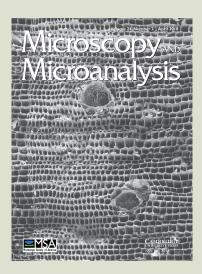


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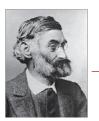
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DearAbbe

Dear Abbe,

I have to section a lot of resin-embedded tissues. I don't mind sectioning, but it does become very boring. I need to find a way to make the tediousness enjoyable. If anyone can help, it's you.

Endless Ennui in Edinburgh

Dear Endless,

Ach, sectioning used to be a real skill, now there are diamond knives, powered ultramicrotomes, computerized microtomes, even computerized ultramicrotomes inside electron microscopes. And you whine about having to sit and cut sections. There are worse things than having to section biological samples, or so I've been told. I do not section, as I have minions at my disposal (although I am running out of bananas). However, I did ask my relatively sane colleague what she would do. She developed several methods for attenuating the tedium and claims the quickest method is imbibing alcoholic cocktails. Make sectioning a drinking game! If you manage five or more sections on a slot grid, you take a swig. As a young acolyte she told her supervisor that the concoction was medication and had a prescription. Of course, the gentleman at the corner Spirituosengeschaft called it a receipt. Semantics. The games become more difficult and entertaining with success of getting sections on grids. After editing Huckleberry Finn for my friend Mr. Clemens, I suggested his solution for unappealing tasks: overselling the task. She began to tout how wonderful it was to section: elaborating on the Zen-like quality, the rewarding exercise of chasing errant, needed sections around the trough filled with the tears of undergraduates. She was very good at it and should have won an award for her performances, but no one recognizes a budding genius before they become a blooming idiot.

If you are stuck with mindless tasks, you may wish to seek additional advice from Herr Dr. Abbe. Contact his faithful assistant at jpshield@uga.edu.

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