonlit night in winter, I walked across the Meadows in the wartime blackout, on my way back on foot to Granton after supper with a naval colleague and his family who lived in a rented house in Marchmont. My wife with our son was visiting her parents in Paisley. I was glad to have our friends' company, and their hospitality, on an unscheduled and rare day off duty, a 'watch ashore', duty free. I had to be back at the Royal Naval Sick Quarters, by midnight, a good four miles walk across the city. There was more than enough light to see the way, the full moon, low toward the west, throwing shadows far across the paths and grass, the trees bare and black against the blue-grey sky. The stillness of the Meadows was peaceful and relaxing, and there was no great need to be fearful of misadventure when walking there in those days.

North across the Meadows the light from a single un-blacked-out window high in the Medical School sparkled on the frost below. The yellow square of the window seemed to hover low in the sky, like a bright machine, not quite stationary, its brilliance obscuring the silhouette of the building. A white-coated figure moved in the room, to and fro past the window, and for a while stood looking at the world outside, oblivious that he was inviting any air raid warden or policeman or other citizen to perform a public duty and see to so evident a breach in the generally well-kept blackout of the city. Might not the Luftwaffe on a quick reconnaissance from Norway or Schleswig-Holstein find such a beacon useful? A fifth-columnist at work? But it was no spy, just an absent-minded academic catching up with his post-mortem reports. How do I know that? I knew whose room it was.

I walked on, nearer the lighted room as I made my way along Middle Meadow Walk toward the gate facing Forrest Road. It was the brightness from that uncurtained window which showed me the black shape that suddenly I came upon, on the grass by the path. And just as I saw it lying there the light from the window wavered and went out, a steel-hatted figure drawing the shades and leaving the school building illumined only by the moon. What of that black shape, now less clearly seen in the restored norm of the night's natural light? Instinctively, I slowed my step and, careful before caring, moved out of the proximity of this foreign shadow, so obviously no usual feature of the parkland. I did not know then how foreign it was and how near to becoming just a shade. Its size and shape immediately suggested a human body, roughly covered. A drunk, potentially violent? Shelterless lovers? A villain, lying in wait for any

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