



**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE  
MD STUDENT CONFERENCE  
PUZZLES**

## Act III, Scene 2 Mean Arterial Pressure

*(Note: the story is not part of the puzzle)*

Jared paced back and forth along a strip of faded red carpet at the front of the lecture theatre. It was nearing 9:00am and the lecture time slot had come and gone — and yet the hall remained soaked with a restless silence, broken only by the rabid tapping of keyboards.

This was a problem that Jared had pondered over the past hour. He had tried everything he could — from striking up a conversation to the silent treatment, from scanning an open palm in front of his friends' expressionless eyes to violently shaking them, as if to jolt them awake from their slumber. He pinched and punched, he tapped and slapped, he attempted every measure used to break a trance known to man.

But it was all to no avail. They had all become mindless bots. Succumbed to Influenzer Type A. Another approach would be required.

Jared took a seat at the back of the auditorium, his sweat-stained shirt brushing up against the cheap polyester backing of the mass-produced lecture theatre seating. His hair, likewise greasy, brushed up uncomfortably against the top of the seat. Subconsciously, he combed a hand through the centre of his thick curls, picking up sweat and grease and stress.

Time to enter the belly of the beast, he thought.

Jared reached for his phone. His hand suddenly beset by a mild tremor, he moved to open up the TikTok app on his phone and confronted his nemesis once more. And it did not take long before the algorithm found him what he was looking for.

A Medfluencer, dressed in colourful custom scrubs, began prattling away about the virtues of finding work-life balance in this day and age. Swipe. And their top five study tips. Swipe. And how to avoid burnout. Swipe. And how to prepare for OSCEs. Swipe. And what a day in their life was like. Swipe. And their favourite medical TV show. Swipe. And how to get into medicine. Swipe. And Anki. Anki, Anki, Anki, Anki.

Before Jared knew it, he had already downloaded the deck in use by his comrades and began to be bewitched by its rigour. The concise but precise wording of each card, the crisp and clear font choices with appropriate bolding and italicisation, and the satisfaction of nailing one card, and then another, and then another, and then another... It all appealed to the inner medical student within him and was simply too irresistible.

And then, with the casual alertness of a gazelle grazing gently on the Serengeti, a proverbial alarm went off in Jared's brain and he bolted upright in his chair.

Phew, that was a close one, Jared thought. This is too treacherous of a road... Looks like I'll have to go about figuring out this problem the old-fashioned way...

Jared glanced over his shoulder at Luke and all of his other entranced colleagues and friends.

“I have to do something to help them... But how? And, besides, what even is a virus, anyway? I swear, they never teach us this stuff properly at medical school...”

And, for the second time in the space of five minutes, Jared’s tired brain was able to offer up an epiphany.

With a long and heavy sigh, he opened up his YouTube and tuned into the dulcet and familiar tones of what must now be close to his most watched YouTube video.

A resonant Cali accent began to brighten up the dead space of the lecture theatre: “Viral replication involves a series of stages: attachment, entry, uncoating, genome replication, gene expression, assembly, and release. In attachment—”

“Attachment, entry, uncoating, genome replication, gene expression, assembly, and release...” repeated Jared.

A long day beckoned.

*(To be continued...)*

*(The puzzle begins on the next page)*

**M E A N  
ARTERIAL  
PRESSURE**



