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The Vodka Factory: The Heart of Helsinki

It's a warm summer night in Helsinki. You're walking north along Mannerheimintie. Suddenly you catch the scent of fresh vodka drifting through the trees. You have arrived in the spiritual center of Helsinki: the Vodka Factory, located opposite the biggest church in Helsinki, just a stone's throw from the Senate House.

If you have time, it's worth stopping for a glass of newly made vodka straight from the

distillery. In the summer, vodka is served on the atmospheric terrace under the lindens. Cheerful waiters will refill your glass before you even have the chance to put it down. Passed-out customers are stacked up discreetly behind the bushes.

Busy townspeople tend to visit the Vodka Factory for a couple of shots before rushing off to their jobs, homes, the train, the doctor, the hairdresser, the tax office, the shops, a friend's house, an AA

meeting, or the parent-teacher meeting at the school. Or just for the fun of it. Before each plenary session of the Senate House, the representatives form a long, winding line to the vodka tap. They are regular customers and thus allowed to pour the noble spirit into their own vessels.

Every morning there's quite a spectacle as the usual throng of people crowds between the Vodka Factory and the center of Helsinki. These thirsty



townspeople are looking to wet their whistle at the daily tasting: each morning, 200 volunteers are chosen to sample the vodka distilled during the night to check that the drink provided to consumers does not contain too much methanol.

The Vodka Factory is also the center of the city's public life and festive occasions. Each new president of Finland visits the Vodka Factory in connection with the inauguration ceremony. This custom dates from the early years of Finnish independence. According to tradition, predictions on the upcoming term of office are made depending on how long it takes until the president is carried out of the Vodka Factory in a state of unconsciousness.

Vodka is a part of everyday Finnish life in thousands of ways. Upon embarking on your journey to Finland, you may already witness pilots throwing back sturdy shots of vodka before grabbing the controls of the plane. On the streets of Helsinki, you will quickly become familiar with vodka kiosks and advertisements

"The Vodka Factory is the center of the city's public life and festive occasions."

featuring colorful storybook characters marketing kiddie vodka to schoolchildren.

If you happen to spend time in Helsinki on the first of May or the Night of the Arts in August, you're in for a treat. On these special days, the public fountains are hooked up to the pipes of the Vodka Factory, and everybody can drink their fill of free vodka!

It's said that the closest you can get to the Finnish soul is on the terrace of the Vodka Factory on a summer night, when the raised voices of young people sipping their first drinks, the nonsensical mumblings of afternoon drunks, and the snores of hardy customers who have sat there since the morning are joined together in harmony – echoes of which can be heard in the symphonies of Jean Sibelius. VS



Helsinki Stock Exchange Ready for Extraterrestrial Companies

Helsinki Stock Exchange announced today that they are all set for trading shares of extraterrestrial public companies.

"We have already added a placeholder for the galactic exchange into our web page template," their PR manager explains. "We are also able to

sell Nokia shares to alien investors. Some minor details still need to be worked out before the actual stock trading can start. We need to determine if the alien culture understands the concept of capital, convert their medium of exchange into Euros, explain the European financial laws to

them, create a galactic financial law, and also to find some developed alien cultures. Oh yes, and their companies need to write their financial reports in EU approved format. That takes some time to get used to, so it would be a good idea to bring it up in a first contact situation." HL

Nine Billion Names of Dog

BY ARTTURI S. LARKKINEN

Koira, koiran, koiraa, koirassa, koirasta, koiraan, koiralla, koiralta, koiralle, koirana, koiraksi, koiratta, koirineen, koirin, koirasi, koirani, koiransa, koiramme, koiranne, koiraaani, koiraaasi, koiraaansa, koiraaamme, koiraaanne, koirassani, koirassasi, koirassansa, koirassamme, koirassanne, koirastani, koirastasi, koirastansa, koirastamme, koirastanne, koirallani, koiral-

lasi, koirallansa, koirallamme, koirallanne, koiranani, koiranasi, koiranansa, koiranamme, koirananne, koirakseni, koiraksesi, koiraksensa, koiraksemme, koiraksenne, koirattani, koirattasi, koirattansa, koirattamme, koirattanne, koirineni, koirinesi, koirinensa, koirinemme, koirinenne, koirakaan, koirankaan, koirakaan, koirassakaan, koirastakaan... (CONT'D)

Finland's Metal Tradition Traces Back to Ancient Times

Finland is regarded as the most metal country in Europe, and rightfully so. The metal music tradition began already with the great Blacknämöinen, the hero of the Finnish epic Kalevala, which describes the true history of Finnish people. Blacknämöinen is the embodiment of Finnish metal: son of a goddess of air, he possessed the loudest growl and scream in the whole land, drove women to suicides,

and created the first kantele, a badass instrument made out of the bones of a giant pike and strings out of maiden hair. He was hugely admired among his fans, but some people were jealous of his talent – such as the foolish Yo-kahainen, who decided to challenge him to a sing off. How did that end up for him (and how the superiority of metal was once again confirmed), you can read in the excerpt below.



BLACKNÄMÖINEN SINGS YO-KAHAINEN INTO A SWAMP

In the north of Kalevala,
Yo-kahainen, young MC
Heard of a singer, much better
than he:
Blacknämöinen, brutal
minstrel
Shredding louder than the
thunder,
Screaming songs of heroes
damned
The most metal man of all
Northland.

Yo-kahainen, overcome with
jealousy,
Decided there can only be one
MC
Sulking, he said to his old
mama
"Imma go to the South of
Kalevala

And show to that saggy old
sap
That I'm the best in a battle
rap!"

Wise and worried, said his
mama
"Do not go, or he will eat ya!"
But young Yo-kahainen did
not listen
Furious and firm in his
decision,
Grabbed his boombox and
golden chain
And rode off in his pimped-up
sledge.

Riding reckless, driving to
defend his pride
Didn't notice Blacknämöinen
was out for a ride.

Yo-kahainen swerved towards
the edge
But he lost all control of his
sledge
And drove right into the
brutal bard
Knocking him off of his own
cart.

Before Blacknämöinen said a
word
Yo-kahainen turned his
boombox on
"Yo, the word on the street is
you're better than me
I'm here to challenge you to
see who's the better MC!"
Bemused and bashful
Blacknämöinen
Gave the first turn to Yo-
kahainen.

"Yo, yo, yo! Let me introduce
myself,
I'm the new wonder and I'm
here to stay!
Yo-kahainen is the name
And I know all the stories
there are to tell!
There's no one who drops
sicker beats
And I know this land's every
b...each.

You can never beat my free-
style
Look at you, you're getting
senile
You just an old relic here in
Kalevala
That warpaint makes you look
like a panda!
Feeling all tough in your
spiked wristbands
You can't even put together a
band!
And yo mama's fat. Yo."

Blacknämöinen became filled
with anger
And to stop the sap from
further slander
Blacknämöinen, the brutal
bard
Hit the strings of his horrid
harp,
Fiercely frowning, he took a
breath
And onto Yo-kahainen
unleashed his wrath.

To the mighty minstrel's
sound of singing
Surrounding spruces swayed
headbanging
His raw riffs resonated
through the air

The wheezing wind became
his snare
The shaking mountains were
his drummer
And the roaring thunder his
bass player


The whole land became
Blacknämöinen's band
And sent Yo-kahainen sinking
into the sand
Seeing he was stuck up to his
golden chain
Defeated and desperate he
shouted in pain:
"Please don't eat me, I'm too
pretty to die!
Let me go; I'll give you my
sister to sacrifice!"

Blacknämöinen brought his
beastly gig to end
Intrigued, he inquired "A
sister, did you say?"
"A young one, she will taste
tender when fried!"
Blacknämöinen has changed
his monstrous mind
And yanking Yo-kahainen out
of the mess
Set off to cause the damsel
great distress.

PO

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Nine Billion Names of Dog

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koiraltakaan, koirallekaan,
koiranakaan, koiraksikaan,
koirattakaan, koirineenkaan,
koirinkaan, koirako, koiranko,
koiraako, koirassako, koiras-
tako, koiraanko, koirallako,
koiraltako, koiralleko, koira-
nako, koiraksiko, koirattako,
koirineenko, koirinko, koirasi-
kaan, koiranikaan, koiransa-
kaan, koirammekaan, koiran-
nekaan, koiraanikaan, koira-
sikaan, koiraansakaan, koi-
raammekaan, koiraannekaan,
koirassanikaan, koirassasi-

kaan, koirassansakaan koi-
rassammekaan, koirassanne-
kaan, koirastanikaan, koiras-
tasikaan, koirastansakaan,
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koirattannekaan, koirineni-
kaan, koirinesikaan, koirinen-
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rinennekaan, koirasiko, koi-
raniko, koiransako, koiram-
meko, koiranneko, koiraaniko,
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rassaniko, koirassasiko, koi-
rassansako, koirassammeko,
koirassanneko, koirastaniko,
koirastasiko, koirastansako,
koirastammeko, koirastanne-
ko, koirallaniko, koirallasiko,
koirallansako... (CONT'D)

How to Drink Like a Finn:

A GUIDE TO FINNISH DRINKING CULTURE

You have just arrived to Finland on a late evening flight, checked into a hotel, and all the restaurants nearby are already closed. So you go to the nearest store to grab some rye bread and a couple of beers only to be told by the cashier she can't sell you those, even though you are waving around your passport, explaining that you are indeed of legal drinking age. What's up with that? We are here to give you some tips on how to get drunk in this strange country.

WHEN AND WHERE TO BUY ALCOHOL?

Basic beers and ciders can be bought in every supermarket – but only between 9AM and 9PM. For something stronger (including wine), one must go to a specialized store called Alko. But heads up – Alko is closed on Sundays. While one might think that this is due to everyone being too hungover at the end of the weekend to create any profit, the real reason behind this inconvenience is religion.

FINLAND, RELIGION, AND ALCOHOL

Finland is still, for the most part, a Christian country. This is no surprise, since a lot of people can appreciate a dude who can turn water into wine, especially someone who loves their nightcap (and morningcap, middaycap, quarter-to-two-cap, any-other-time-of-day-cap) as much as Finns. But wait – if Finns appreciate Jesus's bartending skills, why would they not celebrate him

by drinking on a day of worship? Actually, it makes perfect sense.

FINNISH PASTIME IN THE PAST TIMES

Ever since the first drunken Swede stumbled into Finland in the 12th century, bringing along some Bibles and wine, Finns have strived to master the art of brewing and distilling alcohol themselves. However, old habits die hard, such as the long pagan tradition of Finland. No matter how hard medieval Finns tried, they ended up with homemade magical potions instead of the desired feeling-numbing agent. Suddenly, there were people running around who, on their evening stroll from a local inn, had been having conversations with bears, seeing in the dark, had taken a shortcut home by walking on a lake, or had even flown. One of these drinks, a barley beer called Sahti, gave Finns the power to withstand extreme hot temperatures, like the ones in saunas. Unfortunately, the Church was not OK with these magic potions – it's one thing to get wasted and raise hell, but witchcraft is frowned upon. So, the first bureau for controlling the intake of magical elixirs was established, and to this day Finnish alcohol can't be sold on religious holidays.

DID YOU SAY MAGIC? GO ON

Unfortunately, apart from Sahti, most of the traditional recipes have been lost, and only a fraction of these enhancing drinks is still being

produced. But luckily, they are widely available from Alko and every bar with an occult license. The most typical and famous Finnish potion is Salmiakki, a thick, black drink which turns anyone into a black metal singer in just two bottles. Jaloviina, another popular Finnish drink, greatly improves your speech, and can even you the ability to speak a foreign language! During the long winter months, a several shots of Koskenkorva a day is recommended, as it will greatly increase your resistance to cold (and now you know how Finns withstand the harsh

weather: it's magic). And for those unfortunate, romantically-challenged souls, a shot of tar will instantly turn you into a badass in front of your chosen one. Some drinks are available only seasonally, such as Sima. This cold, sweet drink, is usually available only during several weeks of summer, as it is designed to help people withstand the twenty degree heat. And new drinks are constantly being developed. One of the more recent drinks is Lonkero, or long drink, which was specially invented for the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. This drink, which

greatly enhances your stamina, strength, AND agility, was a huge success. Enormously popular, Lonkero is the only allowed doping amongst Finnish athletes.

AND IF I JUST WANT TO GET DRUNK?

When in Finland, do as the Finns do: go to Estonia. Just a short ride across the sea, this small land with lax alcohol laws is the place to get magic-free versions of all the Finnish drinks. But you are missing out; you really should try the mesmerizing power of the local potions. Are you worried you might look ridiculous? Try to plan your trip around some pagan Finnish holiday, such as the First of May celebrations, Midsummer, Christmas, or any weekend; these massive witchcraft celebrations are the best time to dabble in some magic. **PO**



EUKONKANTO

The witch-carrying world championship is over and the record breaking results keep astounding fans all over the countryside of Finland. Spun off from the original wife-carrying tradition, practiced by mostly Finnish non-witchcraft folk, witch-carrying began as an attempt to bring notice to traditions of witches, but has since developed its own, separate event.

Witch-carrying has not yet been embraced by the Olympics, but that is subject to change as the popularity of

the sport has tripled in the two years since its conception.

The undisputed champion of the sport, and winner of all three championships held thus far, is Jukka-Pekka Antervo, 208 cm, blonde, blue-eyed, Adonis. Just a second later with an astounding 70 seconds, Alexander Arn, mightily improving from last year's final place. The third place belongs to Walter Pärt. The fourth and last preferred to stay anonymous.

The competition, which has husbands carrying witches on their backs in a sprint of 330 meters (roughly the same

in witch feet) through obstacles, saw the birth of several new, arguably revolutionary carrying techniques. Walter Pärt and his witch Norma Pärt developed an offshoot of the widely embraced Estonian-style (the witch hangs upside down with legs around her carrier's neck). In the revised take, the witch keeps herself from falling down by holding her carrier's muscular thighs with her hands, alternatively holding by the fat, often burrowing her nails into the flesh. The legs go under one armpit, a risky move as that spot may get slippery.

Alexander Arn, a Swede, as a response to the nationalistic sentiment brought by his Estonian competitor, pioneered the Swedish carry, something he had been working on ever since

the second championship. The carry had gone through many stages and several witches, finally being perfected with the prodigious Menni Mustonen.

The recently married couple is a sight to behold, the man standing one giant foot tall, over 2/3 bigger than his partner in height and 3/5 larger in size. Hanging on his neck, this gem of a woman was able to whisper words of encouragement to her husband and holler spells at approaching opponents.

The winning Finnish couple did little in way of innovation. The technique was old-school, considered by most aficionados as "outdated", "counter-productive", and "embarrassingly dense". Results, however, told a different tale. Carrying his witch in his arms like

"The popularity of the sport has tripled in the two years since its conception."

a newlywed bride, the team of two flew over obstacles, barely touching the ground, light like a feather. No spells left the witch's lips, which had the jury question the validity of their performance, but accusations of leaving out performance enhancing spells quickly died out. Though the use of witchcraft is mandatory, the rules on what counts as magic have been contested in recent years. Those that saw the run could hardly say there was no magic in the air. **ANON.**

Emmanuel Arsé

Miss Korpi and the Golden Egg of the Nazis

At the heart of our homeland, there is a region of which we know almost nothing." Koitonheimo's words echoed through my mind as I sat looking out the train window at the landscape, which gradually grew more forested and wild as we moved further on from Mikkeli.

The freshly laid tracks of the Greater Savo Railroad clanked under me. I could not help feeling proud of the effort made by our young nation. The increase in tax revenue following the repeal of Prohibition had been used for the right purpose. The woodland, untouched since prehistoric times, was finally penetrated by a railroad that would frighten away the wolves, bogeys, and scaly monsters from folktales, which were said to dwell in the depths of the forest.

"The Greater Savo Railroad only cuts through a corner of one forest in Greater Savo," I imagined Koitonheimo's voice reminding me in its annoying way. "It is said that nobody has really explored the mysterious valleys of the mountains of Savo. Even the ancient kings of Savo did not dare to

enter them." Koitonheimo gave a snort of contempt.

My conversation with A. Fj. Koitonheimo, the chief of the Bureau, had taken place the previous day. When Amanda told me that morning that I had a telephone call from the Bureau, I asked her to fetch my traveling skirt from the closet and pack my things while I was occupied; I had anticipated this call.

Koitonheimo grunted a greeting from behind his desk. He was an old-fashioned man who found it difficult to accept the methods of my Sisterhood. However, our help was good enough for him when the Fatherland was in distress. I also anticipated the lecture that was about to follow, mainly on things with which I was already very familiar. More so than Koitonheimo himself, in fact.

"We have received information that a foreign power has, for some time now, been investigating the Greater Savo woods, and has also established its... lair, shall we say, there," Koitonheimo said, grimacing. This was a failure for the Bureau, then. But this was

undeniably something new. I leaned forward to hear more. Koitonheimo leaned back, probably without even realizing it.

"Germany," Koitonheimo stated. "Since last summer, the Germans have had some kind of base deep in the woods of Greater Savo, possibly all the way in the mountains. We found out a month ago, when an intoxicated German gentleman posing as a tourist let this information slip in the restaurant Kappeli. It seems that the Germans are planning to do something tomorrow on the Greater Savo Express train."

Koitonheimo looked out the window. The early summer sun lit up the Bureau's courtyard in southern Helsinki. "I was... recommended to pass this mission to the Sisterhood, and especially your name, Miss Korpi, was mentioned in relation to this."

That was surprising. I was not in favor with the leaders of my Sisterhood, because – well, we had certain philosophical differences as to which courses of action were suitable.

"Your mission is to find out what the Germans are doing. And, if they are after something that could benefit the Fatherland, to acquire it for us. If necessary, you are also fully authorized to stop whatever they are doing," Koitonheimo said with a wry smile.

"Was there anything else?" I asked, returning his smile. I could not resist the temptation to adjust my position so that my blouse opened slightly between the buttons at my bosom. I noticed this having the desired effect. I had assessed Koitonheimo's weaknesses correctly.

"N-no," Koitonheimo said, clearing his throat. "This folder contains descriptions and a few photographs of persons we suspect of being German agents."

As I took the folder, I leaned forward and offered him a good view. The poor man, a prisoner of his own limitations. Just like the matriarchs of the Sisterhood.

This was how I ended up on the Greater Savo Express. The carriage was full of happily laughing young women returning from Helsinki. Judging by their chatting, they were

students of domestic science from somewhere near Joensuu, returning from their long-planned school excursion. They had saved money especially in order to travel on the Express. They positively glowed with sweet, youthful vigor, and I felt the same mood affecting me as well.

My actual target consisted of four men who sat a few rows ahead talking quietly amongst themselves. I could have easily identified them even without the descriptions given by Koitonheimo. I considered using my methods for a bit of eavesdropping, but it would probably not be worth the trouble. They were hardly likely to blab their secrets on a public train carriage. The men were talking in Finnish, which was astounding. A trace of a foreign accent could be detected in their speech, but if I had not known better, I might have taken them for native Swedish-speakers with fluent Finnish skills.

Apparently, the Germans took this plan of theirs seriously, whatever it was. That was disquieting news. In my opinion, Hitler was a loathsome little man leading first a party of repulsive hooligans, and now all of Germany. If I managed to foil the Germans' plans, it would be reward enough to last me a good long while.

I awoke from my angry thoughts as I noticed the men getting up. They went to the restaurant car. After a while, I followed them. They were sitting at the same table. On the same side of the car, right before their table, was another, empty table, so I sat down and asked the waiter to bring me a menu.

The men were eating Karelian meat stew, I picked at my salmon loaf and observed them. The clanking of the tracks and the buzz of conversation in the restaurant car prevented me from eavesdropping on them, but I could easily figure out their reciprocal relationships. The man sitting near the corridor and facing me was the leader of the group, a thin, bald man, the oldest of the four. He had a harsh-looking mouth used to command: clearly an officer or a former officer. He did not speak much, but whenever he opened his mouth, the others immediately fell silent. Next to the bald man sat number two,

an intelligent young man with dark hair. There was something restless about him, as if he were not entirely sure of his position. I could not see the two men who sat with their backs to me, but judging by the way they talked and gestured, they were probably under the command of the other two. Number two was probably the youngest of the bunch, which would explain his insecurity. I gleaned enough of their conversation to find out that his name was "Heikki" – probably Heinrich.

He would be my target. I began to stalk the right opportunity.

It came after a moment, as the man excused himself and rose from the table. He made his way towards the compartment, most likely to use the toilet.

Now, I had to move quickly, if I wanted to use the enchantment. When he had disappeared from the door of the restaurant car, I got up and followed him discreetly.

I was right; he locked himself in the toilet. I looked around and slipped into an alcove near the carriage door. Calming down my breathing, I performed a quick mental exercise, a basic tenet of the Sisterhood. Finally I opened my blouse just enough to slide my left hand between my breasts, where the pendant of the Sisterhood hung.

I asked the pendant for the power to control this man. For a moment, I hesitated. Using the enchantment, it was easy to maneuver a man to say a few words or to do something he would otherwise not have done; special methods were not always even necessary. But now, I would clearly need more. I knew what I could do. The problem was that I had never tried it before.

I grimaced inwardly and glanced around me to make sure I was alone. Then I slipped my right hand under my skirt. Mentally cursing my impractical clothing, I struggled with the waistband of my underpants. Finally my hand was between my legs. If someone were to enter the corridor now, I would be hard pressed to explain what I was doing.

I forced myself to remain calm and started to repeat the Sisterhood's exercise in my mind. My hand accompanied the exercise by means of slight movements. I felt myself growing warmer, the force beginning to glow inside me.

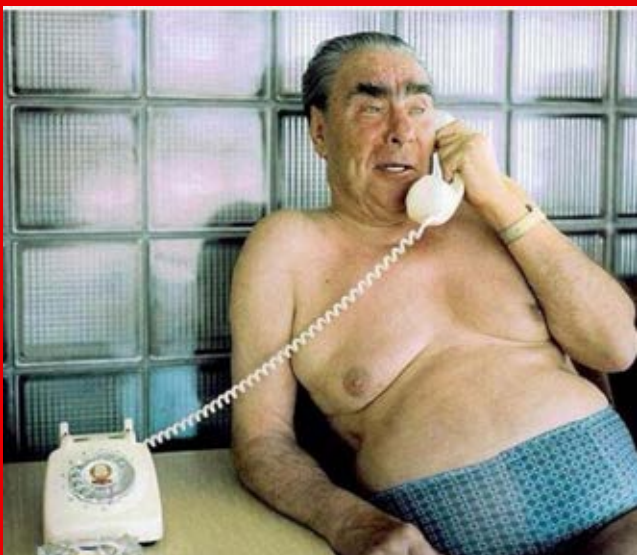
This force was something I had never experienced earlier. It struggled inside me like a skittish horse. I had to use it soon or something would happen.

I heard water flowing from the tap. I had to act now. I stepped closer to the door as Heikki stepped out.

"Oh, excuse me!" I cried softly, bumping into him. Instinct-

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tively, he grabbed me, and by swaying a bit more I managed to press myself against him. I felt the force rushing to the surface of my body. I was ready to direct it towards him.

For a second, we stood there holding each other, and it was then I acted: I swung my right hand under his nose, ending the movement in my hair as if attempting to fix my coiffure.

My forefinger was slightly moist from my exercise. I moved my gaze to his face and saw the faint fragrance working its magic. His nostrils flared, and he did not take away his hands, one of which was holding my back and the other resting on my hip, a bit too low for propriety. His pupils dilated as I held his gaze. The enchantment and the force were working. Something in him changed.

"Hilde... how can you be here?" Heikki stammered out, his eyes dimming. He did not notice that he was now speaking German. I stepped a bit closer, making him grab me harder. With a slight movement of my body I made him act; he pulled me into the toilet. I locked the door behind my back.

He was still raving, but I intensified the effect by grasping

his face with my right forefinger next to his nose. My force flowed straight into his mind. Then I kissed him, letting my body press against him.

These were the methods that Mother Aino, the leader of my Sisterhood, had warned me about. I was not entirely sure which parts of my actions were unauthorized use of the enchantment and which parts were – something else. I could not have cared less at the moment, as Heikki turned out to be a very good kisser. I felt him getting hard against my pelvis.

"Hilde... oh, Hilde..." he groaned.

I steeled myself; I had to strengthen my hold on him. So I pushed my jacket back in order to make the buttons of my blouse easier to open. Heikki raised his hands to the buttons, but his fingers shook too much. I had to open the buttons myself, and felt my hold on him weakening slightly. I decided to leave my blouse alone and pressed myself closer, looking into Heikki's eyes. He sighed and moved his hands down my back. I felt both hand squeezing my buttocks.

Very well. Heikki was one of those men who turned back to look after women.

This meant that I had to try another way, even though it required suppleness. I took a final look into Heikki's eyes and ensured that he would remain in my thrall for the time it took me to turn around. I held onto the sink in front of me and caught his gaze again in the mirror.

Then I arched my back and pushed my buttocks against the front of Heikki's trousers. Even through two layers of thick fabric, I could feel his rock-hard manhood. He grunted in approval and began to pull my skirt up. I helped him by pulling my underpants down. I teased him, pressing myself harder against him as he was struggling with his belt. Finally, I heard his trousers falling to his ankles.

His naked penis slapped against my buttocks. I could feel the force inside me reach new heights. I was hot. Heikki was moaning with pleasure, and I feared that he would soon experience something premature.

Now, I had to concentrate and gather all the force for my use. I slipped my other hand behind me, reaching for Heikki's organ. Oh, it was so hard and throbbing! A part of

me wanted to push it into my damp place without further ado; I started to understand Mother Aino's sermons on how the force always has a counterforce – and a price.

I reminded myself that I was dealing with a German national socialist. I bit my lip and let my hand travel further. I grabbed Heikki firmly by the testicles and twisted. At the same time, I caught his eyes in the mirror.

His pupils were dilated. His gaze held pain and pleasure in proportions that I could now control with tiny movements of my hand.

"Now. Talk. What are you and your comrades planning?"

His breathing was ragged. I loosened my grip a little.

"There's a golden egg at the Base... such pretty girls, and Doktor Müller is going to give them to the lizards..."

I could not seem to get anything sensible out of Heikki. Was he drunk?

His voice began to falter. I had to loosen my grip more. This position was uncomfortable for both of us, and I could not hold out for long either.

I wanted that skin-covered staff inside me! No, I wanted to get out of here. Heikki was grunting.

The girls, what was he saying about the girls? It was hard for me to concentrate.

"What girls do you mean?" I puffed out between my lips.

"The girls from the agricultural school... on the train."

I felt a cold wind blowing inside me. The young ladies from the school of domestic science in Joensuu.

"More. Tell me more!" I said and squeezed his testicles.

"We're taking them to the Base in the forest. The lizards are waiting."

Lizards. Was he talking about the dragons and scaly beasts that were described in the Kalevala and lived, according to folk-tales, in the depths of the Greater Savo woodlands? Had the Nazis really found these creatures? But what did the girls have to do with them?

"What are you going to do to the girls?"

I squeezed his testicles once more. He nearly screamed.

"Doktor Müller says that the golden egg can make invincible soldiers out of lizards and humans. The girls will give birth to the soldiers." The last word was but a whisper, and in the mirror I could see his eyes rolling back in his head.

TO BE CONTINUED

Elrond the Sauna Elf

"Tolkien based his character 'Elrond' on a real Finnish half-elf he met," Jaakko insisted after a few more beers. I don't usually consider someone I just met in a bar as a reliable source of information, but he seemed quite serious about it. He had attracted my attention by attempting to order a beer in Quenya. I offered to act as an interpreter, and we ended up talking for hours.

At first I thought his claim was ridiculous, but it got even better. He told me he had actually met Elrond, and drafted me a map of his whereabouts on a napkin. Jaakko's stories made me curious enough to travel to the middle of a forest in a remote part of Northern Karelia.

"Yes, I do know Elrontti," a farmer, whose old estate was the destination in my napkin map, told me. "He's been taking care of the family smoke sauna forever. He also maintains the garden and forest, so we give him some food for his services," the farmer explained. "He's a bit of an eccentric fellow, keeps to himself and is not easy to meet. He works mostly at night, often wandering through the forest talking to animals when the sky is starry, and he is totally

obsessed with sauna. There's actually only one way to meet him. Go and have a nice sauna, then pretend to leave but return to the sauna in quarter of an hour, and you'll meet him there."

My curiosity was starting to kill me, so perhaps I did need a relaxing sauna. I did exactly as instructed, and returned to sauna with my heart pounding at full speed from excitement.

"Greetings, stranger," a voice surprised me before my eyes had adjusted to the dim light of the smoke sauna. I mumbled a response and in a moment saw a thin, tall, long-haired guy seemingly in his fifties sitting on the benches, looking quite at ease even though I intruded his private session. "I thought you had finished with your sauna," he continued. "You're welcome to stay if you bring beer."

After the sauna I offered him tobacco and more beer, as Jaakko had told me to do. It did make Elrontti talkative, and after a couple of hours he was finally ready to reveal something about his ancestry and elves in general.

"There are two kinds of Finnish elves. The first kind are the small ones who inhabit saunas or other buildings or work as minions for

Santa Claus. Most Finns know about them and often call them gnomes. Then there are the Kaleva Elves, who are bards and warriors, an ancient race who sailed into the West. That's Sweden, as far as I know. Good riddance, in my opinion. They were always singing about some star or a squirrel or their own heroic deeds, never letting a guy get drunk in peace. I also do love the stars and animals, but I don't need to sing operatic arias about them every freakin' evening. I'm a half-elf. My father was a sauna elf and my mother was a maid who sneaked into the sauna after everyone else had left. Daddy did a little elf magic with her and later I was born."

Perhaps I wouldn't have believed him, if he hadn't started blowing tobacco smoke into shapes that were beyond the skill of any mortal man. Elrond told me that he has been smoking all kinds of weeds for 800 years as a way to keep the garden in control. Some of the shapes would have made an innocent mortal man blush.

I asked him about Kalevala. "Oh yes, that Elias Lönnrot fellow. Stalked me for weeks before I gave in and sang some old songs to get rid of the creep. He stayed for months,



wrote down every word I sang. Half of the stuff I made up on the fly. And the songs were not enough for him; he also asked for a sample of every plant I smoked. He published a book about plants and songs both and sent me signed copies. Weirdest groupie I've ever had."

I couldn't hold my excitement any longer. With a shaking voice I asked if he met Tolkien?

"You have a list of weirdos you're going through? Yes, I met him too. Only a hundred years after I got rid of one guy

obsessed with language, another one pops in. Thankfully, he wasn't too interested in plants. Wanted me to teach him Kalevalian Elvish. I didn't know any, but I made up some words to get rid of him. He seemed pleased enough with that and left after only a week. Gave me a freaking tiara, off all things, for my troubles."

There was so much more I wanted to ask Elrond, but I did get the hint and left him in peace before I added myself into his list of nuisances appearing every hundred years. I hope. HL

Primal Reindeer Sledge

Far away, in the far North of Finland, lies a winter wonderland called Lapland, a place full of snow and polar lights. Here is where live a people called Sami, who enjoy all the cold weather, having their own parliament and, most of all, reindeer herding. There are so many reindeer farms in Lapland: sleigh farming, cute-reindeer-tourists-can-pose-with-for-Instagram-likes farming, fur farming, and good old reindeer meat farming, providing Finns with meat for their traditional dishes, such as reindeer pizza, since time eternal. You can't walk a day

through that cold, barren land without stumbling upon one. But one of these Sami-run reindeer farms is special – they have an exclusive agreement with a certain Korvatunturi native called Christmas Goat (sometimes going by his lesser known nickname Santa Claus) to train flying reindeers for his sleigh. It is a great privilege to work for him, and all the reindeers from the neighboring farms are so jealous of the reindeers who choose to be born on the Christmas Farm, and all the fun they have with their flying lessons, falling courses, having their noses

robotically modified for night light, and a promise of certain work stability in the future.

But once upon a time, a reindeer was born on the Christmas Farm who did not enjoy being there at all. His name was Matti, but he preferred to be called “Sledge” and all he wished for was to be on any other farm but the Christmas Farm. You see, Sledge never wanted to grow up and get a boring job working for Santa; instead he wanted to become a famous metal guitar player. And so, while his fellow reindeers were trying on their new noses during night orientation practice, Sledge promanaded in sunglasses and a top hat over his permed antlers, looking real badass while crashing into the traffic cones. While his classmates were trying hard to stay in the air during flying classes, Sledge only wished to be on the air with his own band Reindeerica. And play time for Sledge always meant guitar practice time, putting the guitar down only two minutes to midnight, just before the herders turned off the lights.

Unfortunately, it seemed as if everything went against Sledge and his dream. A sad but true fact is that reindeers have no fingers – and fingers are quite important things for a guitarist to have. But Sledge was determined to be famous, and not even his handicap would stop him. After many months of hard practice, Sledge finally mastered the power chord. Even though he had yet to pick up on what to do with his right hand, Sledge was so encouraged by his success he began getting his classmates aboard this rock'n'roll train. Taking on Sledge's

example, Ville – the Christmas Farm's guard dog – took on the nickname “Fleas” and grabbed the bass, and Lars, Sledge's classmate from roof-landing, who lacked any musical talent whatsoever, became Reindeerica's drummer.

Finally, Sledge's dream was coming true. The band found a small practice place on a little clearing in the forest surrounding the farm, and sneaked off there every night. At first, they were all alone under the stars, but soon the forest animals became curious about the ruckus. Before long, all the rabbits, mice, birds, a fox on the run, and other animals were gathering for their nightly performances, headbanging in the moonlight. And one fateful night, a big she-wolf grabbed the mic, and as sudden as that, Reindeerica had a singer. Sledge was the happiest little reindeer in the world.

Unfortunately, this did not last long. First, the Sami herders found out that Fleas was not only colorblind, but entirely snowblind, which was not a good thing for a dog working in snow, and they sent him off to a vet for retirement. The new dog found the hole in the fence

they used to sneak out, and alerted the herders. Not only did they fix the hole, but they noticed the wolf tracks in the snow surrounding it. The herders right away enforced strict rules for all the inhabitants of the farm. That night, forced to lie in bed, Sledge heard a loud bang. The following morning, when Lars showed up for breakfast without his antler-ring, Sledge knew this was the end of Reindeerica.

Worried about the state of The Christmas Farm, the Sami herders called for Santa's elves to do an inspection and help them figure out how to get the reindeers to walk the line again. Sledge took this as an opportunity to plead his case, and to get himself transferred to the School of Rock, instead. When the elves arrived, Sledge curled his antlers extra kinky, put on his most expensive hat, and when it was his turn to show the inspectors what he had learned, he performed the best air guitar solo of his life. And it impressed everyone around, for when the elves left, the farm principal called him into his office. “Matti,” he told him, “we've noticed you are not very happy here. We've decided to send you to a farm much better suited for you.” Sledge could not help but to break his rock'n'roll cool and smile.

So there you have it, kids. Don't ever give up on your ambitions, and dream on! **PO**



Traditional Finnish Reindeer Stew

Ingredients:

- 500g of reindeer meat
- 70g of butter
- To taste: salt, pepper and crushed teenage dreams

Instructions:

- Heat up the butter in a large pan and add reindeer meat cut into thin slices. Add spices and cook until done. Serve with cranberries and benzodiazepines.

LAUGHS WITH SANTA CLAUS

One day, Santa Claus called all of us elves to see him.

“All right, who's been spreading rumors that I don't live here on Korvatunturi, but in a luxury ice castle on the North Pole?” Santa Claus thundered.

“Not me!” cried Hairy Ears the elf, who was not known for his sharp wit.

On the third day of the interrogations, Hairy Ears confessed to having murdered Bambi's mother. This made even the tough elves interrogating him burst out in laughter. The guffaws were so jolly

that children in neighboring villages thought Christmas had already come.

– Z. Z., Tomtedalen

One morning in early December, we were shoveling in our “rice porridge”, thin gray gruel with nary a grain of rice in sight. In the middle of our breakfast, Mrs. Claus stepped in and asked sweetly, “Dear elves! How do you like my Christmas porridge this morning?”

“Tastes like wolverine droppings, as usual,” growled

Weepy Eyes the elf. Naturally, he was immediately fed to the reindeer.

“And how do the rest of you like my Christmas porridge?” chirped Mrs. Claus, smiling like the midwinter sun.

“It's the best thing I've ever eaten!” cried out Brown Nose the elf. This was true, as none of us had ever eaten anything else. Of course, Brown Nose was immediately fed to the reindeer as well.

“Does anyone else want to tell me how they like my Christmas porridge?” Mrs. Claus asked in a voice that

would make icicles shiver. Wisely, we remained silent, and were all fed to the reindeer, as they had to be well nourished in order to carry presents for all the children of the world to enjoy.

–Y. R., Santaland

The preparations for Christmas of '73 were difficult. I was part of an elf brigade commanded by Jingle “Balls”, the strict head elf who even Santa Claus himself rarely dared to order about. That year, children's wish lists had begun to overflow with all kinds of plastic crap that was a real pain to put together in our primitive elf workshop. I was just finish-

ing up the electrical couplings of a car track, when I noticed that I didn't have the tool I needed.

“You got a screwdriver without a cross head?” I asked Boozehead the elf, who was working next to me.

“No, but I got one with no Christmas spirit,” Boozehead quipped.

The whole workshop exploded with the kind of laughter that only a jolly flock of elves can produce.

We didn't notice that “Balls” himself was standing in the doorway. He turned all of us into stuffed elf dolls that children enjoyed for years after the hard Christmas of '73.

– F., Rostock

VS

DON'T GET LOST IN FINLAND!



The 8th Symphony



Finnish Laments

One of the most traditional Finnish art-forms are songs performed while crying, so-called laments. These laments were being sang at any occasion and for any reason, such as funerals, wars, weddings, winter was coming, sauna was too cold, one had to wake up in the morning, one had to go to sleep in the evening, Firefly was cancelled, or one just got to the very end of a good magazine.

The photograph above captures one such lament performance from June, 1906. The lyrics, however, date back to 1830s.

Oh how fast the night has passed

Why did you leave us so young?

The light flickered and the wench said "we're closed"

And the light inside my heart went out forever.

What wouldn't I give for just one more glass

Or five.

Now we have to leave this fine establishment

And go out into the cold and cruel world

And cross the street to get to the next bar.

Perkele.

PO

It's official, Jean Sibelius' 8th and last Symphony has seen its completion and will debut on Finland's 100th anniversary, 60 years after the legendary Finnish composer's passing. Sibelius' masterwork took him almost twenty years to complete, delayed both by a string of major successes, brought by now-considered minor works, and drama, coming from struggles with excessive use of alcohol, weighing heavily on his family life.

There are no clean music sheets of the 8th, a piece with over 100 instruments, lasting almost an hour. Sibelius, a known pedantic perfectionist, burned the official copy. The current one has been completed from different bits and pieces, found from different notes, sometimes gathered from arguably questionable sources. "Napkins, diaries, parchment, even wood; his brilliant inspiration could hit him in the oddest of places," laughs Arja Tarjanne, the conductor of the symphony.

Some skeptics have deemed the symphony as mere speculative guesswork, accusations of fabrication have also gained traction. Tarjanne dismisses these early reactions as unfounded fanatical behavior. She herself has faced much criticism for allegedly tinkering with the work to make it sound wholesome, which she dismisses. "All lies and provocations. Whatever you think of it, with every station playing it... Brace for impact!"

"A Symphony is not just a composition in the ordinary sense of the word, it is more of a confession of faith at different stages of one's life," wrote Sibelius in 1910. His 5th, the fluid and tra-

ditional "Swan hymn", was followed by the brutal 6th, the motives of the merciless wind clearly felt in the violent chords and the unexpected stop in the final movement. A through-line of the struggle between the light and darkness within himself is felt throughout his works, culminating in the 7th, which fuses somber and hopeful tones. The tone poem "Tapiola" about the Finnish woods was to be his last orchestral work. So where does the 8th fall?

"For an instant God opens his door, and His orchestra plays the 5th Symphony," wrote Sibelius to his confidante. The gates to the phantom 8th seem to be of another kind.

"This time he went deep into the woods. Where Tapiola is an idyllic look at a fresh, young forest basking in the summer rays, a young new Finland perhaps, the 8th is murky, old, rotten and true, not man-made and not for the modern man." Yet that's what Sibelius was, perhaps the great anti-modern modernist of the 20th century. Now that a version exists, what can be said of it? What did Sibelius find?

"Something pagan. The first movement grows grimmer, tougher as it goes along. The woods are tighter, the sunshine sparse. The chromatic descending scale is ever present, the woods embrace, streams of light get thinner until it turns to an unparalleled omnibus progression, a mounting pressure, a despair that does not let up. It's Suffocating, really. The movement goes on with heavy steps, sometimes on the verge of stopping entirely. And then... Salvation, a goddess in the woods." Tarjanne stops,

dramatically staring into the distance, then laughs and continues.

"The scenery changes, Sibelius reaches another time where fairies dance and sing. It's one of the few moments of pure sentimentality found in any of his works, a sentiment many aging artists experience; it's on the deathbed that childhood feels the closest."

The joy does not last for long, for Sibelius it never did. The cries of suffering are palpable in his diary written in the 1940s: "The tragedy begins. My burdensome thoughts paralyze me. The cause? Alone, alone." The pain is present throughout his journals and records. Success could alleviate it, love eased it, but the feeling of utter loneliness persisted. "The joyous staccatos die down as grief returns. Then abstract elements are introduced, rhythms that were associated with pagan rituals take over with shamanic chants. Repetitive sounds lead to a trance-like state, growing faster, crescendoing, more and more until stop. It ends. A shocking, bold, abrupt sequence, similar to the one found in the 6th. It's a wake-up call. From there it's like winding back the clock. Sibelius escapes, writes the work, then burns it for no one else to hear." Tarjanne stops with a sigh of relief.

Some previews have already garnered polarizing reception. The words "apocalyptic" and "abyss" have been repeated in more than one review. Tarjanne shrugs the reaction off as nonsense. "It's a modern interpretation of something ancient, times and tones collide. Fittingly, like a cycle of life, only on steroids. I promise you a hell of a show!" DN

Nine Billion Names of Dog

...koirallammeko, koirallanneko, koirananiko, koiranasiko, koiranansako, koiranammeko, koirananneko, koirakseniko, koiraksesiko, koiraksensako, koiraksemmeke, koiraksenneko, koirattaniko, koirattasiko, koirattansako, koirattammeke, koirattanneko, koirineniko, koirinesiko, koirinensako, koirinemmeke, koirinenneko, koirasikaanko, koiranikaanko, koiransakaanko, koirammeke, koiranneke, koiranikaanko, koirasikaanko, koiraan-

mekaanko, koirannekaanko, koirassanikaanko, koirassasi-kaanko, koirassansakaanko, koirassammekaanko, koirassannekaanko, koirastanikaanko, koirastasikaanko, koirastansakaanko, koirastammeke, koirastannekaanko, koirallanikaanko, koirallasi-kaanko, koirallansakaanko, koirallammekaanko, koirallannekaanko, koirananikaanko, koiranasikaanko, koiranansakaanko, koiranammekaanko, koirannekaanko, koiraksenikaanko... (CONT'D)

PERKELE!! – A Finnish message to outer space raises concerns.

The Finnish space probe, Aalto-666, that was launched a month ago carries an exceptional message to possible alien life forms. Apparently the voice message contains only on word: "PERKELE!!" shouted with a very loud, probably a bit drunken voice.

The International Space Agency has warned that the aggressive space messages may start an interstellar war.

"Actually, it is not aggres-

sive," explains Dr. F. Nasalblast from the Finnish Space Agency. "We decided to send it on a Monday morning in November, when we had just run out of coffee. It just felt like PERKELE!!"

Dr. Nasalblast emphasizes that the Finnish swear word "perkele" has lots of meanings – anything from delighted or pleased to "I'm going to kill you now with my knife and use your intestines as Christmas decorations." The difference is

basically in how you say the word.

"We went with a philosophical way to utter the word," Nasalblast says. "We are sure that the alien life forms will recognize the angst of the PERKELE!! – It is a subtle combination of light hangover, running out of coffee, feeling older, and realizing that your planet is dying because of stupid things you and your fellow cohabitants have done, and are doing at the moment." VS

EVENING PERKELE

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