

“But you are correct – no scientist could withhold such a finding, yet the Dolourish people know what we do here at Fastnet Rock; they despise us and I am hardly the creature to reveal such an idea as DTEA. Freeing our people is my desire. And DTEA is the key. To have been the one that cut that key is my defining moment. But I am not the one to unlock them or to show them that God is dead or to bring them their freedom from Dolourism. I am not the one. You are.”

Borrada groped in his purse of expression but could find none in local currency. “Am I meant to take you on past performance, having solved all your previous consultations as trickery?”

“The performance was never the reality.”

“So why me; because I’m the one they know, love and trust?”

“Because you are not the weak man you pen yourself to be. You can feel the truth of this chemical. You know there is vastly more to you than this corporeal bag of meat. You have always felt it have you not? You have never nearly reached your potential that you know deep in you. You never believed that life was such formal banality. Tristeza, we reserve that greatness for God of Dolour. But that greatness is rightfully Man’s. It is ours, and by magnitudes and multiples.”

The backwash of crematorium gasses seeped under the door and through the ash-blocked vents: cheese-sour and portraying hopelessness. Borrada was too weary to cover his nose. “What could possibly make you even dream I’d seek this role?” he said, “after you’ve imprisoned me on a lettre de cachet, left me tested, doped, indoctrinated, broken and tortured? Look at my eye bruised. Look at my hands trembling; my arms needletracked; my throat inhalant-raw. What makes you think it?”

“To be Dolour’s salvation is the noblest aim. But is it not enough? Is it not enough that through this you can be restored to The Dáil and instate a new Dolour? Is it not enough for you to thus imagine yourself making restitution for your greatest mistake: the war with Lugubria: our nation’s undertaker?”

Borrada wiped trickles from the nape of his neck and let his arm hang there. “What’s it all to you, Gottisttot?”

“I too have dreams, Tristeza. I can only hope that we share them. I dream about God and about Man. Humankind is almost senseless. The people cannot hear their own wisdom. They cannot see their beauty. They cannot read their own clever scripts. But they can feel God. God is all they know. But I dream that their sense of Man is reignited. I dream that their greatness is re-awakened. I seek to realise my dream, Tristeza. Because the choice of the people is made for them. God of Dolour is their only choice. But were they to witness the almighty greatness of the Animal of Man within them, then they would at least have a choice to make between God and Man where the two are equivalent.”