

LH & 13 ODO

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BACKSTAGE

The venue is on the ground floor at the back of a black tower block. The black tower block sits within an estate, made up of identically-shaped blocks. All black. All rectangular, but configured differently. Some stand upright, some lie flat. The estate is known for its nightlife, its gang culture and for the hot wind that scythes through it in the wee hours.

Inside, the sound of a leak trickling into a thimble reverberates monotonously, merging with the rasping swish of the bartender's broom and, now, with the approaching click-clock of high-heeled boots, heavy and stiff. Flomb, flomb, sweesh, sweesh, click-clock, click-clock. The card playing rodent group rearrange their tails hugging them closer to their bodies out of the way of the sharp heels. Noses twitching, their agile bendy bodies slouched in the middle of the room now stiffen with expectation.

Bright cold light falls through the blinds slicing the dust-filled air into strips. Extravagantly shaped bottles dance along the shelves behind the bar. Green, yellow and pink glass shimmering in the dramatic light and refracting it into ever more complicated graphical patterns. But nothing sparkles, really. The surfaces are covered with the unglamorous sheen of having been touched too many times, like the sacred toe of some saint's sculptural surrogate or the handrail on the underground.

The click-clock of the boots fades out. A long shadow before cast on the greasy floor is shrinking again. They did not come in the end. Not today.

JR