

Introduction:

Previously in The Donald Diaries

ENTER THE PROTAGONIST, the hero,³ the star... Donald.

From our previous meeting with the intrepid Donald, we know that Donald Halfbrain is usually atypically quiet, unassuming, and intelligent. He is the one shining star in his own universe. He is also crazy. You don't even need to take my word for this, just read on, Macduff.

Until now, and then...

Donald is still reeling⁴ from the last week of his life.

After surviving many years of unimaginable obscurity, he is in the not quite, but nearly, forced custody of The Woman. This could either be interpreted as ("Call me") DD, Dr Gee Jay, Nurse Hatchet, or Ma'am Cybill Flex. Donald doesn't particularly care about whose care he has been caringly placed in; he is too busy carefully focussing on how to extricate himself from their seemingly uncaring care.

Although he knows the best place for him, at the moment, is right where he is, he also knows the best course of action for him, at precisely the same moment, is to do everything he can to not be right where he is. Donald is preparing himself to try and freely embrace the mental hieroglyphics he will undoubtedly be taught in the coming two weeks.

The comforting piece of information lurking in the shadows of his mind is that the two-week period remaining in his treatment is a fixed timeframe. It will only *feel* like eternity.

³ If you could be convinced to call the second-to-last clean Knife, Fork, or Spoon in the cutlery drawer a hero. (And yes, "KFS" is the correct order.)

⁴ Maybe realing would be more appropriate?

It's funny because it's true. If it wasn't funny, it would be overwhelmingly sad.

Donald fits somewhere between "What the?" and "Oh..."

Donald is thinking about the treatment he's receiving and how it is a thrilling double-edged sword. One edge facilitates becoming normal *because* you're able to change your thoughts and start to think good things about yourself. The other edge facilitates becoming normal *while* you continue to remember bad things about yourself, because you can't change the past.⁵

Donald Halfbrain is about to continue on his path of:

Story Defining

Life Changing

& Legend Creating...

Cue the hazy memory being replaced by the current scene...

Check how many *Donald* books have been sold...

Display something to indicate hope...

Pulling on his grey hoodie,⁶ Donald, our recurring franchised hero, again sets out to interact with the wild environment, the insanely⁷ small microcosm he is going to call his home, for the next two weeks exactly...

Greetings from: Saint Rita's Sanatorium for the Clinically Mental and
Psychollogical: Part two
in the series of
The Donald Diaries.

⁵ The result of all this thinking was, "If the treatment is a double-edged sword, why aren't I holding on to it by the hilt?"

⁶ I actually have several different variations of these, but I only packed the one for Donald to take with him.

⁷ And, more importantly, ironically.

1:

Monday Morning (Bedroom Deja Voodoo)

STARTING THE DAY ON A POSITIVE NOTE,⁸ Donald found he was completely aware of who he was, where he was, when he was, and far more importantly in the scheme of things, *why* he was who, where and when he was. *How* he was remained a complete mystery, however.

Donald would always answer the generic noncommittal greeting “How are you?” truthfully. In fact, Donald answered every question with the truth as he saw it. Being *politically correct* wasn’t a tool that Donald had ever owned and, quite frankly, he didn’t ever want to.⁹

If someone was to ask Donald the *How* question right now, his reply would go something like this...

1. Stop moving and glare at the person who was asking.
(Decide on the level of sarcasm required, given the current location and situation.)
2. Shift his gaze up and to the right into contemplation stance.
(Hold for at least six seconds.)
(Form appropriate answer in one.)
3. Answer with a completely truthful, “I don’t know.”

Normally his brusque answer would be some permutation of “Reasonable”, but as that particular vein of answers required him to have both a *sound mind* and a little *normality*, Donald felt like he was missing at least two of those two key requirements.

⁸ As opposed to Bb. Yeah, I know it’s a dad joke. But hey, you have to write what you know, right?

⁹ The fact that Donald’s wants didn’t really matter doesn’t really matter. He would always only ever be *literally* correct.

Apart from thinking about these quantum life questions, he was also still thinking about where his much-beloved Puppy was, and why he was thinking so much.¹⁰ Returning his thought process to the calming three items of focus from the Welcome Pack wisdom, Donald prepared for the day:

- ⌘ **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN** and not on what you can't
I **CAN** get dressed in my clothes from yesterday;
- ⌘ **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU DO** and not on what you don't
I **DO** think it is completely acceptable; and
- ⌘ **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WILL** and not on what you won't
I **WILL** turn some of them inside-out.

The weekly clothing rotation concept, which Donald had only very recently adopted,¹¹ was originally developed to rotate through an entire wardrobe, so each piece of clothing found would get a consistent amount of wear.

Unfortunately, this philosophy fails in several obvious areas:

- ⌘ You will wear out each clothing item of the same type at roughly the same rate and therefore at the same time. This means there had best be some planning done before you have to replace all of the worn-out underwear unreasonably urgently.
- ⌘ The process is completely incompatible with the “selecting coordinated clothing to wear” optional sub-process. Several of the basic activities, such as adhering to styles and colour matching, become weak points, resulting in the awkward failures of Double Denim or Muffin Tops.
- ⌘ There is a very real chance of internal carnage when only one of a pair of socks develops an additional hole. Donald has tried to mitigate this experience by de-pairing his pairs of anything, including pants, glasses, and scissors.

Donald was committed to making his life easier, so every new alternative concept he was trialling received an appropriate amount of testing before he consigned it to his “unsuccessful” pile. He figured that if he could persevere with

¹⁰ These three thinkings were of the exact same importance to Donald.

¹¹ This happened sometime during the last week, when Donald realised it was easier acquiescing to his base instinct of being lazy, rather than not, and did his washing.

the weekly clothing rotation concept for at least thirteen or 14 days, then it may be a win under his metaphorical belt.¹²

Completing his dressing requirements for the morning, Donald set about correcting one of the niggling issues regarding his room. He didn't like that he was breaking a rule each time he went out, so annotating the "Please keep this door Closed ALWAYS!" sign was another achievable win.

Attacking the sign, Donald gave it an appropriate caveat:



If Donald had thought about this for just one second longer, he might have realised that a door is still in use when it is closed. So, literally, an operational door is never *not* in use. Thereby rendering the sign a conundrum, as well as an impossibility, should Donald want to open the door to exit his room.

Satisfied with his own cleverness, however ill-deserved, Donald continued with his daily preparations by verifying that all of his senses, which weren't part of the famous five senses clique, were working. He did this by indulging in his non-sensory intense internal sense non-fence-sitting checking formality:

☒ **Balance**

Raise your upper left leg until it's parallel to the ground, with the lower portion of your leg remaining perpendicular, while simultaneously extending both arms diametrically opposite each other to form a large V centred at your neck, making sure to keep both palms cupped and fingers splayed. Then lean forward slightly and bend your grounded leg a similar amount.

¹² And under his literal one in the case of his jeans and suits (Formal suits only. He didn't have to wear one for the Track or Birthday variants yet).

At this point, your body should resemble the “Crane” kick position made famous by *The Karate Kid* movie, but Donald had had it at raising his leg off the ground without falling over.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

⌘ **Danger**

As Donald was alone, he classified this status as “Possibly”. It won’t come as any surprise to learn there are also three statuses, “Possibly”, “Probably” and “Yes”. At no point is Donald ever not in any danger.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

⌘ **Pain**

For this element, Donald measured his abstract metaphysical vulnerability to pain in the present moment, using the diagnostically unvalidatable DOGoN (*Donald-Oh-Goody-Not*) scale. His reasoning being any purely physical pain felt would be captured in the default stage two internal monitoring checks. He was currently running a perfectly acceptable five.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

⌘ **Common**¹³

“If only common sense was actually common.” Donald prided himself on fastidiously following this mantra through from last week by uncommonly entering into this unusual (unique?) situation. It was only common sense.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

⌘ **Hunger**¹⁴

Interestingly, success of this check was inversely proportional to the level of hunger reached, divided by the availability of suitable food, correct to within thirteen swallows. Basically, as long as there was enough food to satiate his insatiable hunger, there was no need to worry, and he knew Chef wouldn’t fail him now.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

¹³ How coincidental (but definitely not ironic) is this, the thirteenth footnote, falling on what Donald would consider to be the most important sense? Common Sense is how you avoid unlucky situations.

I was surprised to find that “common” was mentioned 51 times last week.

¹⁴ Donald was well aware that he had exceeded his general restriction of only three items within each concept. Hunger, or lack thereof, was too much of a motivator in Donald’s world for this to be left out.

I was also surprised to find that “food” was written 86 times last week.

⌘ **Sixth¹⁵**

Donald felt a tingle run up and down his spine, playing an unfriendly game of vertebrae, in addition to the spate of cold shivers he was also experiencing. He decided to reserve any formal judgement on this mysterious topic until he next encountered (shudder) Mindy.

☑ **Metaphorical Tick**

As he was quickly becoming aware of the time and how it was slowly ticking away, Donald unlocked the padlock on his bedside drawer with the key hidden underneath his coffee mug. After he realised there was nothing in the drawer he needed, he re-locked the padlock and sequestered the key in his underwear drawer. Satisfied with the vast amount of discouragement this precaution offered to any nosey people, he grabbed the Welcome Pack and headed to the common area.

Being able to make himself a “congratulations for making it through the night” mug of hot coffee and being extremely satisfied with his flouting of the “DO NOT REMOVE” rule on the Welcome Pack, Donald made himself comfortable in the no-longer-deserted common area and perused the Pack.

He read silently for a little while. Pressure began to build up inside his head, as this tiny amount of perusal came dangerously close to generating a panic attack. There was no tangible danger to anyone else, or even to Donald, if the truth be told, which we all know it will be. During his initial petite read, three things became apparent:

- ⌘ Both the “*Medical Staff*” and the “*Non-Medical Staff*” Rosters had been updated and added to;
- ⌘ A “*Week Two Checklist*” had been included; and
- ⌘ There was an “*Addendum*” stating that the previous changes had been made overnight, and that he shouldn’t worry about what any of the staff did to him while he was asleep.

Donald’s primary task for today¹⁶ would be a review of both the *M ‘n’ N-M* Rosters...

¹⁵ If you are going to break the rules, you may as well go big.

I wasn’t surprised to find that I said something like this.

¹⁶ Apart from everything he had just done, obviously (obviously?).

Saint Rita's Sanatorium for the Clinically Mental Medical Staff, Roster Redux

Primary Nurse	-	Nurse Dolly Dix DD	Which part of "Call me DD" didn't you understand?
Day Nurse	-	Nurse Jack Call	Blood Shopping Assistant ¹⁷
Night Nurse	-	Nurse Hatchet	Given Name - Berrythy
Weekend Nurse	-	Nurse Wendy Dunk	Née Swirl
Student Nurse	-	Grey Duate	Gender Irrelevant
Medical Doctor	-	Dr Andy Coughed	Doesn't "have" SaRS
Psychologist	-	Dr Mr Houts Marted	Awwwww... c'mon!
Psychiatrist	-	Dr Gee Jay	No comment
Trainee Psychologists:			
	-	Stu Arthur Dent	No relation
	-	They Meantwell	They is the "they" they

SaRS Official 1: Medical Staff Roster Redux

Donald turned over the page to write his notes about the Medical Staff Roster. Scribbling over the forecasted menus for the next three weeks, he made the following notes (and while there was one more than three notes, he would fail to note this):

- ✘ All non-corporeal entities have been removed. Have they been given an exercise programme by Ma'am Flex?
- ✘ Nurse Dunk must've had a whirlwind marriage and honeymoon, as yesterday she was only a single Swirl.
- ✘ There is a definite strangeness about the continuing presence and content of the comments.
- ✘ Two Trainee Psychologists... I can't decide if this is good or bad, for either us or them.

¹⁷ Donald was sure there was a word, or some punctuation, missing here.

Sipping thoughtfully on his coffee, Donald continued thinking about the new additions¹⁸ to the SaRS workforce, the two Trainee Psychologists. He knew SaRS's mission statement, which was just a set of five "try to make you feel good" words: compassion, respect, justice, hospitality, and excellence. What confused him most was that there was no mention of who these objectives were being levelled at.

Compassion for the inmates, or for the staff who had to look after them?

Respect of the rules by those lower in the food chain, or higher?

Justice? Clearly if there *was* any justice, there wouldn't be a need for its inclusion in the statement.

Hospitality... the quality of being A Hospitality?

Excellence. Donald just shook his head in dismay.

The point of these thoughts was slowly approaching. There was no mention of teaching, in any shape or form.

Donald was prepared to have Grey perform all of the menial tasks related to his medical treatment: take his temperature, sphygmomanometer his ~~Blood~~ blood pressure, make his bed, etc., as these were all factually verifiable. What he had an aversion to was someone poking around inside his head where he couldn't see what was happening. Especially if they were going to make not-completely-educated guesses while only backed up by a textbook.

Trying to figure out if this was a practical joke or an impractical one took Donald's mind off this dilemma and returned it to thinking about the Rosters. He redirected his gaze back to page two of the *M 'n' M-M* Rosters...

¹⁸ These clearly can't be *old* additions, as that would be considered ageist; *additional* additions would be redundant, but you can't refer to them simply as *additions*, as all of them were additions at one stage. This was the type of conundrum Donald loved to hate, as you know what is being said, but you also know it isn't what it actually says.

Saint Rita's Sanatorium for the Clinically Mental Non-Medical Staff, Roster Redux

Pastoral Service	-	Aaaron Aare	Always the first entry
Dietician	-	Seymour Feedme	Why is he first?
Fitness Worker	-	Ma'am Cybill Flex	Ma'am Yes Ma'am Sir
Administration	-	Mark Time	Administration Rules!
Cafeteria Cook	-	Chef Chief Changes	Comment redacted
Pastoral Service	-	Zzzyxon Zzippy	Always the last entry
Therapists	Art	Sue Rhea Liszt	c ₀ m _m e _n t - c ₀ m _m e _n t - c ₀ m _m e _n t
	Massage	Anna Lykeananna	Scratch that, will you?
	Musical	William the Piano Man	Willy, I'm a Willy!
Maintenance	Spick 'n' Span	Cleansing	Elevator Pitch cleansing
	Who Wood	Masons	We Who Are Not Carpenters
	Wholly Mowly	Groundskeeping	Keepers of the Grounds

SaRS Official 2: Non-Medical Staff Roster Redux

Needing to turn the page again, Donald called out a few of the many issues he could see in the *N-M* Roster (managing to keep it appropriately restricted to three line-long items):

- ⌘ It is no longer obsolete, even though it needs to change.
- ⌘ All non-bipedals have been removed.
- ⌘ The unwritten subliminal messages aren't very obvious.

All of this, from "Donald made himself comfortable" to "All of this", took place in a little over thirteen minutes. This gives you an indication of how fast Donald's mind works. His mug of coffee had reduced in temperature enough that it didn't cause an issue when Sven interr-

If you disengage an engaged gauge, where does the useless “u” go?¹⁹

“Sphincter Feng Shui!”

Sven had just efficiently removed Donald from his reverie, and he was also sufficiently removed to notice there was a small crowd gathering in the other TV room. Donald had been shown this room last week by Owedebt, who had taken him for a wander around some of the facility, but had so far, confusingly, never attended a formal morning self-introductory roll call.²⁰ Even though it was optional, it was expected of you to attend.

Donald made his way to the other TV room after unsuccessfully brushing the spilt coffee from his clothes. If you looked closely at Donald’s clothing, you would find coffee stains on most of them, at best. You don’t want to know what else you might find lurking under the creases at worst.

“Good morning, everyone.” Nurse Jack was obviously rocking a chipper mood this morning, which didn’t come anywhere close to surprising Donald. He immediately rationalised that Nurse Jack had been away from SaRS for the whole weekend. Even Donald would be happy after a weekend off if he worked here. “How is everyone feeling today?”

“Good morning, Jack/Nurse Jack/Nurse Jack Call/exactly who are you?²¹”

Everyone regreeted his morning greeting, albeit in a generally less enthusiastic way, but no one²² responded with an answer to his question, as they all knew it was a polite rhetorical inquiry. Unfazed by the unimaginative response, Nurse Jack dived into the meeting’s scheduled items. Writing the relevant topics for discussion on the whiteboard as he was saying them out loud resulted in a humorous delay between the syllabised words:

- ⌘ Self - int - row - duck - shons;
- ⌘ Time - tay - bull - of - the - day’s - ack - tiv - it - is; and
- ⌘ Pub - lick - an - ounce - ments.

¹⁹ Coincidentally, this is a question both I and Donald would like an answer to.

²⁰ The roll-call self-introductory routine will be a very convenient way to remind Donald, as well as you, of some of the people who this book is about, and contrary to popular (my) belief, this is not only Donald.

²¹ Depending on the level of your knowledge/memory/acquaintance.

²² Why does *no one* have an intermediary space, making it two words, when everyone does not?

"Now, who would like to get us started?" Nurse Jack looked directly, and as loudly as he could, at Donald. Donald had chosen to sit on the seat nearest to the door, which was a self-inflicted dive into the deep end, because it showed he was the person least likely to still be there five minutes later. Unable to find an alternative solution, Donald kicked off the self - int - row - duck - shons.

"My name is Donald..."

Donald was completely comfortable with uncomfortable silences and able to avoid eye contact at will. He made absolutely every indication he was going to calmly do nothing until someone else started speaking. Even if another someone did start speaking, he was going to continue to do nothing.

Seeing there was going to be no elaboration, embellishment, or expansion of Donald's introduction, and belatedly realising his mistake of thinking people would follow a simple pattern when presented with the chance to do so, Nurse Jack shifted his focus to the person adjacent to Donald.

Never being one to stay hidden away after being called out, Owedebt said defiantly, "Owedebt Dear."

Jumping on this chance to be at the centre of some gross inattention, Nota barely waited for Owedebt's closing quotes to be pronounced, and very nearly prematurely announced, "Nota Beenhead... !! !! !!!" with the maximum amount of post-oral insinuation allowed in mixed company before her series of three double exclamations.

"?" Chunky Poopy, Owedebt's over-round, over-friendly and over-easy service pet had raised his left ear, which indicated, "What? I'm a dog! What do you think I'm going to say? I can't speak in human... You must be a complete idiot!" Which should, technically, have been de-verbalised as "??", but Chunky couldn't be bothered repeating himself this morning.

Following these early missintroductions, the rest of the inmates stumbled along with the mostly name-only idea, and after removing the non-pertinent names, this is what was left over:

"Khkhkhkhkhyello, my name Got Knotyed."

"Pass."

"Mindy Ownbeeswhacks! Who are you looking at?"

"My nametag says Lost M'Hankie?"

I'm smart enough to know that I'm not nearly as smart as I genuinely like to think I am.

Nicely putting an end to this extract²³ of client introduction shambles, Sven started well but wound up talking himself into a confused circle.²⁴ Nurse Jack then continued as if this was a normal everyday occurrence, which, of course, it was. "Very nicely done, everyone. Right, there are a couple of new staff members I would like to introduce to you: Stu Dent and They Meantwell."

Stu Arthur Dent (no relation) was the first of a pair of student psychologists who'd been assigned to SaRS as part of their postgraduate training. Having a residency at the SaRS facility on your résumé was unfortunately considered to be a detrimental piece of mandatory information disclosure.²⁵ The humiliation it generated was a lot like being the last one picked for the soccer team... after the ball has been picked.

They Meantwell (was the other) one.

Their Staff Identification tags were waiting to be collected from reception. As it was a Monday, as first days of new employment usually are, there was a backlog of identifications to be processed, and as the students weren't here in any *employed* capacity, administration couldn't prioritise the tags any higher, so they took a full 17 minutes to produce after the request was received...

Student Psychologist - SaRS Stu Arthur Dent (no relation) Pre-Authorised for all locations where Dr Mr Houts Marted works
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Student Psychologist - SaRS ²⁶ They Meantwell (is the other) Pre-Authorised for all locations where Dr Mr Houts Marted works
--

"They and Stu will be observing *everything* Dr **Mr** Houts Marted does. He will be teaching them what to do, what not to do and what should have been done by applying the simple uncouple principle of 'do what I say and not what I do'. They

²³ Why does *extract* mean "what is left over" after everything *inappropriate* has been removed? Intract of the exappropriate would be much better terminology.

²⁴ Which isn't confusing, considering the circle of people he was in.

²⁵ Unfortunately for Stu and They, there was no feasible differentiation between having a Residency *at* SaRS and being a Resident *of* SaRS.

²⁶ Even though Dr **Mr** Houts Marted *Really?* was not present, Donald was aware of the palpable unrighteous indignation emanating from the tiny storage cupboard that was performing as the Psychologists' office, because Houts had not been issued with his own identification tag yet.

are only here to learn how to teach you how to learn, not to teach you how to learn.”

At this point, they were both²⁷ looking extremely confused, and just a little bit scared about the inflection Nurse Jack had used on *everything*. Seeing these looks of confusion, then comparing them to the looks of confusion on the inmates’ faces, and tentatively discerning there was no discernible difference, Nurse Jack decided it was appropriate to continue with the next scheduled item: to read aloud and comment slightly silently snidely on the daily activity schedule.

“Today’s activities are going to be:

- ✘ Breakfast. Served in the dining room, starting from an hour ago;²⁸
(Or not to be...)
- ✘ Morning self-introductory roll call;
(Which is optional if you are not here, but oxymoronically mandatory if you are.)
- ✘ The Gym will be open at 10am, through to 12~~am~~^{pm} noon;
(In convenient conflict with the morning group session for all those who are more capable in the muscle department.)
- ✘ The Pool and Art Rooms will both be open and available for use from 2pm to 4pm;
(This should not be confused with the Pool Room, which is closed all day.)
- ✘ There is no smoking allowed at SaRS, except in the verbally designated areas;
(While this looks like an announcement, it is also treated as a continuous activity.)
- ✘ Our usual mindfulness walk has been cancelled; as has
(As per usual.)
- ✘ The traditional reading of a joke. We are going to play a fun game instead.
(Not to say that the game is a joke.)”

²⁷ There weren’t two Theys. They was one and Stu was the other.

²⁸ This unfortunate timing goes a long way in explaining why Donald had never previously attended a morning self-introductory roll call meeting.

Donald thought, "Good luck with your joke-replacement game having any serious participation²⁹ from anyone in here. You'll probably find the joke it replaced is on you."

Unaware of Donald's thoughts, Nurse Jack picked up a stack of landscape papers and gave them to They to hand out while he explained what was to happen next.

"At SaRS, we call this game Reviewing All Five of Our Senses.³⁰ We will all be winners once we come to a basic understanding of the individual absolute threshold of each sense, discuss the obviously obsolete systems of measurement used, and provide a practical replacement for each of these systems."

Trying in vain to increase the level of the absolutely non-existent excitement about completing the "practical replacement of the sensory maximum measurement system" task, Stu interjected with some banal commentary. "Our Five Senses, how good are they, They?³¹"

(Count 27 seconds of stunned silence before continuing.)

Reviewing All Five of Our Senses

⌘ Vision - You can see candlelight 48km away on a dark and clear night.

The hospital's searchlight reaches only 1m away from where you are standing.

⌘ Hearing - You can hear a watch tick 6m away in an otherwise silent situation.

A silent alarm being tripped 1.8m away, depending on how tall you are.

⌘ Taste - You can discern a teaspoon of sugar in 7.5 litres of clean, fresh water.

A teaspoon of sugar in a large cup of hot, decaffeinated coffee.

⌘ Touch - You can feel a fly wing falling onto your cheek from a height of 76mm.

There was something seriously wrong with the person who devised this system.

⌘ Smell - You can't not smell a drop of perfume in a volume of three rooms.

Perfume that came from the petrified excrement of a bunny... ewwwww...

SaRS Official 3: Reviewing All Five of Our Senses

²⁹ Donald's participation in any game was always as a stand-in bystander. He'd certainly had next to no stand-out participations.

³⁰ Correct, this is both a correct and an incorrect statement.

³¹ He didn't succeed. Hmm, actually, I think he might have technically succeeded, as he was trying in *vain* to increase their excitement.

As you have just read (after a very minute 27-second wait), the original measurement systems were subjective, and today are largely unachievable. Thanks to the historical efforts to shine a light into every piece of darkness, there is no such thing as “a dark and clear night”. We have also injected sound into every “otherwise silent situation”. While there hasn’t been anything that comes close to being a palatable “large cup of hot, decaffeinated coffee”, it is still far more common than “7.5 litres of clean, fresh water”.

There are also several modern responsible issues to consider. If you start de-winging flies as an adult,³² people from the RSPCA will come urgently knocking on your door and ask you to stop.

And finally, because there is no accepted standard “size of three rooms”, the smell test measurement system fails every conceivable credibility requisite. If there *was* a logistically infeasible attempt to join three rooms together, you wouldn’t get three joined rooms, you’d get one big room.

Donald knew that all of the answers³³ were hiding somewhere in his mind. All he had to figure out was the right questions. He resigned himself to the fact that if he couldn’t get the answers out of his mind at the moment, he might very well go out of his mind before he found the questions to the answers.

While he was contemplating about contemplating, there was some unexpected activity suavely sauntering over to Lost M’Hankie, in the form of a man resplendent in a magnificent tartan suit that could’ve driven any woman wild. Here was a genuine heartthrob who was obviously Heaven-Sent.³⁴

Lost’s predicament wasn’t lost on anyone.

“Pledge, Jimmy Pledge.”

Lost was on the fast track³⁵ to flabbergasted. He would never have believed it, if he hadn’t seen it for himself. Curiously, come tomorrow, he wouldn’t remember that he’d seen anything today, and he’d also never believe you if you

³² It is also verging on being intolerable for a child to do this, even if they protest that they are performing a legitimately sound scientific experiment.

³³ Wait for a few more words before casting aspersions on Donald.

³⁴ Sadly, the reality of this situation was the exact reverse.

³⁵ The Fast Track is not generally parallel to the High Road. In fact, they are often perpendicular, resulting in the infamous Crossroads of Life. This is a place where you can ask the Devil for directions to the undocumented Fiddle the Blues Bar somewhere down in Georgia.

ever tried to explain to him what had just happened the day before.

The interloper pulled out his weapon, a Walter P.K. Chewing Gum shooter, and theatrically aimed it at Lost. "Never shay 'never' to a Pledge, Jimmy!" Slyly, he winked at an unamused Donald.

Fractionally³⁶ after this threat, Donald stayed in his seat and refused to give up the low ground. He didn't know what was happening, but he was quite sure he didn't want to.

Simultaneously to Donald's infraction, Mindy and Got chose to become involved.

"Exkkkkkuse me, kkkkkan I khkhkhkhkhhelp you?" from Got.

And a much more succinct, much less wet "Oi!" from Mindy.

Jimmy sensed he may have been in inarticulate danger,³⁷ and decided some discretion was the better part of running away.

Donald watched Jimmy retreat from the other TV room. His smooooth movement was like a historical frame-by-frame cartoon, where each step covered twice as much ground as it logically should have. It was very much akin to walking along an airport travelator while balancing a book on your head. All that was missing was the reusable background.

"Who was HE!?" Lost asked.

This was inappropriate, as we know who he was, and the lack of **?** only added to the inappropriateness of the situation. Donald closed his gaping maw by manually lifting up his lower jaw and scratched his head, mumbling, "These unexpectations are becoming quite dependable, but at least they're never boring."

Lost returned to the present. "Who was HE**?**"

"You got that right," Mindy replied staunchly.

Lost closed out the interaction with a vague shoulder shrug, and Donald retreated back to his sanctuary, making a small detour along the way to collect some random food from the Tiger-Kangaroo³⁸ kitchen in lieu of breakfast. He also took this opportunity to freshen up his coffee.

³⁶ This is another generic term which doesn't mean what you think it does. For example... a fraction of "Never Ever" is still a very long time.

³⁷ Non-sensory intense internal sense #2.

And yes (or should it be no?), the irony of this being a #2 isn't lost on me.

³⁸ If you've made it to here without understanding some of the unexplained references, a few of the inexplicable scenarios, or a little of the perplexing abundance

Finding some internal peace, Donald decided to get on with documenting his undisputable thoughts while he was recovering from the morning stand-in meeting and the unfamiliar “Pledge, Jimmy Pledge” scene. The sounds from his writing were only inside his head as he documented away, “We’ve had a tremendous amount of activity in the last few days...” completely forgetting about the “**Week Two Checklist**”.³⁹

Donald was reawared out of his extracurricular involvement by another blast from the past week.

Knockknockknock...

As expected, Donald found Seth floating outside his door, unexpectedly without BLT hovering just behind.

“Good morning, Sir. I am here with a timely reminder that you, **one** Donald Halfbrain, are required to attend no less than” - he quickly glanced at an official-looking document apparition - “**two** Group Sessions per day, for a period of” - another glance - “at least **three** weeks. If you are unavailable to attend to these numbers, you are required to account **four**⁴⁰ your absence.”

Go directly to Group.

Do not cop out.

Do not give 200 excuses.

of bad puns/innuendo/hyperbole, I suggest you go buy, then read, *Hospitable* before coming back here to continue.

³⁹ This is my bad. I will try to fit it in in a later chapter. As for now, at 5150 words, this one is full ±500 words.

⁴⁰ This was a conversation, remember. You couldn’t see the words he was speaking, so it was entirely possible he didn’t know the difference. And, by the way, don’t forget that he was a ghost, as this made the words even more invisible.