

ARNHEM? " 16th September 2025 +++ the blackout +++

The clocks struck 2130, curfew time, and the scent of chicorey coffee wafted through the dark room that was Dora' Olivetti's chambers in Schoten, municipality in the Hollands. She sat hunched over a few white cardboards, a pale LED light flickering reflections in the two glasses on the table. Opposite her, on the other side of the coffee table, sat a crosslegged figure, languishing and blowing smoke rings. Slender and redhaired, all legs, she gazed at the cards on the table, bored.

"What does it mean, Dora? those dratted tarot cards? "

"Let's see, the High Priestess... and the Tower, reversed..." not

"Oh it's all rot, isn't it? Magic doesn't exist" and she puffed another smoke ring.

Dora stretched her back and said, "Sure, Moira, and that joint will also cease to exist for me, so hand it over," and she held out her outstretched hand, her index and middle finger apart so Moira could slide the delectable unit between them.

"Ahh, that's better," as Dora took a deep draught, "Look, we'll get into the right frequency puffing this thing. It's def from her travels in Morocco, my aunt, no doubt about it you see. I read her journal from her travels in the 1980s. Du vrai skif, it said. She downed the last of her dregs of chickery coffee and grimaced at the bitter taste. "Too bad I ran out of saccherine last week, sorry about that," and she looked apologetically at Moira.

"Yeah well, time to break out that Aveze drink/booze, it's a right party and I think we ought to get wasted before the others even arrive, knowing their insatiable appetities for anything fermented. Dora reached into the adjoining drinks cabinet, handily placed, and stretched to pull two dawdy dusty glasses that upon closer inspection - peering at the glasses in the light of the LED candle - were actually not dirty enough to not warrant consumption out of. Another reach of an arm procured a dusty bottle with an yellowing label, curling at the edges. "It was under the kitchen sink, between the chlorine and the cleaning vinegar, classic"

"Good job your French studies finally amounted to something useful, knowing what Aveze is," said Moira admiringly, whilst Dora uncorked the bottle with her teeth and sloppily poured the amber liquor into the shot glasses. "Here ya go, bottoms up, or santé, à la tienne, as I should say!"

They both grimaced at the bitter gentian taste, but smiled bravely at the windfall the demise of Dora's aunt had proffered. The doorbell chimed, just as the last of the Damiate curfew bells ebbed away. "trust Erwin and them to be just in time," Dora said as she clambered out of the creaky wooden fauteuil, mangy with years of cat attention.

Dora peered through the video camera to see if it were indeed Erwin and co. She said: "What^{day} is Bloomsday? Also the year!" although this was really just a formality, since she could see Erwin's eye goggling the camera and his two cronies as well. It had started off as a joke, these passwords but since there were drones hanging in front of windows, and follow-up visits by electricians, meterboys, milkmaids and what have you, one needed to flummox the bots. Since time and temporality was not yet ingrained into the singulairity, dates and obscure literary or poetic quotes were a staple. This time it was James Joyce providing the inspiration. "Of course, My dear, that's 16th June 1904. A Thursday," he said. "Who's that with you then, Leopold?" she asked, & although she was fairly certain it was Gaelle, the sax player, and Puck, who worked in the hardware store selling bathrooms. They'd met playing the AR-game underground ripped-off versions of ... Pokemon, namely, where you had to evolve insects and virsuses. "Alright, come on in, but I hope you know its BYOB," "No worries, and a cardboard box containing a bottle or something was held up to the camera. Dora unlocked the door, the hinge, the padlock, the thingy. All strictly analog. Hacked frontdoor locks were kept out of the news with gritted teeth, by an army of bots scouring the socials. They tumbled in, and Dora said, next time it's gonna be from the Hobbit," and they hung their damp cold jackets on the wooden pegs passing as a garderobe. Stomping their feet, their glasses condensed with the amply warmth supplied by the biomethane installations in the buildings. Dora waved to the kitchen, "Glasses and Booze in there for equitous redistribution." The party progressed as a tropical storm might, from one gentle breeze to a firm blustery buffeting wind. with music louder and arms and legs gyrating, and kisses on blushing cheeks, to more whirlwind, palm-tree bending hurricanes, when arms and legs intertwined and glsitening lips kissed/were pressed on smooth lips and sweaty embraces in small cramped nooks and crannies of couches and loveseats. Due to the curfew, everyone had to spend the night regardless. Or not go to sleep at all. and clamber into a duff parka at 6 A.M, stealing a licorice root from the pot to lamely conceal the sickly sweat canonning hangover breath that could curdle milk and make babies cry.

"Catchy~~g~~oulater, Dora, awesome party," whispered Erwin in Dora's ear, who mumbled something vaguely affirmantive and snuggled closer into Molly's arms. Molly, although quite the party animal, and more into experimental knowledge than the stuff from books, woke up when Erwin and co dragged theyr shabby selves out of the apartment. "Yo Dora, you've gotta get up, you don't want another NegPoint at work..." she smoothed a blonde curl from Dora's cheek, and gently shook her. "Okay, I'm going to make some chickorey coffee..." and she extricated her gangly body from the couch and Dora's embrace.