

# SEMI-WEEKLY BANDON RECORDER

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY OF BANDON

## His First Lesson In Medical Practice

By THOMAS R. DEAN

Miss Elsie Tisdale was engaged to marry Mr. Bert Sawyer, a medical student. Mr. Sawyer was aware that Miss Tisdale was as sensitive as a bird. All she knew about physicians was when one of them came to the house, felt some one's pulse, asked about sundry symptoms and, taking out a square bit of paper, wrote certain hieroglyphics on it that an apothecary understood.

What Bertie, as she called him, was going through to acquire a medical education she had no idea. That he ate peanuts off the breast of a cadaver he was at work on in the dissecting room, that he used the top of a skull, inverted, for a tobacco box; that he frequently took a hand, a foot or some other member of the human body to his room to cut to pieces, she had not even a suspicion. She supposed that a medical school was like other schools—books, books, nothing but books, and nice, clean books at that—while gentle professors lectured on how to cure a stomach ache and when to give the baby paracetamol.

Bert, aware of her innocence, was very careful not to disturb her notions of the medical profession by enlightening her. By an unfortunate contretemps he suddenly burst upon her in his true frightfulness. She had been visiting a friend in a neighboring city and was returning by rail. She had been in the car but a few minutes when she saw the back of a head that looked familiar. It was turned aside toward a man who sat beside its owner and displayed the profile of Mr. Bert Sawyer. Facing the two sat a figure done up in a big shawl.

Horrible to relate, the face of the figure was that of a skull. Mr. Sawyer and his friend Billy Peterson had learned where the skeleton of a human being could be bought cheap. They had gone for it, purchased it and were taking it home. There were but few persons in the car, and the conductor had good naturedly permitted them to seat it opposite themselves.

Just as Miss Tisdale got into the car, recognized her lover and caught sight of the grinning face with no nose and empty eye sockets the conductors came through the train and, passing the two medics, punched their tickets. "Fare, governor," said Mr. Sawyer, addressing the skeleton. "Produce your ticket or you'll be put off."

The skeleton continued to grin, the conductor smiled, and the men in the car seemed to think it all very funny. There were two women besides Elsie, one sitting in the next seat and one farther forward. Neither of them seemed to consider Mr. Sawyer's action a bit funny. As for Elsie, she was paralyzed with horror.

"Oh, he's all right," said the other medico. "He's no deadhead," and, slipping his own ticket in the band of his hat, he put the hat on the skeleton's head.

This caused a burst of laughter from the men in the car and a scowl from the women.

"Smoke, governor?" said Bert, thrusting a cigar between the skeleton's

toothless and gumless jawbones.

Another laugh from the men and a murmur of indignation from the women. The train rounding a curve, the skeleton lost its balance and fell against the arm of the seat.

"Sit up, governor," said Bert. "Don't be rolling around that way. The passengers will think you've been drinking."

"I smell his breath," said Billy—"gin and lemon peel."

The conductor was sitting at the end of the car, and one of the women called to him and told him that if he didn't stop that indecent behavior on the part of those young men she would report him for negligence of duty. At this the conductor went to the two medics and told them they had better roll their bony companion in his shawl and step the fun. To this they assented, and that ended the performance. Soon after the train rolled into the station the medics and the "governor" went out through the front end of the car, while Elsie left it at the rear. She held her handkerchief to her eyes to conceal her tears and to avoid being recognized by Bert, whom she intended never to meet again as her fiancé.

The next morning's mail brought him a note from her containing the few words:

"Our engagement is broken."

Sawyer looked at it sideways and endwise, then shook it as if it were a toy puzzle. He could not understand it. Anyway something was wrong, and he went right over to the house to find out about it. Mrs. Tisdale came down with a suppressed smile and told him the cause of the break. Elsie had come home the day before heartbroken. She had supposed she was going to marry a gentleman and found that instead she was to marry a ghoul.

Bert was crushed.

"You'd better drop the whole affair," said Mrs. Tisdale, "and let Elsie get over it by degrees."

"She'll never get over it," growled Bert. "She'll have a horror of me as long as she lives."

The affair was a good lesson to Bert. He became a famous physician and never forgot that the doctors and the haly are two different peoples. As for Elsie, he was right in assuming that she would always have a horror of him. She married another.

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