

# ESCAPE FROM HELSINKI

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO (AND FROM)  
THE EASTERN HARBOUR CITY



2nd REVISED EDITION







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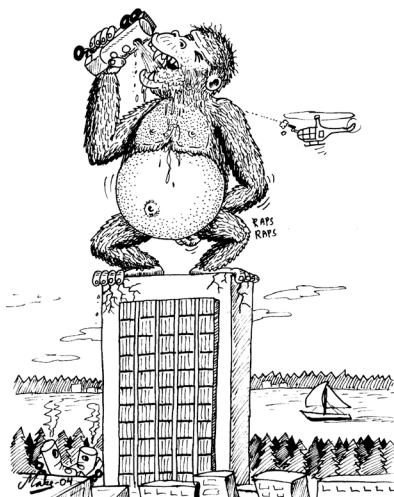
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Translations of *Squatty Flatty* and *Western Metro Extension is Delayed* by Marjut Katajala



# WELCOME TO ESCAPE FROM HELSINKI

This is the second revised edition of the special issue of ESCAPE magazine 1/2015. It is the second part in the travel guide series published by Espoo Science Fiction and Fantasy Association ESC ry. The first part in the series (*Fantastinen Espoo*, first edition 2009, second revised edition 2014) introduced its readers to the history and sights of Espoo.

It all started when we heard rumours of a kind of a harbour city located east of Espoo. We decided to kindly introduce that city to our international friends and follow in the footsteps of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama and that British dude who tried to reach North Pole but ended up being eaten by polar bears, and arranged an expedition to investigate the mysterious city. We dressed up in red shirts, packed spoo for food and some cheap plastic jewels for trading with the natives and headed east, armed only with our courage and AK-47 assault rifles.

Getting there was easy, but getting back again was difficult (which explains the name of this publication). On our way we found dreamlike wonders, unimaginable treasures, life-threatening danger and angry seagulls. We found a port of call, home away from home. A self-contained world 715 square kilometers large, located in neutral territory. A place of commerce and diplomacy for a half of a million humans, aliens and polar bears. A shining beacon at the Baltic sea shore, all alone in the night.

The year was 2017.

The name of the place was Helsinki.

# HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

by Jussi Katajala, Marjut Katajala, Tapio Ranta-aho and Shimo Suntala

ca. 7000 B.C. - First inhabitants arrive in the Espoo area.

ca. 5000 B.C. - The area known today as Helsinki rises from the Baltic Sea. Some say it happened because of a post-glacial rebound, others say that the alignment of stars was right.

12th century - Finland becomes part of the Swedish Kingdom.

1458 - Espoo is founded.

1520 - A large underground lake filled with poisonous water is found east of Espoo. St. Olarius, Bishop of Espoo, calls the lake "*succumbo infernum*" ("Hell's sink").

1550 - Helsinki is founded by King Gustav I as a rival for Tallinn in maritime trade.

1640 - Helsinki is moved ca. 10 km south so that it can be actually reached by ships.

1710 - Plague breaks out in Helsinki.

1809 - Finland becomes part of Russia as the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland.



1812 - Helsinki replaces Turku as the capital of the Grand Duchy of Finland.

1855 - Anglo-French fleet bombards the Suomenlinna Sea Fortress for 47 hours during the Crimean war.

1917 - Finland declares independence.

1939 - World War II begins. Finland fights twice against Soviet Union and once against Germany. The war ends before Finland manages to attack Sweden.

1947 - Aliens plan to attack Helsinki but turn left instead of right and crashland in Roswell.

1952 - The Summer Olympics are held in Helsinki.

1977 - Helsinki Youth Affairs Committee bans Donald Duck comics because Donald does not wear pants.

1986 - The first Finncon is organised in Helsinki.

1995 - Finland wins the IIHF World Championship for the first time. The captain of the ice hockey team, Timo Jutila, is chosen as the first king of Finland (Timo I).

2000 - Neil Gaiman visits Helsinki Comics Festival.

2003 - Neil Gaiman visits Helsinki Comics Festival for the second time.

2004 - Espoo Science Fiction and Fantasy Association ESC ry is founded.

2006 - The Church of the Third Coming of Neil Gaiman is founded.

2007 - The Eurovision Song Contest is held in Helsinki.

2009 - The largest Finncon so far (ca. 15 000 visitors) is organised in Helsinki. George R.R. Martin is one of the guests of honor.

2011 - Finland wins the IIHF World Championship for the second time. Ice hockey becomes state religion.

2012 - The Finnish Broadcasting Company airs the first season of Game of Thrones. Ca. 14 000 people wish they had a time machine so they could visit Finncon 2009.

2017 - Worldcon in Helsinki

2018 - Nazis return to the Earth from the dark side of the moon.

# SIGHTSEEING IN HELSINKI

by Jussi Katajala and Marjut Katajala

Helsinki has many interesting and beautiful sights and attractions. Some of them offer full frontal nudity, such as the statue of three naked blacksmiths at the intersection of Aleksanterinkatu and Mannerheimintie. The four Stone Men holding mysterious light spheres at the Central Railway Station have the lower parts of their bodies covered, but they tend to sometimes wander around. However, the bear statue on the stairs of the National Museum of Finland is not a statue. It is a real living polar bear that hunts for food by imitating a statue of a brown bear. Every year at least one tourist who tries to pose with it for a selfie ends up eaten. You have been warned.

If you prefer to go sightseeing on your own, there is a map on the centerfold of this guide. You can join a guided tour for more interesting information, or, for more excitement than on a regular tour, you can go on a ghost walk. The walk starts at the intersection of Henrikinkatu and Lönnrothinkatu at midnight during full moon, no advance booking is needed. The ghost walk guide is easily recognized—he has a pale face, dark red eyes and pointy teeth.

In case you do not want to walk, there are Hop-On Hop-Off sightseeing buses and segways, hoverboards, velocipedes and centipedes for rent.



# TOMB OF KEKKONEN



*Entrance to the Tomb of Kekkonen*

Urho Kaleva Kekkonen was the longest-serving President of Finland (1956-1982). After reading *Sinuhe the Egyptian* he ordered the construction of a pharaoh-style large tomb on the Töölönlahti Bay. The tomb was finished in 1971 and taken into use in 1986. Legend has it that if a politician makes bad decisions, the ghost of Kekkonen appears and yells "*Saatanan tunari!*" ("Bloody blunderer!"). If the politician continues to make bad decisions, the ghost of Kekkonen paints the politician's buttocks with tar.

After President Kekkonen passed away, the city officials decided to honour him by renaming every street in Helsinki to *Urho Kekkonen katu*. This was done during night time without an advance notice. The renaming caused a lot of confusion, and a week later all the street names were changed back to what they had been, again during night time and without an advance notice. City officials destroyed all documents about the incident and claim that it never happened. One *Urho Kekkonen katu* remained close to what is now the Kamppi Shopping Center because the Public Works Department lost the original street signs.



# THE CRYPTOZOOLOGICAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF HELSINKI

The Cryptozoological History Museum of Helsinki displays a large variety of taxidermed animals, skeletons and remains of pre-historic animals. There is also an exhibition of imaginary animals like hippocampuses, cockatrices, wolpertingers and kangaroos.

One of the most popular exhibitions is the Moomin exhibition. It shows the evolution of Moomin from the stone age *Moomin Habilis* to the *Moomin Helsingis* subspecies and finally to the modern day *Moomin Sapiens*. Do not pay any attention to the creationists who have camped outside of the museum and give out leaflets claiming that the Moomins did not evolve but, instead, were created by Tove Jansson.

## MOOMIN VALLEY

Unfortunately there are no longer Moomins in the valley. They were relocated to Naantali when the Helsinki railroad was built. There are still Hattifatteners in the Moomin Valley of Helsinki. Local power company Hattivattenfall uses them for providing clean energy to the inhabitants of Helsinki.



*You can still find remains of the old Moomin culture in the Moomin Valley*



# POLAR BEARS



*Polar bears roam free on the streets of Helsinki*

The polar bear population of Helsinki has been declining during the last decade. Due to this it has been declared a protected species that can be hunted only with a special permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Although you may see a polar bear on the market square, feeding them is not allowed because it harms their natural hunting patterns. For that, you will receive a fine of 50 euros. The City of Helsinki would also like to remind you that tourists do not belong to the natural diet of polar bears, so in case you get eaten by a polar bear you will be punished. It is also forbidden to dress up as a penguin because that confuses the polar bears.

Scientists have tried to find out why there are polar bears in Helsinki because the species normally lives north of the Arctic Circle. There are three competing theories about their origins: Nikandor Parkano from The University of Helsinki claims that the polar bears migrated south because of the large amount of herring available for food, Saalemi Janakkala from the Helsinki Institute of Biology states that the polar bears of Helsinki are descendants of the two polar bears who escaped from a circus in 1853, and finally Tertius Solander, professor in the Academy of Fringe Theories and Shenanigans, screams loudly that the polar bears are either a massive lie or just made up using smoke and mirrors.

# SPÅRAKOSSU

A pub tram named Spårakossu travels around Helsinki. For a small fee passengers can enjoy drinks of ice cold vodka. The actual route of Spårakossu is not known because the passengers tend to lose their memory and end up at random places. If you happen to spot a tram with the route number 013, that is the Spårakossu.

## HELSINKI ZEPPELIN STATION

Helsinki Zeppelin Station in the Kallio district was built in 1912. Visiting dirigibles could dock to the tower without having to land. The station was financed by Stig af Tåget, the Earl of Munkkivuori. He traveled in a Zeppelin airship LZ 10 while visiting Germany and was convinced that airships would be the transportation method of the future. Unfortunately it took longer than expected to get a permission for airship traffic from the city officials, but it was finally granted in June 1914. Only one month later World War I began and it became impossible to purchase the needed airships from Germany.

In 1921 Stig af Tåget founded a company called *Helsingin Dirigiibelyhtiö* to take care of the air transport business. Eventually, regular airship traffic between Helsinki and Stockholm started in 1927. At first business went well. Airships were full of passengers because Finland had enacted prohibition but the airship passengers were allowed to buy tax-free alcohol on international airspace. The flagship of the company was Vega that had luxurious cabins, a dining room with large windows, a fully equipped gym, a sauna and a bowling alley.

The Great Depression, which began in 1929, reduced the number of passengers notably. In addition, prohibition ended in 1932 so there was not much demand for tax-free alcohol anymore. After the Hindenburg disaster in May 1937 airship traffic suffered a blow from which it never survived. The company went bankrupt and Stig af Tåget lost most of his money. Vega made its last flight in September 1937, after which it was sold to the Finnish Air Force to be used for target practice.

A few decades later Stig's grandchild Holger "Hoppa" af Tåget worked in the suburban traffic committee and participated in the planning of Helsinki Metro. He was convinced that the metro system would expand rapidly and made sure that a metro station was built in 1964 to Munkkivuori where he lived. As of today, the Munkkivuori station does not fit into any planned metro lines and is unlikely to be ever used. The Helsinki Zeppelin station is open for visitors and offers a magnificent view over Helsinki.



*Airship Vega arriving to the Helsinki Zeppelin Station*

# TELEPHONE BOOTH



*Telephone Booth on Sofiankatu*

Nobody knows why there still is a telephone booth on Sofiankatu because nowadays everyone in Finland has a mobile phone. None of the telephone network operators admit to knowing anything about it.

Actually, the telephone booth is not always there. It keeps appearing and disappearing at random intervals. Those who have looked inside report seeing an advertisement of Finncon 2009 and writing on the wall saying "To contact the doctor, please dial 07700 900461". It is not known if the telephone line is actually connected because it works only with coins of a currency called Pandak.

# TEMPLE OF OCEAN GODS

Since fishing industry and maritime trade are important for Helsinki, many local people still worship a variety of ocean gods despite Ice Hockey being the state religion. In the temple you can find statues of several underwater deities, e.g. Poseidon, Cthulhu, Iku-Turso, Kraken and SpongeBob SquarePants. It is also widely believed that the statue of Havis Amanda, located near the temple, wakes up once every year on 1st of May unless it is given a ceremonial bath a day before.



# CHOLERA BASIN AND MARKET SQUARE



*Cholera Basin by the Market Square*

The harbour basins were built in the early 19th century next to the market square. Of them, the Cholera Basin is used for quarantining ships that may contain cholera, plague, ebola or Swedish tourists. A local legend says that an extremely large catfish lives at the bottom of the basin. Divers who have tried to confirm or bust this myth have never returned to tell what they saw.

According to the official records, the basin was built 9 meters deep, however, this may not be the truth. In 1988 an exploration submarine Golden Trout tried to investigate the bottom, but had to resurface after reaching its maximum operating depth of 100 meters. Swimming in the Cholera Basin is currently forbidden, but the Mad Scientist Society of Helsinki has an annual tradition of sinking their arch enemies to the Cholera Basin by using an unnecessarily slow-moving dipping mechanism.

The Market Square booths sell traditional market foods, treats, handicrafts and souvenirs. Popular souvenirs include jewelry made of polished reindeer poo, statues of President Kekkonen riding a dragon, herring hats, and dolls representing Rähmäkäkkiäinen, the mascot of 1974 IIHF World Championship held in Helsinki. There are ferry links from the Market Square to Suomenlinna, Korkeasaari Zoo and the lost continent of Lemuria. On the square you can see a statue of a two-headed seagull, a gift from the city of Chernobyl where multi-headed animals are common.

# SQUATTY FLATTY

## THE FLATTEST LOW-RISE BUILDING IN THE WORLD

by Tapio Ranta-aho

The flattest low-rise building in the world, Squatty Flatty (*Kartanon Jököttäjä*) located in the Malminkartano district in Helsinki, is the outcome of Linus F. Nokia's momentary flash of wit as he thought up of a gigantic apartment building for Nokia workers. The building was designed to have a direct line of sight to the Nokia headquarters should the phone networks should go down for some inexplicable reason. Originally the building was planned to be 2110 feet and 143 storeys tall, but for budget reasons the number of storeys had to be reduced to 84. However, due to many mysterious bumbles and hodge-podges, the final number of storeys turned out to be 48. The architect denies innumeracy.

When the construction work was about to start, the Ministry of Land, Water and Aviation intervened with the project. The Space Exploration Center had been planning a sling launching track (for a so-called Spede Sling) and the Squatty Flatty was located directly on the flight path of the projectiles. As a result, the Squatty Flatty had to be made 21 storeys lower by the decision of the Department of Aviation. At the same time the adjacent Department of Water insisted that due to an overload risk in the water pump system the tower has to be made 18 storeys lower.



*Many Helsinkians like to take a walk to the Squatty Flatty on Sundays*

According to the official documents, both departments based their calculations on the original 84-storey design for which the construction permit was given. The departments were unaware of each other so the demands were, in fact, unnecessary. The reductions were made cumulatively in full and the total number of storeys decreased to 9. At this time the building had broken the flatness record of the formerly flattest low-rise building, Den Svarta Enhörningen in Södertälje, Sweden.

Problems continued. The soil was a mixture of peat and chips of birch and slowly it cave in. The building started to sink into the ground. After six storeys had been built, three of them had already disappeared underground and the sewer system was no longer able to carry the waste away from the bottom storeys. The building started to fill with poo which set new challenges to the air conditioning. As a emergency solution the top three storeys were not built so the air could circulate through the roof.

In 2004, the construction of Squatty Flatty was finished in only 11 months. The estimated schedule had been 9.5 years which meant that the Helsinki Urban Planning Department had not been up-to-date with the progress. The surrounding area had been designated as a landfill site for the City of Helsinki, and in the springtime the gravel

mixture that was used for sanding the roads during the winter was dispatched there despite the Squatty Flatty squatting in the middle. In a few years time, a hill consisting of landfill wholly surrounded the building. The city authorities had to intervene because at that time the open roof of the Squatty Flatty was already 10 feet under the ground.

The outside of the building is made from beautiful Carrera marble. There are Ionian pillars by the entrance and the lions guarding the door have been carved to resemble the lion statues from the Ming dynasty. A lot of gildings and polished bronze have been used. Unfortunately all this lies deep underground and the entrance to the building is via an aluminum ladder going through the roof.

You can reach the Squatty Flatty by taking the M train from the Central Railway Station. The walk from the Malminkartano station is slightly over a mile and the route is marked with signs. If you cannot understand the language of the signs, you can also find your way by following the smell. The most convenient way to leave the Squatty Flatty is to buy a sled from the souvenir booth on top of the hill, head towards west and slide down. The hillside is slippery all through the summer and winter so you should gain enough speed to cross the city border half a mile away and make it to Espoo.





# MEET THE LOCALS

by Jussi Katajala and Tapio Ranta-aho



One major drawback of travelling is that unless you travel in an armoured personnel carrier, you most likely have to interact with the locals.

Communicating with the locals is rather easy since most of them, especially the young ones, can speak many languages. Often they just choose not to speak them. The locals consider silence as politeness and excessive small talk can be seen as a hostile act, especially in the public transport. The traditional

way of having fun in Helsinki is to go to a pub with your friends, drink beer and be silent for hours.

Do not feel offended by the direct and straightforward way the locals communicate. They do not mean to be rude or unpolite, their language just does not have corresponding words for concepts such as *"Please"*, *"Thank you"*, *"You're welcome"* or *"It would be very kind of you to perform the task I requested so I don't have to get my engineers to invent a combustible lemon that burns your house down"*. Due to this they are unaccustomed in using them when speaking a foreign language.

Certain topics of discussion can be slightly sensitive. Since ice hockey is the state religion, it is not advised to talk praisingly about football, basketball or any other team sport. There used to be two fiercely competing denominations in Helsinki: the Church of Jokerit and the Congregation of HIFK. In 2014 the followers of Jokerit converted to Eastern Orthodox Khokkeyism and the tensions between these two groups have now diminished. However, it may not be a good idea to point out that both sides are heretics and only the followers of Espoo United will get a ticket to the Heavenly World Cup of Hockey.

Distinguishing the locals from the tourists is not always easy because the locals follow international fashion trends. However, this does not apply to Russian tourists. They can be easily spotted as they wear green ski masks and unmarked uniforms. If you meet a tall, winged, horned monster who is wearing silver clothes, do not be afraid. It is just Lordi, the Finnish Eurovision Song Contest winner.

The probability of getting robbed or mugged is very low as long as you stay away from the seagulls. These merciless birds of prey look for victims around the Market Square. Should seagulls decide to attack you, do not resist or do anything to aggravate them. Try not to stare in their faces as they might think you are challenging them. Even polar bears do not dare to challenge seagulls. If you allow them to take what they want, they will not harm you. Usually they just want your french fries, donut or whatever you are eating.

The locals tend to prefer quite a large personal space. The size of the personal space is a circle of which the radius is the length of one's arm plus 12 cm (traditional length of the blade of *puukko*, i.e. Finnish belt knife). Entering this personal space without permission can make the locals feel uncomfortable and threatened.

However, as a gesture of your good will you can offer a gift of coffee, *salmiakki* (salted liquorice) or herring. Alternatively, you can utter the widely used greeting, "*Polkupyöränlamppuni törröttää karviaismarjatynnörin reiässä.*" ("My bicycle lamp sticks out from the gooseberry cask hole.") Just be careful and do not confuse gooseberries with cloudberries (*lakka*, *hilla*, *suomuurain* just to mention a few of its names) because mentioning cloudberries is a great insult in Helsinki.

We encourage you to bravely interact with the locals. After all, the same green blood runs through the Helsinkians veins.



# LICENSE TO SALVAGE

by Shimo Sutila

The Sun breached the frail veil of clouds and offered promises of warmth if allowed to shine. Leino Ruusula lounged on a bench on the Market Square watching small fishing ships bob in the Cholera Basin. In the middle of the autumn the warmth was a welcome surprise and Leino closed his eyes enjoying the tantalizing caress of the distant nuclear inferno.

A voice spoke from directly behind him. “Here.”

Leino let out a panicked yelp and almost jumped out of his skin. Scampering onto his feet, he swerved around to find a girl with red hair and green goggles lifted to her brow, clad in a red and black body armor, standing rigidly at ease.

His heart was pounding. “Vero, don’t DO that!”

The girl’s expression did not break into a smile. “Do what?”

Leino raised his hands to enhance his words. “Don’t give me such a scare!” Frankly it was not the first time. In fact, he had stopped counting already a while ago.

Her mouth remained a thin line but a mischievous glint sparkled in her eye briefly. "Your guard was down. An enemy could surprise you. Your own fault. Fright teaches a lesson." Amidst his distress Leino failed to notice how liberal Veronique was with words. She was obviously in a good mood. "You wanted to see me," she said.



"Yes. It's time we got you registered as a licensed hero. Come on," Leino said and made an attempt to grab Veronique's arm. That nearly cost him his. Faster than a normal human could follow Veronique's gloves had the blades extended and she herself was ready to cut the enemy to small enough pieces to fit inside a matchbox. Leino's lightning reflexes were the only reason his arms stayed attached to his body. Veronique stood in battle stance and hissed furiously.

"Right. You prefer not to be touched. How foolish of me to forget." Leino felt his legs tremble but was nonetheless grateful he still had his innards. It took a moment for him to level his breathing. "And by the way, once we get inside let me do the talking, alright?"

"Why?" The blades which could have been called claws were they not so long slid back in and Veronique resumed her formal standing position, hands behind her back, no visible expression on her face.

"Because you don't get along with people that well. We have to convince them that you're on the level with this superheroing shtick and deserve to have the license, not eviscerate them in midsentence."

"I mean why register. I already have this." Veronique produced a shining hero license from one of her many pouches.

"Because that one is a forgery," Leino said, took it from her and tossed it into Cholera Basin. "Even if it is a rather convincing one. Look, Vero, you've been in this time stream for what, months now. Heroing, beating up bad guys, stealing their stuff."

"Salvaging," Veronique corrected.

"Salvaging. You've made it into the papers a few times already. You've been noticed. And they really don't like vigilantes here in Helsinki. If you want to keep on doing what you do, you need to have a license for it."

"Why?"



"Because us pre-apocalypse Finns are really into bureaucratic procedure. You got to have a license to pilot mechas, a license to practice black magic, a license to own pants and a license to apprehend anyone posing a threat to public safety or not having a proper license for whatever they are doing. And before you ask, this applies to you too." Leino had heard Veronique drawing a breath to argue. "If you keep on busting heads and stealing equipment unlicensed, things will escalate and someone with nukes for fists will come after you. Trust me, it'll be far easier for everyone this way."

Veronique measured her grandfather for a while and conceded eventually. "Yes," she said. Leino sighed. That was as much as he was going to get from her if the past was any indication.

The city hall stood on the other side of North Esplanade and that is where the Hero Affairs Bureau was located as well. Leino led their way through the almost Minoan maze of concrete corridors flooded with bureaucratic banter until they finally reached the New Heroes Affairs department and vice counselor's office. Leino knocked and opened the door. "We have an appointment?"

Vice counselor Alexei Formitage was a tall man, thin and long-faced. Almost like a man whose legs had for a fraction of a second delved just barely too close to a singularity and had been stretched out of all reasonable vertical proportions. He leafed through a file in front of him. "Why don't you come in uninvited while you're at it, Mr. Ruusula. Seeing as how you're pretty much already in." He lifted his gaze and the two eyes that drew their power from that same singularity bore two pinprick holes into the bald man in the doorway. "Do I know you from somewhere?"

"Probably not." Leino and Veronique stepped inside and sat down on two wooden chairs.

Formitage looked at the file in front of him, then at the red haired girl on the other side of the desk. "I have seen you in the papers. You are not new."

Before Veronique had even a chance to utter the first word and blow everything sky high Leino hurried to answer. "She has been operating, yes, but she was unaware of the need to register."

Leino's concern was unfounded. Veronique was doing exactly as she had been told which could be distilled into two distinct commands. 'Sit down' and 'shut up'. Formitage looked less than impressed. "According to this she has been around most of this year. Mr. Ruusula, that is at least eight months without a legal license to practice as a hero."

Once upon a time Leino's wife had told him that if he wanted to do better with people he should try to smile more. People liked smiles. Leino hoped to Sky Goddess that his wide, apologetically tilted grin counted as one. "Yes, but you see, she did not know she was doing anything wrong, and I thought her license was a genuine one. Now that we know better we're here to correct that slight oversight and everything will be just fine. Right?"

Formitage did not like the sound of that at all. A forgot license was one of the gravest forms of misconduct in his line of business. He leaned against his cushy chair, put his fingers against one another and let out a dramatic sigh. "Sadly it will not be as straightforward. There are certain aspects that we have to take into account. As you know there is no formal test that you have to pass but the applicant's suitability to uphold and follow the law is paramount." Mr. Formitage picked up a golden pen and pointed at Veronique. "Your lawfulness has to be measured."

"How?" Leino was starting to sweat. A quick trip to get a license was degenerating into a painful slog and the possibility of a disaster was growing exponentially.

"By filling a form, of course," Formitage replied and pulled a crisp paper from a military grade orderly stack. He hovered the pen above the form and said to Veronique: "First, your name please."

Veronique remained silent. It was not in her orders to speak or answer questions. Again Leino hurried to get a word in. "As I understand, her real name does not matter. Secret identities and all, right? Her given name is Veronique and because of a complex situation the family name for the records should be Ruusula."

Formitage had been in this very occupation for a long time. He had seen it all. Mundys with no powers save for a dire need for psychological counselling and a shredded bedsheet for a cape. Inexperienced youngsters with widely misplaced delusions of grandeur and glory. Hardened combatants trained to the peak of their natural physique ready to do their part in containing the ever-growing threat of metahuman villains. He had a special name for each category. These kind of cases he called 'the nosy besserwisser mentors' or just 'gits' for short. He drew a deep breath.

"First of all, Mr. Ruusula, should she not be able to answer these questions on her own if I am to issue her with a license that carries a lot of responsibility? Second, please explain the so-called complex situation." He paused for a second and muttered under his breath. "And third, I'm sure I've seen you—" Leino sat more upright and cleared his throat loudly.



*Hero Affairs Bureau*

"Well, when my wife died she was pregnant," Leino began. "A teammate of mine managed to save my son and hid him until he would be ready to be born. I don't know where he is but I know he will be OK because Vero here is my granddaughter—"

"Hold on," Formitage interrupted. "Granddaughter? She looks to be in her mid-teens and you can't be a day over twenty yourself." A sense of dread foreboding surrounded Alexei Formitage as he realized he might prefer not to hear he answer after all.

"That's right. You see, she is from an alternate timeline where Helsinki is destroyed in an alien attack and the survivors have to scavenge for everything they need. Vero was sent back in time to mount a counter-offensive but her onboard integrated computer system lost some files so we don't know when the attack happens and I can't really trust my father to have an access in her system because I suspect his colleagues had a hand in my wife's death, so—"

Formitage was waving his hand for attention. "I don't believe it."

"I assure every word is true." Leino looked a little hurt.

"I mean I don't believe I didn't see the temporally displaced relative angle coming a kilometer away."

Leino blinked. "You have heard something like this before?"

"More often than you apparently assume, and definitely more often than I would care to remember." Formitage shook his head. The lunch hour was approaching fast and the case at hand threatened to drag on for who knew how long. "Let us backtrack to the first item." He looked again at Veronique.

Veronique was staring back at the inquisitive man with indifferent intensity. If there was any threat present in this room it was clearly him and thus he warranted her almost undivided attention. Almost undivided, as she was still aware of her surrounding to a great detail. Formitage in turn stared back as well. Neither spoke. Eventually the government official realized that the girl was not going to say anything. This was going to be a long day.

"What is your name, please?" Formitage tried again.

Veronique stole a quick glance at her grandfather who nodded minutely. Concluding that she had a permission to answer the question Veronique replied: "Veronique Ruusula."

The golden pen approached the paper when Formitage realized that there already read 'Veronique Ruusula' on the form. He had automatically written it down when the answer had been given the first time. A very long day indeed.

He hesitated over the next item for a moment until he felt composed enough to speak aloud again.

"What hero name, code name or heroic alias would you like to register?" Again he was met with a blank stare.

Silence hung in the room until Leino broke it leaning closer to Vero and saying in a quiet but clear voice, "It's one and the same. Just one name needed."

This provoked an immediate reply. "Darksparrow." To enhance her statement Veronique tapped at a newspaper clipping with her picture on the desk. It was about a giant insect attack in Kallio two weeks ago. Collateral damage had been moderate. Formitage scribbled the name down...

*The story continues on page 29*



# HELSINKI IN PICTURES



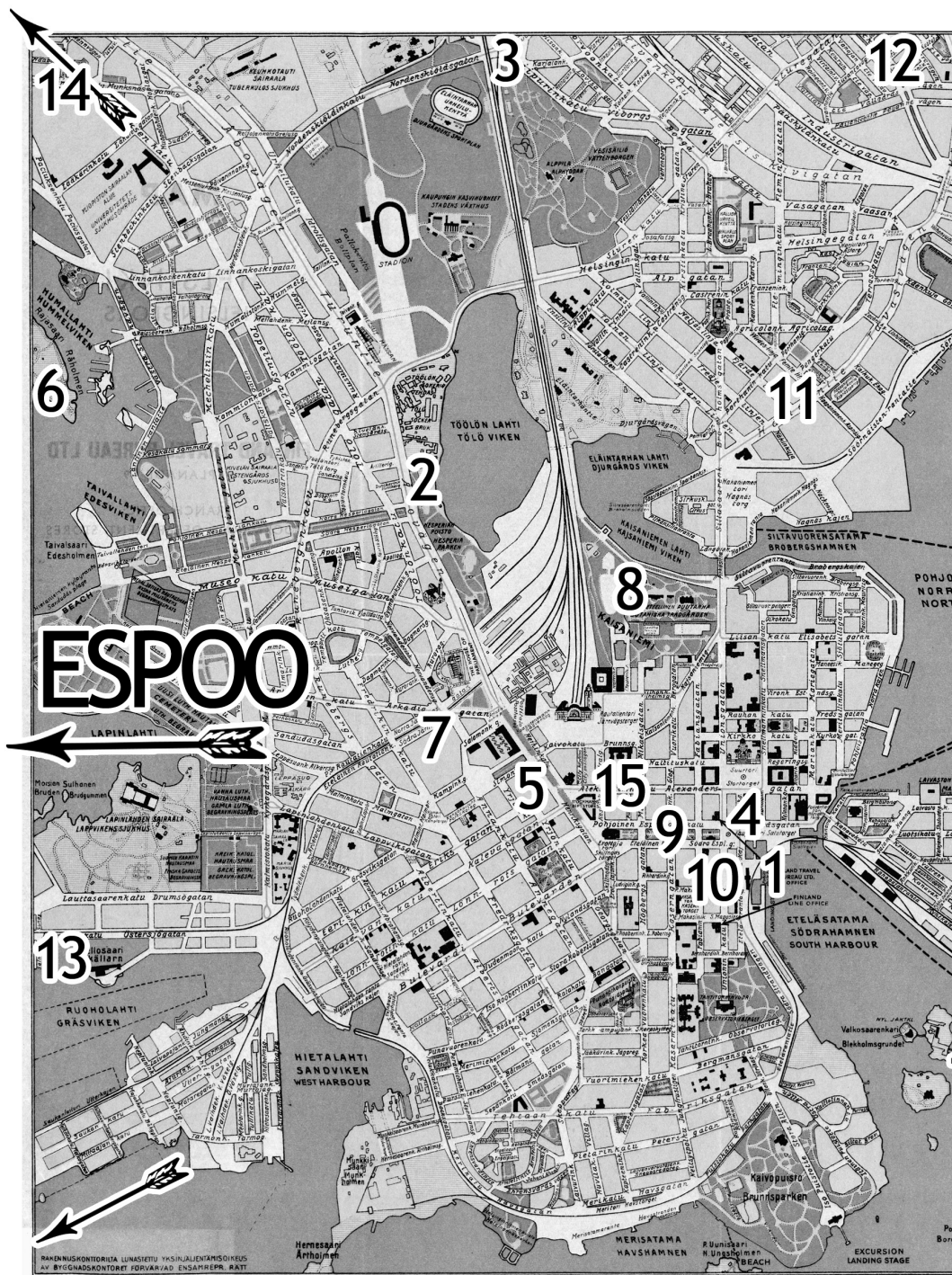
*Spårakossu on its route*



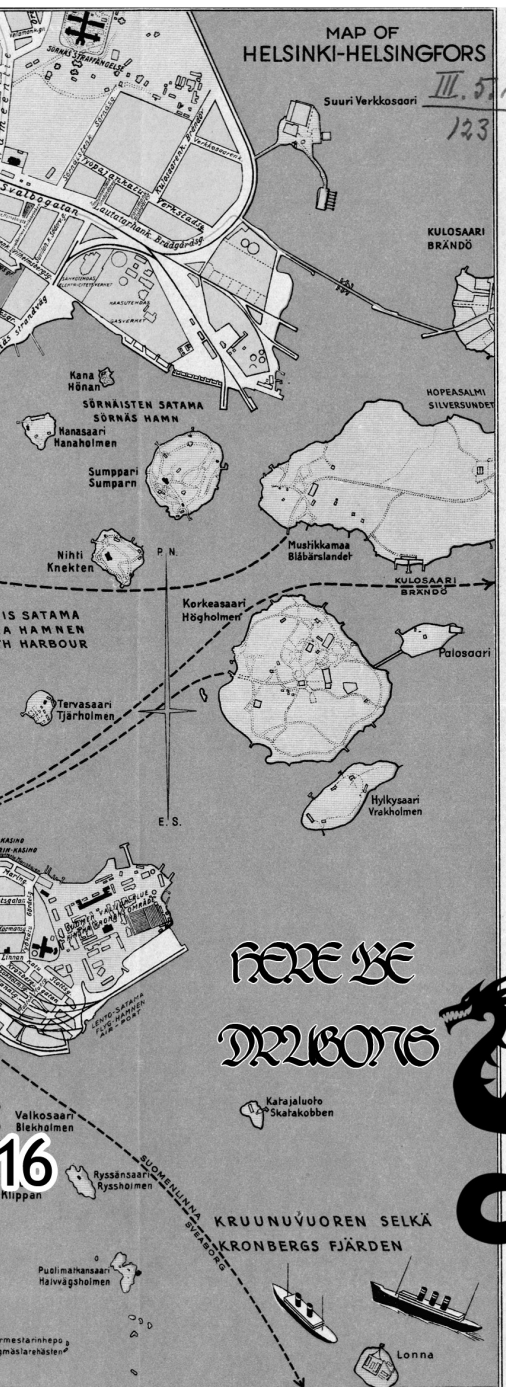
*Temple of Ocean Gods*



*View to Espoo*







1 TEMPLE OF OCEAN GODS

2 TOMB OF KEKKONEN

3 SQUATTY FLATTY

4 CHOLERA BASIN & MARKET SQUARE

5 CRYPTOZOOLOGICAL HISTORY MUSEUM

6 SEURASAARI OPEN DOOR MUSEUM

7 MOOMIN VALLEY

8 TRIFFID PARK

9 ESPLANADE PARK

10 TELEPHONE BOOTH

11 SPÄRAKOSSU

12 HELSINKI ZEPPELIN STATION

13 WESTERN METRO EXTENSION

14 MUNKKIVUORI METRO STATION

15 HERO AFFAIRS BUREAU

16 BIRD ISLAND AND PIG ISLAND



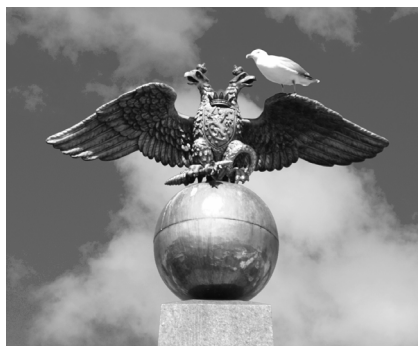
*Fare evaders set in stone*



*Waiting for tram*



*Celebrating the spring*



*Statue of Two-Headed Seagull*



*Havis Amanda*

The next few questions were general enough for Veronique to manage on her own guided only by the small reassuring nods or cautioning shakes of head from Leino indicating which questions warranted extra caution. The topic shifted to more intricate matters. Formitage lifted a paper clipping up for all to see and quoted the headline, "This salvage is mine." He wanted to hear either a confession or a rebuttal to a question that had been in fact a statement. Getting any information out of the girl seemed to be on par with squeezing subatomic particles out of a stone. Since Leino did not signal to withhold an answer she gave one.

"Yes."

Formitage was beginning to assume that the timeline the girl came from possessed some very weird and specific laws of cause and effect, namely that speaking with more than two-syllable words would result in a greatly reduced life span. He tried again. "What do you mean by this? What salvage?"

While the natural wit within the Ruusula lineage had all but passed Leino by without so much as brushing him fleetingly good training can cover even a huge amount of incompetence. One of the things that working with a group deep in counterintelligence work had taught him was how to gather information while divulging it as little as possible. One tactic was 'query swap'. It meant rephrasing the question in such a manner that the answer to the new question still fit the original one while sidelining all the bits that were grounds for prosecution.

While Veronique was cataloging in her head the full inventory of every little bolt, tool and weapon of mass destruction she had taken from someone somewhere Leino intervened once again.

"He means all the harmful weapons and other devices that could fall into criminal hands after you defeat the bad guys but before the police arrives. You do make sure that none of those devices ever falls into the hands of the criminals of this city, right?" This flood of words interrupted the meticulous inventory and Veronique turned her attention to her mentor. There was a nod and she replied accordingly.

"Yes."

If the world's fate ever was at stake and it all depended on someone keeping a secret despite insufferable torture Formitage dearly wished it would be this girl. Primarily because then the Earth would be absolutely safe, and secondly because he wished some kind of a plague to fall on both of them.



Formitage looked at Leino, then at a news clipping on his desk. Wait a second! If he imagined Leino wearing a blue cape and a blue white bodysuit, and a piece of metal over the right side of his face, the man was a spitting image of the man standing behind Darksparrow in the photo from Kallio. Formitage opened a red drawer in his desk and retrieved a file. He looked inside. He looked at Leino.

"Mr. Ruusula, are you in fact a practicing hero yourself going by the name—"

Leino grimaced and confessed. The game was up. He shrunk in his chair. "Yes, yes. I guess I am."

The file was a thick one. "I see you have managed quite a bit in the year and a half you've been active. Last year you fought off a Moon robot invasion singlehandedly."

That brought a bright smile to Leino's face. "That was a tough one."

"You, in fact, downed their mothership above the ground. Above Espoo, to be precise."

"Its shields dropped and—"

"The exploding and burning pieces fell down all over the place. Otaniemi was scorched to the bedrock. They are still rebuilding the place." Formitage glanced at Darksparrow. "And you are mentoring her." His head was starting to throb seriously. Lunch hour was already on and pretty soon the cafeteria would be packed. He had two choices now. One included denying the girl her license, a few hours worth of paperwork and missing both lunch and dinner. His hand went for the stamp. It represented his one chance of immediate freedom.

The stamp hit the form with a sturdy thud. "Congratulations, Darksparrow. You are now a fully authorized, licensed hero in Greater Helsinki urban area. Please collect your license badge from the desk in the front lobby." Formitage braced himself and presented a composed and professional facade. Its destiny was to crumble to tiny pieces.

"Why?" asked Veronique. "I already have this." Then she pulled another perfectly forged license from her pouch and placed it on the desk.

Two floors up a secretary let slip of a coffee pot when a surprisingly menacing and agitated voice carried from somewhere deep within the bowels of city hall.

"You two, get out of my office. Get out, you hear me. Now!"

# SHOPPING IN HELSINKI

by Marjut Katajala

Helsinki is a great place for shopping. In the very centre there are two big department stores, three shopping centres and numerous smaller shops and boutiques that sell almost everything you can think of. The service in the small shops is more personal but the department stores offer you more holistic shopping experiences.

## DEPARTMENT STORES

The department stores in the center of Helsinki have been built into old buildings while trying to preserve as much as possible of the old spirit (or spirits, you really do not want to mess with them). This is why the floor plans of the department stores may seem slightly confusing at first. There is one long staircase just going up and one even longer coming down, and one more leading nowhere, just for show.

If you are looking for the champagne bar on the sixth floor but cannot seem to find the right escalator, try not to get irritated because the escalators sense your frustration and hide. If you have kindly asked your significant other to join you on a shopping spree and you are starting to see signs of boredom and tiredness, be careful. Keep calm and aim towards the escalators.



The escalators were originally designed in the 1960's by Mr. Eskola, an engineer who thought his wife spends too much time shopping and gossiping over coffee with her friends. His plan failed miserably as his wife (and the wives of his fellow engineers) did not give up shopping but insisted on looking for the hiding escalators and, at the same time, shopping for more and more needful things. Some of the escalators have been replaced since but there are still some original ones left.

## BOUTIQUES

Helsinki is famous for its designer boutiques. You can find unique clothes, shoes, bags and jewellery. For example, the *Planetoid Valleys* necklace Princess Leia wore in *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* is designed by a Helsinkian. Shopping is easy: the fitting rooms are large with warm wooden walls and you can try on the clothes in a cosy atmosphere. Just relax and wait for the shop assistant to bring you more and more new things to try on. Soon you will be surrounded by so many dresses and fur coats that it is almost difficult to find your way out. Just head towards the light of the lamp post and remember to dress up warmly for the Finnish winter.

## SHOPPING GENIE

If you need personal assistance, you can reserve an appointment with a personal shopping genie. The genie leads you straight to the right products, tells you that these are not the souvenirs you are looking for and as you go, shows you things you thought you did not need but need anyway. If you have to find something quickly or if you want to spend your time trying on different clothes, the genie always brings you the right size and colour—and what's best: you never look fat.

## TO BE NOTED

Be careful when shopping. Helsinki is a safe city but that does not mean that you can act carelessly and leave your bag unattended. There have been reports of occasional attacks from pick-pockets and quantum thieves who rob unsuspecting tourists of their qubits and mobile phones.

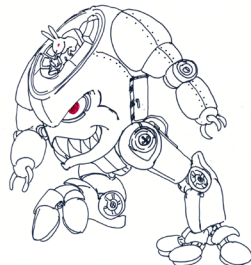
# HOW TO ESCAPE FROM HELSINKI

by Jussi Katajala and Marjut Katajala

## ROAD TRANSPORT

The backbone of Helsinki's motorway network consists of three semicircular ring roads, Ring I, Ring II, and Ring III. Unfortunately, you cannot use them because the Three Rings are for the Elven-kings under the sky. Unless, of course, you are an Elven-king. There are two expressways, one going east and one going west of the Helsinki center. These are called *Länsiväylä* and *Itäväylä*, i.e. Western Expressway and Eastern Expressway, respectively. People of Helsinki are not famous for their imagination. Anyway, go west, towards Espoo.

There are also intercity highways going out of the city: highway 1 to Turku, highway 3 to Tampere, highway 4 to Lahti and highway 7 to Kotka. Highways 2, 5 and 6 have been transferred back in time because they were needed in the previous Shadow War. Any of these remaining intercity highways might also disappear into the past without warning, so use them at your own risk.

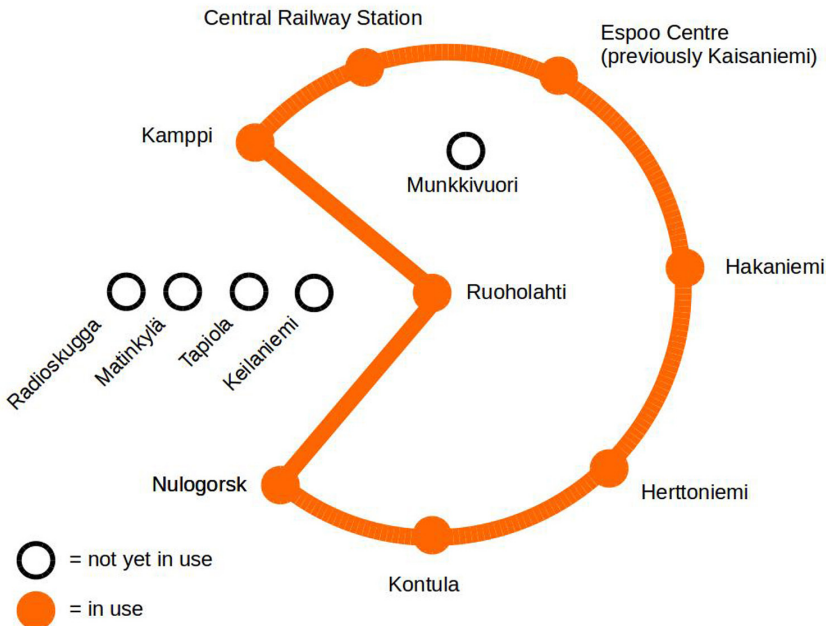


Helsinki has an extensive bus route network. Unfortunately all of the routes have been pre-emptively changed into feeder routes for the Western Metro Extension. This means that no matter which bus you take, you will end up at a random metro station or a place that will be a metro station in the near or distant future.

Long distance buses use the intercity highways that may disappear into the distant past at any moment.

## RAIL TRANSPORT

The Helsinki Metro is very simple as there is only one metro line. Just beware of the Dark Ones when you take the metro and remember that there is not Metro-2 despite all the rumours. However, at the moment it is slightly complicated to escape to Espoo by using the metro as the Western Metro Extension construction is still going on. If you decide to take the metro anyway, be prepared to wait for an undefined time. If you do not want to take your belongings with you when you, for example, have a cup of coffee while waiting, the inhabitants of the local universes in the lockers at the Central Railway Station take care of your luggage for only a small fee.



Map of Helsinki metro





*The number of spheres carried by the Stone Men reflects the four stars in Orion's Belt: Alnitak, Alnilam, Mintaka and Burton*

To escape from Helsinki, take any of the local trains. Trains Y, U, L, E, S and A are preferable because they go to Espoo. Local train M goes to Mordor, which is nice, because one does not simply walk there. Local train Z goes to Lahti. Other local trains are K, N, I, G, H, T and R. Helsinki is planning to introduce local trains Å, Ä, Ö, Æ, Ø, Ω and É as the rail network is extended. If you arrange the ever-changing letters of the trains correctly and decode the secret message, you can participate in a monthly raffle. The winner gets a free unicorn.

The long distance trains are rather unreliable. State Railways claim that the frequent delays and cancellations are due to snow, rain, sunshine, moose sleeping on the tracks, guidance system malfunctions or lack of any of the aforementioned. But that is all a lie. The real reason is the non-Euclidean geometry of Pasila. Due to that the trains are often unable to travel beyond the Pasila railway station. Local trains use inverted polarity so they remain unaffected. Unfortunately there are no Tesla coils big enough for the larger long distance trains.

Remember to validate your ticket after boarding a train. The train ticket inspectors may turn you into stone for fare evasion. In fact, some passengers have been placed on display as a warning at the Central Railway Station.



*Apes on a plane*

## AIR TRANSPORT

The Helsinki Airport is located in the neighbouring city of Vantaa. If you manage to get there, you are already out of Helsinki. The Malmi Airport is located in Helsinki, but it is planned to be moved to the city of Porvoo, some 50 km east of Helsinki, just to annoy people and make things generally irritating. Unfortunately there is not an airport in Espoo but you can parachute out of the airplane in Espoo airspace.

From the Hernesaari Heliport you can take a helicopter south to Estonia and there life will be endless sunshine, tequila and tacos. ”¡Bienvenido a Mexico!”, like they say in Tallinn.

## SEA TRANSPORT

Several cruise ferries travel between Helsinki and Stockholm. In Finnish they are called ”Ruotsinlaiva” which means ”Swedish ship”. In Swedish they are called ”Finlandsbåten” which means ”Finnish ship”. In Klingon they are called ”*lupDujHomwlj luteb gharghmey*”. You can also say ”*Este caballero pagará todo!*” and take a ferry to Estonia. In that case, do not forget your sombrero! According to an official statement by the Kremlin, there are no ferries travelling between Russia and Finland. If such a ferry is seen, it is just on vacation. None of the Helsinki ferries go to or stop in Espoo on their way but you may consider borrowing a life boat.

There is a Vesikko class submarine by the Susisaari Island at the Suomenlinna Sea Fortress, but you need to bring your own diesel fuel. Also, bring some torpedoes in case you meet coast guard ships while sailing to freedom. You might find also other submarines in the coastal waters of Helsinki, but do not hitch a ride in those if the crew speaks Russian. If the crew speaks Swedish, just give them a sixpack of *Lapin kulta* beer and they will be happy to take you to Stockholm.

## OTHER MEANS OF TRANSPORT

To escape from Helsinki, you can walk, run, ride a bike or a motorbike, take a taxi or rent a Segway. You can wait for the mysterious phone booth to appear on Sofiankatu near the Senate Square, however, it is quite unreliable and may take you somewhere else but Espoo, so we cannot recommend that. If you use a slingshot to travel from Bird Island to Pig Island, you most likely remain in Helsinki, or, if you are lucky you may bounce to Espoo.

For a more reliable means of transport, there are transporters for beaming you up (and down) to Espoo in all park-and-ride facilities. The Helsinki University Observatory stargåte is located inside the Tähtitorninmäki Hill in Kaivopuisto and it is open for public during office hours (08.00-16.00 on weekdays).



*Entrance to the Stargåte*

# WESTERN METRO EXTENSION IS DELAYED

by Tuomas Saloranta

*The Helsinki Metro is the world's most northern metro system, and the only metro in Finland. The system was opened to the general public on August 2nd, 1982 after 27 years of planning. The Western Metro Extension (Länsimetro) towards Espoo is currently under construction and due to be opened in 2016... 2017. Or maybe not. Notes made by a reporter who visited the construction site not so long ago tell a different story. Apparently, there is another tunnel parallel to the metro tunnel.*

*At the moment we have no clue as to the reporter's current whereabouts.*



*Western Metro Extension construction site*

"And then came the spiders."

"Spiders?" I asked in surprise. Virtanen grinned.

"They started to show up as we detonated further away in the tunnel. First there were only few, then more and more. Eventually they came in waves, the men literally drowned in them—and the devils kept on biting! They were poisonous..."

Virtanen started coughing again. I could not help but glance at the dark and silent mouth of the tunnel that laid wide open outside the pale circle of light created by the construction site spotlights, and then at my feet. I got very unpleasant shivers, as if small jointed legs were climbing up my leg and all the way to my spine.

"There are no poisonous spiders in Finland," I said, and tried to shake off the chilly feeling from my neck.

"Tell it to my workers," Virtanen snapped. "I lost twelve of them before we were able to control the situation."

"Maybe it was an allergy or oversensitivity," I suggested. "Or you have found a whole new species. Obviously, you did not close the site?"

"Of course not," Virtanen replied. "This project is about big money and we cannot afford to take the risk of quarantining the whole area so that biologists could sit here for years and years. In the worst case this might become a nature reserve for the bugs! We called for the best vermin destroyers money could buy, and that's it. Or so we thought."

Virtanen fell silent for a moment and rocked nervously in his chair.

"The vermin destroyers poured litres and litres of poison into the tunnel but the spiders just kept on coming. Finally we found the place where they came from. A wall further away in the tunnel did not seem to belong to the original construction but looked newer and coarser. It was very old, though. The explosions had cracked it and the spiders were able to enter the tunnel from the other side of the wall through the crack."

"So you found a wall someone had built to block another tunnel," I said. My voice trembled. "And after that you..."

"We blasted it open, of course," Virtanen said. "So we could poison the spiders in one go. And this... This you had better see for yourself."

Virtanen quickly pushed some control panel buttons and a picture appeared on one of the monitors—a dim and grainy moving picture. One of the workers, or maybe a vermin destroyer, carried the camera while the others walked in front of him and lit the way with their flashlights.

"On the other side of the wall the tunnel started to fork," Virtanen explained. "There was a complete network of tunnels, and the tunnels were much more... refined. Maybe they had been maintained all the time the wall had blocked the way to the outside world, or maybe the tunnel outside the wall had just deteriorated."

I was about to say something but remained silent. I trembled again as if cold wind had blown from the depths of the excavation—a wind that was born immeasurable eras ago, I reckoned, but lost thought as soon as I looked at the monitor.

Something humanlike had appeared to the picture but it was not human. It moved across the walls and the ceiling and had way too many limbs. I saw only a glimpse of it as the camera turned the other way and started shaking from side to side—soon the camera shook even harder and then pointed to the floor.

"What... was that?" I stuttered. Virtanen smiled gloomily.

"I have better footage," he said. "Let me find it."

He bent down to the control panel. The monitor showed men with helmets, bullet-proof vests and assault rifles.

"I know what you are thinking," Virtanen said. "We encountered a new, possibly intelligent life form. Of course we should have called the police, the army, scientists, the representative of minorities, maybe even the president... But that would have delayed the metro or probably stopped the construction work completely and that was not an option after all the sacrifices."

He looked at me and laughed.

"It's surprisingly easy to hire private gunmen to take care of discreet matters such as this when you have the right contacts."

I stared at the monitor weak-willedly. I saw several creatures attacking the armed men, creatures that were like humans or like spiders and ultimately neither. The guns spat fire silently but did not affect the creatures. They moved fast, climbed on the





ceiling and on the walls, grabbed the gunmen and dismembered them with their claws and nails or wrested them out of the picture.

The deaths of the men did not seem real but the violence was crude and ugly and proved everything to be true.

"We fought a trench warfare for a long time," Virtanen continued. "We tried to blow up their tunnels, to drive them deeper to where they had came from..."

I glanced at the edge of the circle of light again. The tunnel was black and lifeless—but did I hear a quiet, distant sound like nails rustling against the walls? I got the goose bumps and the look on Virtanen's face did not calm me down at all. He watched entrancedly as the creatures started to win the fight. The gunmen who had not been dragged into darkness or torn into pieces turned around and ran—and there were not many of them.

"What happened then?" I asked and gulped. "Did you eventually win and destroy them all?"

"But why, of course not!" Virtanen cried out. "We were not able to! Just look at all that grace and beauty... Strength! What are we men compared to them? They were old already when our species had not yet descended from the trees! They are the true rulers of this world. And now they have been awoken!"

He coughed and kept on talking in a calmer manner.

"Besides, it was all a misunderstanding from our side. They had only approached us diplomatically—you see, their culture is very merciless and due to the lack of a common language their only way to communicate was to eat few members of the species alien to them. Soon we reached an understanding. They took me to the Queen."

"The Queen?" I asked though I really did not want to know.

"The Queen had been sleeping underground for thousands of years," Virtanen said, "longer than the history of mankind. In ancient times she ruled the Earth and people were her servants, slaves... But our ancestors rebelled, put her to eternal sleep with their witchcraft and closed the door to her realm and we awakened her. Now she has returned among us and we shall receive enormous glory!"

Virtanen turned to look at me. His eyes were open wide and he shook all over. It seemed like he had to grasp onto the remains of his sanity to be able to speak calmly.

"We have to go public and tell that the Western Metro Extension is late. The construction work has to be stopped because it disturbs the Queen. That is not acceptable."

I looked at the other monitors—and almost fell down from my chair. I saw the humanlike but still very alien shadowy shapes flash past the surveillance cameras. They moved on from one screen to another, passed the construction machines, approached the distant gleam of light that I to my horror realised was coming from the spotlights that surrounded us.

"Yes, you have been given the greatest honour of all!" Virtanen leaped up from his chair. Spit burst out of his mouth and he waved his hands frantically. "You get to be the one who tells the world about the return of the Queen! But first you have to see her! She is beautiful, the most beautiful creature in the whole world... Look, here they come! I told them about you and they're going to take you to the Queen!"

Now I really heard the rustle from the tunnel along with a strange hissing sound. Shadows moved rapidly on the edge of the circle of light but I did not bother to take a closer look. The chair fell down as I rushed headlong to the direction we came from, towards the mouth of the excavation and daylight. The mad scream of Virtanen echoed in my ears.

"They're coming! They're coming to take back what belongs to them! The world is theirs, it has always been! And now they're coming back...!"

I spent the evening and the night in the sleaziest bars on Vaasankatu, sat alone in corner tables and tried to numb my mind to get rid of the dreams and thoughts. I do not know how I got home but I woke up there. I woke up to my own scream and for a moment I thought I saw huge eight-legged shapes in the dark corners of my room.

I sprayed cold water on my face in the bathroom and looked at myself in the mirror. I startled when I saw the face staring back at me. I was afraid I would look as old and weary as Virtanen.

I searched the pockets of my jacket though I was not able to hold on to anything. My camera had pictures only of the Lauttasaari metro construction site. I was not able to find the recorder, maybe I had left it at the site—or I might have lost it in a bar. I went through the phone call list and only managed to drop my phone on the floor. I collapsed onto a chair and covered my face in my hands. I did not reach for the phone because I realised that it was all in vain. Virtanen had called from an unknown number.

I stumbled to the balcony and looked at the city that was waking up, trying to look for the answer in the brand new day. Everything seemed to be as it had always been. The sun shone and the birds sang, the day was going to be beautiful and warm for the season. Still I felt the freezing cold of the metro tunnel rise up inside of me, making me tremble. I decided that I would not answer unknown phone numbers anymore.

As I returned inside I noticed a spider climbing up the balcony wall. An incredibly beautiful spider that glowed in the rays of the morning sun.

*Excerpt from the original short story.*

*The original short story was published in 2011 as Länsimetro viivästyy in Kultakuoriainen #3 under the pseudonym of Johannes Sohlman and in 2014 in Mahtavat Ammoiset ja muita karmaisevia kertomuksia.*



# FUN FACTS

by Jussi Katajala

*Before you finally escape from Helsinki, there are still some fun facts to consider.*

**1.** There is a large cavern filled with 25 million litres of water a hundred meters below the Esplanadi Park. City officials claim that the water is used for district cooling of apartments and offices of Helsinki. In reality, the summer cottage of Cthulhu is located there.

**2.** During November, Helsinki receives only 37 hours of sunlight on average. This is compensated in June when there are three suns on the Helsinki sky. At Midsummer the heat generated by these suns is too much for the locals. They disappear for a couple of days and Helsinki is inhabited only by polar bears and confused tourists. Nobody knows exactly where the Helsinkians go, but scientists think they perform mysterious rituals to banish the extra suns from the sky.

**3.** There are thousands of rabbits, descendants of former pets let loose in the city, in the parks and forest areas of Helsinki. The city of Helsinki tried to control the rabbit population in the early 2000s by letting loose



a rabbit-borne virus created by the Umbrella Corporation. As a result, the rabbits became undead carnivores and started to attack humans. The city officials have only stated that their next plan is to "call Alice".

4. Besides a tram pub, there is also a karaoke taxi, a sauna bus and a barbecue zeppelin in Helsinki.

5. There are several unused metro stations that were built in the 1960s and '70s just in case the metro system would be expanded later. The Munkkivuori Metro Station is currently used for accommodating people who have been bitten by zombie rabbits. Due to a clerical error, one of the victims has ended up in Hakaniemi.

6. The first traffic lights were taken into use in 1951. Before that, the one with the higher number in the license plate had the right of way. When the first wheeled vehicles were taken into use, the right of way was determined by the first letter of the species of the animal pulling the carriage. The animals were listed in reverse alphabetical order and that is why zebras were more popular in Helsinki than horses.



*Zebra-powered carriage from the early 1900s*

7. Only 40 % of the people living in Helsinki are actually born in Helsinki. 3 % of the inhabitants are copies of the cylon model **Number Six**. That is why there are so many blondes.

8. Seurasaari Island is an open-air museum which consists of old buildings transplanted from elsewhere. You can find there a 17th century church, a 19th century farmhouse, the House of Usher, Jabba the Hutt's palace and the Royal Library of Alexandria.

9. During the Cold War foreign film crews were denied access to Russia, so Helsinki portrayed Moscow in several films, for example, in Ken Russell's *Billion Dollar Brain* (1967). Helsinki has also portrayed Tokyo in *Godzilla vs. Astromechamoomin* (1973), Capua in *Spartacus: Blood and Sand* (2010) and Atlantis in *Stargate Atlantis* (2004-2009). Helsinki is the only city ever nominated for an Academy Award in the category Best Actor in a Supporting Role for its role as Minas Tirith in the film *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003).

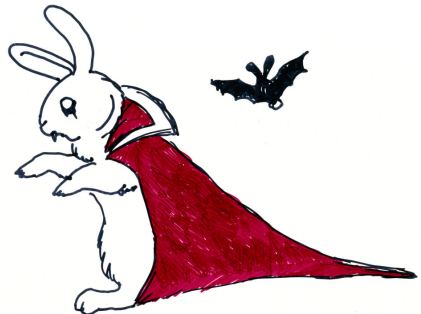
10. There is not a cat café in Helsinki like in many other cities, but there is a triffid park which is a popular picnic site.

11. Many interesting annual festivals are arranged in Helsinki. The Helsinki Herring Fair is held in October. At the fair you can buy and eat herring prepared in many different ways. In late August is the Herring Fight in which the participants throw herrings at each other purely for fun. Also, just before Midsummer there is the Running of the Herrings. Several people are injured every year in this event in which people try to outrun angry herrings that are let loose on the streets of Helsinki.

The latest addition to the local festivals is Pharmacy Day when anyone can set up a pharmacy. On Pharmacy Day it is allowed to freely sell medicines that would normally require a prescription and perform minor surgeries without anesthesia. The city officials were at first skeptical about this event but it has saved the city of Helsinki millions of euros in healthcare costs.

There are now plans to widen this concept and arrange also Motor Vehicle Inspection Day, Explosive And Corrosive Materials Day and Large Hadron Collider Day.

12. "City of Helsinki" is an anagram of "Oily Chiefs Knit".





# LEAVE-TAKING

by Frej Wasastjerna

Teuvo Suursuo stopped to unzip his jacket. It was warmer than he had expected, up here on the hills of Mäkkylä, with all the firs, pines and birches blocking the wind and the sun shining from a cloudless sky.

He saw something glint.

How come? It was in shadow, in one of the shelters that the Russian army had excavated during the First World War to protect Helsinki and the naval base at Viapori from a possible German attack.

He decided to investigate and began walking...

He woke up. He was lying on his back. Above him was a ceiling that seemed to be built of rusty rails interspersed with logs, blackened by age, smoke or whatever. The ceiling was supported by concrete walls, without the graffiti he would have expected. On his right was a rectangular doorway leading to a similar room, still darker than this one.

Hadn't he noticed something in such a shelter and wanted to take a look? He couldn't remember anything after that. What had happened?

A sound, like somebody clearing his throat, came from the left. He looked in that direction and saw a man with an unkempt beard, dressed in a shabby quilted coat, looking like a skid row alcoholic, sitting on the floor of the shelter. The light that lit the room came from a lamp beside that man.

Had he been coshed and robbed? Reflexively he groped for his wallet—it was where it belonged, in his right rear trouser pocket. He stopped himself before he took out his wallet to check whether anything had been taken. Seeming suspicious might not be a tactically sound move at this point.

His back hurt a little, maybe from lying on a hard floor, but his head felt fine, except for the gap in his memory. He sat up and looked around. There was only a duvet on which he had been lying and the other man, sitting on a cushion, both on a flat concrete floor littered with rubble. There was nothing else, nothing which could have glinted even in sunlight, much less in shadow.

"How do you feel?" the man asked.

Teuvo rubbed his head. He couldn't find any lumps or sore spots on it. "Not too bad," he said. "What happened?"

"You were zapped by one of the aliens using this shelter as a research outpost for studying us. They found you snooping around here, and they have a weapon that makes you lose consciousness and forget everything that happened for several minutes before that but doesn't hurt you otherwise, so they used it on you."

What the hell? Did that guy expect Teuvo would believe this bullshit?

The man smiled. "Yes, I know it sounds like a load of crap. That's exactly what the aliens are counting on—or rather were. They know that if we bums told anybody what was going on here, nobody would believe us, except for a few people who really are crazy. And they have stuff to keep their presence secret, not only that forgetfulness ray. Have you walked past this place before?"

Huh? What was that about? Teuvo nodded.

"Did you see it before?"

Teuvo hesitated. "I'm not sure. I haven't paid all that much attention ."

"Well, you wouldn't have seen it. They have stuff that made the rock wall here seem solid. But now they've dismantled that. They've decided that with all the new residential

buildings going up around here, there are going to be too many humans walking around here, so they are evacuating this outpost. Frankly, I'll be sorry to see them go. They kept the place warm and supplied us with food and drink—yes, both water and stronger stuff, whatever we wanted—in return for getting to study us and for our keeping quiet. But now that they're leaving, I suppose that bargain no longer holds."

Teuvo sat silent. He had to give that bum some credit for imagination.

He looked at his watch. It said 02:34. "Was I unconscious for some twelve hours?" he asked.

"Yes. They had to zap you again several times to keep you that way. But now they've removed all their stuff from here, and I suppose they'll soon have finished loading it into their, well, I suppose you could call it a space shuttle, though it's very unlike the American shuttle design. Anyway, that's what they use to ferry stuff from or to their big ship in orbit."

"A big ship in orbit? How come nobody has noticed it?"

"It's invisible to both radar and telescopes, they say, though they didn't tell me how—and probably I wouldn't have understood anyway."

"Where do they come from?" Teuvo noticed that he had almost begun to take this cock-and-bull story seriously. He shook his head. It did make a weird kind of sense. But, as they say, the trouble with an open mind is that people come along and put things in it...

"They didn't say that either." The bum stood up and somehow dialed down the intensity of the light. "How about going out to see them leave?"

"Okay." Teuvo stood up too. Suddenly he noticed that his bladder was full. "Which way is out?"

"Through that opening," the bum said.

Teuvo walked through the doorway he had noticed just after waking up, moving very cautiously in the dark. There was just another room...

"To your left."

Yes, there was some faint light coming from that direction. Teuvo walked through another doorway and found himself beneath an open sky, with a few clouds lit from

below by light pollution from Helsinki and Espoo. Almost stumbling over a couple of roots in the not quite total darkness, he found a tree and relieved himself against it.

After he had zippered his trousers, the bum walked past him. "Follow me."

Teuvo did so. After only a few meters they stopped. "There," the bum said. "Look carefully."

At first Teuvo saw nothing remarkable, just a clearing with trees all around it. Then he noticed that the trees straight ahead looked odd—curved, as if painted on a spherical bowl.

And there was more. There were some dark discs, barely visible in the night, arranged in a semi-circular pattern as if they were on the surface of that sphere that might be there. Portholes? Camera lenses? Something else, something he couldn't imagine?

A hatch opened, seemingly in mid-air. The light that streamed from it was faint, but Teuvo could discern some very prosaic-looking boxes lying on the ground. Then four beings emerged through the hatch. In the darkness, Teuvo couldn't really make out what they looked like, only that their appearance was too alien for him to make sense of it. They picked up the boxes and entered the hatch, closing it after themselves.

For some minutes, nothing more happened. Then a couple of hatches opened again, higher up. There was no light coming through these hatches, but by now Teuvo's eyes had adapted enough to the darkness that he could see something extending from these openings. At first he couldn't see exactly what it was. Then he realized that the things at the ends of those arms looked like propellers.

Again, huh? Why would a space vehicle have propellers?

Then the propellers started spinning. Sounding very much like a quiet helicopter, something rose into the air, almost invisible against the clouds in the background. Then the propellers churned the bottom of a cloud for a moment and the thing was gone.

"Well, that was that," the bum said. He and Teuvo looked at each other for a moment. Then the bum turned toward the shelter and Teuvo turned the other way to go home.

*(Strictly speaking, Mäkkylä is just outside the city limit of Helsinki—so someone already escaped. Mission accomplished.)*

# ESCAPE ARTISTS



## **Karri Asikainen**

Karri Asikainen is a bohemian eccentric from Kouvola.

## **Jussi Katajala**

Jussi Katajala stems from the melancholic region of Kymenlaakso from where he escaped to Espoo. His short stories range from historical to horror and science fiction, and they have been published in several magazines and anthologies.

In 2014 he won the Atorox award for the best Finnish science fiction short story. Jussi has published three short story collections and a historical detective novel *Romuluksen pojat* (2016). He is interested in history, photography and special beers.

## **Marjut Katajala**

Marjut Katajala's literary work has been published on five continents and translated into more than ten different languages. Unfortunately they are user manuals and nobody ever reads user manuals (except that one guy in Russia). On her spare time Marjut knits, drinks wine and spends time with her husband and cats.

## **Ville Kröger**

Ever since he first laid eyes on a rented VHS copy of Star Wars, Ville Kröger has been on a hell-bent, ADD-ridden quest to make cool stuff. This has led him inescapably to his current project of piecing together a time-lapse nature film of the Norwegian Lapland. He also enjoys amateur astronomy, military simulations and other bearded activities.

## Tapio Ranta-aho

Tapio Ranta-aho is the former and the longest-stading president of Espoo Science Science Fiction and Fantasy Association ESC ry. He has written and directed a movie and an audio drama, and written short stories and causeries for different magazines. Tapio works as a civil engineer and he was one of the designers of the Western Metro Extension. For real.

## Tuomas Saloranta

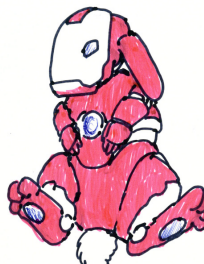
Tuomas Saloranta is the founder of the independent publishing house Kuoriaiskirjat and the neo-pulp movement Uusrahvaanomainen Spekulatiivinen Fiktio (URS). He is the editor of several anthologies. Tuomas has published over 40 short stories in different magazines and anthologies, and he has been successful in many Finnish science fiction and fantasy writing contests. He has published three novelettes and a horror story collection *Mahtavat Ammoiset ja muita karmaisevia kertomuksia* (2014).

## Shimo Suntila

Shimo Suntila dwells in the underground tunnels of Turku, far enough from Helsinki to survive should the capital be annihilated by the Tsar Bomba in a freak 'accident'. He writes scientifictional tales and designs in his spare time a Tsar Bomba of his own.

## Jarmo Vainionpää

Jarmo Vainionpää is from the Southern Pohjanmaa region, a nerd who got lost in Espoo and has not yet found a way out. He kills time and nerves by writing and drawing and brain cells by role playing.



## Frej Wasastjerna

Frej Wasastjerna was born in Helsinki in 1944. He started school in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1951, learning English and becoming a science fiction fan. He worked at VTT, the State Technical Research Center of Finland, from 1972 to 2008 and retired in 2009. Currently he lives in Mäkkylä with two cats, working on developing a naval war game and occasionally writing. If you want to know why a space lighter would have propellers or read more of Frej's work (stories, poems and other stuff), go to <http://www.frejwasastjerna.net> .



TO: Arnold Ape, Chief Banana Officer  
FROM: Gabby Gorilla, Chief Executive Orangutan  
DATE: June 14, 2017  
SUBJECT: Meeting policies

Our last meeting went on and on like Groundhog Day even after all the donuts were eaten and coffee was cold. This is unacceptable.

By the end of the week all the employees must receive a copy of *Escape from the Meeting Room*. You can use 10% of the office refreshment service budget for the purchase.

And I expect everyone to read it and follow the instructions provided in it. After all, this is a respectable company, not a zoo.



*ESCAPE from the Meeting Room* available from [www.esc-ape.net](http://www.esc-ape.net)

## RESTAURANT PROVIDENCE



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Located next to Temple of Ocean Gods

Come and try our delicious seafood menu

**Azathoast**

*Toast filled with herring and blue cheese*

**Lurking Eel**

*Smoked eel with pasta*

**Catfish of Ulthar**

*Deep fried catfish with french fries*

**Dunwich Haddock**

*Haddock with smashed potatoes*

**Cod Out of Space**

*Cod fillet so big it doesn't even fit on your plate*

**Crayfish of Charles Dexter Ward**

*Boiled crayfish seasoned with essential salts*

**Feast of the Great Old Ones (min. 2 persons)**

*The number of dishes on this surprise menu depends on the number of participants*

