

# Neville Sharp Must Die!

A 2021 Parish Council contribution

by

Nigel Warner



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Mr Sharp sat down. He shuffled about a little to make himself comfortable, pulled his copy of The Sun from under his right arm and settled in for a good read before returning from lunch. He had already balanced his own quilted toilet roll on top of the little box next to the toilet which dispensed those terrible single sheets. If it were up to him, he thought, the people responsible for such a travesty as ‘single sheet dispensers’ would go on trial.

There was no one else in the toilets, he’d checked. It was just him, his paper, and sweet relief. He settled his trousers around his ankles and shook out his newspaper, turning to the next page. Beaming back at him from page 3 was Sharmaine, 22, from Dagenham. Apparently, she liked young children and worked on a North Sea oil rig. It crossed his mind that her colleagues would get a shock when they looked at the paper but, to be honest, Mr Sharp didn’t really care. He wasn’t interested in her work so much as... well, you know.

He stopped reading. He was a little concerned because his stomach was really playing up, and it seemed to be getting worse. He lowered his paper and looked down to the floor, concentrating on the task at hand. Wondering what he might have eaten that would make him feel this sweaty and nauseous.

Suddenly, a thunderous parp escaped him and echoed around the stall. Mr Sharp was thankful there was no one else in the room to hear his disgrace. He felt quite lightheaded, as if he were about to faint. He heard another loud noise and was shocked to see the colours of the room flow around him as his head begun to swim. What was wrong?

He dared not stand in case he fell. Mr Sharp looked up at the stall door... only to find it wasn't there anymore. Even as he gawped, the rest of the walls of the stall melted away to reveal, rather than a grubby public toilet, a featureless landscape which seemed to glow red from the within. He could smell rotten eggs was almost overwhelming as blocks of colour started falling from the sky, rattling into piles which, as he stared, revealed something else.

The feeling of the space around him started to change as it filled with light and shapes, until Mr Sharp, perched on the toilet, found himself sitting in the middle of an enormous stadium built of columns. Tiers of seating rose on all sides and there was a sense of a million hungry souls. His incongruous throne seemed to rise from the ground on a plinth which built itself and the smell of eggs dissolved to be replaced by fresher air. He looked around, gobsmacked.

“Sharp?!” bellowed an enormous voice which silenced the mumbling of the assembly in the stadium.

“Y... Yes?” He replied, thankful for a moment that he was already sitting on a toilet.

The voice, if possible, swelled further to fill every space, “You have been called to face the charges of your crimes against Sentient Life, how do you plead?”

Mr Sharp was terrified, but he managed to answer in his reedy voice, “I’m dreadfully sorry... I’m not sure I understand?”

A sudden mist hissed out of the dusty floor beneath his plinth, urgent with pressure and heat. Before his eyes, it swirled and coalesced into the form of a robed spectral figure, tall and thin. It carried a sturdy leatherbound tome beneath what must have been its right arm, and Mr Sharp was thankful he couldn't see the face beneath the heavily cowed hood.

“What?” intoned the voice from within the cowl. “You feign ignorance?! That you know not that of which I speak?! You, the dreadful

bringer of pain! The harbinger of destruction! The sower of discord and terminator of existence! You DARE to affect ignorance?!”

“Yes, I’m dreadfully sorry, but I don’t know what you mean. I’m just an accountant.”

“You may call yourself what you wish... Accountant from Hell!!... but all the species of the central arm of the universe know of your deeds. You laid waste to the Desert people of Khoom. You destroyed the hatcheries of the Squadrons of Skarwal and doomed their species to destruction. You have obliterated 7 planets and 2 star systems as you sought to enforce your soulless rule over the Empire. How dare you, Accountant of Destruction! You have birthed only darkness and suffering through the 14 quadrants of Mu Arae. How dare you claim such, even while you sit on your exalted throne before the gathered souls of the dispossessed?!”

“The toilet?” Mr Sharp asked.

The cowed figure turned in a circle and addressed the stadium... “What say you?! Gathered creatures of the Mu Arae... what say you?! Even as the souls of your younglings scream from their graves, demanding blood and suffering in return!! What say you to the dread Emperor on his hollow throne?!”

The words echoed around the vast space. Suddenly the questions were answered by the unified, deafening cry of the gathered multitude. They cried out as one... “NEVILLE SHARP MUST DIE!! NEVILLE SHARP MUST DIE!! NEVILLE SHARP MUST DIE!!”

The figure spun back to face the prone Mr Sharp, moving with an almost palpable clap of thunder to speak face to face. Mr Sharp could still not see beneath the cowl, but he sensed an eternal space and pain in the empty hood which looked at him.

“You, Dread Emperor, killer of planets and slaughterer of the innocent. You, Neville Sharp, must die!”

For another seemingly endless moment there was silence. The gravity of accusation laid heavy in the atmosphere. Mr Sharp continued to stare into the infinite darkness of his accusers’ cowl, feeling the hot breath on his face of whatever this creature might be. All he could smell was the foetid stench of death. Mr Sharp pooled all of his courage and replied timorously, “But my name’s Colin.”

“What?”

“My name is Colin. Colin Sharp. I’m a chartered accountant.”

There was silence, so Colin continued. “I live in Godalming. I work for Kingsley, Spiggot, and Jones. They’re Chartered Accountants.”

Still silence.

“I’m married to Janet. We have two children... Amy and Brian. I don’t understand... what’s happening? Is this from the ripe stilton? Am I dying?”

For a moment more there was more heavy silence. The cowed figure backed away... “Your name is Colin?!” it asked in a voice that could be heard for miles.

“Yes.”

“Not Neville?!”

“No... sorry.”

A sighing wave of hot, exhaled breath washed over Colin Sharp, and the figure looked up. “You’ve got the wrong one you idiots!!” It looked at Mr Sharp again, “Are you sure your name is Colin?!”

“Yes.”

“You’re not trying to get one over on me, are you?! Neville isn’t your middle name, or something like that?!”

“No... it’s Clifford”

“Damn!” The figure looked up again. “Such incompetence cannot be tolerated!! You’ve called the wrong one across the dimensions! Send him back and we’ll have to try again!” To itself, the figure muttered, “How can I be expected to meet out pan-dimensional justice when all I have are fools to work the machine...”

The figure looked at Colin once more, “I’m most dreadfully sorry... Colin! You’ve be brought here by mistake. Things have been such a shower since Neville Sharp ravaged the universe. We’ll send you back now... please carry on as you were... ..”

Colin felt sweaty and nauseous once more, and the walls of the toilet stall began to reappear. The sense of huge space and the presence of a million souls was suddenly replaced by the smells of stale urine and worse still, probably results of the shock he’d just experienced...