

Dora's Blackout, Arnhem Oct 12, 2025

It's pretty hard to go about one's real business when you've been left out in the cold. Dora was still fuming inside at the folly, yes the folly, the fugue, the Houtrakkers and that wispy imp Tako, in particular, had left her in.

She recalled the expectant evening, hustling into the Cold War bomb shelter under the 'Fjord' community center. She had been mortified - she'd brought all her friends, vague acquaintances, even some groupies, roadies and buskers. The worst was Molly's look of derision and worst of all, pity. Even Baako had slipped away unseen when he saw the chance/had half a chance. The stage had hummed with 50Hz, every breath was about to tilt it into bashee style eardrum-shattering feedback whines. Primed like a grende, the sound engineer had rustled up all the vacuum tubes, condensator mikes and guitar footpedals like Jimi Hendrix would have been proud of - he'd had to nick the juice from the daycare center just to fuel the 1960s pedal by EHX Electric Lady. Too bad the little muppets would have tepid chestnut milk tomorrow. No doubt enough cause for the authorities to launch an investigation, uncover hacking, blame it on spies in the PTA, close the centre for weeks, have the muppets wander the streets nicking and begging straight out of Dickens. Benevolent side-mission accomplished. Because the brainwashing they were getting was no joke - fending for themselves and mucking about in the streets, playing paddle-ball and mock trenchwarfare and getting scabby knees and falling out of trees and burning cats' tails were a breath of fresh air in the stifling straitjacket that was the daycare center, *the harbinger of zombic model citizens.*

The risks she'd taken, holing up in the broom closet of the daycare center with Molly (her niece worked there, and was unabashedly naive, so when Molly said she needed to practice her broomsweeping for the local contest, she bought it and let us stay, giving us the code of the alarm box as well. The code to which we had already surmised, was the birthday of our exalted leader, Dustin. They stole some of the protein bars ("only 55% insect, 45% labgrown goodness") that were reserved for the young tikes. God they were good. if a bit crunchy. the ~~lost~~ ^{best} harvest had been particularly bumper crop in Chinese South-West Africa.

The stolen kisses in the closet, a bit cloying. and a lemony smell due to the detergents being stored there, were the best. whilst they waited for ~~the~~ ^{nightfall} curfew, and the dark. A lot better than playing tic tac toe, as she might have done in a more solitary age.

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