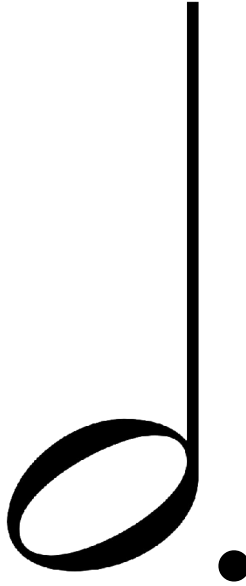


drummond



Drummond

A Novel By Patrick R. F. Blakley

Drummond

Written by Patrick R. F. Blakley

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**Make yourself someone you can trust,
then start listening to yourself.**

- *Stephen L. Melillo*

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Chapter 1

Lessons Are A Lot Like Church

(Half-Step #1: D - Do - P1)

“Hi Dru,” the man said.

I shuddered just a little bit. Dru, a single syllable, bland and unsophisticated. Shouldn't a name be more interesting than a singular blurted sound? I mean, it represents an entire human life, complex and interesting, summed up by one syllable? Blah. I can't hold it against him, I thought to myself, my name is Drummond and he just assumes I go by Dru. I read that line in my head like a script every time this happens. Sometimes I continue, he's just being friendly, let's see if he's the type of person to ask what I prefer to be called. Some people are

careful not to insult me by shortening the name my parents gave me. Not that I'd be insulted, but I guess some people actually take offense to something like that. Not me though! I blur the line on sarcasm.

Some people just call me Drummond right away. Usually this is a sort of question which silently invites me to let them shorten it, if I so choose. Others will use my full name, but ask if I go by Dru or not. I always respond the same way, that they can call me both, but I prefer Drummond. Maybe I'm too nice. I don't love being called Dru, but I'm not going to correct someone because I don't want them to feel like they did something wrong. Maybe I tend to overthink this. Maybe it's time to give up and let the wheel-of-randomness decide my name for everyone who meets me and spins it!

The smallest fraction of people will issue me a multiple choice surprise quiz. I'm good at tests, but still get a little bit uneasy.

“Hi Drummond,” they'd begin, “do you go by A: Drummond, B: Dru, C: Drum, or D: None of the above?”

Okay okay, they don't literally list them like that using lettered answers, but they do suggest abbreviations for my name. This single-question test is worth one-hundred percent of my grade. I better get this right since it'll go onto my permanent record with this testing institution. How do I answer though? Am I allowed to

choose more than one answer? How do I make sure they know I'm not offended by any of these names, but that I do have a preferred designation. Should I give them strict percentages for every response on how often they're allowed to use each name? Or will they cling to the most dominant answer I give and brandish that title as the pilot insignia under the cockpit of a fighter jet.

What nobody ever knows, and couldn't ever guess, is that my friends call me Drummy. I'm not sure who coined the nickname, maybe family, maybe friend, but if I had to guess I'd say that in the past someone gave me the ol' pop-quiz and I answered C for Drum and it turned into a nickname.

C is the most common answer on most multiple choice tests. Since teachers don't want to give up the correct answer right away for answer A or B. And to wait until D is tantamount to circling the correct answer themselves. C! C is the correct answer precisely sixty-five percent of the time, which promises you a passing grade if you just pick C all the way down. You'll end up bored just sitting in class after handing in your test mere moments after receiving it, but boredom is a cheap price to pay for just getting by with the bare minimum. However, a coy teacher would know this, and in turn might shift their correct answers to B, the next logical hiding place. Doing this would defeat the classic C strategy completely and until it's brought before the Supreme Court of the United States of America students

using the C strategy will plummet the overall grades of every school in the county! Anyway, I probably got the wrong answer and calling me Drum evolved into rebranding the nickname to Drummy.

Nobody gets to pick their own nickname, but at least Drummy made sense. I'll always know someone's talking to me when they call me that, it sounds just like my full name.

Funnier still, I think the name drew me toward drums. When asked what instrument I wanted to play I gravitated toward drums, probably without even realizing it! I think my dad played trumpet, but music wasn't really a huge part of our everyday lives. Other than racks of CDs in the family room and a tall wooden cabinet of sound gear, my starter drum pad just collected dust at home. Music and band was just another class in school.

Half a second passed in slow motion as I oversaturated it with my tired inner monologue.

"Hello," I simply responded.

The man introduced himself as just Dwayne. Until now I'd never met a Dwane before, I mean, I knew it was a name, but I don't think I've ever said it out loud until now. My teachers taught me how to remember someone's name easily after meeting them, just repeat it back to them and it'll stick.

"Hi Dwayne," I said while shaking his hand, "I'm Drummond, but my friends call me Drummy."

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