

A day in The Hogeweyk

The visitor's perspective

In the shade of one of the large trees, a married couple gazes happily at the activity in the theatre square. An elderly gentleman, together with a young lady, intently study the large chess board and take turns moving the pieces. At the fountain, a group of women chat loudly on colourful garden chairs. The story is clearly audible—it is about a memory of a visit to a park in Paris which had the same chairs. Passers-by, old and young, greet the women enthusiastically. A little further on, a woman is talking to a man opposite her. She is gesturing wildly. After a while, another woman joins the conversation. The two women then walk through the open front door of Boulevard 15.

The covered passage smells of freshly-baked cookies. The scent is coming from De Bonte Hof. Amusing conversations can be heard that pause for a moment when the oven beeps in the kitchen that has been decorated in an old-fashioned style. A tray of fresh cookies is removed from the oven. Two women, one in a wheelchair, enter the venue, obviously seduced by the smell. They sample the cookies.

The supermarket across the street is very busy. Shopping trolleys loaded with groceries are pushed out of the shop. The rattle of a shopping trolley dissipates into the distance as it disappears from view towards Grote Plein. A man reluctantly pushes the full trolley while two women follow behind him arm in arm. The trio disappear behind the front door of Grote Plein 5.

One of the women loads the fresh vegetables into the kitchen fridge. The kitchen features many shades of red, flowers on the handles and pink tiles on the wall. A young lady continues to empty the shopping trolley. The newly-bought bag of chocolates is emptied into the silver bowl on the coffee table. A beautiful white teapot with red flowers, is placed on the table. Old-fashioned sing-alongs are playing from the speakers. All those around sing along loudly. With a bang, one of the cups with flowers and a silver rim falls to the floor. Someone got a bit too excited by the singing...

A woman isolates herself amidst the fun. She seems restless and shouts something unintelligible. The music is turned down a notch and a young woman takes a seat on the couch next to her. They talk together and peace is restored. The man gets up, picks up a summer coat from the coat rack in the hallway and walks out the front door, apparently for a walk. Clockwise towards the Boulevard. On the Boulevard, the copper letters on the facade of the Mozart Hall glisten in the sunlight. Classical music can be heard. Through the window, one can see a group of men and women dancing around the room while other people in wheelchairs sway to the music.

Two men read the newspaper together on the terrace at the The Hogeweyk café. A woman approaches them and asks for directions. She seems upset. After a while, she

notices two ducks waddling towards the Vijverpark (Pond Park). She suddenly turns around and follows the ducks. In the Vijverpark, a woman in a wheelchair is dozing off in the sun. She doesn't notice the ducks cooling off in the pond.

It's very busy in the restaurant further on. A large group of men in suits and ties are sitting in the back. The waiter hands out the lunch menu. People are walking around the buffet. Groups of people chat at tables. Others silently enjoy the menu's lunch dishes. The waiter serves the men in suits their orders. They enjoy a local beer together amid laughter. They seem to be speaking English. Children at another table make noise and cheer when the pancakes arrive. An elderly lady sips her glass of wine and seems to be enjoying the spectacle.

Further on, two women in front of Grote Plein 7 drink coffee with the neighbour who lives at Groenhof 8. A woman walks inside. Through the French doors, she can be seen chatting with the elderly woman in a bed by the window in the living room. The lunch table is cleared, and someone is heard singing along loudly with Willy Alberti. The Persian tablecloth is put back on the table.

Further on, at Vijverpark 16, a woman is tidying up her room. She is straightening one of her own works of art. The style would be best described as 'modernist'. A man is drawing attentively at the dining table in the living room. The woman sits down and starts on a new artwork, but is quickly distracted. The ducks are back. The quacking is clearly audible through the French doors. Three children run around chasing the ducks. A man enters with a full shopping bag. Moments later, the smell of garlic emanates from the kitchen. Layer by layer, lasagne sheets are placed in an oven dish. A woman puts tomatoes that she sliced herself on the next layer. The man adds the béchamel sauce immediately afterwards.

Outside, in the garden, the neighbour's washing rack squeaks. Two neighbours take the laundry off the washing rack. One of them follows the children inside curiously. A little later, one of the children comes out with a fresh muffin in her hand. Apparently, one will not be missed. A young man typing at the computer in the living room waves goodbye to her. He walks to the utility room, removes a roll of medication from one of the drawers in the cupboard and takes the medication and a glass of water to the living room.

The children are still playing near the fountain on Theaterplein. The square is busy. People from all over the neighbourhood are making their way towards the theatre for the afternoon concert.

Life.