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Klitgaard, Mogens, 1906-1945.

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Mogens Klitgaard

There's a man sitting on a trolley.
THERE’S A MAN SITTING ON A TROLLEY
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Mogens Klitgaard

There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley

Translated and with an Introduction and Notes by Marc Linder

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Introduction

I. Mogens Klitgaard’s Life and Works

In his six years as a novelist during a very brief life, Mogens Klitgaard succeeded in writing six books that made him one of Denmark’s most interesting social-critical realist and historical novelists of the interwar period. He has been called “[t]he central representative of the period’s ironic-elegant everyday realism”¹ and “one of Danish realism’s classics.”²

Klitgaard was born into a solidly middle-class family in Valby—an industrializing village that had been incorporated into Copenhagen in 1901³—on August 23, 1906. His father was a department head of the umbrella organization of the Danish consumer co-operative stores (Fællesforeningen af Danmarks brugsforeninger). His secure childhood began to dissolve at the age of six when his 42-year-old mother died of cancer in 1913; by the age of ten he had become an orphan when his father also died of cancer at 47 in 1916. After briefly living with his stepmother—his father had married the family’s maid the year after his


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wife's death—who had never shown any interest in him or his older sister, he moved in with his aunt and uncle in nearby (and relatively affluent) Frederiksberg. Although they were fond of him, the childless couple did not feel equal to the task of being parents and in 1917 they placed him in the Royal Orphanage (Det kongelige Opføstringshus) in Copenhagen, which had been founded by King Frederik V in 1753.4

This harsh and highly structured total institution, which enforced obedience, punctuality, and order by corporal punishment and—what was even more painful for Klitgaard—detention preventing him from spending weekends with his aunt and uncle and brother and sister, imbued him, a wilful child known as an "escape artist" since the age of four, with an exceedingly intense desire for freedom.5

At the end of the summer of 1921, at the age of fourteen (after his confirmation and completing the highest school grade at the orphanage) he was placed out as a market-gardener's apprentice in Rødvig, a Zealand coastal town about 40 miles south of

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4B[ertel Bing], “Ligefremt Interview: Virkelig Romantik i Hverdagslivet,” Nationaltidende, June 10, 1937; Dansk biografisk leksikon 8:41 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1981); Leon Jaurnow, “Dronmem om noget andet—portræt af Mogens Klitgaard i anledning af 50-året for hans død,” in Magasin fra Det kongelige bibliotek 10:3-14 at 4 (1995); Leon Jaurnow, “Efterskrift,” in Mogens Klitgaard, Der sidder en mand i en sporvogn 193-209 at 202 (N.p.: Dansk Lærerforeningen, 1997); Leon Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond: Mogens Klitgaards liv og forfatterskab 8-11 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, forthcoming); telephone interview with Inga Klitgaard (May 25, 2001). In Klitgaard's day Det kgl. Opføstringshus was a boarding school both for boys without parents and boys facing various social problems at home; for example, a single mother with a large number of children might request admission of one of more of her children there. Email from Leon Jaurnow (June 11, 2001).

5Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 12-17.
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Copenhagen, where he was supposed to spend five years. As he explained in newspaper interviews a few days after There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley appeared and again in an autobiographical piece in 1938, the choice had not been his: his brother Svend, who was ten years older and acted as a kind of guardian, and the orphanage had chosen the apprenticeship for him. He had never wished to become a gardener and never cared a bit for the "hard toil of an unskilled laborer from morning till evening"; but being an orphan, he had to go someplace where he would not be a burden to anyone. For his 12-hour workday the young Klitgaard received room and board and 10 crowns per month.6

Klitgaard revisited his feelings about this kind of work many years later in a newspaper essay with his observations while sitting in a village inn. When a gardener's apprentice enters the inn, Klitgaard is moved to note: "Seen from a taproom in North Zealand, life looks good and festive; seen from a desolate plowed field behind a beet pit, it looks different. With a spade in your hand, an icy wind at your back and four hours till dinner, it looks different. Then you don't give a damn about natural beauty and you console yourself with the thought that in half a year you're going to get twenty crowns more. If in fact you're not fired before then."7

His nominal wage—equivalent to less than two dollars when a loaf of bread cost about one crown8—made his position rather


8Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1926, tab. 101 at 102 (Co-
isolated, and, in the spring of 1922, after a little under a year, he engaged in his first act of “rebellion”—flight. One day he got into a dispute with the market-gardener, threw down his tools, hopped on to a bicycle, and headed to Elsinore about 70 miles away; after stopping in Copenhagen to telephone his family to inform them of his decision, he bicycled up the Zealand coast and crossed over to Sweden, making his way north. Initially he made a living dealing in notions and working for a farmer.9 At the age of fifteen he had thus embarked on a vagabondage that would last a decade.

His “rebellion,” as Klitgaard explained to the well-known journalist and novelist Christian Houmark in an interview in the right-wing tabloid B.T. a few days after There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley appeared, was against “the whole thing,” though not actually against “society.” On the one hand he was driven by a “longing to go abroad” to see and experience; on the other hand, his life was “extremely depressing” because he simply lacked the money to buy himself “anything new”—he had to use his minuscule pay to buy wooden work shoes—and get out and about

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penhagen: Thiele, 1926); Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1922, tab. 82 at 96 (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1922).

9Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard”; Houmark, “Daarligt egnet til at mode Livet”; Klitgaard, “En Søndag for to Aar siden”; Jaurnow, “Drømmen om noget andet” at 4, 6; Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 22-23. According to Jaurnow, “Efterskrift” at 204, Klitgaard stopped a few miles south of Elsinore at Humlebæk, sneaked on to a stolen boat and sailed to Sweden. Klitgaard did not mention this boat theft in the aforementioned autobiographical accounts, but the narrator in his semi-autobiographical novel recounts the incident. Mogens Klitgaard, Gud mildner luften for de klippede får 9 (N.p.: Carit Andersen, n.d. [1969] [1938]). Klitgaard’s widow states that everything in this book is autobiographical, while his biographer believes that almost everything is. Telephone interviews with Inga Klitgaard and Leon Jaurnow (May 25, 2001).
like the other young people.\textsuperscript{10}

The opening sentence of his autobiographical novel may have declared that he sometimes believed that chance occurrences do not determine our lives,\textsuperscript{11} but it seems highly probable that his own life would have followed a radically different course had his brother Svend, instead of giving him a one-way train ticket to Rødvig, helped him realize his wish of becoming a clerical trainee at the Copenhagen office of the East Asiatic Company—Denmark’s premier agent of colonial exploitation—with prospects of being stationed under the Orient’s green palms and baking sun.\textsuperscript{12}

Between 1922 and 1932 Klitgaard lived in Sweden, Germany, France, and England, working as a seaman, smuggler, counterman, waiter, dishwasher, office worker, farm worker, and “agitation leader in a revolutionary organization,” though he never had a permanent job and worked from one day to the next. In between he also returned for various periods of time to Copenhagen, where, for example, in 1923 he worked at a dairy, and sometimes lived on public assistance.\textsuperscript{13} His “greatest experience” as a vagabond, as he put it in his largely autobiographical novel, \textit{Gud mildner Luften for de klippede Får} (\textit{God Tempers the Wind to the Shorn Lamb}), was to lie on his back by the roadside and “just stare up into the air, to be completely free and independent, completely without responsibility, without obligations. Freer than the birds, which have a nest and mate and chicks and all that stuff.”\textsuperscript{14} It was an attitude that reappeared in other novels

\textsuperscript{10}Houmark, “Daarligt egnet til at møde Livet.”

\textsuperscript{11}Klitgaard, \textit{Gud mildner luften for de klippede får} at 7.

\textsuperscript{12}Jaurnow, \textit{Den lyse vagabond} at 27.

\textsuperscript{13}Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard”; Klitgaard, “En Søndag for to Aar siden”; Ebbe Neergaard, \textit{Mogens Klitgaard} 5 (Copenhagen: Carit Andersen, 1941); Jaurnow, \textit{Den lyse vagabond} at 23.

\textsuperscript{14}Mogens Klitgaard, \textit{Gud mildner luften for de klippede får} 44
too. Even in his posthumously published science-fiction novel written in 1932-33, Klitgaard called “lying by the roadside staring up at the blue sky with the drifting clouds . . . paradise on earth.”

The problem, however, was that Klitgaard soon discovered that gazing at the sky from a horizontal position was not possible that often—even for a vagabond. Not only did “the danger of getting work lurk everywhere,” but the repetitiousness of the experiences was “tiring, and life as a vagabond becomes just as monotonous and rather boring as the work in a factory or an office—everything becomes habit.” That routine reached its absurdist high point when Klitgaard wound up running a bureaucratically organized cigarette smuggling business on the northern Norwegian-Swedish border—an activity that came to an end in November 1924 when the Swedish police arrested him and he was deported to Copenhagen for being unable to support himself. He was just as unable to support himself in Denmark delivering groceries, but he was not subject to deportation and could obtain public assistance.

A turning point in his life took place in 1929 when he got a

(N.p.: Carit Andersen, n.d. [1967] [1938]). The title of the book is usually attributed to Laurence Sterne though it can be traced back farther. Klitgaard uses the phrase at the end of the book when the vagabond-narrator expresses pride in not having been taken in by the stories that are told to keep people satisfied in their slavery: “So that the sheep not make a ruckus about being clipped, they say that God tempers the wind to them.” Id. at 151.

Mogens Klitgaard, de sindssyges klode 68 (Copenhagen: Carit Andersen, 1968).

Klitgaard, Gud mildner luften for de klippede får at 44.

Klitgaard, Gud mildner luften for de klippede får at 81.


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job as a scorekeeper-pinsetter at Helmbeck's billiard parlor above the Kino-Palæt in Copenhagen. His 70- to 84-hour workweek was compensated at a mere 30 crowns. That same year his failing health led to his rejection as a soldier, and after having lived outdoors for a decade, he was even more vulnerable to the smoky indoor air, and on New Year’s Eve 1932 he was admitted on an emergency basis to the tuberculosis ward of Copenhagen’s municipal Øresund hospital. On March 7, 1933, he was then transferred to the tuberculosis sanatorium at Boserup near Roskilde, about 20 miles from Copenhagen, where he remained a patient until August 3, 1933.

While there he became an avid and voracious reader, especially fascinated by the American novelists Dos Passos, Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, in addition to Ilya Ehrenburg, Erich Kästner, B. Traven, Hans Kirk, and Martin Andersen Nexo. During his stay at the sanatorium he also wrote his first book, a socialist science-fiction novel (The Globe of the Insane) about a scientific expedition to another planet (nedrof—the Danish word for “earth” spelled backwards). Through a common friend in left-wing cultural circles (Helge Andersen, who was associated

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19 For a photograph from the year 1936, see København: Før og nu, Vol. VI: Frederiksberg, Yderkvarterer, Forstæder at 96.
20 See below note to p. 79 on wages in Copenhagen at this time.
21 Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard” (70 hours); Klitgaard, “En Søndag for to Aar siden” (84 hours); Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 40, 44, 57. According to Klitgaard’s own account, he began working as a scorekeeper in 1932, but his biographer insists that Klitgaard’s own diary notes show that his memory later failed him. Email from Leon Jaurnow (June 1, 2001).
22 Poul Carit Andersen, “Mogens Klitgaard,” in Klitgaard, de sindssyges klode 5-28 at 13; Jaurnow, “Drømmen om noget andet” at 8, 10.
23 Earlier, in 1926, he had written poetry that he was unable to publish. Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 33-36.
with the magazine *Clarté* and later became a noted author of books on economic power in Denmark), Klitgaard sent the manuscript to Hans Kirk, who in 1928 had published his first novel, *The Fishermen*, to critical acclaim, and was already a critic of some note. Though a communist, Kirk never let his political agreements interfere with his judgment of his comrades’ literary efforts.24

On July 2, 1934, Kirk replied to Andersen: “There’s no doubt that he has talent.” Although the book was “handsomely and sensibly” constructed, Kirk had two crucial objections. First, Klitgaard’s language was academically dry and stiff and his dialogs old-fashioned and bookish. Kirk observed that Klitgaard would have to work energetically at freeing himself from that style if his intention was to become a writer. Secondly, the psychological conflict in the book was too slight and uninteresting. The “decisive” point for Kirk was whether Klitgaard could train his psychological sense of what goes on in people. Since Klitgaard was young, he could do it, but it would demand great patience. In addition to vigilantly observing himself and others, he advised Klitgaard to “study modern psychology—Freud.” Kirk’s more wide-ranging concluding remarks are

24For example, in 1929, just one year after he had published *The Fishermen*, Kirk wrote a scathing review of a novel about large farmers during World War I by Martin Andersen Nexø, the author of *Pelle the Conqueror* and, together with Maxim Gorky, arguably the world’s foremost proletarian novelist. Kirk stressed that Andersen Nexø—who many decades earlier had worked as a poor farm laborer—had written about the farmers without having any real familiarity with them, having acquired all his knowledge from newspapers. Hans Kirk, Review of *Midi i en Jærntid*, in *Lolland-Falsters Folketidende*, Aug. 22-23, 1929, reprinted in Hans Kirk, *Litterature og tendens: Essays of artikler* 80-86 (Børge Houmann ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendals Uglebøger, 1974). Kirk did not join the Danish Communist party until 1931, but he was a Marxist-socialist by the mid-1920s.
more intriguing. The form that Klitgaard had chosen for the novel appeared “obsolete” to Kirk:

After all, there isn’t the slightest reason to improvise this complicated action apparatus to give a critique of capitalist society. One was forced to do that in Holberg’s time—Niels Kliim’s subterranean travel—but in our day one can of course criticize and satirize quite openly. However, there is something entirely first-rate about the subject: Capital, which seeks to prevent the scientist from publishing his results because they don’t suit it. If Klitgaard took up this theme, in another form, and if he succeeded in freeing his style and gaining broader psychological insight, I believe it could turn into an excellent book.25

Klitgaard respected Kirk’s opinion so highly that he put the manuscript away, never showed it to anyone else, and never published it.26 As its posthumous publication in 1968 revealed,

25Letter from Hans Kirk to Helge Andersen (July 2, 1934), in Mogens Klitgaard’s papers, Det kongelige Bibliotek (Copenhagen), NKS 2839, 2 (copy furnished by Leon Jaurnow). Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) was the founder of modern Danish literature and the leading figure of the Danish enlightenment. He published his satirical science fiction poem Nicolai Klimii iter subterraneum in Latin in 1741; it was translated into English as The Journey of Niels Klim to the World Underground.

26This account is based on the forthcoming biography of Klitgaard by Leon Jaurnow, who has studied Klitgaard’s papers at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. Jaurnow speculates that the divergent account given by Neergaard and Carit Andersen, who were friends of Klitgaard, was based on Klitgaard’s own erroneous recollection. These authors reported that Klitgaard had sent the manuscript directly to Kirk, who wrote him a letter in reply. Neergaard, Mogens Klitgaard at 5; Carit Andersen, “Mogens Klitgaard” at 14. The account given in Jaurnow’s unpublished biography corrects an earlier version according to which Klitgaard had sent the manuscript to an (unnamed) publisher, which commissioned a report from Kirk. Jaurnow, “Efterskrift” at 206.
Kirk and Klitgaard were right: though the novel was not uninteresting, its scarcely veiled indirect critique of conditions on Earth was tediously heavy-handed.\textsuperscript{27} None of Klitgaard’s published novels ever displayed such defects or deficiencies.

After he was discharged from the sanatorium in 1933, Klitgaard’s health was no longer robust enough to permit him to resume his vagabondage. But his longing to return to life grew stronger and stronger and he resumed his old job as billiard scorekeeper,\textsuperscript{28} where he did meet an interesting cross-section of the Copenhagen populace, which provided him with rich material for his first published novel. He also became involved in left-wing political organizations such as Studentersamfundet (though called Student Society, its members included non-student left-wing youth, and Hans Kirk, for example, was its chairman in the 1930s more than a decade after he had left the university) and the Danish Communist Party’s \textit{Røde Hjælp} (Red Aid)—which assisted communist refugees—of which he became secretary. Klitgaard, however, never joined the party itself because he wished

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Klitgaard’s widow believes that Jaurnow is wrong on this point, but she has no first-hand knowledge since she did not know Klitgaard in 1933. Telephone interview with Inga Klitgaard (May 25, 2001).

\textsuperscript{27}Klitgaard, \textit{de sindssyges klode}. For a more positive assessment, see \textit{Dansk litteraturhistorie}, vol. 7: \textit{Demokrati og kulturkamp 1901-45}, at 436. The manuscript was written without any capital letters; although until the orthographic reform of 1948 all Danish nouns were capitalized (as they still are in German), the first edition of \textit{Der sidder en Mand i en Sporvogn} capitalized only proper names as in English. Klitgaard’s very first publication (in 1933) was an article on the functional obsoleteness of the way the letters of the alphabet were written that advocated the abolition of capital letters. Jaurnow, \textit{Den lyse vagabond} at 48-49.

\textsuperscript{28}Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard”; Jaurnow, “Efterskrift” at 206. See below note to p. 19 on Danish pin-billiards.
to retain his independence.\textsuperscript{29} When asked directly by a journalist in June 1937 whether he was a communist, Klitgaard replied: “I’m a revolutionary humanist even though that sounds like a paradox, because I don’t understand how one can be a humanist today without being revolutionary.”\textsuperscript{30} Similarly, when asked whether he was a Marxist, he responded: “I don’t want to be categorized. I’m not a fanatic in any area.”\textsuperscript{31}

How he came to write \textit{There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley} is an interesting story in its own right. According to accounts he gave in 1937 and 1938, on turning 30 in 1936 he “felt a beginning self-contempt”\textsuperscript{32} in taking a quick survey of the insignificant way his life had passed until then: “the course of events painted a picture of a weak person, a person who was seeking freedom, but who’d never been so far removed from freedom as now.” But he “actually couldn’t see where the mistake lay, on which occasion or occasions he should have behaved differently.” People do do things which in their consequences turn out to have been wrong, but “taking into account the situation, taking into account my nature, my upbringing, and my morality, I couldn’t perceive the great, decisive mistake I must have committed.” The fear and agitation unleashed by his thirtieth birthday suddenly came over him while he was sitting in Kongens Nytorv—one of Copenhagen’s most popular squares—one Sunday afternoon in the late summer of 1936. Klitgaard imagined that in “semi-elegant and awfully boring” Kongens Nytorv the

\textsuperscript{29}Carit Andersen, “Mogens Klitgaard” at 14; Jaurnow, \textit{Den lyse vagabond} at 59-63; telephone interviews with Inga Klitgaard and Leon Jaurnow (May 25, 2001).

\textsuperscript{30}Houmark, “Daarligt egnet til at møde Livet.”

\textsuperscript{31}Jaurnow, \textit{Den lyse vagabond} at 78 (quoting an unidentified source in Klitgaard’s papers at the Royal Library).

\textsuperscript{32}Houmark, “Daarligt egnet til at møde Livet.”
frayed edges on his pants were the most conspicuous ones there to the “boring middle-class people whose sole ambition was to rise to a higher social level.” It was not the frayed edges per se he cared about, but only as an expression of the unfreedom in which he found himself at a time when he still suffered from the illusion that people who wandered the roads were free, although in fact no one was more dependent on his surroundings than a beggar. Sitting there, he recalled one morning in the 1920s when, penniless in Paris, he had been on the way to sign up for the Foreign Legion; by sheer coincidence he ran into a Dane who lent him 100 francs and persuaded him not to join. Realizing that his whole life had consisted of lucky and unlucky coincidences, he left Kongens Nytorv, went home, and began writing There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley.33

He began work on the novel in November 1936 and, despite the time-consuming demands of his job and having only enough money to buy 25 sheets of paper at a time, he was able to complete it by January 1937. Because he thought about the book while at work and walking to and from work, “it came into being, so to speak, on the street it deals with.” One day he personally delivered it to the broad-minded publishing house Povl Branner, put it on the counter, and went home and waited for a response impatiently, especially since a turn for the worse in his health forced him to work half-time at a wage that failed to cover even his modest needs. The manuscript was accepted and the book appeared on June 1, 1937.34

Publication of the book, Klitgaard told an interviewer, meant more to him than anyone imagined. Writing it had not been

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33Klitgaard, “En Søndag for to Aar siden.”
34Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard”; Klitgaard, “En Søndag for to Aar siden”; Carit Andersen, “Mogens Klitgaard” at 17; Neergaard, Mogens Klitgaard at 8. These sources give conflicting accounts of when Klitgaard began work on the book; Klitgaard himself may have been the origin of the confusion.
driven by “literary ambition”; rather it was “make or break” for his life. That personal comment prompted the interviewer to ask whether the book’s main character was in outline Klitgaard himself. Klitgaard replied that one might well say that, except that for Lundegaard it became “break,” “and maybe that was in fact what I was expecting in my heart of hearts when I wrote the book.”

Critics “unanimously praised” the novel as a “brilliant debut.” It became “the book of the year,” receiving “the most laudatory reviews” of any debut novel in “many years” and going through four printings reaching a best-seller-like total of 8,000 copies in three or four months. Klitgaard was able to give notice at the billiard parlor. Instead of setting pins, he was asked to give readings, and excerpts from the novel were read on Danish state radio. In retrospect, one skeptical literary critic called the publicity surrounding the publication—including Klitgaard’s newspaper interviews and autobiographical piece—an “impressive media event” and “mythmaking.”

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15 Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard.” With Schadenfreude one interviewer for a conservative newspaper asked Klitgaard whether the book’s good reception had not disappointed him since the book dealt with those who never got far in spite of all their struggles and abilities. The interviewer then had “the unconditional satisfaction” of seeing the author begin mumbling when he asked the further question as to whether the book’s success must not be a “loathsome fiasco” for him. B, “Ligefremt Interview: Virkelig Romantik i Hverdagslivet.”

16 Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard.”

17 Carit Andersen, “Mogens Klitgaard” at 18, 5; Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 77.

18 Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 78-79, 83.

19 Susanne Oddsson Arnason, “Den regulerede jungle: Mogens Klitgaards Der sidder en Mand i en Sporvogn og Elly Petersen,” in
Introduction

In his review, "Promising Debut Novel," in the influential daily *Politiken*, the highly respected literary critic Christian Rimestad called the author a "young man with Talent! Mogens Klitgaard has powers of observation, a sense of humor of a bitter, sarcastic kind, an ability to make a plan and carry it out so that everything develops logically: not with the author’s private, pre-conceived logic, but with life’s own inexorable necessity—and for that... *psychological fantasy* is demanded...")40

Both mentor and mentee must have been especially pleased with the very enthusiastic review that Hans Kirk published in the Communist Party’s *Arbejderbladet*. Under the title “Vigorous Realism,” he stressed that it was rare for the author of a first novel to combine such “penetrating psychological acumen with a social overview.” Behind the “dissecting realism” could be sensed a “restrained humanity,” a “hidden sympathy” for the people who are so bad off, and an unobtrusive humor. Kirk also praised Klitgaard for the exemplary manner in which he worked with the modern novel technique that John Dos Passos and Alfred Döblin had created and that enabled him to place the central characters in the middle of a city and an epoch. To those who would predictably object that the book was too depressing Kirk replied:

But after all, that’s the way it is, and this family’s fate is typical. We’ve met former dry-goods merchant August Lundegaard many many times, on the trolley, on the street, and other places in life. After we’ve read Klitgaard’s book, we understand him better. He’s a person who’s ground down by a development he’s not the master of. Capitalism has made him into an economic and moral bankrupt, and one owes it to him

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not to blather his fate into sentimentality.41

The following year, in a review of Klitgaard’s next novel, which he praised for its charm and “humoristic elegiac” treatment of the lifelong consequences of petty-bourgeois upbringing, Kirk went so far as to speculate that “if Klitgaard had seized the opportunity, he would have become the favorite of reactionary criticism.”42 As a later literary historian formulated it: “If conservative, social-democratic, and communist critics of the ’30s could not agree on anything else, in any case they could all see that Mogens Klitgaard was an unusual author, who deserved much praise.”43

Klitgaard himself attributed the popular acceptance of There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley’s to its focus on a current problem: “[Y]ou can’t walk down a street without seeing that notorious little sign For Rent, and you never think what led up to the sign’s being put up and what’s become of those people?”44

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43Hans Rømeling, “Den lille mand” i 30’ernes litteratur belyst gennem udvalgte værker 100 (Copenhagen: Studenterrådet, 1974).
44B, “Ligefremt Interview: Virkelig Romantik i Hverdagslivet.”

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In spite of Klitgaard’s statement to an interviewer immediately after the book’s publication that at the moment he had no plans for a new book, that new events would perhaps have to intervene in his life before he wrote the next one, and that restoring his health was his main objective, he spent much time in late 1937 working on a film adaptation of the novel, which was never produced. Then, in quick succession, Klitgaard published: in 1938, his aforementioned semi-autobiographical novel; in 1940, two anti-heroic, social-historical novels focusing on the lives of ordinary everyday people—one of which, Bal­lade paa Nytorv (Hullabaloo in Nytorv), takes place in Copenhagen about the time of Frederik V’s death in 1766, and the other, De røde Fjer (The Red Feathers), in 1807, at the time of the British bombardment of Copenhagen during the Napoleonic wars—which required significant original research and were designed to shed light on contemporary life; in 1941, Elly Petersen, the first novel ever commissioned to be read on Danish state radio, a story, inspired by his wife’s own life, about a young woman’s move from the provinces to Copenhagen to seek her luck (which was made into a film in 1944); and in 1942, Den guddommelige Hverdag (The Divine Weekday), a kaleidoscopic, experimental novel with documentary montages of actual newspaper articles and advertisements about Copenhagen during the German occupation.

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45Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard.”
46Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 80-83.
47Mogens Klitgaard, De røde Fjer (Copenhagen: Povl Branner, 1940); Mogens Klitgaard, Ballade paa Nytorv (Copenhagen: Povl Branner, 1940); Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond at 100.
49Mogens Klitgaard, Den guddommelige hverdag (Copenhagen: Carit Andersen, 1975 [1942]). The literary historian Ib Bondebjerg
On August 29, 1943, the day on which Nazi Germany, which had been occupying Denmark since April 9, 1940, dissolved the Danish government, Klitgaard, who had been in the limelight as former secretary of Røde Hjælp and a member of the board of directors of the newly formed authors organization Forfatterbundet, was in North Zealand; instead of returning to Copenhagen, he fled to Sweden, thus avoiding the fate of other board members who were interned by the Gestapo. He lived there, joined half a year later by his wife and young son, until the liberation of Denmark in May 1945. While there he wrote a manuscript for a semi-documentary film about the wartime occupation struggle in Denmark, which was bought by the Svensk Filmindustri, but never produced.  

Soon after his return to Denmark he published on two consecutive days a lengthy opinion piece in the Danish Communist Party newspaper on recent trends in the development of individualism, which he contrasted unfavorably with Marxism. His years of vagabondage had, however, taken their toll: after a year’s illness in Sweden, the recurrence of tuberculosis led to the removal in the summer of one of his kidneys; shortly thereafter he died of tuberculosis of the heart at a hospital in Aarhus on
December 23, 1945, at the age of thirty-nine.\(^\text{52}\)

The death of such an energetic author at such a young age might prompt regret concerning all the novels that were lost to the world. But Klitgaard might never have written any more books anyway. Although in Sweden he had begun to rework the film manuscript as a novel (\textit{Det nye fædreland}), on his return to Denmark he concluded that there were more important things to do than write or even read novels about a world that had been totally turned upside down and had silenced him. He abandoned the manuscript and imagined becoming a journalist travelling around Europe, meeting people, understanding their problems, and contributing to the discussion about reconstruction.\(^\text{53}\) With his sharp eye for the tragic and absurd, Klitgaard would doubtless have become an excellent reporter.

To be sure, in his obituary Hans Kirk expressed the belief that it was just as certain that Klitgaard would have returned to literature, “where he belonged. It was the vagabond in him that longed for freedom after the war’s long confinement.” Specifically, Kirk suggested that Klitgaard, who “had never let go of his revolutionary Marxist convictions,” had the talent, linguistic artistry, and breadth of social view to have written “a novel of European format.”\(^\text{54}\)

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\(^{54}\)Kirk, “Mogens Klitgaard.” It is difficult to reconcile Klitgaard’s political life with the claim of one obituarist that the rebellion in Klitgaard was neither directed against definite dominant forces in society nor on behalf of a struggle for a new order, but “merely in general a protest against the many kinds of pressure that society imposes on the work-a-day little man.” Emil Frederiksen, “Mogens Klitgaard død i Aarhus,” \textit{Berlingske Tidende}, Dec. 24, 1945, at 3.
II. Danish Social-Realist Novels Between the World Wars: The Growth and Organization of the White-Collar Proletariat and the Proletarianization of the Petty Bourgeoisie

Danish literary historians and critics generally classify *There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley* as falling within the sub-genre of 1930s literature dealing with "The Little Man." This category includes: Kjeld Abell’s play *Melodien, der blev væk* (*The Melody That Got Lost*), which was the greatest Danish theatrical success between the wars, played to a full house for more than a year after its opening on September 6, 1935, and was viewed by the Commercial and Office Employees Union as having successfully depicted a whole class in one person; Leck Fischer’s *Kontor-Mennesker* (*Office People*); Harald Herdal’s *Der er Noet i Vejen* (*There’s Something Wrong*); *Legetøj*, H. C. Branner’s allegorical depiction of the rise of Nazism in a Copenhagen toy wholesaler’s office, as well as the German novelist Hans Fallada’s worldwide success, *Kleiner Mann—was nun?* (*Little Man—What Now?*). Nevertheless,

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60 H. C. Branner, *Legetøj* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1967 [1936]).

within this group of urban realists, Klitgaard’s emphasis is somewhat different.

Larsen, the main character in Abell’s play, quickly became the Danish embodiment of “the little man” who is employed in society’s distributive and administrative entities at a low wage and “at some point or another in his life is confronted with the contradiction between his bourgeoisie complex and his standard of living.” “The Little Man” literature focuses on the Great Depression’s impact on the low-paid nonmanual white-collar

“a fashion in the style of Hans Fallada” is unfair because the latter’s stupendous sales are inseparable from its maudlin love story, which is totally alien to all of Klitgaard’s works. Dansk litteratur historie, vol. 4: Fra Tom Kristensen til Klaus Rifbjerg 158 (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1966). For a dissection of the romantic and apolitical idealism of Fallada’s book, see Romeling, ”Den lille mand” i 30’ernes litteratur at 10-32. In its first month more than 40,000 copies of the Danish translation of Fallada’s book were sold, “an almost unheard of print run for the time. People who otherwise did not read books had to get hold of it and they escaped into its sentimental dreamland.” Andersen, Danmark i 30’erne at 75. Total sales during the 1930s amounted to 46,000 copies. Erland Munch-Petersen, “Bestseller-begrebet om masselæsning i mellemkrigstiden,” in Litteratur og samfund i mellemkrigstidens litteratursociologiske studier 194-213 at 206 (Carl Erik Bay and John Chr. Jørgensen eds.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1979.) The white-collar workers union reviewed the Danish translation, noting that “the book’s conclusion that two people’s love for each other becomes their good fortune does not solve the problem of how they are going to free themselves of their social misery and get food the next day. . . .” Jonna Duch Christensen and Søren Federspiel, Fra flipproletar til løn­arbejder: HKs historie 1900-2000, at 69 (N.p.: HK, 2000) (citing Dansk Handels- og Kontormedhjælper Tidende (Dec. 1933)).

To be sure, Abell’s play was not realism. For an earlier American expressionist play on a similar theme with a bleak conclusion, see Elmer Rice, The Adding Machine (Garden City: Doubleday, 1923).

worker—or, in the contemporaneously coined term, “white-collar proletariat” (Flipproletariat)\(^\text{64}\)—in offices and stores whose working conditions and lives are revealed to be subject to the same ruthless capitalist forces generating insecurity, anxiety, alienation, and, ultimately, impoverishment as industrial workers’. At the same time, this stratum had to pay for its lower risk of unemployment during the Depression with salary cuts.\(^\text{65}\)

The huge absolute and relative increase in the number of white-collar workers in Denmark in the twentieth century lay behind this development: from 1901 to 1940, the number of salaried employees in the trade sector rose 530 percent compared with an increase of 66 percent in the total labor force.\(^\text{66}\) This

\(^{64}\)In Branner’s office novel, which appeared one year before Klitgaard’s, the worst insult a communist can hurl at a co-worker in a packing and shipping department who has been coopted into an informant job on a monthly salary (with a modest increase) is *flipproletar*. Branner, *Legetøj* at 60. The word itself, modeled after the German *Stehkragenproletariat*, points to the job requirement of wearing a shirt with a detachable collar.


\(^{66}\)Calculated according to: Hans Christian Johansen, *Dansk økonomisk statistik 1814-1980*, tab. 1.5c at 122, in *Danmarks historie*, vol. 9 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1985); Svend Aage Hansen, *Økonomisk vækst i Danmark*, vol. II: *1914-1970*, tab. 1 at 203-204 (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1974). The white-collar category in the first source is incorrectly defined as including public servants in the trade sector. According to a different source, the number of salaried employees in all sectors rose 76 percent between 1921 and 1940, while that in trade rose 117 percent and the entire labor force expanded by only 43 percent. During those decades, salaried employees increased their share of the total labor force from 17 to 21 percent, while salaried employees in the trade sector increased theirs from 5 to 8 percent. Svend Aage Hansen and Ingrid Henriksen, *Sociale brydninger 1914-39*, tab. 20 at 336, in
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growth dissolved the earlier patriarchal workplace relations and, reinforced by office mechanization, created many more subordinate white-collar positions. Office work—which in its modern form was introduced into Denmark around the turn of the century by English and U.S. multinational firms such as the Vacuum Oil Company—was predominantly a Copenhagen phenomenon: at the time of the 1930 census, 61 percent of Denmark’s 17,658 office workers were found there.

The general political and social debate sparked by “The Little Man” literature, in the view of the Commercial and Office Employees Union (Dansk Handels- og Kontormedhjælperforbund), helped promote the increase in unionization during the following years. Indeed, the so-called Larsen discussion and the fear of a leftist turn toward unionization by shop and office workers—in 1932 the white-collar workers union had itself taken

Dansk social historie, vol. 6 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1980). Although the distinction between white-collar and other employees in the Danish censuses before 1921 is not completely comparable with that used later, the huge increase was real regardless of which data are used as the base year. Id. at 50-51.

67Christensen and Federspiel, Fra flipproletar til lønarbejder at 11.
68Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1938, tab. 13 at 18-19 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1938). This proportion was down from 68 percent at the time of the 1921 census, when there were 10,903 office workers. Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1932, tab. 8 at 14-15 (Copenhagen: Thiele, 1932).
69For examples that took place during 1936, the year Klitgaard’s novel depicts, see “Melodien skal findes til Larsen,” Politiken, Jan. 1, 1936, at 25:1-6, 26:1-6; “Larsen og Organisationen,” Politiken, Jan. 7, 1936, at 4:1-2. In the latter contribution, Gustav Pedersen, the future chairman of the white-collar workers union, insisted that as long as office and store workers were unable to cover their modest expenses, the wage question remained paramount.
70Christensen and Federspiel, Fra flipproletar til lønarbejder at 69.
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a major step toward working-class unity by joining the social-democratic national union umbrella federation (De samvirkende Fagforbund)—caused the chief party representing urban employers, the Conservative People’s Party, to propose a law in May 1937 to provide legal protections to nonunion white-collar workers in an effort to sustain their identity as an intermediate stratum separate from the working class. The Commercial and Office Employees Union and the Social Democratic Party did not support the proposal because they feared that it might lessen the perceived need to join the union, but when the Social Democrats’ government coalition allies, Det radikale Venstre (Social Liberals), which competed with the Conservatives for “middle-class” votes, showed interest in the proposal, the union and the Social Democrats regained the initiative by rewriting the law to give additional protections to all private-sector white-collar employees. Among other things, the law, which was enacted in 1938 (and is still in force with amendments) gave private-sector white-collar workers a three-month notice period after six months’ employment and up to a maximum of six months’ notice after an additional nine years of employment.71

71Pedersen, Bogen om handels- og kontormedhjælperne og deres organisation at 276-95 (Pedersen, chairman of the union and a Social Democratic member of parliament, was the principal drafter of the final statute); Christensen and Federspiel, Fra flipproletar til lønærbejder at 74; Lov Nr. 168 af 13 April 1938 om Retsforholdet mellem Arbejdsgivere og Funktionærer i private Erhvervsvirksomheder, sect. 2, in Lovtidende for Aaret 1938, at 719 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1939); Walter Galenson, The Danish System of Labor Relations: A Study in Industrial Peace 256-60 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952). Section 1 of the law defined covered private salaried employees (Funktionærer) as commercial or office workers employed in buying or selling or in office or warehouse work. On the complex conflicts over the law within the Conservative Party and between this party and employers, see Carl Gustav Johansen, “Funktionærlovens forhistorie...
Klitgaard’s focus in not so much on white-collar workers as on the proletarianization of a petty-bourgeois dry-goods store owner, August Lundegaard, who is forced into white-collar employment as a bill collector for a men’s installment-plan clothing business after competition with large department stores bankrupts his little store. To be sure, to the extent that the proletarianization of small store owners increased the supply of and intensified competition among white-collar workers in the trade sector, whose chances of becoming proprietors themselves were accordingly diminished, these two phenomena were interlocked. Lundegaard himself belonged to a transition period: fifty years old at the time of the novel in 1936, he was part of the generation of shop salesmen who had completed their apprenticeships before World War I and could, with the aid of considerable self-exploitation and exploitation of their wives and children, realistically expect to own their own stores.

But by the 1920s there was an explosion of criticism of the irrational system of retail distribution with its oversupply of proprietors whose hours of actual productive work amounted to semi-unemployment and who scraped by behind a shield of local...
monopoly by charging high mark-ups to consumers.\footnote{Hansen and Henriksen, \textit{Sociale brydninger 1914-39}, at 156-58.} The presence of a significant stratum of “small, poorly educated merchants” had led Danish observers even before the Depression of the 1930s to identify them as a “proletariat.”\footnote{Jens Warming, \textit{Danmarks Erhvervs- og Samfundsliv: En Lærebog i Danmarks Statistik} 348 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1930).} By the time of the Depression, a proletariat of the unemployed was even flowing into this sector as the relatively minimal start-up costs of a small store prompted some of the growing number of unemployed workers to open shops in an attempt to make ends meet.\footnote{Vagn Dybdahl, \textit{Det nye samfund på vej: 1871-1913}, at 67, in \textit{Dansk social historie}, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1982).} Consequently, the number of retail stores continued to rise in Copenhagen even during the Depression; with declining overall sales, the size of the stores in many branches declined too. Thus from 1925 to 1935, the number of retail establishments rose 18 percent from 17,816 to 20,985, while total sales fell 16 percent from 1,223,900,000 crowns to 1,029,100,000 crowns; thus average sales per establishment fell 29 percent from 68,697 crowns to 49,040 crowns. In several branches with the largest number of establishments, the rate of increase considerably exceeded the overall average. Thus the number of establishments selling tobacco and wine rose 26 percent, bread and milk 36 percent, and fruits, vegetables, and flowers 45 percent—all branches in which total sales either fell strongly or were stationary over the ten-year period.\footnote{Københavns statistiske Kontor, \textit{Statistisk Aarbog for København, Frederiksberg og Gjentofte Kommune 1936-1937}, tab. 94 at 77 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1937).}

Many of these Copenhagen store owners fit C. Wright Mills’s category—which is applicable beyond the U.S. context in which he developed it—of the “true lumpen-bourgeoisie” who “employ no workers at all: the proprietors and their family mem-
bers do the work, frequently sweating themselves night and day. At the bottom of the depression, the 'proprietor's withdrawal' was liberally estimated at $9.00 a week for stores with sales under $10,000. Here, at the bottom of the twentieth-century business world, lies the owner-operator who, in the classic image, is the independent man in the city.\textsuperscript{78}

Although Klitgaard once described Lundegaard as a "common denominator for a definite male type in Copenhagen,"\textsuperscript{79} he was acutely aware that Lundegaard was "the type one runs into in all countries. It's the middle class that's disappearing." Even the Lundegaards of the world could sense that they were being deprived of the platform they had been standing on. In fact, they sensed it especially keenly because they "are disposed to think individualistically and therefore can't link up with the working class's collectivity."\textsuperscript{80}

Some literary historians have distinguished between critical and socialist realism in the 1930s literature. Because Klitgaard does not build an explicitly socialist perspective into his critique of capitalist society and focuses on an intermediate petty-bourgeois stratum rather than on the working class, he has been viewed as pursuing a "registering realism that describes a powerlessness" and is therefore inclined to seek "general, abstract, or individual paths." The attempt by the central figure in the novel to salvage a new identity for himself in his new individualistic job as bill collector is seen as a prime illustration of this more "directionless" approach.\textsuperscript{81} Yet this analysis per se condemns to

\textsuperscript{78}C. Wright Mills, \textit{White Collar: The American Middle Classes} 28-29 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967 [1951]).
\textsuperscript{79}Houmark, "Daarligt egnet til at møde Livet."
\textsuperscript{80}B, "Ligefremt Interview: Virkelig Romantik i Hverdagslivet."
\textsuperscript{81}Ib Bondebjerg, \textit{Proletarisk offentlighed}, vol. 2: \textit{Arbejderoffentlighed og arbejderlitteratur i Danmark 1924-1939}, at 117-18 (Copenhagen: Medusa, 1979). In a somewhat different formulation in another piece published the same year, Bondebjerg tried to illustrate critical
an inferior level of literature any novel about the petty bourgeoisie that fails to culminate in a rousing appeal to collective forms of struggle no matter how unmediated that call may be. However, Klitgaard’s critical, sympathetic, lyrical, and yet “satirical realism,” which shows how fruitless and absurdly tragicomic efforts at individualistic solutions are in a period of depression, is no less legitimate a social insight than novels that expressly call for collective solutions. Moreover, such appeals would have been incompatible with Klitgaard’s effort to “unmask the little man and fight for him” and his “consummate feat” of forcing the great reading public that otherwise preferred the banal dream-world of the weeklies’ novelettes to confront hard and depressing
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realities.⁸⁴

The claim—advanced by the editor of a popular paperback edition of There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley—that Klitgaard merely puts a "resigned question mark" next to the issue of whether there are "collectively or ideologically based solutions to life's problems"⁸⁵ is, therefore, untenable. Klitgaard was not writing about "life’s problems," but about whether there was an individualistic way out for the petty bourgeoisie undergoing proletarianization during the Depression; and to this question he provided an unambiguous answer. Even if the ambit of the novel is expanded to include the problems of the worker-characters, Klitgaard was not denying the efficacy of collective solutions, but highlighting the hopelessness of individual action. In fact, There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley can plausibly be viewed as a “reckoning with the interwar petty bourgeoisie, which economically and socially belonged to the proletariat, but which psychologically and ideologically were middle-class people."⁸⁶

Leek Fischer had chosen as the title-page epigram for his novel Kontor-Mennesker: “Can you live on being educated?” In a polemical response to Fischer’s chiefly psychological-moral study, the title page to communist Harald Herdal’s schematic Der er Noet i Vejen bore the epigram: “It’s not so much the question of whether you can live on being educated, but the question of whether you can live without being organized!” In contrast, Klitgaard invests his characters with real psychological traits without imposing an agenda on them. Interestingly, he told one interviewer that the reviewers had not noticed that: “My book has a happy end. Through his struggles Lundegaard has attained

⁸⁴Neergaard, Mogens Klitgaard at 31, 13.
⁸⁶Rømeling, “Den lille mand” i 30’ernes litteratur at 107-108.
more humanity. Ibsen's moral is that you shouldn't take the lie from a human being. But life takes it from them!87

No matter who Klitgaard's fictional characters were, the city of Copenhagen, which both repelled and fascinated him, was a—if not the—main character of all his novels.88 The twelve chapters of There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley introduce the natural and social seasonal rhythms through each month of the year 1936 in a metropolis that has alienated its residents from the nature that surrounds them. Klitgaard's novel offers what remains perhaps the most evocative contemporaneous panorama of the city's bleak working-class slum life during the Great Depression.89 During the 1930s Greater Copenhagen's population, largely by virtue of migration from rural areas, grew by 30 percent.90 Moreover, the rate of unemployment in Denmark had been high even in the 1920s: between 1930 and 1939, the rate varied from a low of 13.7 percent in 1930 to a high of 31.7 percent in 1932, whereas the fluctuation between 1925 and 1929 ranged between 14.7 percent and 22.5 percent. As an "ineradicable social evil," unemployment came to attract more attention than any other subject during the 1920s. In Copenhagen, the average unemployment rate was 15.9 percent between 1925 and

87 B, "Ligefremt Interview: Virkelig Romantik i Hverdagslivet." Klitgaard used the English expression "happy end."


89 For a contrasting contemporaneous American account of Denmark bubbling with cheerfulness and praise of virtually every aspect of life in Copenhagen, see Agnes Rothery, Denmark: Kingdom of Reason (New York: Viking, 1937).

90 Svend Aage Hansen and Ingrid Henriksen, Sociale brydninger 1914-39, at 327, in Dansk social historie, vol. 6 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1980).
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1929 and 20.0 per cent between 1930 and 1934.91

In his 1941 novel Elly Petersen, which tells the story of a sixteen-year-old girl from northern Jutland who travels to Copenhagen to work as a chambermaid in a boarding house, Klitgaard programmatically depicted the city as a people-making and -breaking machine:

Surrounded by woods, water, and flat fields lies Copenhagen, the provincials' biggest city. The city where more Jutlanders live than in Århus. The city whose public life is stamped to a higher degree by people who have moved from the provinces than it is stamped by Copenhageners, a large paved expanse in a corner of Denmark, which sucks in streams from all sides, streams of people, who are seeking a tolerable existence and find a hard world following other rules than the ones they came from. The provincials' city. The city that contains a fourth of the country's inhabitants. The city whose glitter shines across the country and attracts the mills, a grinding machine that pulverizes some to death and creates a new existence for some.92

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91 Johansen, Dansk økonomisk statistik 1814-1980, tab. 7.3 at 289-90; Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København, Frederiksberg og Glostrup Kommune 1936-1937, tab. 185 at 140-41; Hansen and Henriksen, Sociale brydninger 1914-39, at 130 (quote). Because the members of unemployment insurance funds were largely trade unionists, Danish unemployment statistics were undercounts. To give some sense of the possible discrepancy, in 1936, when the rate of insured unemployment was 19.3 percent, the rate of unemployment among union members in the United States was 13.3 percent, while the total unemployment rate was 16.9 percent. F. Zeuthen, Arbejdsløan og Arbejdsløshed 246 (Copenhagen: Busck, 1939); U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970, Pt. 1, D-85-86 at 135 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1975).

92 Klitgaard, Elly Petersen at 21.
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III. There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley Sixty-Five Years On

Although several of Klitgaard's novels have been translated into German, French, Swedish, and Dutch,93 none of his works has appeared in English before now.94 There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley has retained the interest of Danish readers: not only did the leading literary publishing house, Gyldendal, republish it in paperback editions in 1970 and 1985, but in 1997 the Danish Teachers Association published a special annotated paperback edition with a long afterword by Leon Jaurnow, whose biography of Klitgaard will appear soon.

In a review of that latest edition, novelist and critic Mette Winge observed that if one mentioned the name Mogens Klitgaard to Danes, most answered: Mogens who? But if one mentioned the title of the book that had made him a name in the summer of 1937, most people said: Oh, him and that book—because many remember the title even if they do not know the novel. Winge also welcomed the annotations to the new edition because the book contains many allusions, persons, and circumstances that have leaked away from Danish collective memory especially among young people. Winge ironically noted that the word "trolley" was not included in the annotations.95

93Dansk skønlitterært forfatterleksikon, vol. II: 1900-1950, at 125 (Svend Dahl ed.; Copenhagen: Pedersen, 1960), lists a Swedish and a Dutch translation of There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley, but only the former could be bibliographically confirmed.

94In an anthology of Danish literature edited by Elias Bredsdorff, the first chapter of There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley was translated by J.F.S. Pearce, one of Bredsdorff's students. Mogens Klitgaard, “The Nineteen Thirties,” in Contemporary Danish Prose: An Anthology 302-14 (Elias Bredsdorff ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1958).

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Because non-Danish readers will not be familiar with most of the novel’s cultural, geographic, historical, and institutional references, an extensive apparatus of annotations is provided at the back. They include, for the first time ever, precise references to the daily newspaper articles that are the sources of many of Klitgaard’s montage-like insertions of real headlines and information. Klitgaard adapted this technique from John Dos Passos’s novels with what one critic has called a “special Danish tone: an unobtrusive indignation with an admixture of a touch of tragicomedy.”

A Note on the Text


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A Note on the Cover

The drawing reproduced on the cover was an inspiration to Klitgaard while writing the novel. It had appeared a few months earlier in the June 1936 issue of *Kulturkampen*, a journal which was part of the left-wing political and cultural circles in which he traveled. "The Trolley Conductor" by Arne Ungermann (1902-1981) bore a caption that Klitgaard took as seriously as the drawing itself: "Why should life today not be as good a motif as in Breughel's time?"

Klitgaard fastened the drawing with thumbtacks to the wall over his desk and was forced to look at it every time he looked up from his typewriter. A year and a half after the book's appearance, Klitgaard, who still had Ungermann's drawing hanging on his wall, explained its significance for him:

When I look at his trolley passengers' faces, the worker with the thermos bottle sticking up out of his pocket on the way home from eight hours' toil at a construction site, the retail dealer who can't find the money for his expenses, the office worker with the pants and elbows shiny from use, I can't help thinking that people's lives have never been as impoverished and monotonous as today. That the Stone Age man's existence was fuller.

And still. Something is lurking in the eyes in Ungermann's real-

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istic faces. Something unconquerable. A stubborn optimism. A quiet force that has survived all periods of oppression, all wars, all thraldom. An irresistible will to live that will survive all the calamities the future appears to hold in store.

From my room in Esrom Abbey I can see down into the abbey garden where the children are playing. They have the same thing in their eyes, the same force. If they escape the airplanes’ bombs, in fifteen years they’ll be trolley passengers, laborers, retail dealers, office workers. The dimples will disappear, but the unconquerability, the eyes’ stubborn optimism, the need to make life better, will remain.²

Klitgaard did not think of the title, which is a sentence in the book introducing a description of the central character and one of the figures in Ungermann’s drawing,³ until after he had finished writing the book. In response to an interviewer’s question about whether the title was artificial, Klitgaard insisted that the


³See below p. 45. Ironically, the cover of Gyldendal’s 1970 edition of Der sidder en Mand i en Sporvogn used Ungermann’s drawing, but totally obscured the thermos bottle with a band containing Klitgaard’s name and the book title, even though the novel discusses the thermos (see below p. 46).
A Note on the Cover

book could not have been called anything else. The title underscores that the main character is an incidental, anonymous individual from big city daily life; nevertheless, Klitgaard’s interest in the impact of the overarching socioeconomic conditions does not lead him to treat August Lundegaard as devoid of specific psychological qualities.


Acknowledgments

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The map of Copenhagen at pages lxvi-lxvii is used with permission of the Danish Tourist Board in New York City.
Cast of Characters

August Lundegaard—bill collector/former dry-goods merchant
Poul Lundegaard—August’s son
Anna Lundegaard—August’s daughter
Mrs. Lundegaard—August’s wife
Nielsen—billiard scorekeeper/former clerical worker
Mr. Salomonsen—landlord and moneylender
Girl in the mauve outfit—prostitute frequented by Lundegaard
Sister Rebekka—Nazarene
Olsen—billiard player
Svendsen—billiard player
Svendsen’s wife
Andersen—billiard player
Musician—billiard player
Hansen—bookkeeper at firm where Lundegaard works
Lundegaard’s boss at the men’s clothing business
Jensen—August Lundegaard’s old army buddy
Eigil Holm—warehouse clerk and Anna’s boyfriend
Health insurance fund doctor
News dealer—Lundegaard’s neighbor and a communist
Former customer of Lundegaard’s
Barber
Truck driver making delivery to barber
Mrs. Salomonsen
Female employee of lawyer who collects Lundegaard’s rent
Agent of Fabric Warehouse
Department head of Fabric Warehouse
Appraiser at state pawnbrokerage
Berg—restaurant owner at billiard parlor
Bar girl
Frants—little old man who sells razor blades in taverns
Andresen—worker Lundegaard tries to collect debt from
Cast of Characters

Unemployed machinist at Sundby beach
Female office worker at Fabric Warehouse
Lundegaard’s brother-in-law
Motorcyclist—Anna’s new boyfriend
Encyclopedia salesman
Carlsen—man Lundegaard served apprenticeship with
Sonja—seventeen-year-old Eigel Holm goes out with
Lundegaard’s brother
Lundegaard’s brother’s wife
Taxi driver
There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley
First Chapter

One damp Copenhagen January morning a truck drove up in front of a smallish dry-goods store in the old part of the city. The gray daylight had as yet barely been able to disperse the heavy, wet darkness in the slushy street. People don’t have much interest in their neighbor’s business on such a morning, and the moving of the little shop’s inventory and some poor furniture didn’t attract much attention. The movers’ ponderous, rough figures struggled in the semi-darkness with boxes and tied-up down quilts; a woman came out of the narrow shop door with a few poor potted plants in her arms.—

Late in the morning it began to rain. A man came and stuck a sign on the shop window: For rent.

It had to be the bad times that were to blame. Month after month sales had dropped. Lundegaard had fought like hell to keep it going; he wasn’t the man to give up at the first difficulty—he’d taken goods on credit, he’d borrowed from his family, he’d tried to do clearance sales, and he’d had the printer print up many thousands of fliers, which his son had distributed in the neighborhood—but everything had been in vain. There were more and more bills and fewer and fewer customers.

Life for the Lundegaard family the last few years had been hell, backbreaking and futile work, and a return so scanty that they could barely keep body and soul together. Since his son Poul had finished his apprenticeship, he’d been unemployed most of the time. His daughter Anna was doing better: she’d gotten work in a department store at a salary that at least covered
the bulk of her modest consumption.

Toil and drudgery, filth and poverty had been the main content of their lives during these years. And then even so their struggle had been in vain. In the end they’d hoped that Christmas sales would save them.

One gray January morning their poor possessions were driven to a rear-tenement apartment on a side street in Vesterbro.

January is a bleak month in Copenhagen, but it’s hell in a Vesterbro slum. People are freezing and hungry, the atmosphere hangs heavy and damp over the filthy houses, even the rats don’t thrive—only the ministers seem to manage amazingly well in this part of town. There’s no lack of slum work, and the laborers in the Lord’s vineyard don’t neglect the earthly for the spiritual needs. Isn’t it written that you have to make the most of your talents. Our Lord looks with mercy on the minister’s duties.

Religion is the opium of the people. Mrs. Lundegaard was in need of opium. Every Friday God’s friends met in the Nazarenes’ parish hall and cried over the sins of men. She, who’d had a healthy and practical temperament, had totally collapsed when the business had to be given up.

When she married Lundegaard 25 years ago, they were good, well-off, middle-class people. The business went well and they had two healthy and beautiful children. Back then they’d dreamt beautiful dreams of business expansions, a wholesale merchant’s license, and maybe a pretty little house someplace outside the city with a lawn and flagpole. They’d been capable and energetic, probably happy too, even though they didn’t realize it till now after the fact, and in the evening, while the children were sleeping, they’d taken out their bank book and were pleased with the growth of its contents, and it was in these late hours that their imagination had built their beautiful dreams.

Nothing ever came of a villa, but they certainly did get a little summer house which they biked out to in the evening after the store had been closed and the day’s accounts made up.

It may well have been the war that was the setting for their economic success and produced the beautiful promises, because
little by little as the years after the world war passed, the good
times quieted down.

Things really couldn’t ever get that bad; they belonged to a
good bourgeois family, which was simply well off. Lundegaard
was of the opinion that the poor sales were a phase, and, thank
god, you of course had a little to fall back on.

But sales never recovered. They kept dropping, and as the
months went by, the difficulties piled up. — It’s the crisis,
Lundegaard said and read aloud from the newspaper about the
many small businesses that had to close. The children were
grown up now, but the difficult times gave them a bad start in
life. The summer house had to be sold, the bicycles had to be
sold, and the family had to be content with little excursions to
the surrounding area of the city.

Incidentally, the desire for amusements and excursions gradu­
ally disappeared on its own. Lundegaard lay awake at night
speculating. He became nervous and testy, got black circles un­
der his eyes, and sought to deaden his anxiety about the future
with liquid stimulants.

For the children it was actually a relief when the collapse
came. Anna’s salary exactly covered the rent for the little apart­
ment in the rear tenement, Poul had his jobless benefits, and if
Lundegaard could get a little bill-collecting work or something
like that, they could probably keep the worst distress from their
door.

It turned out, however, that it wasn’t so easy to get work of
that kind: A bond was required—but eventually it looked as
though it was going to work out. Lundegaard’s brother and
brother-in-law, after many misgivings, got the required money
together, and on the same occasion you heard that things weren’t
going well for them either. Lundegaard’s brother was a senior
bank clerk, his brother-in-law a civil servant. Their salaries had
been cut back, and then of course on top of that came inflation,
which made the prices of consumer goods rise so the money only
went a little way.
The winter days moved at a snail’s pace through slush and cold for those who spent their drab existence at the bottom of the grimy stone shaft in Vesterbro’s slum quarter.

Every day Lundegaard set off for his wearisome collection work. Up staircases and down staircases. The doors were slammed and he collected more curses than money. His wife conducted a heroic struggle to preserve the family’s middle-class stamp. She scoured and washed the damp little rooms, patched, mended, and brushed the worn-out clothes. The children spent time at home only when they slept. Anna had gotten herself a boy friend and Poul spent the evenings in the passageway with those his own age.

One day Lundegaard was busily on the go around town and had come by their old store. It was already rented out again and was now a florist shop. He hadn’t been able to help pumping people on the street. They informed him that the flower business didn’t really appear to be going anywhere and that the new proprietor apparently had already begun to be in difficulties. He was said to be a gardener’s assistant who’d gotten tired of going around and slaving for other people and had tried his luck with the few pennies he’d been able to set aside from his wages, but it surely wasn’t exactly luck that he wound up having; in any event, the former gardener’s assistant stood for hours in the window staring in a melancholy way out at the street, and there were exceedingly few customers who could be enticed by the modest window display. But at bottom he certainly had to be an optimist, the gardener, because he’d gotten married on the strength of the business’s future, and as far as you could see, his wife was expecting a baby soon. — What’s more, if all it took were toil and drudgery, then things would really be all right: the gardener went to the market square every morning, and he kept the shop clean and nice and arranged the flowers very beautifully in the little window, but after all, who could afford to buy flowers in these times.

Lundegaard was consoled a bit, as it were, by the fact that
his successor wasn’t having any more luck with the premises than he himself had had. So then it was after all the premises and the times that were to blame and not Lundegaard’s incompetence as a businessman.

It was therefore with badly disguised glee that he told his wife how things stood with their old store. But his wife didn’t like being reminded of their earlier life as shopkeepers. Those beautiful visions, the summer house, the title of wholesale merchant, the lawn and the arbor with hollyhocks, the whole paradise lost once again stood before her inner gaze, dimmed her eyes, and gave her a lump in her throat.

“That, there,” Lundegaard comforted her. “I mean we never really got that far along.”

“But we did have a business and money in the bank,” she cried. “What do we have now.”

The poor bill collector didn’t know what to say or do. He awkwardly stroked her hair and expressed the opinion that, after all, things might improve yet.

But he himself surely didn’t mean that. In his heart of hearts. They’d slaved and toiled for the realization of their dreams, and their vitality had surely been thrown in for good measure. Now they were, after all, both at the half-century mark, so where it would come from wasn’t easy to see.

He turned quite melancholy, Lundegaard did. Not until now did their misfortune stand so clearly before him. The move, the fitting up of the hole-in-the-wall rooms here in the rear tenement, and the trouble getting work had pre-empted his thoughts, and his consciousness of the fact that it was the very destruction of their life’s destiny that they were experiencing did not reach him until now.

Yes, it was true. They couldn’t expect any more from life now than the struggle against poverty and filth. A dull urge to protest awakened in him. How had they deserved such a fate. Hadn’t they been honest and energetic people. Hadn’t they in a life of labor and toil deserved a tranquil old age. Was the world then bewitched. Now he had to run up and down the stairs to earn his bread. A quiet, gnawing indignation was forcing its way
in the otherwise so peaceable and sociable Lundegaard. The department stores were stealing the trade from honest people and taking their children into their employ for 40 crowns a month. The department stores were able to do it. They expanded and expanded, while one little shop after another had to close and their proprietors could go their way, wherever they pleased—if in fact they hadn’t resisted for such a long time that Sundholm was the only place open to them.

III

It was a perfectly ordinary Copenhagen January day. Slush, dampness, fog. The thermometer on the Custom House fluctuated between 3 and 4 degrees centigrade, pork rose 4 øre per kilogram, the newspaper dealer had turned blue with numbness from the cold in his wooden stand, and the parks’ paths were covered with a coating of white, which turned to water wherever you set foot. The stock exchange reported a brisk atmosphere for bonds and stable share prices, and in Østerbro there was a little cigar dealer who gassed himself. From weariness with life and because his business was going badly.

It was late in the afternoon. Mrs. Lundegaard had had to turn on the light to be able to see: even in the middle of the day it was half-dark in the small rooms. Of course, you should save on the light, but there was so much that had to be done. Patched and darned. Once in a while she had to go out into the kitchen and look after the food.

By 6 o’clock she’d set the table. Anna had come home and was sitting by the window sewing up a silk stocking. It seemed to Mrs. Lundegaard that she’d begun to use so much make-up recently. Of course it also cost money. Neither of them said anything. Each of them lived her own life. But there was of course that business with the money. It was hard to get the household money to go round, the food first and foremost had to be nourishing, and it was a pity for the girl, who brought home almost all her wages, perpetually to have this dull warm lunch
and the humble sandwiches, which in a way displayed the poverty of her home to her coworkers at the department store. Mrs. Lundegaard thought she’d make a bit more out of Anna’s sandwiches. But there was of course that business with the money. Maybe she could earn a little sewing. The greengrocer’s wife had said that one of the big ready-to-wear clothing shops on Vesterbro Street was looking for home sewers. Her eyes, of course, weren’t so good any more, but she could get herself glasses. It probably wouldn’t be that expensive—after all, the health insurance fund would pay some of it.

Poul had come and was rummaging around in something in the bedroom, but Lundegaard still hadn’t come.

At half past six he still hadn’t come.

Mrs. Lundegaard looked at her daughter anxiously. Anna couldn’t stand to eat late. She always had to leave again just when they’d eaten. Poul didn’t care when they ate—he surely didn’t seem to care about anything. It would probably be better for them to begin, then Lundegaard would doubtless come in the meantime.

They ate in silence. When they’d finished and the table had been cleared, he still hadn’t come.

― ― Lundegaard didn’t come home till far into the night. He was drunk. She’d never seen him like that before. His clothing was dirty and he blathered on incessantly.

Lundegaard awoke during the night and was intent on being violent to her. She cried and those religious thoughts arose in her once more. A life in purity and beauty, in spite of poverty. God and self-discipline might help. They’d lived a worldly life—this was their punishment. A husband who drank and was lecherous, a man of his age, a daughter who was never home, and a son who’d become a stranger to his mother.

IV

“As far as I’m concerned, I wouldn’t have a damned thing against it if war came, the sooner the better,” Nielsen said,
protruding his lower lip, as he was wont to do when he meant to emphasize his masculine strength. “It might clear the air, I mean everything’s so confounded anyway that it couldn’t get worse.”

“Somebody’d have to be an idiot to say something like that,” Poul said. Nielsen was an unemployed office worker and lived as a boarder in the front building. They were hanging around the passageway

“Maybe,” Nielsen said, “or desperate. Well, I look at the question from my own perspective, based on what concerns me. I gladly leave the rest to others. I think that’s a nice little way you have of examining things, but it irritates me a little bit. The whole time you keep saying we and us. There’s nobody who’ll raise a hand to help you unless there’s an advantage in doing so.
— And as far as I’m concerned, let things just happen, I don’t care—they couldn’t get worse. I’ve been unemployed now for 8 months, I owe money left and right, I get summonses from the sheriff, I sit at the welfare office every other day and wait for 4-5 hours. The landlady here in the boarding house, who was so lovable while I had work, is now trying to provoke me into being insolent so she can give me notice. And she’s right to do that—she can’t pay her rent with my excuses. When you meet some of your old acquaintances on the street, you’ve hardly managed to say hello to them before they say: Well, old boy, I’ve got to get going. When I’d been unemployed for 5 months, my fiancée broke it off. Which I can well understand with all my heart: it was totally senseless for a girl like her to be engaged to an unemployed office worker who isn’t even in a labor union because his friends didn’t think it was fashionable back then when he had work. And even if I’d been such a lucky dog that I’d gone and gotten something to do, so what—you know what a man working in an office earns. If you’re working all the time and maybe even have a chance to asskiss your way forward, or elbow your way forward, then maybe it might work out, but once you’re 29 years old and have been unemployed for 8 months, then it’s abysmal, hopeless. No, just let that damned war come—it might well be able to clear the air one way or another. In any case, it’ll be a change. That’s something anyway.”
Poul went with Nielsen up to his room. Nielsen went out into the kitchen to the landlady to procure two cups of coffee. Poul looked around the room. If nothing else could put you in a gloomy mood, in any case the room certainly could. If you looked out the window, you saw a cement yard with truck garages, trash cans and a pissoir; the rear tenement was situated across the courtyard where he himself lived, and an electroplating plant was located on the right. God knows how many different people had lived in this room over the course of time. Three different pictures of the king of Rome and a photograph of a hotel in Hjørring were hanging on the wall. In one corner stood a washstand that was painted green with a wash basin and an enamel pitcher; Nielsen’s razor, comb, toothbrush, etc. lay on the shelf above. It wasn’t so strange that Nielsen preferred standing down in the passageway.

When Nielsen returned with the coffee, they sat down to talk about girls. But almost as if they were something bygone or something that lay a good ways in the future. Nielsen showed him photographs from the time when he had work and went on excursions with his fiancée. Poul had seen the pictures before, but looked at them again out of politeness. It was as if Nielsen didn’t own anything except a couple of amateur pictures of a girl who was sitting on a grassy cliff in the woods and squinting into the sun or lying in a bathing suit on Solrød beach. There was also a somewhat older picture of a soccer team Nielsen had once been on: Nielsen was No. 3 from the left and marked with a little cross.

The sound from a radio in the rear tenement came through—it was playing the song about Larsen.

“We’re brought up to be considerate and modest,” Nielsen said. “That’s what’s destroying our existence. We have to be ruthless, cynical, and cold-hearted. In a city like Copenhagen there are plenty of opportunities if you’re just not so naive to go around waiting for them to come on their own. You can’t line up nicely and wait your turn; you can’t give a damn about rules and morality—instead you have to use your head. Morality is made by those who want to keep the opportunities for themselves.”
Poul didn't say anything. In general he said very little. He made sure he reported at the unemployment office, made sure to be home at mealtimes, sat for hours over a cup of coffee without anything with it in the ice-cream parlor around the corner, or stood and hung out in the passageway.

Lundegaard was a little washed-out after the previous evening's events. He sat and looked out the window and didn't really know how to deal with the situation. Whether he should be distant or contrite. It wasn't that simple. He had in fact spent some of the money he'd collected. Besides, whichever way he turned, he ran into tough times; the gas bill from the business still hadn't been paid. They'd gotten an extension on that as on so much else. But what was the point of an extension—after all, things wouldn't ever get any better.

Mrs. Lundegaard didn't talk at all about what had happened the day before. She said something about perhaps being able to get some work as a home seamstress. They talked a little about it, but they realized that they'd then have to buy a treadle sewing machine on installments—after all, the old hand machine wouldn't be any use. Lundegaard thought that if a loan of a few hundred crowns could be procured, they could put a stop to all their worries at one time. And then maybe they'd get beyond it, and things would be able to run smoothly.

Lundegaard knew that such a loan could probably be procured. Maybe with the furniture as security or with the guarantee his brother and brother-in-law had given. Naturally not at a bank—banks didn't get involved in something like that. Lundegaard knew the address of a moneylender. Of course the whole city knows where the moneylenders and abortionists live. Copenhagen's misery has its own advertiser newspaper, which doesn't have a royal charter, but will nevertheless surely reach its customers.
VI

Mr. Salomonsen was a landlord and once in a while lent money. With appropriate security. He was sitting in his nice chair in his nice drawing room calmly listening to Lundegaard’s explanations. Actually, he didn’t go in for that kind of business, didn’t care for it—it was so easily misunderstood; besides, what security did he have that he’d get his money back. He’d done people favors of that kind before and many times had gotten ingratitude and bother in return.

Lundegaard turned ardent and earnest.

Mr. Salomonsen meant what he said. What security did he have that he’d get his money back. What was unreasonable about charging a profit in proportion to the risk he was running. If people sought his help and did it so often, it was because there was need for it. Mr. Salomonsen knew and loved the parable of the unfaithful servant. Mr. Salomonsen was a good Christian. Mr. Salomonsen was a useful citizen. It was the bankers who looked askance at his business activities, and the bankers had influence with the press. Mr. Salomonsen had once been a little boy who’d played in the Søndermark and gotten a beating from the other boys because he was weaker than they were and didn’t know how to stand up for himself. Now it might happen that one of these boys came to him. Back then little Salomonsen had said the Lord’s Prayer every evening, and even though he no longer did, he was of the opinion that it could never hurt. On the eve of major church festivals Mr. Salomonsen went to church with his wife, who’d previously been his housekeeper.

Of course he had to have security for his money. Lundegaard had believed that the guarantee would do it. Besides, after all he had a good job. It was only a momentary embarrassment. Besides, he could have security in the furniture, which had cost a lot of money.

Mr. Salomonsen looked at his watch. It was his custom to go to the billiard parlor every afternoon and play a game with one or another of his good friends. And afterward maybe a game of poker in the back room. It was an enjoyable game. And he
played cautiously.

Lundegaard took pains to find several items that might give Mr. Salomonsen the security he desired. The sole item of fixed cash in their poor life was Anna’s salary. Pledging her salary as security. She’d never go along with that, Anna wouldn’t. Maybe he could get a loan at a bank, after all, if his brother and brother-in-law co-signed. After all, they’d already co-signed once. He remembered their expressions, their noble indignation about his having misused kinship in that way. He wouldn’t ask them a second time. He had to have that loan from Mr. Salomonsen and then get rid of it as quickly as possible. The 200 crowns that could put a stop to all his troubles were sitting in Mr. Salomonsen’s wallet, right there inside his vest. They might wander over into his wallet and put an end to his worries. He had of course spent some of the money he’d collected.

Mr. Salomonsen thought over the words Pledging Her Salary as Security carefully, and then sat down over at the desk and drew up several documents.

On the way home Lundegaard went into the main train station and put Anna’s name on one of them—after all, she’d never find out about it anyway.

VII

Whenever you talked to people, they all said: War’s coming—it might take a short time or a long time, but it’s certain it’ll end in war. But at bottom some of them nourished a mystic belief that it wouldn’t come to that after all. In any event, they weren’t preparing themselves for it to come.

There were groups that desired war. Depressed unemployed people; people who were in difficulties up to their ears, insuperable difficulties, and kept themselves going only by this consideration: No matter how things otherwise turn out, the sun of course still rises every morning and sets every evening; people who feared that the embezzlement they’d committed would be uncovered before long; little people for whom the difficulties
grew from day to day and who sometimes considered suicide as the only solution—and then of course the speculators.

It was during these days that a well-known editor of a paper in Copenhagen wrote that a quick little war would have a refreshing effect, create business, production, work for idle hands, earnings. There was a man on the trolley who said: If we were just certain of being kept out like during the world war, let it come. The sooner the better. Do you remember Copenhagen in 1915-16—life was worth living then. And he hummed a snippet of a tune from back then: Then we’ll go boozing the whole night through. — He was a well-dressed man, a good-looking man with a trustworthy appearance and friendly eyes.

There were people who hated and feared war and who saw preparations for war everywhere. When a bridge was to be built, a road constructed, when air shows, military displays, were arranged on Sundays so the soldier-boys’ families could see how capable they were and how splendidly they were doing. There were pacifists who said you should conscientiously object to serving as a soldier, and people from the labor movement who said you should turn the weapons the other way.

The conversations around Lundegaard at this time were about war, which was approaching. At the office, at pubs where he drank a beer to warm up, with chance acquaintances he ran into. At home they never talked about that kind of thing. Of course, there was so much in the newspapers about rearmament everywhere. The news dealer on the corner, who was a communist, said that when the steamship company stocks rose, war would come. The stock manipulators were in the know—there was money to be made on a war. Of course, you had other things to look after than watching the quotations for steamship company stocks. Lundegaard felt it was almost like something that didn’t concern him. Now he could get the money and get the worst troubles off his hands.

It’d become fashionable to talk about the coming war in the same way you talked about the weather, about accidents and about the six-day race. You fired off the set comments. You followed the time-honored rules, delivered the clever, banal
views about the day’s current events, which no one contradicted. You never talked honestly, independently, because you had no opinion. Why should you trouble yourself with it—after all, you could get it from the editorials in the newspapers. The conversations were by and large an exchange of clever, prescribed comments. If it was a train accident: Terrible. The poor surviving family. If it was a corruption scandal: Incredible that people with a fixed, generous income behave that way. You might hope that they’d get a proper punishment. But they’ll probably be let off with a fine or be let out the prison back door. If it’d been a poor man who’d stolen firewood, it surely would’ve been different. If it was war: It’s certain there’s a new war coming. As long as there are two people on earth, there’ll be war.

It was almost as if everybody went around masking his real thoughts, his own little private existence, behind this shield of set comments. When all’s said and done, people didn’t know much about one another. They lived side by side day in and day out without actually knowing one another. It was probably actually an advantage of these conventional comments that you never gave yourself away. There was nobody who knew that Mrs. Lundegaard paid the collection to the Nazarenes with her meager household allowance, nobody who knew that Lundegaard was a regular customer of the girl in the mauve outfit, who always, in any case after nightfall, stood on the corner of Vesterbro Street, who knew that Poul went about with plans to move away from home and force his way into living life, if need be, with methods that by law are assessed with prison.

And people didn’t know that every morning when Anna rode to the department store, she gave away her lunch pack to the old woman who sat by the church, and that she bought a nicely piled-up open-faced sandwich in a store, a sandwich that could stand up to her work mates’ scrutiny. In general, people knew very little about Anna. She always behaved friendly to her parents, but never said anything about herself. She rode off in the morning, came home for dinner, and disappeared again. She slept in the dining room, Poul slept in the kitchen; there was never anybody who noticed when she came home.
Second Chapter

I

Obliging foreigners have called Copenhagen: The Paris of the North. It sounds good, but it doesn’t fit very well—Copenhagen is Copenhagen. It’s a city like all other cities and it’s a city in a class by itself. So absolutely singular. A human settlement on an insignificant island in an insignificant country, beautifully placed on a fresh, blue, salt-water sound near some remnants of an old fairy-tale woods with deer, wilderness, and open flat lands.

It’s cobblestones and tenement houses, asphalt and taxi drivers, parks with bird life and children playing, some dreary, rectangular lakes with artificial bird islands, banal, ugly bridges, and screeching gulls. It’s Tivoli and Langelinie pier, it’s fleet visits by big foreign powers, English workers in sailor’s dress, German workers in sailor’s dress, American workers in sailor’s dress; it’s the city that appears under the item: Payment under an affiliation order in the English state budget, it’s wholesale merchant Hansen’s daughter’s wedding, it’s the amateur society whose gala attire’s covered in the press—cream-colored milanaise and light-green taffeta—it’s Babbitville, and it’s a metropolis.

It’s garbage dumps and communal gardens, it’s bathing beaches and fortifications that’ve been demolished and some that haven’t, it’s a strategic point on the European political-commercial map and on the military map, it’s the city that’s praised for its social welfare and the city that’s notorious for its treatment of orphaned children, it’s the city that builds layer-cake houses and starlings’ nesting boxes, but uses a collection of barracks next to a gas plant as a tuberculosis hospital.
Its speech is unobtrusive, but not colorless. There aren’t any fumes of blood in its atmosphere, but sweat and tears.

A pretty city. A splendid city.

A February evening like this one, where the twilight settles softly and appeasingly on the gray stone houses and makes the contours turn blue when the lights are just now turned on here and there, when the western sky’s red evening afterglow colors and beautifies and the city seems to calm down before the late evening’s hunt for amusements— but of course for that matter all cities have twilight and evening sky. What is it that does give Copenhagen its charm and its singularity. Its women are neither especially pretty nor especially ugly, the street’s perpetual gliding streams of people are neither especially shabby nor especially well-dressed. The restaurants aren’t especially interesting and surely most cities have old buildings.

—— ———

Copenhagen’s a nice city. It is 800,000 struggling and striving people, it’s a carousel, a wheel of fortune, a lottery with thousands of blanks and a few prizes.

—— ———

A February evening like this, where the twilight beautifies the people and the stones, where Vesterbro Street’s asphalt lies shiny from automobile tires, smooth as a mirror in the glow of the strong electrical light and the many neon advertising signs, where Lundegaard and his wife are out looking at a treadle machine, where Anna with lips a bit too red is waiting on customers in the department store, where Poul and Nielsen are sitting and hanging out at the ice-cream parlor, where Mr. Salomonsen’s playing billiards up in the parlor, where the girl in the mauve outfit is out shopping—on such an evening Copenhagen seems gay, colorful, and beautiful.

In his heart of hearts Lundegaard likes Mr. Salomonsen. He was friendly and understanding, he’s a nice man with a congenial appearance. Lundegaard’s feeling a new zest for life. It’ll be all right. In the course of a few months the money’ll have been paid back; after all, now they have the chance to earn a little more with the help of the treadle machine; in reality he was clever and
decisive in a difficult situation; now the difficulties have been overcome and the immediate future lies, if not bright, then at least somewhat tolerable before them.

II

One evening Sister Rebekka came calling. Rebekka was one of the Nazarenes. Her life was an eternal wandering among brothers and sisters in the Lord, an eternal inspection from one member of the congregation to the other. At every place she drank coffee and satisfied her natural curiosity.

When Sister Rebekka’s black-clad gaunt figure showed up in the vicinity, people hurried to put the proper expression on their faces, the hymnbook, the Nazarenes’ little red hymnbook, was put in a conspicuous place, and the water for the coffee was put on the stove. Clandestinely they examined the inside of their slender purse, and if it was possible, they sent one of the rear-courtyard kids for bread.

Then after the coffee had been served and Sister Rebekka had let her searching eyes glide across the room, the pious woman’s social skills came to light. She was a talker. She knew everything about everything and everyone. The most important news was delivered in a subdued, confidential tone.

Sister Rebekka didn’t like this neighborhood, its staircases, rear-tenement yards, and residents. There was something self-tormenting about her visit that gave her a kind of satisfaction. Sister Rebekka had been born in a neighborhood with wide streets, wide front stairs, and a caretaker in the basement.

Even the street displeased her. The slushy gutters, the filthy kids, the dirty facades that hadn’t seen whitewash since the house had been built, but on the other hand were over-embellished with inscriptions drawn in chalk by intrepid children’s hands, the damp and dark passageway, the overflowing garbage cans, the narrow stinking stairs where the light couldn’t shine—all that filled her with honest loathing.

Mrs. Lundegaard wasn’t happy about the visit. She was
ironing and, besides, was expecting Lundegaard home any mo-
moment.

She managed to put the coffeepot on and sent off one of the
children living on the same stairway with her last twenty-five øre
for bread.

Hopefully Rebekka wasn’t at all disturbing her; she’d come
by coincidentally. God guides people’s ways, she added with a
warm smile.

While they sat drinking coffee, Lundegaard came home. He
looked askance at the Danish pastry, sullenly said hello, and sat
down by the window with a newspaper.

A flagging conversation got underway. Rebekka had a sub-
scription list for the mission work. Lundegaard thought to him-
self that, after all, the pastor’s wife had a car that could be sold,
but didn’t want to say it, even though he felt like it. He noticed
that his wife was drifting into all that stuff. He didn’t under-
stand it, but he didn’t want to interfere. He had his hands full with his
own affairs—it was his shoulders everything rested on.

Rebekka began talking about the church that was to be built,
about the tidings that would reach out across the whole earth.
The Bible predicted it, word for word. It also predicted the war
that would come. In her gentle voice she cited the passages.

Mrs. Lundegaard saw her out.

When Mrs. Lundegaard came back in, she immediately
started ironing again. Now of course she had so much to do that
the little bit of time that was left over she had to sew. She’d got-
ten glasses. They made her look older, but of course that didn’t
matter. Religion gave her consolation for her unfulfilled wishes.

She chatted while ironing. After all, something new happens
all the time. The greengrocer’s wife had gotten her hair dyed
and Poul’s acquaintance, Nielsen from the boarding house in the
front building, that guy the office worker, had gotten a job as a
billiard scorekeeper. Lundegaard didn’t know Nielsen, but pon-
dered a good deal about Poul. Why wasn’t it Poul who’d gotten
a job, he thought to himself.
At the billiard parlor they were having a marvelous time over a little gag. Olsen had called Svendsen’s wife to ask whether Svendsen was at home. “No,” the wife replied, “my husband’s up at the billiard parlor.”

Nielsen picked up pins, counted points, and wrote them down on the scoreboard. The whole thing was actually very straightforward, but when you’d stood for 5 or 6 hours keeping score, you were about to go crazy—and of course to get sore feet. Only rarely did anything stimulating take place. Gradually as picking up pins and counting became more automatic for him, he had time to spend observing the players. When people play, most of them reveal themselves in all their helpless nakedness: they became openly annoyed when their opponent was lucky, and gloated swaggeringly when things panned out for them.

Over by the window a man was sitting and drinking. He didn’t look to be thinking about anything—was just sitting there drinking. Every time he’d emptied his glass, he held up his finger in the air as a sign that the waiter should come with one more drink. It happened completely mechanically, with machine-like precision.

Every clique cultivates its human ideals and aspires to be like them. Here the important thing was to know all about sports. Not in the sense that you had to be able to play sports, but that you had to be familiar with sports players and their achievements. First and foremost trotters and thoroughbreds, bicycle racing, all the fields where gambling and sports are linked to each other. If you wanted to hold your own in this milieu, you had to know these sports and be able to say something about them. Even if Africa sank in the ocean, it would scarcely be a topic of conversation here; the bounds of sensible talk here were staked out and they were narrow. Day after day you talked about the same thing. During the game you offered comments, but always the same comments. One comment corresponded to every single situation, and nothing was more certain than that the
comment would be made. The same comments year in year out. Learning these comments was part of Nielsen’s new job. The first time you heard them, they could be funny, ironic, but once you’d heard them a few times, they sounded completely idiotic. These expressions would be incomprehensible to anyone but billiard players; the place was crawling with expressions known only to the initiated.

Hour after hour Nielsen counted points and wrote them down on the scoreboard. The man by the window constantly emptied one glass after another. His shoes were wet and dirty as if he’d been walking all day up and down the streets in the rain and slush. He’d started sitting and chatting with himself, his eyes were glazed, and he sat shaking his head rapidly as if life had filled him with the greatest astonishment. Which perhaps he was right in doing, Nielsen thought. He was standing at that very moment and wondering about himself. At the office he’d had quite a definite ideal he aspired to be like: A clever young businessman, quick, lively, energetic, a man with a career for himself in the business world, who’d end up either starting his own business, which would compete his boss’s to smithereens (he could easily raise capital—all the firm’s contacts realized that he was indisputably a first-rate man and were surprised that the boss couldn’t see that and hadn’t long ago made him his deputy), or being solicited by one of the firm’s contacts to take over a well-paid position with trips abroad, important conferences, and such. Then when he became unemployed, his ideal changed its character, and now that he was a billiard score-keeper, it shifted again. He thought about the fact that if any of his former ideals came here as patrons at the billiard parlor, it would appear to him ridiculous if they couldn’t play billiards and didn’t know all about trotting. So that means that if you take a person and let him loose in a certain milieu, he’ll immediately be on the lookout for an ideal for himself and get going on being like that. If he’s forced by circumstances into a criminal milieu, he’ll aspire to be the toughest criminal, the roughest customer, the most ruthless and cynical. If you let him loose in a monastery, he’ll try to work his way up to become the most industrious
and honest one—assuming, that is, that the monastery’s the way it ought to be.

By now the man by the window had collapsed—his head was lying against the tabletop. It was 11 o’clock. It would be splendid if the two idiots he was standing around and keeping score for would stop soon. They’d now played “last game” eight times. He was intensely in need of taking a little rest, washing his hands, having a cup of coffee and a smoke, and sitting down and resting his sore feet. He looked around the premises to see whether some candidates for his billiard table were sitting there; it was as bad as it gets to be busy again immediately after you’d been standing for so many hours. Yes, damn it, little Andersen was sitting next to the musician from the Royal Theater—it really wouldn’t surprise him if they were sitting there poised to get a chance. He glowered maliciously at them. Maybe it would be smarter after all if you could keep this game going a little longer so that another billiard table became available first. You yourself could do a lot to that end. Especially when the players had said last game as here, you could just take the balls when the game was finished and go off with them and thereby shut the mouth of the one of the players who’d been thinking about suggesting one more game. If you desired the game to be continued, you put the balls in place and pretended as if it were completely obvious that they’d play on—that might tempt them to continue.

He decided if possible to extend the game. Especially little Andersen was boring and a bad payer. Incidentally, the musician was no prize either. He was terrible to listen to; when he lost, he whined till it turned your stomach.

At that moment something happened that made Nielsen’s face first lose its color and then turn blushing red. Four people had made their appearance in the hall—two young men and two girls. It was clear that all four were half-drunk. One of the young girls was Nielsen’s former fiancée—the one who’d broken it off after he’d been unemployed for a couple of months.

They’d seen each other immediately and recognized each other immediately. At first blush they were both shocked to meet each other under these circumstances. Nielsen stared stiffly
at the pins, which shimmered before his eyes. He desperately held on to the number 18. And here add 4—twenty-two. Carom twenty-six. He'd fancied that she no longer meant anything to him and now his heart was beating so he had a hard time breathing. Or was it because she was seeing him in this situation, as a billiard scorekeeper. The guy she was with was presumably his successor, a pale-faced drip who howled: “Waiter, waiter please. Head waiter please.” Was he really supposed to be worth less than this nitwit. His self-esteem shrank. He didn’t look up, but he knew that she was looking at him. The whole billiard parlor must’ve noticed it—it was unbearable. He miscounted and the player made a fuss. Again Nielsen felt the blood in his cheeks and the fog before his eyes.

When he’d been to the board to write down the points, he stole a glance over at the table where they were sitting. They were very lively, boisterous. She was the liveliest. Her laughter was affected.

Nielsen was standing feeling sorry for himself. Why should he be humiliated once more—he’d already been humiliated enough. Soon he’d no longer be able to take it. His feelings of inferiority were about to choke him. Do you calculate a person’s worth, then, only according to what he is, how much money he earns. He suddenly remembered his new attitude, the one that wasn’t his own, but that he had to acquire if he wasn’t going to make a mess of everything. He was going to secure himself social position and ample income, regardless of how he managed to do it. Then she’d try to come and make up. And he’d be friendly to her, but let her know that he wouldn’t care a damn about her.

Then he felt how naive these thoughts were and began to mock himself as he usually did. Of course it was ridiculous. On the other hand, that’s the way life in fact was. There was no doubt that if she’d met him under other circumstances, if he’d become “something,” she’d have felt no match for him and would’ve regretted that she’d broken it off; she’d have tried to make up.

There were no billiard tables, all were occupied, and when
the four of them had had a drink, they left again, still boisterous.

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The game was finished—without Nielsen’s having made an attempt either to prolong or shorten it. Andersen and the musician seemed not to want to play. It was almost 12 o’clock and some of the patrons had left. The waiter and the proprietor conferred about the guy sitting by the window sleeping. The waiter went over to wake him under the general watchful eyes of the other patrons. The man awoke, raised his head with a quick start, and looked around confused. But what in the world did his face look like. As a matter of fact, he didn’t have a nose. And what was that lying on the table: It was of course his nose.

Every single person in the hall had seen the scene with his mouth agape; dumbfounded, the waiter stared at the man without a nose. After all, he’d never been confronted with that before.

Suddenly the man grasped the situation. “Where’s my nose,” he mumbled. “It’s lying on the table,” the waiter replied politely. It was an artificial nose made of some kind of strange material or other. Nielsen recalled that Tycho Brahe had had an artificial nose.

The man put the nose in place, paid, and staggered, shaky and drunk, out the door.

It’d become totally quiet in the hall. People had stopped the game on all the billiard tables. Suddenly somebody burst into laughter and a second later everybody was roaring with laughter.

IV

That’s what February’s like. One lunch hour you’re thinking that spring’s on its way. The sun’s warmed up Lundegaard’s bedroom window so the hyacinth bulb’s opened. The tender blue has broken through: it looks so hardy, so vigorous, as if it could burst chains to create access for itself to the light, the world, and life.

The sparrows chirp spring.

And then the next morning the city is lying there white under
heavy melting snow. Once again the snow shovelers are getting a little work to do.

And a couple of days later there's hard frost. With biting cold and parked cars with a blanket on the radiator.

Then the snowstorm stops traffic, the steamers are delayed and covered with ice when they come into harbor.

Again thawing. With avalanches tumbling down from the roofs.

That's what February's like. Skiers in Deer Park, black-headed gulls over Gammel Strand, carnival, and ice on the lake in Ørsted Park. The days have become longer by almost two hours, the banks are sending out an annual report and the English king's been appointed an admiral in the Danish fleet.

"War in Africa and rearmament have created a year of growth," says the Commerce Bank's annual report. Køge Rubber's yielding 15%, the pressure of the crisis is abating—why shouldn't the Lord Chamberlain's Department also be busy.

In a garbage chute of slimy gray stone a blue hyacinth's opened up. Mrs. Lundegaard's surely seen it, but she's too tired to take it in. She's dreamed that she's been sewing all night. And when she awoke, she was tired. Now she had to sew in earnest.

That's what February's like. Nothing special happens.

And then suddenly something happens after all.

Something that hurts.

In the morning Poul's bed stood untouched, and toward noon a man from the police came and wanted to talk to Lundegaard, who'd just left. He talked to Mrs. Lundegaard for an hour and when he left, Mrs. Lundegaard's face was red and swollen from crying. Her boy, her dear boy.

V

Poul paced a cell at police headquarters. He'd made a decision, risked a bet and lost. If it'd gone well, he'd have had money in his pocket now, maybe a lot of money. He'd have
been able to rent his own room, buy clothes. Access to ever­
ything that meant life. He’d have done it only this one time.
He’d pondered and pondered.

They’d also taken his buddy. They’d met at the ice-cream
parlor. One day they’d taken a walk together, a long walk,
through Frederiksberg Palace Gardens and Søndermarken. They
agreed to make the attempt. His buddy had tried it before. He
had experience. He was the one who’d made the plan. Poul was
supposed to stand watch outside the cigar store. It was a matter
of a moment. If you used your brains, the risk was minimal.
And then your troubles would be over with at one blow. He’d
procured information. A couple of hundred crowns were in the
cash box in the night between Friday and Saturday.

Poul’s sorry that it went wrong—for the old folks’ sake.
He’d acted on his best beliefs. He too wanted to live life. Was
there perhaps any prospect of getting work? He’d made his de­
cision and it’d gone wrong. That was all.

Now it’d presumably get into the newspapers. It was a
shame for the old folks. But nobody could demand that he
should go on that way. Sitting in the ice-cream parlor, reporting
to the unemployment office, sitting at the welfare office, stand­
ing in the passageway. Now Nielsen had of course gotten work.
There was nothing to reproach him for. He didn’t regret any­
thing, but he was sorry it’d gone wrong. For the old folks’ sake.
Otherwise he almost didn’t give a damn.

In the evening when he’d taken a walk down Vesterbro
Street and Strøget, he’d seen other young people coming from
movie theaters and restaurants. Well dressed, with their girl­
friends. Poul knew that the girls didn’t look at the unemployed.
Naturally they went out with those who had a job, had a flashy
tie, and could invite them to a restaurant. Naturally. The girls
of course didn’t earn anything themselves. And they too wanted
to live life. That’s also in fact what’d happened to Nielsen.
Lundegaard wasn’t surprised. It was as if he’d lost the capacity to be surprised. And he was tired of speculating. The whole thing really wasn’t that difficult—you should just let things take their own course. Not take them too seriously. A couple of quick cups of coffee cleared your thoughts. You just went around treating things with much too heavy a hand.

And then suddenly it overwhelmed him. All the despair, all the anxiety about everything that was against him and that he was trying to manage to get rid of by desperately looking indifferent. He spoke out loud to himself on the street.

Suddenly he was sitting on a bench in King’s Gardens weeping like a child. And crying, with quivering lips and feverish eyes. “I can’t go on, I can’t go on,” he jerked out the words, as if it helped him a bit after all to be able to say it out loud. “Oh hell, I can’t go on.”

Then when the bout was over, he drank, and when he’d gotten drunk, he confided to everybody that he couldn’t care less. It wasn’t so damn strange if his nerves weren’t so good after all that stuff with the store and all that. But he’d manage all right. Just take it easy.

Oh, that blasted rascal, that damned — . And now things had just begun to be okay. Mr. Salomonsen was, after all, nice and understanding. All the same, they’d be forced to use Anna’s salary to pay the rent with and the sewing hadn’t really gotten going yet. “What. The first installment already,” Mr. Salomonsen had said. “Can’t you even pay some of it.” Lundegaard couldn’t and so he’d just had to sign a new acknowledgment of debt. And Mr. Salomonsen had looked friendly and said to him: “It’ll be okay. But of course you’ll have to make sure to be on time with the monthly installments.”

He’d certainly manage that just as long as he could get the better of his nerves. It was just a phase. But he had to have something to drink. Otherwise he’d go crazy. In fact he was spending more money than he should’ve. Including the money he’d collected, including Mrs. Lundegaard’s money. After all,
he had to keep it going at any price until all of this stuff had blown over. After all, it was his shoulders everything rested on.

One day he’d been so drunk that two strangers had accompanied him home. Mrs. Lundegaard had cried. He himself was so drunk that he couldn’t raise an objection to Mrs. Lundegaard’s undressing him and putting him in bed. The day after he said something about a couple of army buddies he’d run in to. And in a way, if a real man didn’t take a decent swig every once in a while, he damn well wasn’t a real man. Surely there wasn’t anything to object to in that. After all, he was the man of the house, the guy whose shoulders everything rested on.

And then all of a sudden he could turn around and beg her, who’d shared his life’s troubles, for forgiveness. Cry like a child, while she stroked his hair and said: August.

Then Lundegaard decided that it would be over his dead body. He noticed where the whole thing was headed, but it couldn’t be allowed to happen. He’d pull himself together. It wasn’t so easy—after all you weren’t a young man any more—but it had to be done. And there was only one way it could be done. Be energetic, earn some money, save, avoid liquor.

They visited Poul in prison and brought extra food along. When they left there, it was one of those February afternoons when the sun shines and they weren’t in a bad mood at all. After all, the boy looked the way he usually did and he’d surely soon be free again. After all, it was almost a mistake, an aberration. Something he’d done in desperation. After all, he was no criminal.

And then the next day the whole business was so desperate again. Naturally he’d be punished. Lundegaard tried to pretend to be strong. The weather had changed again. Slush and cold. The homeless went about with their coat collars turned up, with their hands, blue with cold, in their pockets, and their shoes soaked through; the buses splashed cascades of filthy water up on the sidewalk. Lundegaard rode his bicycle from address to address. His pants were soaked through and his gabardine coat couldn’t keep the cold out. Nevertheless, it’d be all right if you
just held out. In the afternoon he wanted to buy a few flowers to take home even though they were so expensive at this time of year. It would, so to speak, bring a little optimism into the dark rooms.

VII

The only thing missing to make their misery complete was for Anna to have a baby, Lundegaard thought. My wife religious, my son in prison, and I myself beginning to go crazy.

But Anna isn’t going to have a child. Nothing in this world is perfect, not even misery. Anna’s not going to have a child at all; in spite of everything, Anna has acquired so much knowledge about it; that’s just the way it is—the young people are obliged to acquire knowledge about it themselves, while you hope that they acquire this knowledge without too great a calamity occurring. Some escape unhurt, others don’t do so well.

Since New Year Anna’s received more in salary without mentioning it at home. If they knew, they’d ask for that too. If the rest of them are going to control her life, she’s not going to get much out of life. Anna isn’t egotistic—she just wants to be allowed to be here. She’d like to please the others and gladly gives them nice little birthday presents.

She’s going with somebody who’s something at a warehouse. They go to the movies, sometimes to the theater. They dance a lot and Sundays they go out into Deer Park or a place like that. They’ve never talked about getting married. At the end of the month they usually have to be content with taking walks; and then it happens that Anna doesn’t have time—there are so many who invite her out—and even though she likes the warehouse clerk, it’s still a little dreary to walk up and down the streets if the weather’s bad.

The warehouse clerk lives in a furnished room. Anna’s been there a couple of times, but doesn’t care for it. She doesn’t take a kiss at the front door that seriously. You don’t get kids from it.
No, Anna really isn’t going to have a child. If she does have one some day, it’ll be because she herself wants it.

VIII

Then one day Lundegaard’s at the company office to settle his accounts and the bookkeeper says to him: “By the way, the boss’d like to talk to you.”

Lundegaard goes into the boss’s office. The boss has dealt in menswear on installments for a half a lifetime and you can tell it by looking at him. He’s sitting at his desk and doesn’t look up. He’s busy. It’s not like with so many bosses who’re always especially busy when someone on the staff is called in. This one here really is busy—he always is. There’s so much that requires his personal attention. Purchases, contracts that have to be given as security for a loan at the bank, municipal court suits.

Lundegaard’s a bit uneasy. He’s got an idea that he knows what it’s about, but hopes he’s wrong. He looks at the boss’s red neck and thinks about how many years he himself slaved and did without to become boss himself. Not until now does he think—God knows whether there’s actually that much to it—that the boss never looks happy. But he is well-nourished and well-dressed—he’s not lacking anything.

Finally the boss looks up. He speaks quickly and firmly. He knows everything and has his definite opinion about things. It’s not open to discussion. It’s a half a lifetime’s experience in men’s clothing on installments.

A customer received a dunning letter. He was in the store to make a fuss. An installment he paid wasn’t entered on his account. Lundegaard collected the money and it didn’t get sent on. It was two weeks ago.

“I don’t care for that kind of nonsense,” the boss declares. “It destroys the business and it’s a mess. I mean, I have a bond of course, but it’s not so much the amount that’s at issue. It can’t happen again. But if it does, then I can’t use you.”

Lundegaard says something about having been short the sum
when he was supposed to settle his account.

"Then you should’ve informed us of that. You could’ve paid
the sum in later. The customers’ accounts have to be in order."

The conversation’s over. Lundegaard can go. He thinks
about the other amounts that haven’t been paid in. He doesn’t
understand himself either: He’s been an honest man his whole
life.

IX

Oddly enough when he gets out on the street, he runs into an
old army buddy. Now if he goes home this evening and tells her
that, naturally Mrs. Lundegaard won’t believe him. After all,
you certainly don’t meet old army buddies like this every other
day. And so this time it really is an old army buddy, forty-two,
his name he believes is Jensen.

They go over to have a little drink and to chat for a quarter
of an hour about back then. Now Jensen’s a crane driver. And
has a wife and child. "The way it happened," Jensen says, "was
that one evening a friend of mine was supposed to go out with a
girl who always had her sister in tow. And they could never get
rid of the sister. So I was asked to go along to be the pest’s es­
cort. And then you can imagine the rest: one day she said she
was going to have a baby, and because I thought it was the easi­
est way to deal with the matter, I married her. And ever since
she’s been my private pest. The child was a girl, she’s fifteen
years old now and almost worse than her mother. Skoal."

Actually Lundegaard should’ve been on his way home by
now, but it’s so cozy to sit and chat a bit about the old days—all
his troubles are crowded into the background. It feels so refresh­
ing, especially coming on top of that business with the boss.

"Yeah, I mean I had a business," Lundegaard says, but then
suddenly he can’t go on. It doesn’t matter anyway—Jensen pre­
fers talking to listening. Then they discuss various army buddies
from back then. Some they’ve run into since, others they’ve
never seen again. "I mean it was that guy Mølgaard, the baker,
you know, he’s gotten his own business out in Nørrebro.”

“That thin little guy?”

“Hell, he’s not so little and thin any more. He’s making good money, has a car, and so on. He’s well known in trotting circles.”

“There’s a certain kind of baker and butcher I can’t stand,” Lundegaard says. “It’s as if they earn their money too easily. And earn too much. Imagine, so that’s what became of Mølgaard—who the hell would’ve believed it of that little drip.”

Lundegaard again begins talking about how he had a store, but then he breaks off and says that he should probably see about getting home.

Jensen won’t hear of it now that they’ve finally met each other after so many years—hell, now they’ll have a bit of a jovial time. “I mean, you’re not henpecked, are you?”

“No,” Lundegaard says, “I’m not, but there are so many things, you understand.”

Jensen understands it well. All of us have our cross to bear. But after all there’s no point in going around pondering it. We’re just forced to take things one at a time starting with the most important. Skoal again, Lundegaard.

Later, after they’ve gotten drunk, it’s Jensen who turns sentimental. He’s sure as hell having a hard time of it. His wife puts on airs, they have a four-room apartment filled with furniture that cost a lot of money and that you barely dare look at so it doesn’t get scratched. When the sun shines, they draw the curtains to go easy on the furniture. His daughter’s become a member of a youth organization where there’s a chance she can get engaged to somebody from the upper class. And she’s going to stay in school. Jensen’s scared as hell she’ll come home one day from the youth organization and have gotten into trouble.

Then they happen to chat about war. Jensen, too, thinks that war’s coming. And then of course the whole thing actually doesn’t matter, because either we’ll wind up earning so much money and earning it so easily that we’ll all become upper class, or we’ll be involved, and then of course it’s all over. There won’t be much left once they start with those murderous instru-
ments they have now.

Then suddenly it all overwhelms Lundegaard again. He has to let off steam and gets it off his chest to Jensen. He tells about the business, which went bust, and money he collected that’s been spent, about Mr. Salomonsen, about Poul, who’s sitting in Vestre prison. He tells Jensen everything, everything that’s gnawing at him. He also tells about the Nazarenes and about the girl in the mauve outfit.

He couldn’t confide all that to his wife or to Anna. But you confide everything to a stranger.

It made a painful impression on Jensen. Like seeing a naked person. He doesn’t care to hear about Lundegaard’s troubles. He suddenly understands that Lundegaard’s in a bad way. And tries to brace him. Says what people after all say in such a situation—hell, Lundegaard, you’ll see, it’ll work out.

But now Jensen doesn’t want any more to drink. “I’ll pay for it all right,” he says.

Out on the street he quickly says goodbye. “Keep smiling,” he says.

It’s raining. Lundegaard’s bike is down by the store.

He’d also much rather walk home. Now he’ll come home again like this. Wasn’t home for dinner. Is half-drunk. While she’s sitting at home sewing.
Third Chapter

I

Mrs. Lundegaard also notices that spring’s approaching. They’re not using that much fuel any more and down at the greengrocer’s you can buy snowdrops and yellow winter aconite. You can get almost everything at the greengrocer’s. Even kerosene and homogenized cream. But you have to watch out not to wind up owing too much. Everyone owes the greengrocer. And of course there’s also the thing that when you buy on credit, you don’t make a fuss about the prices or look down your nose at the goods.

Anna also notices that spring’s coming. When she rides to work in the morning, a man’s standing on the corner of Vesterbro Street selling green blossoming sprigs from a bucket. Of course, the twigs aren’t from the woods, but still. Besides, a vague longing arises in her from time to time when she’s in the department store canteen looking out the window and sees the fat leaf buds, which are about to burst, and the starling with the metallic feathers, which are shining and gleaming in the sunshine. And when her thoughts at such a moment touch on the warehouse clerk, she feels that he’s not the one after all. Even though he’s nice and kind and considerate. If he were just inconsiderate at least once in a while. He’s always so solicitous toward her. Never a flash of brutality. No, it’s not the warehouse clerk her longing’s directed at, it’s not anyone in particular at all.

March has arrived. The lockout’s also arrived. It’s thrown 125,000 men out on the street, in addition to the 140,000 who already were. The air’s become milder, but the road conditions are terrible. Black heaps of snow are lying in the gutters. The
starlings have thrown the sparrows out of their winter residences. At the big fish dealers on Gammel Strand you can see the first porpoises that’ve been caught in the North Sea. And little dogs from nice homes have been trimmed and have gotten elegant new blankets so they won’t freeze in the spring cold. There are still plenty of chilly gray days, but there are also days when all the windows facing south are thrown open and when Langelinie pier and the parks are full of people.

The ones who’re from the country are thinking that the sowing has surely begun now and that the lapwings are now screeching over the gray plowlands. The ones who live their whole lives indoors one day suddenly see in the almanac: Equinox. Spring begins. And through the window they can see that the children down on the sidewalk are playing marbles in the sun. The eighteen-year-olds can’t sleep at night and out in the city’s periphery early in the morning you can hear the birds migrating.

Every day brings new wonders. The catkins have opened out at Vestre Cemetery and living out there in the gypsy wagons near the garbage dump are people who’ve heard the first lark. It’s the bicycle mechanics’ peak season: from the bicycle sheds in the courtyards the steel horses are hauled out, polished, and repaired till the nickel and paint shine in the sun.

A single day’s fog or snowfall can’t chase away the jubilant feeling of spring.

All the announcements about war preparations can’t chase away the feeling.

All the discussion in the daily press about poison gas, about the 10 kilograms of phosgene gas that are sufficient to kill the whole population of Denmark, can’t chase away the sense of spring.

Everybody’s expecting something good from the coming months. Nielsen’s beginning to ponder buying a suit on installments. The girl in the mauve outfit is putting aside money: some day she wants to open a store or something like that; of course she also has her spring dreams and hopes to get out of the whole situation. She has an old mother in Hobro who thinks she’s got a nice job. Lundegaard’s also expecting something good from
the time they’re now entering. In spite of everything. After all, now he’s paid Mr. Salomonsen an installment on time, even though it was hard work, and he’s adroitly managed to cover some of the missing items by not disclosing new payments. He suspects that it’ll all work out. Just as long as his wife and Anna don’t hear anything about the loan. Poul will presumably soon be coming back home and maybe he’ll get work. And maybe Anna will soon be getting more in salary: one day he asked her about it, and she said it probably wouldn’t take that long. And now in the spring, sales of menswear on installments would pick up—there’d be many new customers whom it’d surely be easier to get money out of than the ones he has at the moment.

II

And then one morning Lundegaard’s running a temperature and can’t get up. The health insurance fund doctor comes later in the day. He’s in a huge hurry, darts right through the doors without looking to the left or the right, straight to the bed where Lundegaard’s lying, asks for his health insurance fund card, makes a few notations while Lundegaard’s temperature’s being taken, takes a look in his throat, writes a prescription for some pills, and is out the door again like lightning.

And Mrs. Lundegaard, who’s slaved away for several hours so the house could be nice when the doctor came, is standing there bewildered with the prescription in her hand listening to him tear down the stairs. After all, he didn’t even say what was wrong with Lundegaard, she says. Yes he did, Lundegaard says, he said influenza. Yeah, but how can he see that so quickly. Mrs. Lundegaard’s totally confused. After all, Lundegaard’s had influenza before. It was while they had the business; back then they weren’t in the health insurance fund, but in sickness insurance and the doctor who came was so distinguished-looking and had plenty of time, asked about everything, was sympathetic and said they absolutely had to call him if the fever lasted. And that, too, was just influenza.
Now Lundegaard’s lying on the clean sheets that were put on for the doctor’s sake. His face is flushed from the fever. The blue hyacinth’s standing on the window sill. It’s cold in the bedroom and the treadle sewing machine’s humming from the other room. After all, the world doesn’t stop because Lundegaard gets sick.

In the past when he was sick for a couple of days, he enjoyed it in a way. Enjoyed lying there and resting, while everybody else was busy, Mrs. Lundegaard’s nursing him and asking whether he was lying comfortably, all his obligations being taken from him. Enjoyed the sympathy and concern for his welfare, not so much because they were fond of him, but because it was his shoulders everything rested on.

This time he’s certainly not enjoying it. He’s afraid of what might happen while he’s lying here tied down. The money he collected that hasn’t been paid in; Mr. Salomonsen who might go to Anna’s firm to collect her salary if he doesn’t manage to get on his legs again and raise the money for the installment.

He can lie there for two, at most three days. Otherwise the whole thing’ll go down the drain. He’s got to take lots of pills and get the fever to disappear.

Down in the courtyard there’s somebody rattling a garbage can; otherwise it’s so strangely quiet. It’s the quiet that makes him nervous, that makes him feel so helpless. He’s lying here like a prisoner, while something he’s not in control of is deciding his fate.

Lundegaard doesn’t eat anything all day and in the evening his temperature’s risen. At night the sweat’s dripping from him. Mrs. Lundegaard’s lying next to her fifty-year-old heavy husband and all of a sudden sees her life in a light more glaring than ever before. She’s lying next to an unpleasantly sweating man, a man she married many years ago and whom she’s had children with, a man who’s nevertheless actually a stranger. She doesn’t even know whether she ever loved him; maybe she once believed that she did. She dimly recalls a few pictures from the time of their engagement, a walk on the Princess Trail and one time in Tivoli while Lundegaard was a soldier. She was tired of being
in the house and he had so much money that he could open a business; he was capable and a nice young man back then, and she thought that the business would surely wind up going well and open the way to everything she dreamed about, everything she felt back then would make life worth living. Actually she was the one who married him. They’d never had time to be anything for each other; maybe they hadn’t ever felt a need to either. Both of them had lived for the business. Maybe they’d never loved each other, at least not in the way you read about it in books. Yes, there was that time on the Princess Trail—they were lying down by the Castle Mounds looking out across Lake Fure. He’d taken his jacket off and was lying in his shirt-sleeves—it was the end of May. All at once she very vividly remembers the need for devotion that had arisen in her that afternoon. A need to be squeezed till it hurt. Maybe she had feelings like that for him on other occasions, but she recalls only that one time. She recalls his profile as he was lying there in the grass on the Castle Mounds, and now in the weak light from the window she casts a sidelong glance at the fat, sweating man who’s lying and breathing heavily beside her, and tries to recognize the profile. Even though his face has changed, she recognizes his profile, and a very weak and quiet feeling of tenderness arises in her.

A moment later the feeling gave way to practical speculation. Tomorrow Lundegaard has to be moved into the dining room and Anna can move in here into the bedroom. After all, there’s heat in the dining room too.

In the meantime Lundegaard’s consciousness is on a long voyage. The fever’s abolished time and space. He’s moving in a blissful world of beautiful visions; the bankrupt Copenhagen dry-goods dealer’s surrounded by wondrous Japanese women dancers in sky-blue and tea-yellow silk kimonos. They’re as fine and delicate as porcelain. It’s in a pavilion in a fantastic park with little lakes and chained monkeys. The most beautiful of the
women takes him by the hand. They’re sitting by one of the little lakes. He notices her gaze directed at him, a gaze from the slanted, black, narrow slits of her eyes with the delicate eyebrows. She’s a princess. Or maybe a geisha. Then all of a sudden he sees that it’s not a lake they’re sitting by, but the sea, the great turbulent sea. A junk comes sailing by. A group of people come toward them—the one in front is Mr. Salomonsen, who looks pleasant and says that he absolutely mustn’t forget the installment by the first.

Then suddenly he’s standing on a filthy stairway out in Nørrebro trying to light a wet cigarette stub just to take a few puffs before he has to go on. His hands are cold and he thinks: a quick cup of coffee around the corner there.

He has to run—there’s someone pursuing him. He runs and runs. It’s on a highway. The moon’s red—it’s the boss’s neck. They’ll never succeed in catching him. Mr. Salomonsen’s reproachful in a friendly way. No, Lundegaard says, I’m certainly not an idiot, but I’m the one whose shoulders everything rests on. No, he has to run—that’s his only way out. Then he discovers that Poul’s running beside him. Keep on going, my boy, he says, we’ll manage. But Poul looks at him in astonishment and replies that he certainly isn’t running together with him, he’d never dream of it—Lundegaard would damn well have to manage on his own. He came just to say to him that he’d gotten work, but that he’s not so crazy as to give his parents his wages.

Lundegaard can also easily run alone—after all, he’s always been the one whose shoulders everything rested on—but as he says it, Poul’s already gone. The moon’s also gone. Everything’s gone. Just the stillness remains—that’s what he’s afraid of. The stillness crushes him completely; now they’ve got him after all. He screams.

IV

Lundegaard’s lying bathed in sweat. Lundegaard has a high temperature. Sometimes he talks deliriously, but nobody listens
to what he’s saying. Who takes into account what a feverish brain can think up—after all, it doesn’t have anything to do with reality. Besides, Mrs. Lundegaard has to sew from morning till evening.

She’s started to be afraid that things are serious with Lundegaard. If his fever persists, she’ll call the doctor tomorrow. And she’ll say to him that he has to examine Lundegaard for real.

Then suddenly there’s no more thread in the machine and she begins looking for the spool. Now where was it she put it. Otherwise she’s always accustomed to putting it in the same place. But when she was using it the last time, somebody came at that very moment. While she’s looking for it, she’s suddenly standing there with the Nazarenes’ little red song book in her hands.

“And if illness befalls your house, then what is the use in going to the doctors if it’s not God’s will that your health shall return. And on the other hand, if God wants to help, no earthly doctors are needed.”

That strikes Mrs. Lundegaard like lightning. Of course she’s heard about those people out in Østerbro who wouldn’t fetch a doctor for their sick child. The child died. And the doctors claimed that its life could’ve been saved. Mrs. Lundegaard’s standing there in the middle of the floor with the little red song-book in her hand. God’s will. She doesn’t feel convinced. In any case she intends to fetch the doctor for Lundegaard if his fever persists. Even though it’s so nice to place everything in God’s strong hands, especially when you’ve got so much to struggle with. And when you’re simply forced to pay money to the health insurance fund. The collection for the Nazarenes is also a kind of health insurance fund payment.

Mrs. Lundegaard’s going to pray to God. And she’ll telephone for the health insurance fund doctor if the fever persists.

V

The news dealer from the corner over there also lives in the
rear tenement. He usually pops in with the newspaper for Lundegaard after he’s read it himself. The news dealer has feelings of solidarity with all people who have it just as bad as he does. Besides, he gets the paper back and it’s returned to the news company.

Now that Lundegaard’s sick, he usually looks in and chats a bit with Lundegaard, if anything, to say in his good-natured way: How’re you doin’. Or: What the hell are you’re still lying there and doing. And then he looks at Lundegaard encouragingly and says that he’ll end up being all right. Hell, he himself has had influenza so often—you can’t take it that seriously.

Mrs. Lundegaard feels that the news dealer’s a bit coarse, but his utter honesty warms her, and Lundegaard’s lying here feeling lonely and it does him good to talk to a human being. To be sure, the news dealer’s a communist, but of course that’s up to him.

When the news dealer has time, he sits down for a few minutes on the chair by the window to chitchat. He looks a bit at Lundegaard’s face flushed with fever, at the chair next to the bed, where a glass of water and a box of pills are standing next to the thermometer, at the blue hyacinth on the window sill, and says that of course it’s hard times for us little people, who have only our labor to live on. If in fact there’s anybody who needs it. He also talks about the lockout and about solidarity.

He speaks to Lundegaard like to a child who doesn’t know very much, reads aloud snatches from the newspaper to give Lundegaard a bit of instruction:

“The bread factories remain profitable. Wages for past year total well over a million, stockholders are paid out half a million.”

Lundegaard feels that if those people have put capital into the factory and are risking their money, they should of course also get something out of it.

The news dealer snorts contemptuously. How stupid these white-collar people are.

Yeah, look, Lundegaard says. You know, we had a business. But it went bust. It was the crisis.
Anna has bought flowers and fruit to take home. Yes, but of course we can’t at all afford it, says Lundegaard. And fruit, which is so expensive this time of year. Anna doesn’t reply. She did it because it was her duty to. It’s the same way she buys birthday presents. She doesn’t want to owe anybody anything.

Lundegaard’s already been lying in bed too long. He’s given up the hope of being able to pay Mr. Salomonsen any installment this month. But in any case he’s got to have a talk with Mr. Salomonsen. He’s got to get an extension. He’ll surely get it—Mr. Salomonsen’s so nice. And when he hears that he’s been lying in bed sick.

His temperature’s still holding steady and the health insurance fund doctor’s been there again. He was in just as much of a hurry as the last time, and Mrs. Lundegaard didn’t dare say anything after all. But out in the entrance hall, with one hand on the doorknob, he hesitates a second and says to Mrs. Lundegaard: “The patient must have absolute rest.”

But of course Lundegaard has all the rest he can get. Lies there the whole day staring at the window. After all, they never talk to each other—they only exchange remarks.

Lundegaard realizes he’s got to get up, whether the fever disappears or not. No matter what the cost, he has to talk to Mr. Salomonsen, who perhaps without further ado will go to Anna’s company if he doesn’t hear from him. And there’s also something with the collections he has to take care of. If he doesn’t get up, the whole thing’ll go to pot.

It’ll soon be the first of the month. No matter what the cost, Lundegaard has to get up. He decides to lie and say his temperature’s lower than it really is. After all, the fever can’t disappear all at once. The day after tomorrow he intends to get out of bed. Maybe that’s really the only way to get well. He’ll never get well lying here pondering. And of course he can always go back to bed.
VII

So Lundegaard’s sitting on the edge of the bed and asks for his underpants. Heroic and afraid. A real man doesn’t think anything of a little fever. But his head feels hot and dizzy. He says something about its being good it’s over with. Now he intends to go and take a steam bath to chase the last of it out of his body. Afterward he intends to go and get his hair cut, and then he’ll be ready again to take up the struggle.

It’s not at all that simple for a heavy man of fifty who’s dizzy and feeble to go down a staircase. But the fresh spring air does him good. The weather’s cloudy, but you notice already that winter will soon be over.

Now in all the time Lundegaard had the store, he bathed on Helsingør Street. It wouldn’t occur to him to go elsewhere, even if he has to walk the whole way out from Vesterbro. Naturally it’s filled with people waiting in the waiting room. That’s the way it always is, an annoyed Lundegaard thinks. They’re sitting there with their number in their hand waiting. And all the ones sitting there are going to go in before him.

There’s a humid, heavy heat in the waiting room. And Lundegaard’s tired. Then he sees that the man next to him is one of the customers from his store. One of the ones who came and bought cheap socks. Their glances meet, and out of old habit Lundegaard smiles in a friendly and hearty way, as if this man were one of the few people he really prized. The man has a little package in his hands; Lundegaard can see from the package that there’s a pair of cheap socks for 98 øre in there. The man follows his gaze and smiles: “Yeah, of course now I have to buy my socks somewhere else.”

Then Lundegaard has to explain again why the store doesn’t exist any more. It was the crisis, and then the fact that they came and modernized the property and raised the rent. Then Lundegaard again gets this naive urge to confide in a total stranger. He gives his opinion of department stores and Copenhagen landlords. And to show that he’s a man who knows what he’s talking about, he also says something about bread factories, sharehold-
ers, and wages. And then all of a sudden he turns gloomy and says that he’ll soon be an old man who’s had to work hard his whole life. And now he has to wear out the stairs as a bill collector.

The other man’s sitting there not saying anything. Lundegaard looks at him as if appealing to him. He doesn’t meet Lundegaard’s gaze, but sits there looking meditative. Then he says that there really are those who have it much worse.

Lundegaard becomes a bit annoyed. “Would you like for example to switch with me?” he asks.

The other man’s a quiet, earnest person. One of those who don’t say much. “Yeah, I think so, but I wonder if you’d like to switch with me. I’ve lived by the grace of the Welfare Office for over a year. And now my wife’s gotten tuberculosis and is lying out in Øresund Hospital.”

Lundegaard gets a little embarrassed. “Yes,” he says, ashamed, “things must be hard for you.”

“And there are undoubtedly people who’d be glad to trade with me,” says the man with socks. “Homeless people and such.”

That’s a whole new side of the matter that Lundegaard hasn’t seen before. In a way it makes it easier for himself. He instinctively happens to look at his own clothes, which are both in one piece and clean, and compare them with the other people’s.

The sounds from the people bathing in the shower area come out to the people sitting and waiting. Strangely enough, out here they’re all sitting gloomy and gray, dirty and grumpy, but in there they’re whistling and singing and humming. As soon as they’ve got their city uniform off and water pours down over their naked body, the urge to sing arises in them. And when they come out, their faces are flushed and they look delighted. As if they’d become new people from standing naked under a shower.

VIII

Now while Lundegaard’s in the neighborhood, he might feel
like going by their old business and seeing how it looks. But he
doesn't. He's afraid of getting into a conversation with people
down around there, of having to answer their questions. And he
doesn't want to go down to his old barber either. Better find a
new one out in Vesterbro.

So he's sitting at a barber's that doesn't look all too expen­
sive. Little bit down a side street. "Yes, thanks, with a scissors.
Even though it keeps longer with an electric haircutter, but I
mean a guy'd hate to look like a German."

In the middle of it all the phone rings. "Excuse me a mo­
ment," says the barber.

It's from the provinces—the barber has to talk loudly.
"Yes," he says, "I sent the money. Sent it at noon. Oh, good
Lord, it really doesn't matter, it was just a good thing you re­
mined me of it. It might really easily have happened that I’d
have forgotten it. Yeah, I mean, we’ve got so much to do at the
moment. Tons of business, but everyone pays on credit. I mean
it's a vicious circle. Yeah, don’t mention it, Olsen, I suspect
you'll have it early tomorrow morning."

You’re lying through your teeth, barber, Lundegaard thinks.
He knows how it is. And sure enough he in fact hears the barber
asking his wife to go to the post office and send the money right
away.

The barber realizes that Lundegaard’s grasped the situation,
but he keeps the mask on. Keeps clipping. Talks about the
weather and such. Before the clipping’s over with, however,
he's hopelessly exposed. A driver comes in the door with goods.
He's brought along two bills. The older one is the bigger one.
The barber only wants to pay the later one. The driver says that
then he’ll have to take the goods back again. Yeah, but if I pay
for what I’m getting today, says the barber, who’s getting an­
noyed. Yeah, I mean I can’t do anything about it, says the
driver. That’s what I was told to do.

The barber can’t pay both bills. Coincidentally he’s just
made a big payment. For all he cares, the driver’s welcome to
take the goods back again. But really, this is the worst thing he’s
come up against yet.
He finishes clipping Lundegaard’s hair, but he talks about taxes, fees, rent, and bills, which make life miserable. It’s enough to make you crazy.

The bankrupt dry-goods dealer in the barber chair feels profoundly moved by the thought of the barber’s difficulties. His own have been completely forgotten. If he could just help the man. Lundegaard’s only a reflection of his surroundings; now he really feels solidarity with the barber. He’s going to tell all his acquaintances to come here and have their hair cut. He’s going to say it to everyone he meets. In his mind’s eye he sees the shop full of customers waiting, money streaming into the cash register, the bills paid, the faces happy and eager.

“Alcohol and brilliantine, sir?”
“No thanks, neither. What do I owe?”
“One and a half crowns, please, sir.”

Lundegaard’s feeling of solidarity has evaporated. One and half crowns. Hell, then it’s no wonder that nobody comes into the store. One and a half crowns. He usually pays a crown, and he knows there are places where they do it for 70 øre. That guy’s really a bit much of a tough character. Such a con man. For ten minutes’ work.

IX

There’s a man sitting on a trolley. An ordinary man in an ordinary gabardine coat. His face is a bit red and puffed up, he has bags under his eyes, his hair’s thin and wispy, colorless, while his eyes are pale blue. You can see that he’s married and that his wife takes pains to keep his clothes nice and clean. He’s certainly not impressive, as he’s sitting there; there’s something worn-out and fatigued about him, something cheerless.

He has a white crocheted scarf and pince-nez. He’s on his way to a usurer to beg for an extension. It’s Friday afternoon. A day in March. A cold gray day.

He’s sitting there looking at his fellow passengers. Without seeing them. His thoughts are far off. Actually he resembles the
others. After all, they, too, look worn-out and cheerless. That’s in fact peculiar because, after all, actually all of them have it good. In any case could have it much worse. The only one smiling is a young woman with a child. But she also doesn’t know yet what life is. You can see that she’s newly married and that her husband has a good job. She’ll surely get to know life. Then her smile will probably take a walk.

In spite of everything, the raw odor of spring is noticeable here on the trolley. It’s hanging, so to speak, in the passengers’ clothing. But damn it, spring isn’t just poetry. There’s something raw about spring. It’s for the hardy. Poverty feels more glaring, incompetence more despairing in the pale March sun’s raw light than in winter’s darkness, where you feel at home in your rags.

They’re sitting there secretly taking one another’s measure, or they’re looking vacantly ahead. Now for example the unskilled laborer there with the thermos sticking up out of his jacket pocket and his big, red hands resting on his knees. He’s on his way home. And early tomorrow morning he’ll be on his way to work. And so one day follows the next. He sure as hell doesn’t have any highflying plans for prosperity, for better conditions for himself and the people he supports. The only point for him is just to keep his head above water. For most of his life Lundegaard’s certainly had the title of wholesale merchant and the villa to look toward as something that would surely materialize sooner or later, something that would compensate for all those many cheerless days. Now he no longer has that to base his life on. But, hell, most of the others haven’t even had that. They have their hands full keeping their heads above water. They don’t have any time at all to ponder other things. And they feel like chosen, privileged people if they have a job. What dreams of the future would they have anyway, unless they hope one fine day to win a bunch of money in the lottery, just enough to be able to pay the last installments on the furniture and not to owe anybody anything.

Lundegaard’s sitting on the trolley with his crocheted, newly-washed scarf, woollen gloves, pince-nez, and trouser clips in
his pocket, thinking about whether the future mightn’t after all hold in store for him something good and beautiful. Even though he’s now half a century old. God knows what that might be. Maybe something good and beautiful for all of them. Better and brighter times perhaps. After all, the world’s going forward. And of course something’s always happening. Now we’ve gotten the Little Belt bridge, now we’ve gotten the lightning train. And the government always wants to make improvements. But you can understand that that’s not so easy. You’ve got to make compromises.

Then all of a sudden he again sees his life very vividly and soberly. He’s on his way to a usurer to ask for an extension. What the hell does he care about the Little Belt bridge and the lightning trains.

X

It’s Mrs. Salomonsen who opens the door when he rings the bell. That is to say, opens the door is saying a bit much: the security chain’s on and the door’s opened precisely enough so Lundegaard can see the former housekeeper’s pointy nose. Salomonsen probably married her because he envisioned that it would be cheaper than giving her a wage and the possibility of enriching herself with the household money. Undoubtedly Mr. Salomonsen long ago realized that he’d miscalculated, Lundegaard thinks to himself.

No, Salomonsen isn’t home, he’s at the billiard parlor, she says ill-temperedly. Lundegaard believes that perhaps he can talk to Mr. Salomonsen there and finds out where it is.

This time he has to walk—of course he can’t afford to ride like that on the trolley all day long. And besides, his head is so hot from the fever. In general he feels really crappy. But now he’s surely going to get hold of Mr. Salomonsen and manage to prevent the whole thing from collapsing. He can’t imagine that he wouldn’t be able to get an extension—the man’ll surely listen to reason.
XI

At first he stands there a bit confused and looks around. Imagine, there are so many people here on an ordinary weekday afternoon, where you’d otherwise think that people were working. And the lights are burning so for that matter it might just as well be night.

Now you’ll probably have to buy something, he thinks to himself nervously. And maybe it’ll be expensive here. But he can’t see Mr. Salomonsen anywhere. Actually, if he had his druthers, he’d disappear again, but he’s got to get this over with and asks the waiter for Mr. Salomonsen.

Lundegaard’s lucky. Mr. Salomonsen comes at that very moment. He’d been sitting in the back playing cards. Now he comes with his overcoat over his arm and umbrella and hat in his hand. A fine silk umbrella, meticulously rolled up and in its cover. He sees Lundegaard right away and greets him heartily, like an old friend. Maybe he was going to play billiards, maybe he was on his way out; in any event, he sits down at a table with Lundegaard in a friendly, accommodating way.

Mr. Salomonsen calls the waiter. Lundegaard says something about his actually not needing anything, his having a cold, feeling crummy. Then you’ve got to have a rum toddy, Mr. Salomonsen says. It’s so splendid when you’ve got a cold. He himself asks for a glass of port with angostura bitters. Lundegaard can’t stand making objections; besides, the waiter’s already gone.

Even before the waiter’s returned, Lundegaard’s said what’s on his mind. That he’s been lying in bed sick and so on. Whether we couldn’t skip this month. He looks inquiringly at Mr. Salomonsen, suddenly a little anxious.

Mr. Salomonsen’s just sitting and sucking his cigar. He’s a man who thinks before he speaks.

I mean it’s just at the moment that things are a little tight, says Lundegaard. I mean I wasn’t able to earn anything during the time I was lying in bed. And now that spring’s coming, I’ll
have more than enough to do and so I’ll be able to pay two installments next month.

Mr. Salomonsen looks tired and mournful. I hadn’t expected that, Lundegaard. I trusted you, placed confidence in you. You promised me very definitely you’d meet the installment payments. You know, I also have to take care of my obligations; it’s not always exactly easy to make ends meet. I mean I gave you an extension once—now I really can’t any more. So I’ll have to collect the money through the salary assignment.

He clearly sees that these last words hit Lundegaard hard. It was a bull’s eye. He knows his man, this Salomonsen.

“You know, you still have two days to spare. You’ll see—you’ll succeed in raising the money.”

And then Mr. Salomonsen starts talking about other things. After all, he has his worries too. It’s not that easy. Difficulties left and right. He confides in Lundegaard by informing him of his opinion on the maid question. He’s very worried. Not just for his own sake, even though it’s tough not to be able to get a maid when you’re willing to pay for it. 45 crowns. But the young girls nowadays feel they’re too fine for a domestic calling. It’s a social question, the growing dissolution of old, clear concepts. Life’s certainly no bed of roses. Besides, Mr. Salomonsen isn’t well. It’s something with his chest. And in spite of everything you have to stay here at this arduous time of year, which undermines your health, while other people are traveling to Nice and Menton. You’ve got to behave and stay at your post and do your job.

It’s as if Lundegaard’s thunderstruck. Now it’s all over. He makes another feeble effort. I mean, I couldn’t foresee that I’d get sick, he says.

But Mr. Salomonsen’s already gotten up and is putting his overcoat on. Very politely he says goodbye to Lundegaard. On the way to the door he settles with the waiter.

Lundegaard sits for a bit and tries to collect his thoughts. Now what. Two days. And of course he should go straight home and back to bed to get well and tackle fixing everything that was about to overwhelm him.
Then all of a sudden he sees that the scorekeeper at one table is somebody he knows. Oh, that must be Nielsen, Poul’s friend; he recalls having seen him back home on their street in the passageway.

Yes, Poul. What’s going to become of it all. Damn it, he doesn’t really believe that he’s that rascal’s father. He’s never believed it. Maybe it’s Mr. Salomonsen who’s his father. Yeah, to be honest, what does anybody know about it. Maybe he himself is the father of Nielsen, who’s recognized him now and nods to him in a friendly way.

When he’s ready to leave, the waiter comes to collect from him. Lundegaard’s face becomes flushed. He thought that Mr. Salomonsen —.

The waiter smiles mockingly. As if he wanted to say that in that case you didn’t know Mr. Salomonsen very well.
Fourth Chapter

1

Then it happens that Anna sees her friend, the warehouse clerk, standing at City Hall Square chatting with another girl. Indeed, he’s not just chatting—he’s both smiling and laughing. The girl’s smiling and laughing too. They certainly look as though they find each other’s company enjoyable. And the girls looks good. And is well-dressed. She obviously likes the warehouse clerk, to judge by her sparkling eyes. But of course, let them go right ahead—let them enjoy themselves. So that’s the way he is, behind her back. If he’s seen her and calls after her, she’ll ignore it. Just ride on. From now on he doesn’t exist for her. She thinks she feels his gaze from behind. And she speeds up.

A second later Anna realizes she loves the warehouse clerk. Her heart’s beating and she nearly runs into a car that’s jamming on the brakes in front of her. All the way home she’s worked up with anger, indignation, and by the fact that in spite of everything, he’s the one she loves.

Again one of those funny incidents has occurred that intervenes in the daily routine and shakes a person out of her daily, ordinary existence. Because of course she doesn’t usually ride home that way. She usually rides along Gammel Kong Road and turns down Bager Lane. But she’d gotten a run in one stocking, so she has to manage to buy a pair before closing time. True, she has stockings at home, but they’re not much to brag about. And she has to go out this evening. With a bank clerk.

All of a sudden she very acutely wishes that the warehouse clerk could see her together with the bank clerk. She’d smile and look pleased, pretend as if she felt fine in his company. Does she
actually, she thinks to herself. No, actually she doesn’t care about the bank clerk, apart from his being generous, a man of the world, and elegantly dressed. One evening one of her girlfriends had seen them together on the Strøget and the next day asked who the attractive young man was. You could tell she was envious. From that day on Anna went out more with the bank clerk. But actually, of course, he was boring. But now she wanted to go out with him anyway. And hope that the warehouse clerk would see them. Maybe it wouldn’t make an impression on him at all. Maybe he didn’t care about her now that he had the other one. To be frank, he hadn’t appeared especially in love the last couple of times they’d been out together. But she’d also appeared rather cool toward him since that day she first sensed spring and didn’t think that he was the one she had feelings for.

Anna knows very well that the warehouse clerk’s from Hjørring. But she can’t know that the girl he was talking to at City Hall Square is also from Hjørring. That they’d played together as children and not seen each other since. That that was why they were smiling and laughing. That the well-dressed girl was now married to a teacher. That they’d run into each other by sheer chance. She just knew that it was the warehouse clerk she had feelings for and that she didn’t want to let him go.

It’s the hour of love, dusk’s descended on the city, the neon lights, red and blue, are already turned on, Vesterbro Street’s a fairy tale, the girls appear twice as beautiful, and they make eyes left and right, almost to test the strength of their charm. The air’s raw with springtime and sweet with the odor of cosmetics and gasoline exhaust. How long’s the warehouse clerk known the well-dressed girl? How long’s it been going on between them? It was the kiosk they were standing at—in other words, a prearranged meeting.

She turns onto her own street. The pavement is broken up and big heaps of clay and earth are lying there. Maybe it’s the water main that burst. It seems to her that there are always street repairs and such here in the neighborhood. The kids run and play in the excavation, right in the middle of the heaps of clay. They think it’s mighty funny. They march in a demonstration.
through all the muck singing socialist songs.

In other words, people live here. Lords of creation. Who’ve subdued the earth. Some live their whole lives here, others move to places that are exactly like it. The street consists of many rows of houses, behind the front buildings the intermediate buildings, behind the intermediate buildings the rear tenements. You enter these heaps of stones either through the passageways or through narrow, dark alleyways, tunnels, which are filled with bicycles standing there.

II

Incidentally, it’s April now and it’ll soon be Easter. In the gardens out in Frederiksberg the currants have flowered. They’re bright green and give off an acrid smell of new life. In Kongens Enghave they’ve begun to paint garden houses and picket fences, and there’s a green gooseberry bush standing in the Botanic Garden. April has its special meaning for everyone. For the warehouse clerk, who’s a member of a rowing club, it means that the season’s beginning now; for Mrs. Lundegaard it means spring cleaning.

Naturally Lundegaard sees and hears nothing; he’s got his hands full with his own stuff—it’s his shoulders everything rests on. Now he’s been to the lawyer on Strøget to pay the rent. And when he left there, he still had the rent money in his pocket and took a trolley out to Mr. Salomonsen, who gave him a receipt for the money and said triumphantly: “So you see, Lundegaard, it worked out after all—a person shouldn’t ever give up.”

Lundegaard was juggling the debit items. Commingling them. For that matter he could’ve become an excellent statesman, minister of finance. At the lawyer’s he’d asked for an extension. 5 days. The lady had shaken her head and had said that she wasn’t authorized to give an extension. So Lundegaard had to ask to be permitted to speak to the appeals court attorney: the thing was that special circumstances were connected to his request. Then the lady had taken the rent receipt in hand and gone
in the door to the left with the sign Private. And when she re­
turned, she’d smiled to Lundegaard and said that the deadline
then had to be met for certain. In other words, by April 5th at 12
o’clock.

Who actually owned the houses anyway? Obviously it
wasn’t the attorney himself. He just shoveled the money in and
passed it on. The attorney could also really have used the excuse
himself that he wasn’t authorized to give an extension. He was,
after all, just an intermediary who passed the money on. To
those who, in other words, were authorized. But those people
didn’t know Lundegaard, didn’t have any idea that he existed.
They just got his ten-crown bank notes.

For the moment Lundegaard could breathe. No danger
would be threatening him from Mr. Salomonsen for the first
month, and he had a couple of days’ respite to procure the rent.
Lundegaard had once again managed the situation with a nimble
maneuver. He wasn’t totally dissatisfied with himself. But he
was a bit afraid that his abilities as a financial operator would not
do it in the long run. There was something untenable about the
method.

At optimistic moments he believed that it could be managed
forever with maneuvers, new loans, etc. After all, that was the
way the big shots went about it. That was what was called living
off your debt. But in spite of everything, he was sober enough
to realize that other laws applied to little people. But in other
words, it was something like a mood. Optimism, which in turn
was succeeded by desperation and anxiety. After all, that’s the
way things are constantly going for Lundegaard. He’s sick, well,
thrifty, extravagant, ethical, unethical, moral, immoral—all ac­
cording to moods and circumstances. And the whole thing’s just
a compromise. Keep the fragments together and keep it going.

III

Anna’s lips are red, a bit full, a bit sensual, her eyes blue,
gray, a bit protruding, they have what make men interested; men
even have a special designation for that kind of eyes. But she’s too tall, too powerfully built, too proud, independently proud, to appeal to the man’s protective feeling.

Besides, Anna also doesn’t feel attracted to broad-shouldered, self-assured men. The warehouse clerk’s introverted, a bit of a dreamer, with gentle eyes, a bit melancholy. He usually calls the department store during the lunch break and says: Pardon the inconvenience, it wouldn’t be possible, would it, for him to speak to Miss Anna Lundegaard. A couple of days could easily go by without his calling, but this time four days have passed and he still hasn’t called.

If he doesn’t call today or tomorrow, Anna’ll call him. It’s happened only a couple of times before that Anna’s called. She usually says, briefly and firmly, that she wants to speak to Eigil Holm.

She didn’t get a chance to this time—the warehouse clerk called the next day. She couldn’t hide the fact that her voice was quivering with eagerness when she spoke to him. Maybe it was because every time the telephone had rung, she’d thought it was him and felt a gnawing disappointment when somebody said: Telephone for Miss Andersen, Miss Hansen, or whoever it might be. In any event, she gave a start when somebody said: Telephone for Miss Lundegaard.

Now she heard his voice on the telephone and she could hardly fight down her agitation. Since he didn’t make a move to want to make a date, but merely asked how she was and so on, she asked whether he had time this evening. And when he hesitated, she became ardent. Nonplussed, he thought to himself, what’s come over her—she’d never shown that side before. He’d imagined doing something else this evening, but gladly gave it up. That disappointed Anna a bit, as it were. She’d imagined that perhaps it was over with between them and was ready to fight to keep him. It almost went too easily.

So they met at 8 o’clock, went to the movies, and took a stroll afterwards out at Langelinie pier. Made plans for the future. There’s quite a different tone between them than there was before. They’re no longer thinking separately, but together. An-
na’s never before stuck her nose into how much he earned, how he imagined the future, and all that. In a way, it wasn’t any of her business. But it is now. Eigil can’t go on being a warehouse clerk his whole life. Something has to be done. He has to get a better job, earn more money. And she talks about herself. Now she’s going to go to the drafting room and take lessons. The head of her department said that she has aptitude. She has to slave away at it, learn something. Later she’ll go to an evening school. And she intends to get a better job with higher wages.

The warehouse clerk admits that perhaps he would’ve had a chance to go into the main office and get a higher salary if he’d been able to do commercial correspondence in English. But it was of course too late by the time he heard about it. Besides, he already has so little free time. He has his rowing club and he has Anna. Anna won’t hear of it. A chance like that will come again. He has to take a course. And she’ll test him on his homework. She’s convinced that he has great possibilities if he’ll pull himself together.

The harsh April wind sweeps across Langelinie pier. It’s damp and ice cold. Spring’s far away. But schoolgirls are standing in a knot eating ice-cream bars by the Little Mermaid—in other words, it’s spring after all. And a pitcher with pale-green birch sprigs and yellow daffodils is standing in the warehouse clerk’s room. In honor of the visitor who may turn up.

IV

On the morning of April 4th Lundegaard rode his bicycle across Frederiksberg to get to the outermost part of Nørrebro to collect money. Day break had brought with it a snowstorm; now the sun was sizzling brutally and undaunted through the cloud cover and warming up the newly budding, sun-thirsty chestnuts on Bülow Road. Lundegaard knows perfectly well that it’s crummy to be collecting at this time of day: either people aren’t home or else they don’t have any money. But he’s restless and
nervous to the point of trembling and has to create a release for himself through activity. Naturally, they won’t be evicted, even if the rent isn’t paid by the agreed-upon time, but even if he had a day or two more, he doesn’t see any way to manage it. After all, this is about a good deal of money. And of course the rent isn’t the only expense. He’s in that mood that gives birth to desperate plans. Something on the order of going to one of the cabinet ministers and saying: Look, I mean I had a store and such and such. I paid everyone what he was owed; I was thrifty and industrious. I built up home and family—one of the many small homes society consists of. Now it’s come crashing down on me. The cabinet minister would understand him and say: Just take it easy, Mr. Lundegaard, tell me about all your worries without beating around the bush—I’ll see what can be done.

But Lundegaard knows full well that that’s a lie. Lundegaard isn’t naive at all. He knows full well that the cabinet minister will be thinking: Here we have a clear example showing the social dislocation taking place today. The tendency toward concentration in the business world. The class of retail dealers in dissolution. The middle class, which is being proletarianized. And the cabinet minister would, thanks to Lundegaard’s report, get inspiration for a few well-turned sentences for his next speech. Lundegaard isn’t that stupid. Naturally the cabinet minister’s interested in the class of retail dealers and in social dislocations—it’s just Lundegaard who doesn’t interest him.

Lundegaard knows full well that there’s only one practicable way—being energetic and earning money, being frugal and spending less than he earns. With the surplus the dangers that threaten his existence can be warded off, and little by little the whole thing’ll be straightened out, maybe it’ll even go forward, and maybe he can sit in his old age like a patriarch and tell the astonished circle of children and grandchildren about how he weathered the storm back then when the whole thing was about to collapse.

But on the other hand Lundegaard also knows full well that it’s not the people who use their hands and are thrifty who weather it best. It’s with your head that it’s got to be done, not
your hands. Lundegaard wavers between plan, virtue and thrift, industriousness on the one hand, and boldness, daring, volcanoes, decisiveness, devil-may-care-ness on the other.

It's when he turns the corner at Godthaab Road that he meets the agent from the big wholesale firm. Lundegaard gets off his bicycle. The agent's cordial and sociable—that's his job, of course. He asks how the business is going. A sudden impulse makes Lundegaard say: Thanks, great, but of course we are feeling the bad times. I mean, it's not like in the old days, but it's all right. My God, he doesn't suspect that I don't have the store any more, Lundegaard thinks to himself. After all, he also came into the store only a couple of times a year, if anything, to say hello. Of course, Lundegaard didn't do orders that way—he called up when he needed something. The agent came into the store for many years. He invites Lundegaard along for a drink, a tipple he calls it; he's a bit old-fashioned, makes more of an impression with generosity and friendliness than eloquence. Lundegaard says no thanks. He doesn't dare say it straight out, even though he probably felt like having a little drink to warm himself up on such a cold April morning. He doesn't dare; he's afraid of making a slip of the tongue—because the sudden impulse has now developed into an idea, a plan that's going to take care of the situation. It would've been better for him to have gotten the idea before; then he'd have gotten out of going to Mr. Salomonsen, Mr. Salomonsen who no longer at all represents for him the friendly liberator in hard times, but is almost like a black, sinister threat hanging over his head.

V

Lundegaard's made up his mind. There isn't really anything to risk. In the course of two hours the whole thing can be over with and all worries gotten rid of with one blow. It's just a matter of getting it done. After all, there's nothing to hesitate about.

But it's the first time in his life that Lundegaard's undertaking a breach of the law—he feels that business with Anna's
signature was something else: if anything it was a formality—but this time it’s a flagrant and premeditated fraud.

Now or never. He has to pull himself together and get it over with. From a restaurant he calls up the big wholesale firm and orders a piece of fabric. Such and such quality. Presumably it’s absolutely a superior piece of merchandise. No, come to think of it, he’d rather come in himself and get it; by all means, they can wrap it up—he’ll come right away.

That was that. Now it’s over with. So we’ve gotten that far. Of course the worst is yet to come. But now he’s said A and also has to say B. He takes a trolley to go to the company. The closer he gets to Kongens Nytorv, the more nervous he becomes. In spite of everything, it’s really his own affair. Of course, after all, it’s also conceivable that there was someone at the company who knew that he didn’t have a store any more. In any event, the department head’ll naturally come and chitchat with him—he’s always in the habit of doing that. But Lundegaard’s helpless; he’s sitting on the trolley, which is leading him closer and closer to Kongens Nytorv. And he knows that when he’s gotten to the place and gotten off, he’ll walk quickly and steadily up the steps, as if it were a command he was carrying out. And of course it was also in a way. It was the circumstances. He’d been placed in a special situation that demanded a definite decision. He’d made the decision that seemed most correct to him, all things considered. After all, Lundegaard’s no criminal; he always does what seems most correct to him. And of course he has a home and family, responsibility. He’s the one whose shoulders everything rests on.

Then he’s standing at the counter. He’s terribly worked up and feels that everybody must be able to see it. But of course he looks just as he usually does. He’s standing there with his gabardine coat, bicycle trouser clips, and crocheted scarf and looks politely amiable. The department head’s already standing on the other side of the counter uttering amiable commonplaces. Lundegaard’s desperately keeping the conversation on neutral territory. The war in Abyssinia, spring, colds, etc.

And before he knows what’s happening, he’s signed the in-
voice and is out the door with the big package in the smooth, brown wrapping paper under his arm. That’s how easily it went.

Then it occurs to him that he forgot his bicycle out in Frederiksberg. Oh who cares, let it stay there till tomorrow—it’s a holiday. With the package under his arm he strolls along Øster Street across Højbro Square to the state-owned pawnbrokerage. He hesitates at the portal: the package is much too elegant—you can see it comes directly from the wholesaler. And maybe there’s an accompanying packing slip lying in the package. He goes out onto the street again, walks a bit along the canal, thinks it over once more. It’s not too late. The package can be returned. In his thoughts he sees himself being led out to a waiting taxi by two detective sergeants; everything’ll be brought to light—Anna’s forged signature on the loan document, the amounts he’d collected that weren’t paid in.

He’s standing still and looking at the small craft and fish-boxes. He’s again getting weak and dejected. He stands there with his big package under his arm, stooped, and looks at the water. An ordinary April afternoon on Nybro Street. He knows the whole street scene so well that he doesn’t see it. Nikolaj Church, Thorvaldsen’s Museum, Christiansborg, Storm Bridge. At Gammel Strand they’re washing down the street after the morning fish trade. Sea gulls, parked cars, ivy-covered old houses with bay windows, and the canal with the fish boxes. In addition, he’s pondering what’ll happen if he pawns the fabric and what can happen if he doesn’t pawn it. And a potential third solution. It’s this third solution that suddenly becomes of interest to him in his fatigued state.

Then he works up his courage, goes in a front door, and opens the package. There’s no packing slip. So they’ll doubtless send it in the mail. And it’ll be sent back: Addressee moved. Rubbish—after all, he’s arranged it with the postal service that all mail be sent on to his new address. But it could happen by mistake. Of course not—the Danish postal service, which is so renowned for its reliability. He crumples the paper up a little and wraps the fabric up again. Now right away the package looks more normal.
A minute later he’s standing at the counter in the state-owned pawnbrokerage in a line of people waiting. He just acts like the others. The package has been undone and he has his identification papers ready in his hand. The appraiser’s a man with a hawk’s eye. Sees everything, unmasks everything. Lundegaard has a calm and solid look. His identification paper does too.

Then it’s his turn. The fabric is torn out of the paper. How much, the appraiser asks. There’s no time to beat around the bush—he’s already examining it inside and out. 100 crowns, Lundegaard says. 80 crowns, says the man behind the counter. Do you have identification? And without waiting for the answer he dictates to the clerk at the desk as he takes Lundegaard’s papers out of his hand: A piece of fabric. 80 crowns. Dry-goods dealer August Lundegaard.

Afterward Lundegaard has to sit down on a bench and wait. Damn it, that’s almost the worst part. He can see that the appraiser’s saying something to the clerk and that the latter’s nodding earnestly. Could it be something about the fabric and dry-goods dealer Lundegaard. Lundegaard wets his dry lips with the tip of his tongue. What if they call up the credit rating agency and find out that he no longer has a store. That he’s insolvent. But that’s no reason why I couldn’t very well have a piece of fabric lying around, Lundegaard stubbornly thinks to himself. He’s thinking it so energetically that he’s on the verge of believing that he’s had the fabric lying around his house for several months.

Then all at once the waiting’s over, the agony’s over, and he’s standing on the street again with eight ten-crown bills in his pocket.

VI

Salesgirl Anna Lundegaard meets billiard scorekeeper Nielsen in the passageway. In the twilight and glare from the shops he sees her this way: A young, well-shaped girl with nice legs,
red lips, and laughing eyes. A bit large, a bit voluptuous. Now he knows—of course, it’s Poul’s sister.

He has the day off and has his new suit on that he’s buying on installments; he’s got his overcoat back from the pawnshop; he’s got gloves on and has a little white handkerchief sticking up out of the breast pocket of his blue overcoat. Life’s shaping up better for him now and you can see it in him. In the flesh on his cheeks and in his posture.

The encounter’s equally surprising for both of them. They make a pleasant impression on each other. He asks if they’ve heard from Poul. She answers. He asks about several things and she answers. But they’re both thinking about something completely different, and after she’s gone upstairs, she’s still thinking about him as something pleasant, something congenial. The business with the warehouse clerk is something totally different—it has nothing to do with this. The warehouse clerk’s a part of herself and her future. She just thinks that Nielsen’s congenial and interesting. Surely she’s allowed to. And then it was probably the twilight, which makes everybody more attractive than they are. And the spring.

Mrs. Lundegaard says that on second thought it’d be better if Lundegaard kept sleeping in the dining room till he was completely well. And if Anna slept in the bedroom with her. Anna can’t see anything unusual about that; it’s just unpleasant for her to have to share a room with her mother. But she’d like to remain on good terms with the people at home. Especially right now. She’s beginning to think about inviting Eigil home some evening and introducing him. Then she’ll also have more of a hold on him, so to speak. But naturally she wants to prepare her mother a bit. It’d also be better if there was no talk of Poul. It seems to her that Poul casts a cloud over her.

Anna’s more obliging to her mother at this time than she usually is. She asks if her mother’s tired and says she has to be good to herself. And she talks about the new fashions: organdy collars have now become fashionable. And her mother thinks that’s nice.
VII

Lundegaard’s now been to the attorney on Strøget, the rent’s paid, and he even has money in his pocket. He’s in a jittery, impatient mood. Of course he ought to take a trolley out to his bike and begin collecting. Or ought to go home.

It’s impossible for him to do anything ordinary, anything run of the mill, on top of the heavy tension. He’s already drunk quite a few small drinks. He says to himself that his nerves are in need of stimulation. And now of course the rent’s taken care of. And Mr. Salomonsen’s taken care of. He needs relaxation.

And so he gets the crazy idea that he wants to go to the billiard parlor. He wants to try to go there as a patron. Just like the rest of them. Just like Mr. Salomonsen. Maybe Mr. Salomonsen’s there. And he might like chitchatting with Nielsen, the billiard scorekeeper. You just have to take life starting with the most important things and go down from there. Not ponder too much about things. Solve the problems one by one, gradually, as they turn up. The way he, Lundegaard, does. He’d dare say the situation hasn’t existed he hasn’t managed. You just have to use your head. And be a little clever. Not go around being in the dumps. Not take things too seriously.

He makes his entrance at the billiard parlor. His face is a bit more flushed than usual. He makes himself look a bit more important than he actually is. His friendliness toward the world becomes indulgent, a bit condescending. He’s calm and a bit self-important, moves a bit more slowly than he usually does. He’s a man who’s tried a bit of everything. A man you can’t take for a ride. He orders a glass of port with angostura bitters and makes jocular, good-natured comments to the waiter.

There’s Nielsen. He wants to chitchat with him. Nielsen’s got to have a drink. Lundegaard’s not at all too superior to talk to a billiard scorekeeper even though he’s in uniform. Nielsen just wants a beer. Take whatever you want, Lundegaard says in a friendly way. Lundegaard is sheer love of humanity. Can afford to be. Other people would break down. And end up at the Welfare Office. Lundegaard confronts problems like a real man.
and takes care of them. Besides, this whole kettle of fish is only a phase. It's the times.

Nielsen of course wants to give value for the beer and tells some of the current anecdotes. Lundegaard's enjoying himself uncontrollably. Especially with regard to one with an erotic point. He also tells a couple of stories. Passes them off as personal experiences. Nielsen's heard them a hundred times before, but pretends it's the first time. Lundegaard shows his appreciation of this sense of tact with a new round.

The restaurant owner takes a stroll down through the premises. He looks at the billiard scoreboards and makes remarks about the game so you'd think that his welfare depended on who won. Naturally he has no idea what's on the scoreboard. He's just been in to see how much has been rung up on the cash register in the course of the day, and that's the number he's got before his eyes, wherever he may turn them. If things keep up this way, he can just as well close the business. People have to understand how great the costs were with a parlor like this. And of course you can't make a move nowadays without taxes and fees. The state, damn it, paralyzes initiative this way. Restaurant owner Berg can't stand the public sector: it places a straitjacket on people who in these difficult times have courage and initiative to put together a business. Damn it, they suffocate trade this way. That's why there's so much unemployment. The state shouldn't interfere with business. And all taxation ought to be indirect. By the way, politics doesn't interest him, as long as he's allowed to be here and operate his business without having to run up against prohibitions, regulations, taxes, and fees for every step he takes.

Nielsen and Lundegaard get along very well. Nielsen tells him about the various patrons. The tall dark guy over there has a responsible position in the Copenhagen city government and he's fond of saying that he's succeeded in being promoted only by carefully hiding his capabilities and knowledge. He's playing with a colleague who's attained his position by virtue of having neither capabilities nor knowledge. That made it easier for the second guy. He had nothing to hide, while the first guy constant-
ly had to watch out not to give himself away.

By the way, the Copenhagen city government ought to be weeded out, says Nielsen. Now there's been another swindle. And it involved millions. And it was customers from the municipality's shops who'd had to pay—in other words, the very poorest people. If people thought folks didn't notice something like that and remember it, then they're wrong. The corruption scandals were the greatest danger for democracy.

Now Lundegaard's astonished again. Democracy, he says, I mean we couldn't care less. He doesn't care to discuss politics. Damn it, I have my hands full with my own stuff, he says. I have a home and family to take care of and difficulties left and right.

But that stuff about the tall dark guy amuses him. That's true all right, he says. I had an uncle in the country, he was a storekeeper, one of these real old-time provincial storekeepers you just don't see any more. I was there as a boy spending summer vacation in the country, and I can easily say that I wasn't bored. Something happened every day. He dealt in grain and horses and all sorts of things, dry goods too. If he was going to sell a horse and it was a little sluggish, he stuck a plug of chewing tobacco under the horse's tail. Believe you me that helped—the horse became so frisky and fiery there was no end to it: it kicked and danced like a circus horse. When the farmers brought the wagon filled with grain and other things, his store assistants unloaded the goods from the wagon and weighed and counted out, while uncle kept accounts. He did it by putting chalk lines on the counter. The farmers trusted uncle like Our Lord himself. Then they made their purchases and uncle erased the chalk lines little by little as the orders progressed. Then when they were done doing business, he wiped away the rest of the chalk lines with his sleeve and said that the farmer would then get 30 crowns or whatever it might be. And then he counted up the money with great gestures as if it were a whole manor the farmer was getting. I suppose he cheated the farmers, the old rascal. And then he drank to them. A drink to seal the deal. All the booze that man could tolerate. But that was what I wanted to
say with regard to those bigwigs from the city government you were talking about—that uncle hired his store assistants according to the same principle. They weren't allowed to be too clever. It was preferable, you know, if they were a bit slow as far as their intelligence went. And they couldn't look too good either: uncle had a pretty wife and preferred to keep her to himself. And he knew women. He'd been a shop assistant himself before he got his store.

Nielsen and Lundegaard are getting along splendidly. They have one little drink after another. Nielsen tries out some information of interest to his trade—after all, he doesn't know Lundegaard that way: L'Hombre's becoming fashionable again. But Lundegaard doesn't give a damn: he doesn't play L'Hombre or bridge. Or billiards. But with his thoughts still with his blessed uncle, he says that people in the country aren't familiar with such games either. There they play straight-out, mousel, twenty-one, spoons, and the like. They're more for ordinary people. And are definitely supposed to be just as enjoyable. When he was a soldier, he played sjavs.

That's the story with what's enjoyable. Nielsen points out to him that here in the parlor they all look like they're enjoying themselves. But it's just a lie, says Nielsen. Look at the waiter over there, for example, who's standing there marvelously amused by a patron's stupid comments; every half hour the waiter goes into the phone booth and calls the hospital. The day before yesterday his wife had a baby and the midwife handled it so clumsily that it was ruptured and probably has to have surgery. And now he calls the hospital every half hour. He's only twenty-something years old and has been married half a year. This is the first born.

Yeah, all of us have our cross to bear, says Lundegaard thoughtfully. But now Nielsen's become animated and doesn't want to leave the subject. The other waiter has water on the knee and he has to figure that his leg's going to get stiff; he's become so downcast about it that he's begun to go to a nature healer—it's costing him lots of money and doesn't help a bit. But of course people don't want to leave any stone unturned. And the
proprietor, who looks spectacularly well pleased, is in reality the opposite. It’s just a mask, says Nielsen.

Oh, damn it, life isn’t any more depressing than people make it for themselves, says Lundegaard a bit curtly. Of course we all have our cross to bear. But damn it, life does have its bright sides too. You just can’t take things too seriously.

But Nielsen keeps at it obstinately. The counterman used to be a typographer, but he got lead poisoning and will never get completely well. And that guy who was here before begging, the guy who was missing three fingers, used to be a gunsmith and earned a good weekly wage till he got one of his hands smashed.

Gunsmith? asks Lundegaard.

Yeah, at the light machine gun factory.

So, then he doubtless got compensation, says Lundegaard, dismissively and cynically. What business is it actually of his. After all, all of us get our little knocks here in life. If you went around crying about it, you’d have your hands full.

Little knocks? says Nielsen, indignant.

Now Lundegaard’s had enough of sad plights. Besides, he’s getting half-drunk. After all, he wasn’t home for dinner either—hasn’t gotten any food. On an empty stomach you can’t tolerate anything.

You can get a meal here, says Nielsen. But Lundegaard prefers to go. He wants to go to a place where there’s music and girls. Enough of the sad plights. He knows damn well how to take life. He’s in the process of adapting to the new conditions. Previously he was dry-goods merchant Lundegaard with social ambitions; now he’s living on volcanoes. That requires determination, hardness. Damn it, you don’t have time to go around being down in the mouth because of other people’s troubles.

VIII

Here there are many-colored paper chains on the ceiling and a serpentine dance twice a week, chock-full Friday and Saturday and rather gloomy the other days, girls with their sweethearts
and girls with others’ sweethearts. If you can’t conjure up a mood, at least you can conjure up symptoms of a mood. Three men make up a band with a flashy American name and painted bass drum. The three poor devils are in shirt-sleeves and are furnishing imitation mood at full blast. Here’s life and happy days, here the sun never sets. Their exertions are not least due to the fact that their engagement will soon have run out, and the old man, that is, the restaurant owner, is sitting on the sofa over in the corner looking inscrutable. Every single one of the staff knows that the old man’s sitting in the corner and has a mask on; every single one of them has a quiet dread of being fired. It doesn’t take much when the old man’s in that mood. The old man has his eye on me, every one of them’s thinking. And you never know when you can get some other job. And when you’ve got a wife and children. So the waiters are obliging and quick; that’s why the music’s full of spirit and life.

Naturally Lundegaard already has company. Lundegaard’s such typical material for an enterprising girl that he can’t sit for very long without having company. Lundegaard’s a fish and he’s a grateful fish. The girl certainly knows how to capture a man’s interest. She’s perhaps twenty years old. Her boyfriend says that she’s tough, that she knows who she’s dealing with. She has experience. If youth and charm can’t do it, then a glimpse of something naked can do wonders.

Naturally you see right away that Lundegaard isn’t actually a goldfish. Just a very ordinary little fish. Otherwise the American band would’ve long ago struck up the one about the music being thirsty, or the one about we want beer, we wanna have beer. Not just for the beer’s sake, but for the sales it produces. And the proprietor prizes sales.

Incidentally, Lundegaard’s probably never seen a man as fat as the proprietor. The girl says that a suit could be sewn for a grown man from the piece of fabric that went into making his vest. And it’s very possible that that’s right: he looks as though he weighs 440 pounds.

A little old man’s sitting at the next table who wants to chitchat with Lundegaard no matter what. The girl isn’t pleased
about it and frankly Lundegaard, damn it, would also prefer to avoid listening to his nonsense. But every time the music stops, there he is again. He’s animated and pushy. He must and will get said what’s on his mind. He’s familiar with all the taverns in all of Vesterbro, every single last one of them. Has the gentleman ever thought about the fact that there aren’t two taverns in all of Vesterbro that are alike? And then he gives a whole lecture about taverns. He includes the coffee carts and hot-dog carts—they’re also a kind of tavern, he says. For that matter, Valencia too. They’re all taverns. Even though some put on such airs that they call themselves restaurants and don’t let people come in without a shirt with a collar. Damn it, he’s not exaggerating—he knows ’em all. Both the ones with self-service, where the owner himself stands at the buffet and his wife’s in the kitchen, and the nonalcoholic automat and milk bars and chop-houses without alcohol. Taverns all of them.

The girl says Lundegaard shouldn’t listen to all that nonsense; he’s an old eccentric named Frants and lives by going round to the taverns selling razor blades. And the girl tries to stimulate Lundegaard’s interest with her knee.

But by now Lundegaard has, to put it bluntly, become so drunk that he’s not interested in either twenty-year-old silk-knees or some damned nonsense about taverns. He wants to go out into the fresh air.

IX

The cold night air makes him sober again. First and foremost it’s unpleasant to be drunk; next, it’s a lie and superstition that you forget your troubles when you’re drunk; next, it’s unpleasant to know that you’ve spent too much money. Even if you got it easily. But easy come easy go.

There’s a crowd at the corner of Isted Street and one of the side streets. An electric bell’s ringing so loudly it can be heard all over the neighborhood. It’s a burglar alarm in a shop. Two officers have already arrived. They’ve stopped the alarm and ar-
rested two people who were leaning against the window. The whole flock of onlookers are standing like a wall around the men who’ve been arrested and the officers. It’s easy to see that the majority sympathizes with the arrested men. Lundegaard’s sympathy’s also with the arrested men. After all, he doesn’t have a store any more—otherwise it probably would’ve been with the officers. Now the officers march off with the two, followed by most of the crowd.

Lundegaard remains standing there. A few others also remain standing there. The officers have now turned the corner with the arrested men, but a little loyal band’s still standing in front of the shop having a discussion.

And then suddenly, with a start, the shop door flies open and a man dashes down the street like a wild animal. It’s happened so suddenly that the bystanders don’t realize it until he’s long gone.

Well I’ll be damned, one person finally says. Nobody shouts: Stop thief. On the contrary. They’re gloating. Now the officers are walking down on the side street with those two. And so it really wasn’t them at all. Damn, it’s almost too funny.

Still, the atmosphere in the restaurant has got Lundegaard’s blood pumping. He’s standing there thinking about the girl in the mauve outfit. There’s something lively and warm about the girl in the mauve outfit. She says Honey to him. But not in any professional way. His wife never says Honey to him. Has never said anything of that kind to him at all.

And when he reaches Vesterbro Street, he really runs into the girl in the mauve outfit. She turns out to be happy to see him, but it’s doubtless actually because of course it’s cold to walk the streets at this time of year, and, besides, she’s going to need money, a lot of money. To pay a fine her boyfriend got for disorderly conduct in a tavern. Incidentally, she hasn’t had the boyfriend that long, but obviously long enough to become just as hopelessly poor as she was before. Because what she’d managed to put in the savings bank by and by was in fact actually not at all that little. Many hundreds of crowns. Of course, she went around dreaming about the little business she wanted to start

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some day when she’d scraped enough together. At home in Hobro they’d surely be wide-eyed when they heard that she’d gotten a shop. The washerwoman’s daughter from Hobro. The washerwoman with the eight kids. But now of course little by little she’d really withdrawn everything in the account. Except for the last crown—that way you’d have the savings book and could begin over again more easily.

But the girl in the mauve outfit doesn’t complain. She regards it as her fate, as something unavoidable. Besides, everything in this world carries with it its own retribution. In sentimental moments she readily turns religious and philosophical. He who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

X

At day break August Lundegaard’s wandering through the desolate streets toward his rear-tenement home. Here and there the light’s been turned on. Those are people who have to get up early and go to work. In addition, the light’s on at the bakery on the corner and down by the shoemaker. The news dealer’s arranging his stand. Frankly, it’d be much better if you had some real job. With a fixed weekly wage. Then you’d know all right what you had.

But Lundegaard’s become too old to go and get a job doing manual labor. Besides, of course, there’s nothing to get. There are 100,000 unemployed. And besides. Now it’s coming back—that stuff about the title of wholesale merchant and the dreams of good fortune, the business, which went bust, and all that stuff. Now, damn it, everything’s about to collapse on Lundegaard again. He’s standing there on a cold morning in the gray street and recognizes that he’s been knocked out. He stands and sees the yellow light in the shoemaker’s shop. Over on the other side of the street a street-sweeper’s walking with his big broom.

He’s standing there in his gabardine coat shivering from the cold and feeling out of sorts. He knows very well that his new cavalier view of life—that stuff about being brutal and cynical,
about managing the situation by means of maneuvers—won’t do. He knows very well that if it keeps up like this, the whole thing will go down the drain. Actually, of course, it’s already gone down the drain. Mr. Salomonsen, Anna’s signature, the fabric, and the money he collected. He sees very well that it’s his life’s course that’s received a blow. That the rest of his life will only be adversity and misery. And of course a human being has only one life. There’d have to be a miracle for things to work out differently. And people don’t believe in miracles on a cold, gray April morning on a side street. In any case, Lundegaard doesn’t.

A cripple with a little sack under his arm walks past him and down to the shoemaker. He empties the contents of the sack on to the counter—five or six pairs of shoes. He has only one hand. Where his other hand should be there’s an iron hook sticking out of his jacket sleeve. But in fact he uses the iron hook almost as well as a hand. Lundegaard’s seen him before. He knows very well that he’s somebody who goes into the fancy neighborhoods and begs for shoes, which he then sells to the shoemakers, who repair them and sell them as second-hand shoes. Now the cripple gets a few coins thrust into his hand. He spits on them and lets them slide down into his pocket. It brings good luck to spit on the first coins that jingle down into your pocket. When your pocket is empty. And it is every morning.

Lundegaard goes in through his passageway and up the stairs. Baby carriages and old bikes are standing on the intermediate landing so he has to edge his way past.

His little two-room apartment’s empty. The windows are open and it’s cold. His bed’s made. It was like that all night ready to receive him. While he was out spending money on booze and picking up a girl—money that he’d gotten through fraud. The beds in the bedroom aren’t made up; you can see they’re still warm. Anna of course has gone to work and his wife’s probably just gone on an errand. On the kitchen table there’s a note with a message for him. It’s written in pencil, in Mrs. Lundegaard’s stiff hand. The note says:

“The police were her and wanted to talk to you. I’ve gone to get some sewing and will be right back.”
Fifth Chapter

I

Lundegaard stands rather rigidly for a few minutes staring at the scrap of paper. It’s the back of a bread bag and the letters are bumpy and clumsy because the kitchen table, which functioned as a writing surface, is full of cracks and crevices. He still hasn’t taken his overcoat off, he looks dirty and unwashed, his crocheted scarfs crumpled and filthy, his shoes bespattered, his hands frozen blue and grimy after a night’s boozing and whoring.

Now former dry-goods merchant August Lundegaard’s again pondering the third way out, the way out that he seriously considered for the first time in his life when he was standing down on Nybro Street and didn’t dare go into the state-owned pawnbrokerage. Naturally he’s had thoughts of suicide before. Who hasn’t. Once, that was before he met his wife, there was a girl he was going out with. She was a salesgirl in a bakery and was both stupid and ugly. And little by little he’d decided to break off with her, when one day she informed him that it had to be over between them—he wasn’t for her after all—and she told him straight out that she’d gotten herself a new sweetheart. Then Lundegaard had suddenly realized that she was the only girl who meant anything to him, that life would be a desert without her, and he’d made the most desperate attempts to win her back: he walked for hours near her residence in hopes of running into her, had written to her, had gotten drunk in a tavern, which was across from the bakery—all of it without any result. Then he’d become desperate and begun to consider which way of dying would in fact be the gentlest. Then when she read in the news-
paper that he'd taken his life, she'd understand how dearly he'd loved her and regret her cunning. If anything, it was perhaps the fact that she'd possibly never find out about it that made him abandon his project. Because in fact she never read newspapers.

Actually it took most of a year before he'd overcome the humiliation she'd inflicted on him by jilting him. Later in life he'd run into her a couple of times without its having made the least impression on him. He was, if anything, amused by the fact that back then he could've been so idiotic. Presumably that stuff about suicide hadn't been meant seriously either. Of course the hope had probably been lurking in his heart of hearts that he'd be saved at the last moment and be taken to the hospital, where she'd then come and visit him, sit beside the bed with his hand in hers, look at him with her almond-shaped eyes and say: August, from now on, we'll never be separated again. When he thought back to all that, he was ashamed of his own ridiculousness. And in reality, her eyes hadn't been almond-shaped at all: that was something his fantasy had furnished her with after she'd jilted him.

What he was standing and considering now, while staring at the scrap of paper, was something totally different. It was a definitive solution of all the problems at one time against the background of a clear understanding that the rest of his wretched life had nothing beautiful or interesting to offer him anyhow—only poverty and struggle, maybe prison and disgrace.

So it must've been that business with the fabric there was trouble with. Whether it was at the state-owned pawnbrokerage or at the Fabric Warehouse, they'd discovered it. So now the whole thing was over with.

II

Someone was coming up the stairs. Instinctively he straightened himself and smoothed down his clothes with his hands. Just the way he'd recently done it down in the store when every second person who came in the shop door was somebody with a
bill.

The person in question stopped outside. Lundegaard stood rigid like a pillar staring at the hall door. Then a key was put into the door—it was Mrs. Lundegaard.

Lundegaard had expected a scene, but there was no scene. Mrs. Lundegaard looked tired and careworn. Said nothing about why he hadn’t been home. She had a bundle of pre-cut fabric under her arm. While unpacking she said that he’d surely better go over to the police right away this morning.

Lundegaard was amazed that she was taking it relatively calmly. If I don’t go over there, they’ll surely come get me, he said. She turned around and looked at him, amazed, surprised. Come get you?

Yeah, come get me, he said angrily.

She didn’t understand him, said that the policeman had been very nice and had said that he hoped Mr. Lundegaard had time—otherwise she’d have to go. It was the same one who was here last time, she said.

All at once Lundegaard understood. It wasn’t him at all they were after—of course, it was Poul’s case. That he could be so stupid. And now he was standing there and had almost given himself away to his wife.

But surely Mrs. Lundegaard hadn’t understood anything. She’d gone into the bedroom and had put out a clean scarf. Said that he’d better wash up. And asked if he needed to eat something. And was already in full swing making the beds.

III

Poul got 4 months. That’s what the lawyer, the appointed defender, had also said you’d have to expect. That was presumably the rate for that kind of thing. Presumably it works quite automatically. Incidentally, the lawyer himself wasn’t present when the sentence was handed down; he’d sent one of his staff, who just said something about requesting the most lenient sentence under the law for the accused. In other words, in consid-
eration of the circumstances. Poul hadn’t said anything. Dry-goods merchant Lundegaard and his wife hadn’t said anything either. They’d just looked at each other. And when they said goodbye to him, she cried. And Lundegaard, who’d thought beforehand about what he wanted to say, didn’t manage to say anything either except: Goodbye, my boy. With a lump in his throat. Besides, the whole thing went so quickly that it was almost over before they got started. But, of course, there were also so many other cases that had to be heard by the court.

Naturally the neighborhood knew that Poul Lundegaard had gotten four months. Wherever the hell they knew it from. The greengrocer’s wife knew it, the news dealer knew it, the ice-cream parlor knew it. And even people who otherwise didn’t actually know him, knew it: Oh, that guy, the fair-haired one with the freckles, the guy who was always standing in the passageway. And they commented on the sentence in terms they found suitable. Each according to his point of view. The news dealer said something about capitalist society and unemployment, the ice-cream parlor’s statements were cynical and technical, the greengrocer’s wife’s affectedly sympathetic, scorekeeper Nielsen said that there were surely many people who’d have better deserved the four months.

And the day after they talked about something else. After all, so much happens every day. The waiter’s first-born, who’d gotten a hernia and been operated on, had died. Of course, that had to be commented on too. And a man who drove for a living had become jealous and had driven himself and his wife into the harbor. After all, little by little, you’ve gotten into the month of May, in which crimes of passion and happy and unhappy love stories fill the air. There’s never any lack of conversation material in May—lots of things happen every single day. For example, there’s a sleepless young girl who’s heard the first nightingale; then there’s a couple in love who’ve heard the cuckoo call; and then there’s a newspaper reader who’s seen a family of ducks with 10 tiny ducklings on Sortedam Lake.

This year you also have Abyssinia to chat about. Even though it’ll soon be somewhat hackneyed. But it shows in any
case that you’re keeping up to date. In addition, there are the May Day demonstrations, the communists on one half of Fæl¬
leden and the social democrats on the other. And in the news¬
paper you can read that the freight market is livelier, the crisis is easing, the commodities markets are characterized by an upward tendency.

And now you can buy gas masks. They’re not expensive at all. You can get a nice gas mask for 12-15 crowns. And the travel agencies are advertising a Pentecost tour to the Canary Islands and Africa; it’s said to be among the most charm¬
ing—calm sea and clear skies. Tivoli’s opening in pouring rain and people are going out into the woods and gathering anemone and breaking off beech sprigs. Bakken’s also opening. They’ve put water in the fountains round about the city and in Utterslev Marsh you can get yourself the season’s first mosquito bites. The chestnuts are in bloom, the fruit trees are in bloom. And in the shopping districts many-colored awnings are hung out on the shop fronts, the sidewalk restaurants are just beginning to get customers under the brilliantly colored umbrellas, which blaze in the sunshine and attract the eyes. The thermometer’s fluctu¬
ating between 7 and 13 degrees centigrade, the days’ve grown longer by 8 hours, and all of spring’s glorious vegetables have arrived: new potatoes, asparagus, strawberries, cauliflower, spinach, lettuce. They’re just so expensive that they can’t be bought. By ordinary people, that is.

IV

Naturally, Anna doesn’t love the warehouse clerk exclusive¬
ly because she feels she’s lost him. But when you’ve lost some¬
thing, you see its value better. And its defects suddenly appear insignificant and meaningless.

But till now the warehouse clerk has hidden his bad qualities and emphasized his good ones, exactly like a rooster courting. And now, when he notices Anna’s feelings, he changes his tune, doesn’t put himself out any more. After all, he has her now. He
becomes demanding and inconsiderate. At any cost Anna wants to overcome his indifference, win him, anchor him in the relationship, and she’s considerate and sociable as never before. And painstaking with her clothing and her hair as never before. It wasn’t least of all for that reason that she bought the swagger coat. Despite the fact that she couldn’t afford it. It wasn’t at all that little money to lose every month. Because naturally she couldn’t buy it for cash. Where in the world should she get the money from—it was hard enough to come up with the down payment.

And she’d otherwise thought about telling people at home that she’d gotten a raise, but obviously that would now have to wait for the time being, if she was going to manage the monthly installments. The worst thing is that a week later she saw a swagger coat exactly like it in another store that was 30 crowns cheaper. 30 crowns is a lot of money. But maybe she’ll soon get a raise again; the department head’s pleased with her and she’s making good progress in the drafting room. She’s industrious and has aptitude. She’s conscientious.

The spring weather’s chilly and rainy. Still, this time of year’s wonderful. She’s with the warehouse clerk almost all of her free time. They’ve been in Deer Park, they’ve been to the Circus, and one Sunday afternoon they took a walk on Lange­linie pier of the kind that you remember for years. The entrance to the harbor was filled with beautiful pleasure yachts and the air so fresh and scented with spring that you got dizzy from it. They’d been through the Citadel and sat for an hour on the Smedelinie—there was an abundance of fragrant wild plants. From sheer spring playfulness they ate ice cream from an ice-cream truck. From sheer spring playfulness they ran a race up the stairs at the Swedish Church. From sheer spring playfulness she took him home with her for afternoon coffee without in the slightest way having prepared for it. To the great surprise of her mother, who wasn’t at all dressed to be introduced that way to her future son-in-law.
Actually it doesn’t matter whether you’re an Indian carretero, Chinese coolie, Italian day-laborer dock-hand or Copenhagen billiard scorekeeper. You’re stuck in the muck and you’re going to stay stuck. The proletarian’s lot is the same all over the earth, whether he goes around with a collar and nice black shoes or goes around bare-headed and with a many-colored scarf. When the Indian carretero in Mexico hears about the miner in Kiruna or about the mechanic in Detroit, about the soldier in Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese army or about the tap-dancing Negro in Harlem, he opens his eyes wide and listens, deeply moved. Yeah, that’s the way people should live—then there’d be something to life. And when the Egyptian fellah hears about the life of a Parisian servant, in handsomely appointed salons where there are beautiful women and music, whose work consists only in putting a bottle of wine and two glasses on a table with flowers and saying voila, his own slave existence appears to him like a hell without equal. And when the Copenhagen billiard scorekeeper sees a film snippet dealing with peasants’ life in beautiful Croatia, he realizes right away that he’s in the wrong place and that he should now be sitting in a Tyrolese costume at the foot of a mountain watching the sunset.

But it’s only a moment. When you’ve emerged again from the romantic darkness of the movie theater into the chilly street of reality, you realize once again that the proletarian’s lot in the eastern hemisphere doesn’t differ greatly from the proletarian’s in the western hemisphere. In any case, not in the decisive areas. Now of course Nielsen’s so lucky as to be living in a democratic country in free Scandinavia where there are schooling and hygiene, a national population register, and gratis consultation for venereal diseases. And still he really doesn’t have much to brag about as compared to his unwashed brothers in Mexico and China. He earns exactly enough to be able to pay for his lodging and keep his hunger satisfied. It seems to be a fixed rule across the whole globe that the longer the working hours a proletarian has, the less he earns. Nielsen’s working hours total 70 hours a
week. And he earns less than a unionized worker who works 48 hours a week. A cow on a manor on Funen also has room and board. If you were just assured your living for the future. But, of course, you never know when you’re going to be fired. A Roman slave was better safeguarded. A cow on Funen is better safeguarded.

All of a sudden one day a patron can easily become unreasonable. Players easily become unreasonable. Especially when they lose. And then you can lose your composure. After all, you’re just human. Why should you take everything lying down. And then the fun and games begin. The patron complains and the proprietor says to the scorekeeper that he better take his clothes and leave. And not come back. You can’t object to that: in spite of everything, a patron means a lot of money in the course of a year—you can get plenty of scorekeepers. It’s not at all a question of who’s right: if the proprietor had to operate his business according to that principle, he’d soon go bust. And, damn it, the proprietor has enough troubles as it is.

Nielsen’s reliable and does his job. But that’s not at all what matters. It’s much more important to be sociable and to take the insolence and the injustices as if you’d deserved them. It really doesn’t take that much to be fired. When you have a job, in fact you don’t know whether you’ll be fired when you go home.

And so you can stand on the street and think enviously of the Roman slave and the cow on Funen. Because even if the job isn’t worth much, yeah, to be blunt, even if it’s hell, it’s still a job. And jobs don’t grow on trees. There are plenty of people who’ll jump at it the moment you’re fired.

Then of course you’ve got the Welfare Office to fall back on. 13.50 crowns per week. And you risk being sent to do farm labor. It feels like something on the order of being sent to Siberia. Something on the order of being banished. Penal labor. So better to take the chance and run around with a briefcase and hawk something or other door to door.

In the beginning when you’ve got work you’re so happy about having work that you don’t at all notice how wretched it is. Just the fact that you don’t have to go around pounding the
pavement and feeling outcast and superfluous. That you can afford to buy a pair of socks and a cheap tie. And scrape enough together for the down payment on a suit.

But what the hell’s the good of it all when there aren’t any prospects in life. What can it all amount to. You certainly can’t go around being a scorekeeper your whole life. It’s impossible to put anything aside at all on the few cents you earn. After all, on 30 crowns a week you can barely cover the ordinary expenses. Damn it, on your day off you can’t very well afford to go into a milk bar and drink coffee or go to the main train station movie theater and see the newsreel.

It’s just appearing at the billiard parlor on time and then going home again toward morning. And next day the same thing all over again. And presumably that’s the way it’ll keep on going. Indefinitely. At least he can’t see where the change would come from. That is, unless he’s fired.

VI

One day Lundegaard did something unusual. He went out into the woods. A quite ordinary weekday. It was of course his intention to go out to Nørrebro and collect. First and foremost he was going to go out to Andresen, who lived on Thor Street. Andresen had bought a blue serge suit. Andresen worked at the Ice Plant, but was unemployed at the moment. Kept pleading that now of course the season would soon start when the ice plant would be getting busy. Just a little patience—he’d soon be working and then he’d quickly get those few pennies paid so he could be spared all that running around. Sometimes he was gruff with Lundegaard, sometimes he appealed to his understanding. Yeah, but then why didn’t you wait to buy the suit till you were working. Oh lord, man, Andresen replied. I mean, there was that union dance we were going to go to, and I mean, my wife’d been looking forward to it so much. I mean, folks don’t have a lot of pleasures. And besides, I mean, I wouldn’t have bought it on installments if I’d had work. Sometimes he was submissive
and said Mr. Lundegaard, sir, but Lundegaard never got any money. Incidentally, Andresen felt that one day he’d surely get a permanent job at the Ice Plant, maybe as deliveryman. Even though he knew very well that all of them expected to be that and that there was a need only for a relatively few deliverymen. But if you didn’t have something like that to look forward to, then of course the whole thing was crummy as hell. After all, it was the case that the ice plant employed many more people in the season and that these people then naturally became unemployed when the season was over.

Lundegaard didn’t shrink from giving him a sermon. People really had to put money aside while they had work. Lundegaard was indignant. What the hell was the big idea of buying clothing on installments to go to a dance when people weren’t in a position to meet the payments.

And then they played hide-and-seek with him. Andresen was never home. And now they’d just paid the rent. And so on. But if Lundegaard would come on Friday, they’d put it aside for him. And then when Lundegaard came on Friday, no one answered the door at all.

But now this obviously wouldn’t do any more. Now Lundegaard had made an agreement that he’d come today and get an installment and if they didn’t comply with the agreement, the matter would go to the bailiff. That was their funeral. Lundegaard had nothing to do with it. That was something decided at the office. It should’ve happened already a long time ago, but he, Lundegaard, had covered for them and said that they were nice and solid people.

But then instead of going to Nørrebro, Lundegaard went out into the woods.

If anything, it was probably because it was the first time he realized really in earnest that it was spring. On Vesterbro Street he’d gotten into a whole throng of bicyclists. The bikes were newly polished and sparkled in the sun. And two girls who tried to pass him had on cretonne dresses and were as frisky and full of promise as spring itself. And at City Hall Square he was totally blinded and dazed by the sun.
Imagine having to go out into Nørrebro’s staircases in this weather. There also really wasn’t anyone home in this weather. He parked his bike at Nørreport and thought he’d just take a stroll into the Botanic Garden. Just half an hour. Sit on a bench and bask in the sun. You also owed it to your health to take it a bit easier once in a while. Otherwise, of course, he wouldn’t be able to stand the demands that were made of him. After all, it was his shoulders everything rested on.

And then when he was standing there just inside the entrance to the Garden looking at Pallas Athena, Nørrebro’s staircases had become so remote in his consciousness that in his heart of hearts he realized that he wouldn’t get to Nørrebro today. Pallas Athena stood with her helmet in hand. A pair of sparrows had built a nest in the helmet. It looked exactly as if Pallas were staring dumbfounded at her helmet, in which straw and little twigs stuck out in disorderly fashion on all sides.

Of course, you could just as well really go out into the woods. After all, it wouldn’t take but a minute to get out there with the S-train. And he needed peace and quiet. Needed to think through the whole thing in peace. That’d cause him to be able to work so much the better the following days. That way he wouldn’t lose anything by it.

Maybe it was stupid. The woods were, after all, still barely green. But of course he wasn’t going out into the woods to have a party either. Not at all. He was going out into the woods because he needed peace and quiet. And to be alone. To go to a place where there weren’t any people.

Maybe he’d regret it when he got out there. The forest floor was surely soaked through. It had rained so much in the last few days. Maybe it was really a bit ridiculous to go out into the woods alone. On a weekday. Even before it had really blossomed.

But damn it, he needed to see something other than staircases. Down in the Botanic Garden’s lake the ducks were taking a bath. They did it this way—thrusting their heads with a quick jerk down into the water and back up so the water streamed across their backs. And a sparrow had tumbled out of Pallas’s
helmet and was lying on its stomach in the gravel on the garden path carrying on with its wings spread out, taking a bath in the gravel, and chirping as if it were possessed. Maybe it had lice. Maybe that was its way of scratching itself.

So bill collector Lundegaard was sitting on the S-train on the way to Klampenborg.

VII

Lundegaard walks and walks. He’s trembling with restlessness and elation with all his senses open. Like a prisoner who’s escaped, but realizes that before sundown he’ll be sitting behind lock and key again. He walks across Hermitage Plain, past Stag Marsh, through Raadvad and Stampen, again to the south along the paths and across the open plain. He lies for an hour on his back in the sunshine on a grassy slope in the enclosed area by Fortune, stares up into the blue sky, follows the drifting clouds with his eyes. Despite the fact that he knows that’s a dangerous pastime at this time of year when the ground is damp.

And in town people are now going around asking what’s actually become of spring this year. Out here it’s like a summer day. The air, the sounds, the many smells that are carried past his nostrils by the gentle wind. The city symbolizes to him something remote. The city represents everything you’d prefer to forget, the defeats, the adversity, efforts in vain. Here nature seems to annul the whole thing. Since he was a little boy sitting by the roadside in Jutland whittling whistles out of willow branches, almost hidden from travellers by burrs, dandelions, and dead-nettles, he hasn’t been this close to nature. Now he’s here again and it seems as if all the intervening time is unimportant, just a number of years that’ve passed.

In the midst of all the misery, in the atmosphere of drunkenness and breaches of the law, of self-destruction, Lundegaard feels his human ego consciously as never before, the essence of the growing luxuriance is close to him as never before; he can
take it into his head to take wet topsoil in his pale city hands in an unconscious urge to come into contact with the origin of all life; his emotional life’s abnormally receptive, his nerves more awake, his blood’s awake, his sensory life has a ring and color. He’s been removed from the machine-like, calm, stupid equilibrium, standing face to face with life’s crude demands. With his gabardine coat, his little bill collector’s briefcase, his pince-nez, and his crocheted scarf he is, in spite of everything, a part of nature, related to the trees, the plants, the animals. Maybe he’ll be destroyed, yes, undoubtedly he’ll be destroyed, but still for a moment he’s sensed the law that is the universes’.

VIII

But the big machine seizes Lundegaard once more and takes him back to the city. Someplace in his brain it’s written that he has to go the company office before closing time. The S-train takes Lundegaard, the trolley takes Lundegaard, duty takes him. It’s bad enough that Andresen in Thor Street is going to use as an excuse that he was sitting home today all day with the money in his hands waiting for Lundegaard. It’s bad enough that a man of his age is going around getting batty, that a grown, sensible man can get it into his head to tramp about in the woods instead of doing his job. At the office they’d certainly smirk if they knew that he, Lundegaard, that guy who does collecting in Nørrebro, had been sitting for half an hour on a hillside in Deer Park looking at a lump of moss he’d had in his hand for maybe an hour. He still had soil under his nails, wet forest soil.

And all of a sudden something happens again.

Something that shakes his fragile existence to its foundations.

And now when otherwise things were starting to go tolerably well.

What happens is something quite ordinary and everyday. But it makes him pale and causes his hands to shake.

It happened after he’d come into the office, had said hello,
put his hat on a chair, and opened his little briefcase. The bookkeeper turned half around toward him and said:

Yeah, it’s true, Lundegaard. You’re going to get a new district—a reorganization’s been carried out. So I have to ask you to settle up your accounts. Next week you’ll be starting in Sundby.

Lundegaard can’t get out a word. Just stands there fumbling with the papers in his briefcase. Settle up accounts. Yeah, but of course that’s impossible. After all, he’s short over 100 crowns. So now the whole thing will come crashing down. Now it’s all over.

The bookkeeper’s already turned around again. After all, it’s not exactly a sensation for a bill collector to get assigned to a new district.

Yeah, Lundegaard says. Unfortunately I probably won’t get time this evening, Mr. Hansen, but I’ll come in the day after tomorrow with the accounting.
Sixth Chapter

I

So it’s turned June and the weather’s warmer. Beach life’s in full swing, camping life’s in full swing. Incidentally, Paris has decreed that bare backs are permitted this summer only so long as sunbathing lasts. Revolutions are also occurring in the tennis world. Since the English queen’s permitted the participants at the world championships at Wimbledon to play with bare legs, all women are happy because it’s very pleasant to have little, elegant wool socks to go with the white leather shoes with rubber soles.

On the whole the revolution is proceeding. Now they’d just gotten night buses, which turned Copenhagen upside down and created such scenes that people were about to start saying Citizen and Comrade to one another. And then we’ve even gotten new transfer tickets too. Progress is progressing well.

And now alarm sirens are going to be hung up which will give the signal for blackouts during air raids, and a police sergeant will give a lecture about the duties of the police during an air raid, and at Enghave Road fire station fire bombs are being demonstrated. But in spite of everything, it’s as if the war preparations are losing their horror and eeriness in the Danish summer, as if they just beautifully and harmonically fit into the succession of summer entertainments. Besides, of course it’s new and interesting. And as a rule takes place with musical accompaniment. By loudspeaker. A visit of the Dutch fleet at Lange-linie pier says that it’s now summer in Copenhagen and naturally the foreign sailors are adorning Tivoli.

At the office, Lundegaard’s office, the boss is going around
in shirt sleeves, red and puffed up. If he hasn’t in fact slipped out the back door and isn’t sitting in Tivoli with an open-face sandwich with shrimp and a glass of beer. All around town, in parks, on grounds, in gardens, laburnum is ablaze side by side with the heavy, sweet-smelling lilacs. In Ermelunden the hawthorn’s blooming, the rowanberries are blooming. And farther out, out in the real open country, in farm country, you can see the first haystacks.

Even the smallest stores are advertising beer on ice. The butter’s melting in the heat. All that heat’s beginning to become tedious; the heath and bog are burning hot and your heart’s longing for the first Danish summer rain.

In the rear-tenement apartments the heat means that you should preferably not open the windows. The garbage cans put out a stupefying stench. At the Lundegaards it’s especially bad: two big barrels with refuse from the greengrocer and the fish store are standing next to the garbage cans. And if only there weren’t any cats in the house, but the place is swarming with cats, little cats and big cats. But if you killed the cats, the rats would be more than you could stand.

August Lundegaard’s sitting in the dining room in shirt-sleeves. He’s sitting at the table which he’s cleared of both table mats and other odds and ends and dragged over to the window. A notebook’s lying in front of him. In addition, a bottle of ink’s standing there. In his hand he’s holding a pen. His collar and tie are lying on the dresser; his jacket’s hanging over the back of a chair.

Once in a while he shouts out into the kitchen where Mrs. Lundegaard’s sitting at the sewing machine. One minute he’s asking how much they spend on margarine per month, the next how much on cleaning materials, soda, brown soap, and the like. And each time Mrs. Lundegaard answers that she can’t say just right off the top of her head. And then he asks how often does she buy margarine and how much at a time. She answers that it varies so much, but he doesn’t give up, and keeps asking, untiringly and fiercely.

At last the sewing machines stops humming and she appears
in the doorway. Her face is very tired and very gray, she’s steadily deteriorating and has a nervous twitch in her eyes.

Isn’t it enough if you find out how much household money I spend, she asks.

No, I want to know what we spend the money on in order to see what we can save on.

We never buy anything that isn’t strictly necessary.

Yeah, that’s of course what we want to go over and talk about, he says with irritation. Surely you must be able to say how much money we spend on margarine in a month.

She sits down on a chair without answering. She’s come to look old. Her dress is full of basting threads.

Something’s happening inside Lundegaard. Yes, but dearest, he says softly, can’t you see that it’s necessary for us to make an economic plan if we’re going to pull through these times. And so we’re forced to make a list of what we earn and what we spend. An exact list. And to adjust our consumption to our earnings.

She doesn’t understand that. When you’ve been as industrious as you can possibly be and as thrifty as you can possibly be, you just can’t do any more, can you. Those are the realities—the rest is just a piece of paper. Besides, the notebook cost money and in fact Lundegaard should now be in Sundby collecting instead of sitting here. And she’s being interrupted in her work.

She doesn’t understand it, but she gives in. That’s what she’s always done. And helps him to the best of her ability in putting together an economic summary. If that’s what he really wants. Besides, she imagines that it’ll make him more stable in day-to-day life. Because of course she’s probably had a suspicion that things weren’t quite the way they ought to be.

So they sit there next to each other checking their accounts and trying to recall. And when he says that then of course there’s also the installment on the sewing machine, they look for the contract and discover that if they could pay the balance this month, they’d get off 30 crowns cheaper. Still, that’s plenty stiff, it seems to Lundegaard, 30 crowns; they must make a co-
lossal profit on a machine like this, and the less people can afford it, the more they have to fork over. It’s expensive to be poor.

II

Because once again there’s been a turn of events. To be sure, Lundegaard got through the first of the month unscathed, managed both the redistricting and actually Mr. Salomonsen, too. But it was by expensive means and it’s quite clear that that way damn well won’t work any more. In a way it was a funny thing that precisely one of his debts amounted to an asset he could make use of in a pinch. He redeemed the fabric from the state-owned pawnbrokerage and sold it to a dry-goods dealer downtown, who knew him from before. That transaction yielded him fifty crowns. Naturally, under the circumstances he couldn’t raise all the money for Mr. Salomonsen, but still he raised a part of it. He had to sign a new IOU for the rest. But, in other words, he’d managed it once again.

But obviously now they were going to have to live according to a plan. According to a budget. They could spend so much and not a penny more. So much had to be earned. And could be earned. In addition, it appeared from the economic summary that if they could raise the income side by 20 crowns a month and reduce their expenditures by 20 crowns a month, all their expenditure items could be covered and all their installment payments handled. So they had to check where cutbacks could be made and what ways their incomes could be increased.

Maybe they could find a better firm for his wife. There was a business in Nørrebro that was looking for women to sew vests. They paid about ten crowns per vest and Mrs. Lundegaard could probably sew one per day. And he had to talk to Anna. She had to pay more for room and board. If she could afford to go and buy a swagger coat and scarves and the like, then she had to pay more for room and board.
Anna and the warehouse clerk were sitting at a little table in the milk bar where they'd sat many times before. But the mood today was different, their faces were different.

It’s impossible, he said. I can’t believe it. Now just try to be calm and wait and see a couple of days.

Yeah, but Eigil, don’t you understand. It’s already several days past the time.

Well, what do you know—if she wasn’t sitting there crying. She wasn’t sobbing—she was just sitting there, completely calm, letting the tears run.

The warehouse clerk awkwardly stroked her hair and looked around furtively. Apparently no one had noticed. A couple was sitting by the window, looking down at the street; two waitresses were chitchatting at the buffet.

Anna, he whispered. Now be reasonable: it’s absolutely certain there’s nothing wrong. You’ll see: tomorrow you’ll call me and say it was a false alarm.

He squeezed her hand under the table. So, so smile again.

Actually he didn’t feel guilt-ridden, but he had a feeling that it was his duty to be. People expected him to be.

He looked down at her bowed head with its beautiful hair. How he did love that head. God knows whether she felt the same way he did. He knew full well that it was one of life’s serious moments when your sweetheart confides to you that she’s in trouble and that there’ve been consequences, but it was impossible for him to feel the seriousness and solemnity that he obviously ought to feel. He was a bit ashamed of it, but in reality he felt a certain joy: His and Anna’s child.

Child, no, nonsense, that was impossible. If she had a child, she’d lose her job. The future would be destroyed. They couldn’t get married either. You just don’t get married on a wage like the one he and ten thousand other young warehouse and office people worked for.

Suddenly the warehouse clerk understood that naturally she didn’t feel the same way he did—that for her it was serious busi-
ness. And her parents. He began to feel ill at ease. Ever since the day he’d bought the Easter lilies and birch sprigs for the pitcher in his room, he’d felt this oppressive nervousness, but now obviously you were facing reality. It had happened.

People had started coming into the milk bar. Young people who were sitting with a malted milk or a lemon squash with a straw and a few lanky young men who were drinking cognac with coffee and putting on airs.

Let’s go, he said.

They walked down the street. It was drizzling—the first summer rain. I wonder if it always rains in such a situation, he thought to himself. In novels in any case. After all, the weather has to fit the mood. He looked at the couples passing by. How many of them were in the same situation or had been. What had happened to Anna and him was naturally not an isolated case; it was something common, everyday. And what did all these cases end in. And how was this going to end.

At Gammeltorv they automatically turned off from Strøget and walked down toward Christiansborg, where they sat down on the stone bench by the Marmor Bridge. It’d begun to rain more heavily.

They sat for a long time without saying anything. All of a sudden he felt like talking to her about some of the things they usually talked about, but he thought you probably couldn’t do that on an evening like this.

The silence was oppressive. What in the world should he say to her anyhow. So he said:

Now listen, Anna. In any case, it’s not going to help any to sit here and look dejected. I’m quite certain nothing’s happened. Let’s at least wait with the desperation till we know that it’s happened. And if it turns out to be the case, you know you can rely on me. There are ways out of this too.

She didn’t answer, just sat there staring down into the water where you could clearly see the raindrops falling in the light. Two police officers were standing down by the Storm Bridge.

He understood that he’d said something stupid and became impatient.
Come, let’s go, Eigil. We’ll go down and get the bikes and then you’ll go home with me. Suddenly she made an attempt to be lively and warm, stuck her arm under his and said: Silly boy.

On the way home they talked about all sorts of other things, and it wasn’t till they were standing on her staircase to say goodbye to each other that she broke down. She put her arms around his neck, her head against his shoulder, and sobbed. As he was going to stroke her cheek, his hand got wet with her warm tears.

IV

As Anna was about to stick the key in the front door, she heard voices inside. So her parents hadn’t gone to bed. She smoothed her hair and brushed over her puffy eyes with the powder puff before she went in. Coffee cups were sitting on the table and Lundegaard’s saucer was full of cigar ashes. It was an uncommon sight at this time of day. Mrs. Lundegaard, who always made the most of her time, was sitting on the sofa, darning socks.

Do you want a cup of coffee, my girl? her mother asked. You can go out and warm it up yourself.

When she returned, Lundegaard began to tell her about the reason that they had to make an economic plan now—that it wasn’t possible any more to do things haphazardly, that their position today was in fact so difficult that they now had to trim their sails, and the like. And that all of them had to join in.

Yeah, of course, Anna burst out. You folks never before felt that all that was any of my business, but now that we’re on our last legs, I’m being allowed to join in all right.

We wanted to spare you the worries, said Lundegaard, offended. But now the situation’s really so serious that we’re forced to let you in on the lay of the land. Each of us individually has to do what we can to get over this difficult time. And so your mother and I have now made an economic plan and we’d appreciate it if you could look at it and say what you feel can be
done. Don’t you think you could pay a bit more for room and board?

Anna sat and stirred her cup. She thought about whether perhaps she’d better tell them the whole story. Both that she’d gotten a wage increase long ago and that in all likelihood she’d gotten into trouble, and that instead they’d be the ones who’d have to help her. That either she’d lose her job and any chance for a somewhat tolerable life or she’d have to have an operation. And an operation costs money. Besides, she was afraid and nervous and needed to share her anxiety and responsibility with other people. With people who loved her. She was on the verge of starting to bawl again.

But she didn’t say anything, just sat there stirring her cup. Her parents looked at her expectantly. Then, just to gain time, she said something about their knowing themselves already what she earned and how much she paid for room and board. And that she couldn’t see how she could manage to spare more for room and board.

Now listen, Lundegaard said. When the business went bust, we let you stay in the department store despite the fact that we couldn’t afford it at all. You could’ve gotten a job for 100 crowns a month or you could’ve become a maid in someone’s house. But we didn’t have the heart and, besides, we were thinking about your future. And things certainly also didn’t get that bad that you weren’t able to buy a swagger coat, and in fact you also have enough so you can buy stockings, organdie collars, scarves, and the like. I mean, we’re not demanding the world of you—just that you help out a little now that we’re in a pinch.

Anna’s not at all an emotional person, not of the kind that makes sacrifices. She fights to keep what she has and fights to get more. She wants something out of life. She didn’t ask to be born.

Maybe I’ll get a salary increase soon, she says.

Lundegaard would like to have gotten a concrete answer. For the sake of the budget. But he’s fatherly and friendly and says she can think it over. After all, they don’t want to force her to pay more. But it’s for the sake of all of them. After all, they
have to stick together at home.

V

The next morning Anna’s happy and in high spirits. It’d been nothing after all. Everything’s just as fine as can be. But when the warehouse clerk calls during the lunch break to ask how things are going, she doesn’t tell him that that happy little event has occurred. It’ll do him good to be tortured a bit. They agree to meet in the evening and Anna gets a peculiar malicious pleasure from picturing his worries. She hasn’t been having too good a time of it the last few days—let him experience a bit of it too.

On the way home she runs into the billiard scorekeeper Nielsen. He has a bathing suit under his arm, is sunburnt, and looks good. She chats with him in a lively and cheerful way in her happy mood and he suggests that some day they should go swimming together. He usually goes swimming at Sundby Beach on his days off. Actually she has nothing against it. Her summer vacation will begin in a few days and she really hardly knows what she’ll use the week for. But it will be used. And used so she has some pleasure from it. So they agree on a day, but she does add that it’s not totally certain that she’ll make it out there. In part because it’s becoming to be a little reserved and in part because maybe in the meantime a better way to spend the day will turn up. The warehouse clerk had hoped to be able to take his summer vacation at the same time; then they’d have camped at Solrød or some such place, but he didn’t succeed in getting it arranged. Naturally she doesn’t intend to sit inside at home during her summer vacation. And besides, Nielsen’s nice and pleasant.

VI

The warehouse clerk decided to act lively when he met her.
He was going to be cheerful and entertaining. She’d probably be offended by it, but there was nothing you could do about it. The other way was disgusting. He saw himself in his mind’s eye sitting at her side on a bench holding her hand, both filled with pity for themselves and each other. It was downright repulsive.

No, he was going to be cheerful. And more than that, he intended to explain to her straight out what you had to do in a situation like this. He knew who could tell him where you got this kind of thing taken care of and what it cost. The money could surely be raised. And it surely wasn’t that hard; after all, it was said that these people took their clients’ economic situation into account.

But what would she say, Anna? It didn’t matter—that had to be said. He plucks up his courage and then looks at the clock. They were supposed to meet at 8 o’clock, in other words, in only 10 minutes. He took a look in the mirror: how did he look. Once again his courage let him down. How was that? Cheerful and determined! With that face? A tired, nervous, and frightened face. What was it he was about to do. It was of course unlawful. And she could die from it. Or be injured for life.

He was anxious and bewildered. What if she had a child. His and her child. If they just let it come. Maybe they could get married after all. In a couple of years maybe. And he’d be happy about and proud of the child.

God such a bunch of nonsense. Standing around and fantasizing like that. That’d never work out. Her job. Her parents. No, here it wasn’t the emotions, but reason that had to prevail. 5 minutes to 8—he had to leave now. What was it that they’d written in the interrogation report from the big criminal abortion case: Only in exceedingly few cases had the operation not gone smoothly.

He looked in the mirror again—saw a face with a fake resolute mouth and frightened eyes. Oh, Anna, my dearest friend. He got a lump in his throat. She mustn’t notice his anxiety. Okay then—cheerful and determined.
Sundby Beach is a living swarm of human beings. Brown, healthy bodies side by side with pale, sickly bodies. Beautiful, trained bronze bodies, which fit into the picture of sand, wind, sun, and water like a part of nature, and pale-gray, skinny bodies with bad posture, which look as though they don’t belong here. The sunburned ones are predominantly unemployed people who have nothing else to do but lie on the beach; the pale ones are visitors for a day or those with a week’s summer vacation. If you don’t see it beforehand, you see it when they put their clothes on. The charmer in the sunburned, flashy ones has disappeared from them: you can literally see that they have an unemployment card in their pocket. While the pale ones don’t really come into their own until they get into their clothes, with padded shoulders, conspicuous ties, and a crease in their pants. Incidentally, there are also lots of children here who’re making a terrific ruckus.

For that matter, Nielsen’s also sunburned, even though he doesn’t belong to the bronze-colored ones. He’s basking on a spot that he succeeded in finding among all the tents. Sometimes he looks at his wristwatch and from it up at the road where new people desirous of swimming are constantly arriving by bike and on foot. But Anna still hasn’t shown up. It’s so hot that he’d really like to go out on to the pier and take a dive, but then of course she’d come in the meantime. And it’s impossible to catch sight of each other in the swarm of human beings once you’re in your bathing suit. So to refresh himself, he walks up to the restaurant and buys himself a bottle of ice-cold milk with a straw. When he returns, someone else is lying on his spot. A bronze-colored one—in other words, an unemployed person.

Yeah, excuse me, says Nielsen, but—.

The bronze-colored man doesn’t take it that seriously. He moves over three inches and thinks that both of them can certainly be there.

But when they get talking, it turns out that he’s actually very nice. He’s a machinist and sure enough has an unemployment
card in his pocket. Nielsen says that the difference really isn’t that big because actually he doesn’t earn much more than the other guy gets in benefits. And the machinist can lie out here every day from morning till evening, while someone else has to be at his workplace 70 hours a week.

But the machinist says that there’s a difference all the same—that you go nuts from going around month after month without having anything to do. And actually that’s certainly true: Nielsen can remember from back then before he became a billiard scorekeeper. You went around and got so many ideas, pondered too much over things.

Nielsen cautiously asks whether he’s a communist. Hell, I’m neither nor, says the machinist, I just want to have some work. I think the whole thing’s crazy. I mean, there’s plenty of use for goods and there’s plenty of labor—so why can’t they see to getting the machines going again. Damn it, there’s so much nonsense. I’m ready to knuckle under to anything if I can just get my hands full of something, earn some money, and live like a human being. Instead of going around here and lounging. It’s all this dawdling that drives you nuts. If they’d just do something. I mean, hell, it just can’t be that complicated. Let’s get this business humming, pick up the pace. Here we are rotting away.

Actually Nielsen doesn’t much feel like hearing all that stuff. And he’s familiar with the whole kit and caboodle. And he came out here to take a day off and go in the water. With Anna—if she comes. But he let’s him talk. After all, what he’s saying is true all right, but what’s the point of going and getting lost in speculation about how things ought to be.

But anyhow, now it’s so far past the time they agreed on that he wants to go in the water. Even if she came in the meantime, he’d make himself ridiculous if he sat there at the ready to welcome her. You shouldn’t make too much of a fuss over girls. They can’t stand it. He’s had sad experiences. So, out on to the pier and head first into the water; the machinist’ll watch your clothes in the meantime.

When he comes back and goes looking for his spot, he gives
a start. Damn it, never in all his life. This takes the cake. Here he has a date with Anna Lundegaard and instead he sees her father walking and wading at the edge of the beach. Former dry-goods merchant Lundegaard, with his nice striped trousers rolled up to his knees, lost in thought and absentminded, wading about among the playing children. His bill-collector feet are quite definitely not used to this kind of amusement; the bottom’s full of rocks and it looks as though he were about to lose his balance at any moment and flop over into the water, with his clothes on and everything. He doesn’t have a jacket or a vest on. Nice red suspenders are holding his trousers up. You can see he’s a good judge of suspenders.

Nielsen hasn’t seen him since he was sitting at the billiard parlor like a wholesale merchant standing him drinks. It’s almost incomprehensible that it’s the same man who’s now going around and wading on his sore feet a couple of yards from the shore. Nielsen sees all the brown limbs around him and can’t help thinking that Lundegaard looks funny. He hasn’t even taken his pince-nez off.

At that very moment Nielsen sees that everybody on the beach has turned and is looking up toward the road. Some have gotten up. Something must be going on. And then he sees that about twenty men in overalls and gas masks are running on the road. The sight’s both ominous and funny. They don’t look like human beings, but some strange beings with human bodies and animal heads.

In spite of this oddness, the sight shakes him up all the same. Here, right in the middle of the peaceful Danish summer with its beach life, blue sky, tents, and innocent flirtation. It’s the rescue squad training to run with gas masks on. Yeah, but why’re they doing it? Is it true, then, that war might come at any moment?
Seventh Chapter

One evening when Lundegaard came home, Mrs. Lundegaard said to him from out in the kitchen that a letter had come for him. And that it was lying in there on the dining room table. Lundegaard hung his gabardine coat on a hanger, stuck the crocheted scarf in his inside pocket, and put his hat on the little table under the mirror. If the letter weren’t lying in there on the table waiting for him, he’d have made a fuss about how everything was lying about on the little table. How often had he not said that. But they obviously didn’t care what he said. He was allowed to tear around town, all right, and find money to keep their home afloat, for the rent, for the gas bill, and so on, knock his head over managing hand to mouth, rack his brain to find solutions when there was an emergency. But just show a tiny bit of consideration for his wishes about orderliness—that they couldn’t do. Even if you lived in a rear-tenement apartment, you could surely have some order in the entrance hall. What’s the big idea of such an entrance hall with everything lying about. It was the coziness and order that made a home into a refuge; damn, it wasn’t so strange that he wasn’t home more than he was. After all, after a while you couldn’t stand being there. Okay, you probably had to put up with the basting threads and pieces of material being all over the place; after all, actually it was commendable that his wife was helping out a little now that things were tight. But that was no reason why their home had to resemble a pigsty. You were a good-natured poor devil—that’s what was wrong. They were taking advantage of it.

But so now the letter was lying in there on the table and a
new letter probably meant a new annoyance, a new worry. For Lundegaard, no news was good news.

In spite of his premonition about something bad, the contents of the letter were like a bombshell all the same. It was from the Fabric Warehouse and was, in so many words, a request to Lundegaard to go up there because they wished to talk to him. It had the department head’s signature on it. There couldn’t be any doubt whatsoever about what the letter meant.

So that was the end of the game. Naturally, he’d imagined that it would burst one fine day. But actually it wasn’t from that quarter that he’d expected the danger. To be honest, in recent days he hadn’t given the Fabric Warehouse a thought.

And how easily it could’ve been taken care of if he’d thought about it. If he’d written a card informing them that he’d gotten a new address. Because that’s of course the way it’d happened. They’d sent a messenger with an invoice for the fabric and he’d returned and said that the store wasn’t there any more. Damn it all that he hadn’t thought about that. After all, he could’ve told himself that that’s the way it would wind up happening. And he could’ve prevented it. That was an unbearable thought. He could’ve prevented it by sending a postcard. Now all the crap was crashing down on account of that piece of fabric. It was also because he didn’t have someone at his side he could confide in, someone who could help him. Everything rested on his shoulders and always had. A wife who was becoming pious, a daughter who was forever and always running out, and a son who was sitting in jail. So of course that’s the way it was going to end, in spite of all his honest efforts to keep it going. And it was for their sake that he went around destroying himself to keep the pieces together. And if he now told the whole story to his wife, would she understand and thank him for the sacrifices he’d made, because he’d risked everything for the sake of the home, for their sake. No, he knew quite exactly how she’d take it—from that quarter you couldn’t expect support or understanding, only reproaches for their life, which had been ruined. As if it were his fault. As if he hadn’t always slaved away like a dog to pull through.
But now of course actually it didn’t matter. After all, now the whole thing was over with. To be sure, with 200 crowns in hand he could go up there and get rid of the affair. After all, they had no interest in getting him in trouble. Only in getting their money. But where was he supposed to go and raise 200 crowns. He could just as well try to fly to the moon. No, this time there was no escape. He’d reached the end of the road.

II

Lundegaard didn’t sleep that night. Not at all. Didn’t shut an eye all night. And when he got up in the morning, he’d made his plan. It was about like making his will.

He wasn’t going to go up to the Fabric Warehouse right away. Maybe tomorrow. Maybe not until the day after tomorrow. Definitely nothing would happen because of that. After all, he could’ve been out on a trip when the letter came. Or he could’ve been lying in bed sick. Hadn’t he in fact been lying in bed sick for a couple of weeks in the spring? So he could easily wait a day or two and arrange everything in a suitable way before he let himself be led to the slaughter. He was going to straighten out all that chaos a bit out in Sundby, where he naturally from the start had had to keep silent about a series of payments in order to get on an even keel after the redistricting. He was going to undertake an exact accounting of the actual lay of the land. In addition, there were a few petty debts to a few people, who in any case shouldn’t have to suffer a loss because of him. It was best to concentrate everything he’d embezzled in as few items as possible. In addition, there was the girl in the mauve outfit. Maybe it was a scandal, but now that the whole thing was all over with, he didn’t give a damn what was a scandal and what wasn’t.

There was a whole series of things he intended to do. Today and tomorrow. In addition, he intended to write one letter to Mr. Salomonsen, one to the firm, and one to his wife. In the letters he intended to explain everything. He didn’t intend to ask for
forgiveness, but for understanding. In addition, he intended to inform Mr. Salomonsen that Anna’s signature was forged and to request that she not end up suffering for his offenses. So that she lost her job.

But he didn’t want to put the letters in the mailbox until he went up to the Fabric Warehouse, because in his heart of hearts the hope still lurked that it was possible to reach a kind of agreement with them or that maybe it wasn’t this business with the fabric at all. But he knew very well it was false optimism. This time there was no way out and he had to take whatever came like a real man.

III

So he was ready. To Mrs. Lundegaard’s great surprise, he’d changed his underwear and shirt and pants and carefully tidied himself up. The various letters were written and were in the inside pocket of his gabardine coat. He cast a last glance across the rooms before he left. The mess in the entrance hall didn’t make his blood boil, but put him in a sad mood. There was no use denying that he was fond of the mess. It was a part of what he now had to leave.

On the way he got caught in a shower and had to stand for half an hour and take shelter on Vesterbro Street. At first under an awning, where 15 people were already standing, and afterward in a passageway when the awning was suddenly rolled up and together with the other 15 he hastily had to make his escape to a place where there was now room. There was plenty of water in this shower. The big, heavy rain drops splashed down across the street, which was almost empty of people. And it kept up. Some gave up waiting any longer, turned their collars up around their ears, and made a heroic rush out into the storm. After Lundegaard had stood for half an hour taking shelter, he, too, thought that was enough—after all, he certainly couldn’t stand here his whole life. And even though it was pouring down through open floodgates, he set out. In the course of a few min-
utes he was soaked through, but actually of course it also didn’t matter whether he was wet or dry in this situation.

Naturally the rain stopped the very moment it’d gotten him thoroughly soaked and the sun came out. The big yellow tourist buses, jam-packed with foreign visitors who were going to see the Paris of Scandinavia, the city with the beautiful towers, stopped at City Hall Square. The thunder was still rumbling someplace northward and you could expect more showers would be coming.

IV

But of course that’s the way July always is. It’s summer vacation month and who’s ever taken summer vacation without lots of rain showers. According to the almanac, it’s the warmest month of the year and then you can hardly go out without a jacket for fear of frequent, prolonged drenching showers.

But when the sun then afterward bakes and steams the water from the asphalt and pavement, even the worst grumbler has to admit that life’s lovely. After such a shower the weeds surge forth, luxuriant-green and succulent, in the city’s parks and grounds, and out in the new housing blocks with the funny little balconies blue and yellow down quilts are being put out in the sun. In the lake at the Botanic Garden the water lilies, in full bloom, are lying on the shiny surface: the lush flower is like a wide-open embrace, turned toward life and the sun. And in Herlev the hollyhocks are blooming. In the woods near Holte you can pick wild raspberries, and if you look into the people’s gardens, the lawns are dotted with green apples, which have been knocked down by the summer wind, by the Danish summer wind, which doesn’t take anything seriously, not even the dresses of girls riding bikes. The rye harvest’s begun and the whole country’s eating red fruit pudding, housewives are making raspberry and redcurrant jam, and on the parched grassy areas of Fælled park boys who didn’t manage to go to the country this year are playing soccer.
The d’Angleterre’s sidewalk restaurant’s filled with people, a fat and merry lump of a man in yachting clothes is giving a lecture on the upcoming regatta at Lake Bagsvaerd, and outside, on the narrow strip of sidewalk that’s left over, a man’s coming with a gabardine coat, pince-nez, and crocheted scarf. He’s just on the way to the Fabric Warehouse to place himself at their disposal at their discretion, maybe for a longer or shorter prison sentence. Actually it’s kind of funny: next month his son’s coming home and now it’s his turn. Police, judge, interrogation, cell. And maybe it’ll be in the newspaper. Bill collector convicted of embezzlement and fraud. After all, you live in an orderly society. Of course, people can just keep within the framework of the law.

Now of course the family will be deprived of its provider, but Lundegaard thinks it’ll certainly work out anyway—his brother and brother-in-law will surely extend them a helping hand now that he’ll be gone. And they’ll regret their lukewarm attitude, their lack of family feeling, when they see how it ended. They’ll feel like accomplices and, damn it, Lundegaard doesn’t begrudge them it. Because, after all, it didn’t mean anything to them—after all, they had good jobs. Earning good money. But now maybe they’d see the error of their ways and pay for their reluctance. The brother-in-law in any event. After all, really, it was his sister. It would’ve been better if they’d done it while the whole thing could still have been salvaged.

And when Poul comes home, he can certainly get work. Burmeister and Wain’s gotten big orders from the Soviet Union and has lots of work to do for the time being. And it’s easier for a man who’s been in jail to get work. Prisoners’ Aid will get him a job. Besides, Anna’ll probably get a wage increase and his wife’s earning more now that she’s begun to sew vests.

So Lundegaard’s reached the Fabric Warehouse. He walks up the wide stairs and in through the glass door, takes his hat off, and goes over to the counter. A female office worker gets up and comes over to him. He says that his name’s Lundegaard and that he got a letter. Takes out the letter and gives it to her. Lundegaard feels disgustingly rotten—he’s certain that the entire
staff’s familiar with the story and that they’re now secretly observing him and thinking: Huh, so that’s him.

But the female office worker, who’d gone into another office, now comes back and says that the department head isn’t in, he’s gone on summer vacation, and won’t get back for a month. And since no one else knows what it’s about, he better come back then.

V

So Lundegaard’s standing on the street again. The letters are in his inside pocket and he feels so strangely like a fool. Everything in him had been prepared to receive the blow. But the blow didn’t come. Naturally he was pleased—at least he ought to be. So now he was going to have to keep fighting. He’d gotten a delay again. And if this delay meant that he’d make it, then of course everything was fine. But did it? Naturally, the fabric would have to be paid for sooner or later anyway, but he’d probably have been able to keep it going for a long time. And by that time of course he’d counted on having gotten the difficulties over with.

But in any case, then, he did now have a month to spare. And maybe a way out would turn up. After all, so much can happen in the course of a month.

But naturally nothing will happen. It’s just false optimism instead of sober appraisal. Lundegaard doesn’t believe in miracles. Now he can go out to Sundby and continue running up stairs and down stairs.

Go to Sundby today and collect? No, nothing doing—at least there’s nobody that can get him to do it. He neither can nor wants to. He’d rather get drunk. Soon he won’t be able to go on. This isn’t funny any more. He can’t stand it. He’ll wind up going crazy. It’d almost have been easier for him if he’d been driven up to the police headquarters and gone through everything he’d been expecting and prepared for. It’s these violent tensions that do him in.
He really doesn't know himself which streets he's been walking along, but now he's standing on Graabødrez Square staring into the window of a second-hand bookstore. Naturally without seeing anything at all. He's just standing there struggling with himself to find a new platform to keep living on. Because now of course he's really got to get on it again. Collect and mix it up with Mr. Salomonsen, rent, sewing machine installment payments, embezzlement, and borrowed money. And of course he'll soon be an old man. When you're young, you don't take it that seriously.

There's a white envelope lying at his feet. It's unused, but something's written on it in pencil. He kicks it with his foot so it's facing him and he can read what's written there. In fact there's nothing written there except: Remember to take something home. So just a note for someone or other whom it all of a sudden occurred to at the office that he wanted to take something home, whatever reason he may've had for it. And now he probably did buy something or other since he flung the envelope here on the street.

Yeah, why shouldn't you take something home with you. Maybe it makes the whole thing easier if you're not so afraid to show one another a little friendliness. Naturally you have to save. But of course it still isn't enough anyway.

On Skinder Street he stops at a cart and buys a big bag of cherries. Of the best quality. Naturally, his wife'll probably become suspicious when he rolls up with them and will think to herself: what's going on here if he's acting this way. Because, after all, he never did things like that while they had the store. Just as all husbands become suspicious when their wives make their favorite dish for dinner or put out their slippers. But maybe she'll understand nonetheless that it's just a need to show her friendliness. After all, women have such a fine instinct for such things.

And in general he'll try to be more sociable at home. He'll take her and Anna along some Sunday on an outing or something like that. Yes he will. That's certainly one of the reasons that things are going the way they are. Since they moved out to
Vesterbro, each of them’s been wrapped up in himself. That’s also probably why things went the way they did with Poul. They need to get together; really, it might be a lovely day, take the lunch basket along and all that stuff. A bit of the same mood from their summer house. And now he notices for real how fond he actually is of them. It’s his fault that they’re sort of almost going around being hostile to one another. That’s because he’s had all that stuff to be pondering. He’s neglected his family, but now it’s going to be different.

He picks up the pace—he almost can’t get home quickly enough. On Sunday the Worker Good Samaritans are going to have an air defense display at Fort Kastrup—that’ll be a splendid place for an outing. And Anna can take her fiancé along. Maybe he should tell his wife everything. Without keeping back anything at all. But that’s probably going too far all the same. Just right away all at once.

Maybe they also ought to get together more with their family. Maybe then they also wouldn’t be so unwilling to give them a helping hand when they’re in a pinch. Maybe you could invite the in-laws along to Kastrup. After all, to be honest, the brother-in-law’s a really nice man.

VI

An ear-splitting crash filled the air. It must’ve been a high-explosive shell that had struck. And now the sirens got cracking and emitted their protracted, mournful wail.

And now this unearthly sharp popping from an exploding gas bomb. The most indescribable confusion reigned. The moaning of the wounded was mingled with the ambulances’ shrill howling.

Instinctively their faces turned toward the sky. When would the pilot perform his next dive, when would he drop off his next shipment of fire, death, and destruction. The sirens were already giving warning of a new attack.

The place where the high-explosive shell had struck pre-
presented a frightful sight. Private automobiles were still arriving that had been commandeered by the government as ambulances and police cars, the street was blocked off, the personnel had gas masks on. A man came staggering over, blood streaming down over his face.

That’s really only red lead they’ve smeared on, Lundegaard said, but, damn it, it looks very lifelike.

Now they were dragging along some people who’d been victims of the gas, whether it was mustard gas or phosgene. Soon you won’t know what to believe, said the warehouse clerk. One day they say in the newspaper that mustard gas is so terrible there’s nothing to combat it with, and here they’re treating the people attacked by gas as if they’d just gotten a little on their clothes. He was sitting with a yellow leaflet in his hand—it was one of those the pacifists had handed out outside the entrance to the fort. As a protest against the air defense demonstration. By the way, the leaflet claimed that one member of the board of directors of the Light Automatic Rifle Syndicate was also in the management of the Air Defense Association and that the whole show was supposed to serve as an advertisement for armaments capitalists. And if war came, we could look forward to being mowed down by Danish light automatic rifles. Made in Denmark.

Yeah, said Lundegaard’s brother-in-law, all that’s certainly true enough, but these pacifists here are fanatics and that kind always pushes things to extremes.

Lundegaard, who with all his heart wanted to be good friends with his brother-in-law, agrees with him. People should never blindly believe what’s written in some such leaflets.

Well, says the brother-in-law, now I didn’t say that what’s written in the leaflets isn’t true. I’m just saying that they only explain the matter from one side.

There’s no denying that Lundegaard’s a little offended. Here he moves to his brother-in-law’s rescue, and as thanks the nitwit stabs him in the back. Damn, you can notice whose brother he is—that’s of course exactly the way his wife acts, too. Naturally, I’m sure what’s in the leaflets is true, he says in a subdued way,
I just meant that a half-truth is also a lie.

Incidentally, now it’s raining again. It’s really unbearable that when you finally go on an outing, the weather can’t even stay dry. A bunch of people in their Sunday best are sitting, lying, and standing up along the slopes. And now they’re getting their good clothes ruined by the rain.

Then the demonstration’s over and the loudspeakers begin broadcasting music. There’s probably going to be a dance afterward. After all, there usually is on these kinds of occasions. Lundegaard and his family go up on one of the bastions to eat the food they brought along. They crack the jokes of the day and, in spite of everything, sort of little by little, they succeed in managing to create something like a picnic atmosphere. The warehouse clerk goes for beer and mineral water. Anna and Mrs. Lundegaard unpack the food in the basket. The brother-in-law’s wife isn’t along. She didn’t want to, but incidentally it doesn’t look as though the brother-in-law misses her either. Nevertheless he apologizes for her. After all, she’s seen so many war films, he says, and her nerves can’t stand it. She’d much rather be sitting home.

Incidentally, the relationship between the warehouse clerk and Anna isn’t that warm any more and Anna would’ve preferred that he not come along today, but that of course would’ve looked a bit strange since she’d just introduced him at home as her fiancé. And Lundegaard thought he was surely pleasing her when he invited the warehouse clerk along and in general treated him like a member of the family. Anna would’ve greatly preferred not to have gone along if it weren’t that she’d hate to hurt her parents. Of course, you couldn’t always do exactly what you preferred to either. After all, it was really a family outing. But she wouldn’t deny that it bored her. And she was annoyed at the warehouse clerk who seemed to feel splendid in the family circle. He seemed to get along well both with the brother-in-law and Lundegaard. It was totally ridiculous to hear them sitting and discussing military questions and the like. As if they knew anything about it. After all, they were just sitting and saying what they’d read in the newspapers. At the moment the ware-
house clerk was sitting with a prosaic expression saying that they ought to do just what was being done in France, which had nationalized the war industries; that was the only right way because it was the armaments capitalists who were inciting to war. To put it bluntly, he made an almost comic impression as he sat there acting smart. In one hand he had a sandwich with liver paste and cucumber salad, and in the other a beer. Anna was certain that all around everybody was amused by them.

The warehouse clerk took all imaginable pains to make a congenial impression, to win them over. Once in a while he stole a glance at Anna and observed her facial expression. If he just understood what actually went on in that girl. Naturally, he hadn’t been able to avoid noticing that recently she’d become cooler toward him, and had become afraid that maybe she was no longer that fond of him. Otherwise he’d felt so certain of her. Thought he had her in the palm of his hand. Especially after she’d taken him home and introduced him to her parents. And now she’d obviously begun to get irritable and hardly ever answered him when he spoke to her. If he at least just knew why. At first he thought it was because she was afraid of a repetition of those terrible days when they thought things had gone wrong. And in order to calm her down and so she wouldn’t slip away from him, he’d then confided to her that he probably couldn’t become a father, and so he wasn’t in a position to get her into trouble. True enough, he hadn’t the slightest idea whether that was really the case, but he certainly hadn’t become anyone’s father yet. And he’d known girls other than Anna.

But to his surprise, that piece of information had precisely the opposite effect on her. Afterward he could certainly see that he’d acted stupidly and that in his eagerness not to lose her, he’d actually estranged them from each other. Because Anna of course didn’t have anything against having kids, though, true enough, she didn’t want to have them until she’d gotten married. She’d certainly even like to have kids alot. Because she’d been so strange after that conversation and recently they’d been, if anything, like strangers to each other. Later he’d tried to patch things up by saying that of course he actually didn’t know de-
finitely whether that was really the case. That it was just a kind of idea he’d had. Why wouldn’t he be able to be a father? It was really damn annoying all right that he’d come up with that nonsense. But her moodiness was getting on his nerves. You never knew where you were with her.

They’d brought along the coffee in thermos bottles and the brother-in-law had taken schnapps along. Now the weather had turned really nice again, the air was clean and fresh after the rain, and when you looked out across the blue sound, you could glimpse the coast of Sweden on the horizon.
Eighth Chapter

I

Maybe people should be more calculating than they are. More scheming. After all, people who're calculating and scheming usually achieve what they desire. And what counts here in life is to get what you desire. That your obituary's going to say that you were nice and pleasant—that takes up damned little space today. And besides, the ones who attained something here in life, generally get a nice obituary.

You can see that maybe best of all in the case of the redistricting. Because actually it was his own fault that he was transferred to Sundby. He'd realized that the division of the districts was outmoded and irrational, and one day he'd dropped a remark to that effect in the office when he was in there to settle his accounts. With a new division of the districts one man could be cut. And then suddenly one day in fact the division of districts had come. And had caught him completely by surprise—had nearly smashed everything to pieces for him. Thank God, all right, they hadn't gotten the idea he was the one they could do without and fired him.

Yeah, the whole question of the ability to survive was in fact wrapped up with that business with the new division of districts. In a nutshell. Here Lundegaard had shown an interest in the firm's affairs and shown an ability to find improvements. And what'd he gotten out of it? Only trouble and ingratitude. True enough, no one had been fired, but now they all had a bigger district without actually earning more, and the guy who'd gotten Nørrebro had to assist with the bailiff's executions on property two days a week—a job that the firm's head clerk had previously
performed. The head clerk wasn’t pleased either, because, in turn, he now had to take over a part of the work that the boss used to perform. So the only one who profited from Lundegaard’s thoughtfulness was the boss himself. And then the bookkeeper. Because it was the bookkeeper who’d brought the advantages of a new division of districts to the boss’s attention.

So you’d have thought that Lundegaard would’ve been in the good graces at least of the bookkeeper. But that wasn’t the case at all. On the contrary. The bookkeeper, who’d risen in the boss’s esteem, felt irritated as soon as Lundegaard was in the office, just the way you feel uncomfortable running into a man you’ve cheated. For that reason he was brusque to Lundegaard, curt. Maybe he also feared that Lundegaard might disclose that it was his idea the bookkeeper had passed off as his own.

So Lundegaard had lost terrain in all areas. And to boot, by virtue of his abilities, which ought to have improved his position. He now had a bigger and more difficult district and his good relationship with the bookkeeper had been destroyed. And it was no small matter at all either to be on good terms with the bookkeeper.

You could reflect for hours like that on the damned business about dividing up the districts, but the fact was certain that if he’d acted correctly, he’d have improved his position instead of making it worse. He should’ve gone directly to the boss and called to his attention the defects of the old division and pointed out the advantages of a redistricting. That was obvious and straightforward. He’d have come to be on good terms with the boss, and when the others noticed that, they’d have competed for his friendship, done him little favors, and the like. Why you could just see how the whole staff was doing their best to be on good terms with the bookkeeper, to please him, because they knew he was in the boss’s good graces. And in reality they couldn’t stand the bookkeeper, but practically speaking that was neither here nor there. Lundegaard was really well liked by his colleagues, but practically speaking that was neither here nor there either because there was nobody who found it advantageous to be on good terms with him.
No, in spite of everything, Lundegaard’s now realizing what counts here in life. Oddly enough, he hadn’t realized that before—after all, he certainly isn’t that young any more. And now that he’s finally realized it, right away he sees a thousand cases that confirm his view. Isn’t it perhaps the case that if you run into an old acquaintance on the street and in the course of the conversation admit that things are crummy, in fact, to be blunt, that they’re going down the drain, the conversation is only brief, the acquaintance all of a sudden is busy, has to be somewhere at a certain time, and so on. If, on the other hand, you can inform him that things are going splendidly, that you’ve come out on top, you almost can’t shake off the person in question; instead he invites you home to his house one day when he gets the chance, he has, to be honest, often speculated about how in fact things were going with you, and said to his wife: How do you suppose Lundegaard’s doing and so on. Yeah, he latches on to you literally almost like a burr and keeps repeating how enjoyable it was for you finally to have bumped into each other again.

And is there actually anything to object to in that. After all, life’s a perpetual struggle to make it, and if people run into something on their way that might be advantageous to them, they’re pleased and in high spirits, and if they run into something that by some chance might reduce their possibilities, they naturally try to get around it. What’re you going to do with an old acquaintance who’s gone belly-up or is about to? After all, he can only turn into a bother and trouble. Maybe he wants to borrow money to boot. But an old acquaintance who’s doing well it’s pleasant to run into—maybe he can get you a better position.

No, damn it, it’s Lundegaard himself there’s something wrong with. Other people are capable of surviving and look at things in a healthy and natural way. Besides, now little by little we’ve gotten into August and so eight months’ve gone by since the store closed. So it’s about time that he straighten things out a bit and manage to create the basis for an existence that a thinking human being can bear. And if that’s the way it is and life can become peaceable only by back-slapping and humoring them, fine—then Lundegaard’s ready to do it. He’s ready to do any-
thing whatsoever that can improve his situation.

II

Then finally one morning they can pick Poul up at the train station. His face is gray and the prison air clings to him. In addition, something alien has come over his face, which makes his mother worried, a line at the corner of his mouth she's never seen before.

They drink coffee at the train station restaurant. Mrs. Lundegaard's eyes are red-rimmed from crying, and there's no denying that Lundegaard has a lump in his throat. Only Poul appears not to feel anything at this reunion; there's something hard about his face and, as usual, he says very little.

When Lundegaard says that Poul should just take it easy now and go and have a good time, as if he were on vacation, go swimming, etc., Poul's face clouds over. He's been locked up now this whole beautiful summer, and now it's over, and other people've come home from vacations and now, when the beach season's about to end, he's going to be allowed to go and make himself comfortable.

And of course it's true that the summer's over now. After all, you can see it in many things, and besides, the almanac shows that the days are close to two hours shorter. That's how quickly time goes. Before you know it, it's fall with sleet and dark evenings. And then comes winter, which surely there aren't many who look forward to.

But late summer can certainly be a lovely time of year too, and especially August for many people represents the most beautiful month of the year. After all, it's in fact the month of fruitfulness and luxuriance. In Høsterkob the apple trees' branches are weighed down to the ground with golden fruit, in the farm gardens there's a wealth of pretty garden flowers, you can gather nuts in the hedgerows, and on the floor of the dark green spruce forest, the poisonous red fly amanita mushrooms flare up in the course of one night. And of course the most beau-
tiful month is the one that fills people’s barns with grain. The reapers are singing across the whole country, and the undulating grain fields with brownish yellow straw, which swayed under the weight of their golden heads, are transformed into stubble fields, where the shocks stand in long pretty rows. And Lundegaard, who’s from the country, in August always thinks about when as a boy he lay on his back on the top of the cartload of grain and just looked up into the blue sky with its delicate feathery clouds—they’re probably called cirrus clouds.

Naturally Poul doesn’t need to look down his nose at August. After all, he just needs to go hiking in North Zealand to discover this month’s luxuriant and warm beauty. Tramp along the forest hedges where the rowanberries glow in heavy bunches; he can pick blackberries and gather chanterelles. But naturally Poul doesn’t intend to do anything of the kind. He’d imagined the summer on the sand at Solrød Beach among all the tents. That’s what he’d wanted from the summer when he’d dreamed about it. Maybe that photo of a girl in a bathing suit Nielsen had showed him had contributed to it. In any case, that’s what Poul meant by summer vacation and that’s what he’d missed out on. Because now the heather was blossoming on Solrød’s hills and the buses were busy hauling the many tents into the city.

No, Poul isn’t going anywhere—he’s just going to loaf around the city. Up one street and down the next. And naturally you have to admit that there’s not much of August in the city. All around out there you can shake plums off the trees and go hunting in the marshes in high boots, with dog and gun, but here in town, damn it, you can’t do either one. Yeah, of course you can go out to Langelinie pier and on the Smedelinie, but of course that gets boring, too, after a while, and when you come back to town and see Nyboder’s dirty yellow, mildewed old houses standing there at the end of Store Kongens Street, damn it, you can easily lose heart. It’s very good that it smells of rye and harvest in the country, and that Rørvig can advertise blue jellyfish, but what pleasure do you get from it in here on the cobblestones.
When you get right down to it, one month doesn't really differ very much from the next. After all, nothing happens. After all, nothing ever happens. In any case not like in novels where people experience the strangest things. For every month that passes, the big wishes and dreams recede one month further into the future. And if finally something did happen one day, you'd really hardly pay attention to it. Because it's the everyday little things that put their stamp on life and they're always the same, and it's almost as if you pay more attention if your toothbrush breaks in the morning than if your sweetheart breaks up with you in the evening. No, nothing ever happens—romance is always in every possible place except wherever you find yourself at the moment. And one day resembles the next to a T. Every morning at 7 o'clock the shade flies up with a smack and Anna fumbles half asleep for her stockings. She always sits in bed and puts on her stockings, and even though she's both a healthy and shapely girl, to be honest, it's not an especially romantic sight to see her sitting there on the bed that looks slept in with dishevelled hair and sleepy eyes. In the movies people always sleep in attractive pyjamas with their left hand under the back of their head, wearing restrained facial expressions, and when they wake up, they're well-groomed and their hair is lying there in nice braids and curls on the white pillow. Anna sleeps with her mouth open, maybe she even snores, and when she sits there in bed putting her stockings on, she yawns and scratches her hair, her skin's glistening with sweat, and the air in the room clearly says that a human being has slept here for 6 hours. But in fact of course Anna's neither a Japanese princess nor a movie actress in California; she's just an ordinary little Copenhagen sales clerk sleepily tumbling out of bed, dressed only in a cheap, skimpy chemise and a pair of much-darned silk stockings.

Every morning at 7 o'clock exactly the same thing happens: every morning at 7:40 Anna's sitting on her bike on the way to the department store; every day she counts the minutes till the lunch break in the morning and the minutes till closing time in
the afternoon. Every day the same thing, the same thing. Over
and over again. Of course, to be sure, something does happen,
in a way. But nothing that interferes with daily life. Inciden-
tally, things have now fallen apart with the warehouse clerk for
real. She said to him right to his face that he wasn't her cup of
tea. He's too spineless and has an inclination to be sentimental.

In the beginning she liked that, but now she's disgusted by it. If
at least once in a while he’d shown a flash of brutality. But she
realizes that that’s not his nature. Good Lord, she herself can
certainly turn soppy when she’s in the mood. But she’s too
much a woman to be able to stand his perpetually being that way.

He’s a dreamer, yeah, to be blunt, a twirp. That’s not to say that
he couldn’t be inconsiderate to her; he really has been so often,
not dictated by masculinity, but by egotism, self-absorption, con-
ceitedness.

Naturally the warehouse clerk gaped when she finally spoke
her mind about him. Stood there feeling sorry for himself and
was on the verge of crying so she couldn’t help feeling a little
pity for him and saying a friendly word to console him, which he
naturally took to mean she still loved him, and that it was just a
whim on her part. She’d begun to knit a pullover for him and
said that in fact of course he’d get it.

Besides, she’d met a travelling salesman. The travelling
salesman has a motorcycle. Anna’s always dreamed of having
a boyfriend who had a car. True, a motorcycle isn’t a car, but
still at least it’s something. It opens the way to a big part of what
she previously didn’t have access to. The warehouse clerk has
pretty, sad eyes, eyes that had appealed to something in her, but
it'd been a disappointment all the same. The motorcyclist’s a
real man—just putting her hands on his leather shoulders on the
curves is a sensation, which feels like a thrill, a new and intoxi-
cating sensation. The warehouse clerk was gentle; the motor-
cyclist’s a brute and strong. The warehouse clerk claimed he
couldn’t become a father; the motorcyclist can doubtless become
a father to all the children he wants.

That’s the way the days pass. One after the other. The ware-
house clerk also gets up every morning at 7 o’clock and rides to
work. The warehouse clerk also counts the minutes till the lunch break. And every time the phone rings during the lunch break, it gives him a start because it might be Anna who was calling. It was possible she was having regrets. Naturally, she'll regret it sooner or later—it can't be otherwise. She surely had to be able to notice how very fond he was of her. Presumably that counts for something, too. Surely you can't throw a human being's love away like that as if it were used clothing. He's not worth much these days, the warehouse clerk. In the morning, when he rides to work, he makes a detour in the hope of running into her. All day long he sees her image before him. Everything in this world seems to have lost its meaning except this one thing: Anna. He knows full well that she's right in her verdict on him, at least in a way in part. But surely there was no need for her to reject him. After all, he'd do anything to improve himself, to become the way she wanted him to be. He'd do everything she asked him to. And he thinks she'll come back, sooner or later. Because even if he's such a bungler, surely she can't just, like that, without further ado, cut a human being out of her life, a human being who was so very fond of her as he was. And of course she was fond of him too. She's showed that so many times. And surely you can't all of a sudden stop being fond of a person.

That's the way the days pass. One resembles the next to a T. For Lundegaard too. He rides his old bike from one address in Sundby to the next. Some places somebody's home, other places nobody's home. Some make excuses because they don't have any money today, others regard him as their mortal enemy and treat him accordingly. Some pay an installment, the least they can get away with. Lundegaard adapts to the circumstances: some places he's authoritative, others he's submissive. You're forced to do that. After all, the point is to collect the money. If he didn't have his troubles, which constantly threatened to crush him, he'd sink into a stupor in this bill-collector existence. Up stairs and down stairs.

You definitely need to be reminded that there are other things in the world than collecting installments. Now it's pre-
sumably almost time for the department head at the Fabric Warehouse to be getting back from summer vacation, and so of course he’ll have to do it. Obviously, of course, the month that’s gone by hasn’t brought any change. Naturally, he’s nursed the thought that the refurbished relationship with his brother-in-law was worth that spot of money, and if there’s a smash-up when he goes up to the Fabric Warehouse, he’ll try the solution of borrowing the 200 crowns from his brother-in-law. On the other hand, it’s suspicious that his brother-in-law keeps repeating that you should only lend money to people if you want to be on the outs with them, and that for that reason he really hates to lend money, and then not at all to people he cares about. That of course could indicate that his brother-in-law was afraid that Lundegaard was going to come and want to borrow money. And that Sunday that Lundegaard visited his brother-in-law in his nice civil-servant home, of course he in fact sat there while they were having coffee and kept talking about the lousy times, about how miserable it is to be a civil servant, about us poor folk who’re having a hard time keeping things going, and so on. Yeah, damn it, he should talk about difficulties—he’s the right one for it. He’s the one sitting in that nice and cozy job, secure in every which way, the way civil servants are. What did he know about difficulties?

Well, but now of course you’d surely get to see how things would turn out with the Fabric Warehouse. He still had the letters—he just needed to change the date. Maybe he’ll need them. In a few days it’ll be a month since he was up there, but that’s of course no reason to get a move on. He can really safely let two-three days go by. That can’t do any harm—in any case, they’ll just write to him again. After all, it’s not his fault that the department head took summer vacation. If his case weren’t so damned lousy, he could even have allowed himself to be a bit offended. What’s the big idea of writing to a person to come up to the office and then without further ado taking off on summer vacation. After all, that’s almost making a fool of people. In the business world it’s always an advantage to be the injured party. It gives you an extra card in your hand. But that probably
couldn’t help him here. Besides, after all, he hadn’t come right away when he got the letter, but had of course gone and dilly-dallied for most of a week.

IV

In fact, it’s really only for the good that the summer’s now over. It gets too monotonous with sunshine and heat. And the leaves on the trees have gotten this filthy dusty color, which chases away the last remnant of the summer enchantment. After all, you also need some variety. And the only change you have is the weather and the seasons of the year. Otherwise, after all, nothing ever happens. One day passes like the next. It’s not so strange that people always talk about the weather—damn it, they don’t have anything else to talk about. Except when there’s a six-day race or something like that.

Naturally, lots of meaningless things happen every day. Some people start businesses and some liquidate businesses, some are put in jail and others are released. There’s traffic back and forth all the time. Then there are some who go to City Hall and get married, and some who go to City Hall and get separated. The midwives all over town are busy helping new little human beings into the world, and the ministers are busy putting the worn-out ones into the ground. It’s just insignificant, trivial things that happen. That’s not at all what you’re thinking of when you hope that one day something will happen. Something inconceivably big. Something that can burn the souls clean.

And especially when you’re a billiard scorekeeper, you have good reason to long for something to happen that can turn everything upside down. A catastrophe, a war, a revolution. Something that can lift people out of the everyday and give them back the consciousness of their ego. Something that can lift them out beyond the hypocrisy. A new flood.

A billiard scorekeeper can’t at all help quarreling with humanity. He sees the people where they are least suited to being viewed: At a gambling table. When the game gets a person’s
blood boiling, the primitive human being pops up through the thin surface. And primitive man’s not an attractive creature. All the rest, the smiles, the phrases, the politeness, the superiority, is only a mask people put on when they leave home. Life’s taught them that when a million people have to live side by side day in and day out, they have to hide their self behind a mask. The ones who lose the mask as a rule come to a bad end. If their life quietly floats away, if life never challenges them, the mask over their self hardens and whether a self was really concealed behind the mask will never be made clear.

In addition, there’s no way a billiard scorekeeper can avoid winding up being partial to alcohol, and now it’s little by little become more and more common for Nielsen to go out to the refreshment bar and get himself a beer. For one thing, it shortens the workday, which never seems to end, and it revives you when you’re tired. And Nielsen’s always tired. Even at noon, when he gets up to go to work, he’s tired.

But naturally you can’t go around drinking beers like that when you don’t earn more than Nielsen does. Then naturally you can provoke a patron into treating you to a beer, or you can owe the waiter for it. You can also borrow money and you can put off paying your rent.

Life also becomes merrier that way. You’d do better to be cheerful, drop the formalities with the patrons, and owe them money, than to be surly, tired, and sober. Besides, after all, the proprietor pays attention to whether you’re on good terms with the patrons, and the terror of being fired, of course, constantly sticks to you.

The man who doesn’t owe anybody anything, who has his affairs in order, is abstemious, and is conscientious, doesn’t fit in this milieu. Funeral directors are always boring; you pretend you respect them, but in reality you don’t. Officially you’re offended by the man who owes the whole world money, who drinks and tells risqué stories, who always smiles and is frivolous, but nevertheless the man is everybody’s favorite. Frivolity’s always been popular, rectitude never. Integrity’s always been boring.
And when after closing time the guests go to a nightclub, they take Nielsen along. And since it’s the others who’re paying, Nielsen has to show his gratitude by being funny. Besides, you can play with the guests: they gladly forgive you for winning their money, but never for being boring.

V

That’s the way the days flow—like a river toward the sea. That’s the way the weeks, the months flow. Things never go totally wrong and they’ll never go very well. When all’s said and done, it’s of course also not that big a deal whether things go well or badly. There’ll always be another day, the sun rises every morning and sets every evening, quite unmoved by Anna’s love stories, Lundegaard’s troubles, and scorekeeper Nielsen’s frivolity. And besides, it always turns out, of course, that when you’ve overcome one difficulty, a new one arises right away. And no matter how things go, life nevertheless always holds small joys in store for you. Lundegaard knows damn well that he’s approaching a point in his life that resembles a decision. But there’s no decision that’s final, and Lundegaard’s becoming apathetic, doesn’t care about anything. Naturally, he wants to do his best—he’s just calmer now. After all, the whole thing doesn’t mean so terribly much.
Ninth Chapter

Enveloped in spiderwebs, silvery-glistening with morning fog and dew, this nice little country greets September. All around the coasts the tuna are beginning to turn up, and in the quiet mornings the sputtering of the fishing boats' motors can be heard when they return home fully loaded with shiny, fat autumn herring. For the last time the boat sails to Saltholm with Copenhageners fond of outings, and, along North Zealand's highways, garden owners are standing and offering passers-by the first fruits for sale. On Nybro Road's houses the Virginia creepers are redder than blood, and on Copenhagen's boulevards the leaves on the trees are beginning to yellow; on the big avenue along Deer Park's border near Hjortekær the chestnuts are lying strewn across the wet ground. The starlings are gathering to prepare their departure, and in all decent houses there's heat in the pipes. The waiters in the sidewalk cafes are wailing that it's chilly, and in the country the farmers are wailing that there hasn't been enough rain for the beets. People who have lots of time are solving open-house coupon-book puzzles, and others are chatting only about the Landsting election. Some are talking about sulfuric acid's again yielding 12-percent dividends. The big language courses are opening now and the fashion houses are busy preparing the ladies' winter gowns: it was laid down long ago that pink silver lamé will be the coming season's big craze. There's never any mistaking September. There's not a place in this whole little wonderland where you can't see it's September. In the marshes the cattails are swaying and the rushes' downy heads are whispering of the summer that passed and the winter.
that’s coming.

But nobody feels more than the warehouse clerk that the summer’s over. He’s a dreamer. Sentimental. And now that he’s lost Anna, his dreams have glorified her and embellished her. The funny thing is, at the same time he’s trying to convince himself that there really wasn’t that much to her that he’s lost out on something. But the dreams have taken over anyway, and little by little she stands so idealized in his consciousness that probably he could barely recognize her if he runs into her.

And the chances of his running into her aren’t that small, because of course he knows more or less where she makes her daily rounds and instinctively he steers his steps that way. And maybe she didn’t mean it that seriously, maybe it was just a whim, and if they do run into each other, everything will be all right again. She just doesn’t want to be the one who takes the first step. At least that’s the way he’s fond of picturing the encounter to himself. He pictures it to himself in all imaginable details. She’ll come walking in her swagger coat and with her beret, which is pushed down over her forehead, and at the very moment he sees her, she’ll smile warmly and her eyes will say: Can we be good friends again.

Sometimes he appears ridiculous to himself. Going around acting like an idiot for a girl’s sake. A girl who’s jilted him. He gets a grip on himself and says that now this is too much of a good thing. But then suddenly, while he’s standing there putting an invoice in an envelope in the warehouse, he again sees her image before him, her lips, her eyes, her hair, and he gets a feeling that something in him is going to force him to burst into tears.

Again and again he tells himself that it’s only a matter of time; then her image will appear more and more infrequently, and little by little he’ll forget her. But it doesn’t at all look as though things are going to go that way. If anything, they’re getting worse and worse. He’s considering writing to her and telling her how much he longs for her, but instinctively he feels that that’d be the worst thing he could do. When you say to a woman: Come, then she goes, and if you say: Go, then she comes.

Besides, there’s that business with the pullover. It’s a hope
he’s clinging to. After all, she’d said that even if they were now through with each other, he’d get his pullover. So sooner or later she’ll be forced to get in touch with him: after all, his measurements will have to be taken and the like. And even if she finishes it without taking his measurements, of course she’ll have to give it to him. So if he’s just patient, the whole thing’ll turn out all right. He just can’t let her know in any way how much he longs for her—that’ll just ruin the whole thing.

II

As Lundegaard had imagined, he’s still riding around on his bike in Sundby collecting debts. No change has taken place. He’s been to the Fabric Warehouse and the world was quite the same when he left there as when he went up there. Naturally, he had hell to pay: the department head wasn’t nearly so polite as when he was up there to get the fabric. But Lundegaard had the trump up his sleeve that in the last analysis his brother-in-law would probably lend him the 200. That lent his demeanor more composure and his humble politeness did the rest. Naturally, the department head wasn’t any monster: he understood what had driven Lundegaard to his desperate act. Besides, the department head’s daughter’s getting married next month and these days the department head was fond of the role of philanthropist. And the main thing, of course, was that the firm got its money and that the department head didn’t get into any trouble. So at first there was talk of four monthly installments of 50 crowns, but when Lundegaard said he didn’t feel he could manage that, they agreed on 20 crowns per month. That was a humane arrangement, and Lundegaard felt convinced that he could easily manage it. All things considered, he’d gotten back his courage. Things would be okay after all, they’d be okay.

But there’s still the permanent job he has to have as a goal. As long as he went around believing that things could come crashing down any day, there was of course no point in working with a longer view—the point was just to create as many liquid
assets as possible in order to be able to stave off the dangers little by little as they arose. It was like in war when you exploit all available possibilities in order to cope with the moment. Now he felt as if peace had been concluded and the point was to build up from the bottom, to work with a long view. That was probably also why his prospects weren’t very good: he’d constantly had to maneuver, had drawn on future promissory notes in order to manage the situation, notes that had to be paid off later, and paid with more than he’d received. It was clear that this way you’d just get in deeper and deeper. It was crazy to believe you could get through the rest of your life with the help of maneuvers. Naturally he realized it the whole time, but the circumstances had forced him to maneuver. And no one can say anything except that he was clever at managing the most desperate situations. His family should know what they owed him. But they didn’t have the slightest notion about what dangers had threatened their little home, dangers he’d parried, one after the other, calmly and cold-bloodedly, without ever losing his head. And they’d never hear about it—he wasn’t the man to toot his own horn.

The only thing was he realized now that all the clever observations, all the economic summaries, budgets, didn’t help a bit. The only thing that could help was for him to get another job and get to earn more money, not just five or ten crowns more a week, but something that would make a difference. That’s what he had to put his energy into. He had to try to become a travelling salesman or something. In the dry-goods trade. Naturally that was doable. After all, he was a capable man in his line of business, a good judge of fabrics and workmanship, former businessman, and with an ability to socialize with people.

Because what’s been happening until now has of course been nothing but a rearrangement of debt items. And at the same time the debt’s increased—the debt’s increased incessantly. Yeah, when he really considers it, there probably were to be sure a couple of months when they just made ends meet; those were months when he lived according to the principle: Be thrifty and energetic. But it’d be impossible to live life that way: you can do that for a couple of months or three, but not constantly. That
was the old saying about cutting your coat according to your cloth, and of course that was all right, but naturally it didn’t mean you should put up with living the way you were without trying to make it better. Then after all you could really just as well sit in jail—you could make a living there, too, all right. It was fine to focus your energy on making ends meet, but it’d be better to focus it on getting yourself a more plentiful source of income. When all was said and done, in spite of everything, that was where the rub was.

Travelling salesman would be excellent, and besides, he was the man a firm wouldn’t regret having. True enough, Lundegaard knew full well that there are so many travelling salesmen you could use them as hog feed, but there’s always a chance for a capable man. And doesn’t it happen to be true that you can do whatever you want to. And Lundegaard had both the energy and the ability—the point was just to tackle the matter the right way.

There were several methods that could lead to the goal, but especially two that seemed to contain possibilities of yielding results. One was an ad stating that a former dry-goods merchant with many years of knowledge of the trade would like to travel about the country for a larger firm. Don’t ever pretend to be less than you are, especially not in the business world. But with his knowledge of life, Lundegaard really feels that it’s the other method that will probably get him the desired position. And the other method was influence. He had to consider what connections he had in wholesale dry goods, look up these connections, and get into something that way. After all, they could hire him on probation; hell, he’d certainly show them he was the man who could sell a product. When he thought about the travelling salesmen he knew, he got fresh courage. If they could, so could he. He wasn’t at all the man to overrate himself, but if he had to say so himself, he might dare say that he could perform the work better than many of the ones he knew. A good deal better at that.
III

A September evening like this is, in spite of everything, about as wonderful as they come. The lighting and temperature, colors and scents evoke in you a calm, restrained zest for life. September’s the late season for love and delight in nature. September’s not, like May, a month of big tempestuous emotions: there are no crimes of passion, no nightingales in Ordrup Scrub, no sighing in moonlit maids’ rooms, no hullabaloo at the inn dances in the countryside—just a calm and gentle afterglow of the strong manifestations of life in the spring. It’s the farewell to summer that brings out the same feelings as the welcome after the bleak, meager winter; it’s the evening whose symptoms resemble those of the morning.

The human tide glides down along Vesterbro Street in both directions, the stores’ lights gush out across the street, and from the roofs the neon lights’ strong colors attract the eyes. The girl in the mauve outfit isn’t wearing the mauve outfit any more. But since she loves mauve and mauve’s the fall’s big fashion, she wears a mauve dress under the imitation jaguar coat, which is new and flashy, and probably must have cost a hundred crowns or thereabouts. Maybe she doesn’t have her boyfriend to support any more; maybe it’s a Swedish wholesale merchant who was on a business trip to the king’s city. Besides, it’s only in daylight that you can see that the jaguar is imitation, and of course she’s rarely on the street in daylight. After all, something’s still happening, and of course the girl in the jaguar coat also reflects on her life and right now is of the view that, in spite of everything, there’s no sense going around and saving up and dreaming about a store: the facts show that it doesn’t lead to anything. You’d better enjoy life while you’re young and look good: at least no one can take away from you the pleasures you’ve had. The point is to earn money, buy pretty clothes and show up at the places where it’s all happening, where life’s pulsating. Maybe someone’ll fall in love with her and marry her. Just don’t take life too seriously. You’ve got to smile, be happy and reckless the way the real men like it. After all, who cares for wet blankets or
thrifty go-getters, who save up for a store or are worried about the future. One day she buys a nickel armband, the next day a sweet little dog out of wood, which is fastened to her breast with a pin and reveals its owner to be a modern girl with good taste; one day a new hat and another a bottle of warm-smelling perfume, which surges in a cloud around her and appeals to men's feelings via their nostrils. She spends agonizing hours at the ladies' hairdresser, and spends a lot of money on expensive silk stockings and manicures. That's the way life is supposed to be lived. Smile, be elegant and charming, and wait for your chance.

It's wrong to think that nothing's happening. Lots of things are happening. Life's eventful and splendid. Poul's gotten work at Burmeister & Wain and Anna's transferred to another department and is getting more in wages. With quiet glee you can point out that the barber, who was taking a crown and a half for a haircut, has had to close the little joint, the shop windows are already filthy, and the sign that says: For rent, is yellow and has damp stains. Down at the greengrocer's you can buy big, green cooking apples, which smell of Taasinge, and on Strøget a man's standing near the Helligaandshus selling marvelous bouquets of autumn flowers for 1 crown.

Anna's been on a trip with the motorcyclist to Lake Gurre where they found a glorious spot near the shore, put up a tent, and went into the water despite the fact that it was so late in the year and they didn't have any bathing suits along. They made on the whole a day of it that was about as romantic as you see in the American films, where youth has nothing to do but paddle around on large woodland lakes in canoes, which are padded with flowery pillows and with a portable phonograph, whose languorous notes mix with the lake's gentle lapping. Naturally the motorcyclist, in spite of everything, is a bit of a disappointment; sometimes he's both coarse and stupid, but of course there's nothing here in this world that's perfect.
Naturally something’s constantly happening, and it’s funny to see how the chance occurrences intervene in daily life, and funny to notice that nevertheless it’s not the chance occurrences that decide your fate, but the way you react to the chance occurrences. Because of course it’s not at all the first time in his life that Lundegaard meets a person in a tavern who’s selling encyclopedias on installments, and if it’d happened just a week ago, Lundegaard would naturally have let the encyclopedias be.

Naturally Lundegaard can’t help going to taverns. If you’re going to have to knock about like that forever out in the tenement slums, you can certainly do with a cup of coffee or a beer. Sit in peace for a bit with a cigar and think things over before you go at it again. Besides, there are big differences among taverns, and the places Lundegaard goes into for a refreshment and to take a little rest are really just as respectable as a church. There’s sand on the scoured floor, the proprietor waits tables and his wife takes care of the buffet, they have a girl for the kitchen, and twice a week they have a waiter in a white jacket. There are just as big differences among taverns as there are among people: they adapt according to the requirements and the requirements vary.

Incidentally, Lundegaard’s now counting on his poverty and hardships’ lasting only a short time. He’s already talked with a several people, and before long he’ll have a position where just a month’s earnings will be able to sweep all debt items out of the world. Naturally, it could be as long as two or three months, but the crucial thing of course is that he now has something to look toward and the bill-collector life with its accessories is only a guest performance. That’s also why he doesn’t attach much importance any more to smoking one cigar more or less—after all, it’s fairly irrelevant whether his status is 25 øre better or worse that day he starts as a travelling salesman—the point, after all, is just to keep things going for a short period yet; then his little visit in this dreary stairway-existence will be over with and he can look back on it as an unpleasant, but naturally instructive period.
Accordingly, he does now in fact sit more often than before in a cozy little tavern like this and dream about the future. His beer’s standing on the table and in the ashtray, which is an ad for a whisky firm, his cigar’s lying there emitting a delicate, blue smoke coil toward the ceiling. He hasn’t taken his gabardine coat off, its tails are fastened firmly to its pockets with bicycle clips; his hat’s lying on the chair beside him. He’s sitting there so quiet and calm, like an Indian buddha, staring through his pince-nez into his future existence as a travelling salesman. He lives in the biggest hotels—of course the firms require you to do that—and the hotel staff treat him with exquisite politeness. Mr. Lundegaard this and Mr. Lundegaard that. He does a good business and when he’s in Copenhagen, he sits in a buff chair and confers with the boss. Damn it, that’s something different than having to stand at the counter and settle accounts with the bookkeeper, who barely knows whether he feels like greeting you.

Naturally it also happens that he sits around and gets talking to someone—after all, there are all sorts of people who can drop in at such a tavern—and it’s always interesting to hear how other people actually go about managing. And so today he’s gotten into a conversation with someone who sells encyclopedias on installments, and before half an hour’s gone by, he’s heard the man’s whole career. The man’s father was a gunner’s mate in the navy and they lived at number 12 Kamel Street, he’d been to sea, he had a little cigar store which went bust, lived half a year under the auspices of the welfare office with an unemployment card, investigators in the home, questionnaires that had to be filled out with a solemn declaration, had been in an unfortunate marriage and is now separated from his wife, who went back with two kids to Jutland where she’s from, had casual work doing whatever, and so now he’s selling encyclopedias on installments, but sells them in a way that gives reason to suppose that he’ll probably soon lose this easy job. Altogether something that’s certain to arouse Lundegaard’s sympathy for the man. In the beginning when he sold encyclopedias, he was animated by the best will in the world. Slaved away at it like a dog. Now that he’d finally gotten a decent easy job, he’d certainly figure
out how to make a position out of it that could make life bearable, maybe he could later get a fixed salary and so on. But then little by little he treated it less seriously, and now the main thing for him is to get a customer’s signature on a contract and as quickly as possible to get to the company office and draw his commission—regardless of whether the customer’s in a position to pay. He’s a man with a strong need to be happy and surrounded by good friends, wants to pay for drinks all around at all costs, and if the proprietor hadn’t looked so grim, he’d really have gotten a drink too. Lundegaard’s naturally a little uneasy about the situation—after all, you don’t even know whether the man has money in his pocket to pay what he’s collected—but on the one hand he thinks they’re sitting there having a cozy time, and on the other hand it may very well be that he’ll buy an encyclopedia.

The forty-year-old son of a deceased gunner’s mate makes no bones about the advantages of buying an encyclopedia. There’s the 5-crown down payment that’s supposed to be paid at the time of signing the contract, but he’ll magnanimously forgive Lundegaard that, who just has to put his name on the paper, after which he’ll get the encyclopedia delivered to his residence postpaid. After that, as far as the salesman’s concerned, he can do whatever he feels like; he’s not going to interfere in it and no one else’s going to interfere, if Lundegaard just complies with his obligation to pay 5 crowns a month. In passing he remarks that you can go straight to a second-hand book dealer and sell the encyclopedia for 75 crowns. In addition, the salesman doesn’t consider himself too good to stand him a drink to seal the deal if Lundegaard decides to buy the encyclopedia.

Naturally Lundegaard’s sitting there thinking about the fabric, the Fabric Warehouse and all that business, but the circumstances are of course nevertheless somewhat different today. For one thing, he can easily manage the 5 crowns a month—they’re neither here nor there—and as long as he takes care of the payment, naturally nothing’s going to happen; for another, it’d be quite extraordinarily pleasant to get 75 crowns straight away like that. The sewing machine installment will fall due in a few days,
and in about ten days it’ll be the first, when the most frightful things can happen if he can’t meet his obligations. Besides Mr. Salomonsen and the rent, now of course there’s also the Fabric Warehouse. Now he’s got a chance to get past the first of the month easily and comfortably.

Nevertheless, he wouldn’t have done it if he hadn’t been counting on getting a position as a travelling salesman in the course of a couple of months. Naturally he realizes he’s losing on the deal, but there are in spite of everything such big and conspicuous advantages with the deal that it outweighs the costs.

And still he’s sitting there and can’t make up his mind. Might it be something along the lines of once bitten twice shy that’s holding him back? Or is it a premonition of something evil, that mystical instinct, that once in a while intervenes in humans’ actions. When all’s said and done, there’s something about the man he dislikes; maybe it’s because he looks as if he’s fond of grilled lamb’s head. And Lundegaard can’t abide people who eat grilled lamb’s head with all the signs of rapture. There’s something lascivious, something repulsive, about lamb’s head eaters. They look as though they’re thinking about women’s exposed knees, while they’re rooting around in the lamb’s brain matter. Lundegaard can’t abide lamb’s head. And gets nauseous at the thought of oysters or sweetbread.

But the 75 crowns are a tangible fact if he puts his name on the paper. 7 ten-crown bills and a fiver. The rest is just some stupid nonsense. So he borrows the man’s fountain pen and writes August Lundegaard on the dotted line in the lower right corner of the contract.

And it has to be said that the man kept his promise. They even got more than one round, and despite the fact that Lundegaard couldn’t really get into the mood, he gave a round too. There weren’t any other guests in the little tavern besides the two of them, who sat there and had one beer after the next. It was after all in the middle of the afternoon. Plaques from the breweries hung all around on the walls, and a cage with two canaries stood over there at the window.
The billiard season, by the way, has just begun now and scorekeeper Nielsen’s earning more than in the summer. And the man’s nevertheless dissatisfied with his life. Maybe he himself’s the one there’s something wrong with. He’s obsessed with the thought that he has an inferiority complex and he’s shouting about that poor complex in and out of season. When all’s said and done, he’s stuck up and arrogant, quite a grumbler, hard to satisfy. But on the other hand, if people had always been satisfied with the way they had things, we’d of course still’ve been living on the stone-age level, living in caves and bashing stray animals’ heads in with a club and eating their meat raw. It’s human beings’ dissatisfaction with things as they are that’s driven them forward. Incidentally, Nielsen doesn’t have nearly as much fun as the club-swinging stone-age man: his life’s boring as hell, the guests are boring, his buddies are boring, even his time off’s boring. After all, it’s perpetual repetitions. Forever the same thing. Over and over again. Now he’s been keeping score for a couple of hours for a man whose best witticism’s a belch that echoes in the hall. It’s half-empty in the hall, nothing to do, and in peace and quiet he can indulge his annoyance with a nice little man who’s chairman of a billiard club. The nice little man is wearing blue serge and looks solemn, as becomes a chairman. He talks like a man who has to weigh his words because he has responsibility. He’s a mediocre billiard player, but an excellent chairman. When anything goes wrong for him, he peps himself up with the thought that he belongs to the chosen whose death will be publicized in the press: One of Danish billiards’ prom-
inent figures has passed away. — And if not in the daily press, then in any case in the sports papers. And there’ll be something in there about his ability as a leader; his good fellowship will be discussed—a great man, it’ll say. And in fact he tries hard to live up to this fine reputation.

Scorekeeper Nielsen’s annoyed. He’s annoyed with the proprietor, who’s always hanging around the premises as if he were afraid that the staff’s going to run away with the whole business. He’s annoyed by the fact that the girls smile at him when he’s busy and on the way to work, but that they don’t smile at him when he’s got plenty of time, when he’s got a day off, and can easily imagine playing the conqueror; he’s annoyed there’s so much work to do because he gets tired and his feet get sore; and he’s annoyed when there’s no work to do: after all he’s got expenses left and right and can’t ever make ends meet.

Naturally there are bright spots in life. Recently the proprietor had to skedaddle out the back door when a man came who wanted to borrow money from him. And the man stayed there the whole evening. Every time the proprietor came back, he was faithfully sitting there waiting. Maybe you could hire the man to sit there every evening so you’d be spared having the proprietor hanging around in the hall.

But those kinds of bright spots are nevertheless few. It is and remains a treadmill. Galley slaves presumably also had bright spots. Life’s flat and boring. Besides, the night work destroys your health: you’re always going around half-run-down; you’re never really going strong. And that’s the way time passes, one month after the next. And before you know it, the months have turned into a year, an empty and pointless year. A human life consists of so and so many years, and if you examine it right, there aren’t very many. Then the party’s over, and you can’t live life again. A human being has only one life.

II

Incidentally, the weather’s not suited to boosting his spirits.
either. It’s drizzly and damp and cold. Of course, October’s usually the month with the golden colors, the clear air, the high sky, fall sun, and all that stuff, but this year, damn it, October, to put it mildly, is boring. Before the leaves managed to turn red and yellow, the storm tore them off and swept them together in nice piles on the boulevard corners; the night frost all at once killed everything that was called flowers so they’re now lying like corpses along the cold ground in the parks’ flower beds. In the mornings there’s hoar frost on the roofs, at Langelinie pier the storm’s ripping the pleasure boats loose from their moorings and smashing them against the stone sea wall, on the West Coast foreign ships are stranded, and small, poor homes in Liverpool and Antwerp are deprived of their breadwinners, the rose beds in the garden of the Eastern High Court are being covered, the sidewalk cafes are being moved inside, and the newspapers are filled with ads for winter clothing. In Brøndshøj there’s a man who killed his five-year-old son because they were starving and were going to be evicted by the bailiff, and a suburban theater’s having a success with a play whose main character’s a worker who incessantly claims that, after all, we have it pretty good—it’s only the idiots who’re complaining—there are really lots of places where they have it much worse. Moving day, as usual, is turning the city upside down, and the king’s been to the movies to see Panserbasse.

Naturally there are also days with clear skies and clear air, days with sunshine and colors and red rose hips, and of course it’s mainly trees standing alone that’ve been stripped bare by the storm; the ones that are standing in groups have more or less weathered it and are blazing in all colors as is customary on a sunny October day. But obviously it hasn’t turned into any kind of real October: the cold’s come too suddenly and the ground’s so dry that the farmers can’t get to plow. People who drive cars are talking about changing oil, and the most cautious of them have already put the cap on the radiator.

But naturally Lundegaard couldn’t care less about all that. To be sure, he reads the newspapers and sees what’s happening around him, but of course he’s got plenty to do with his own
stuff. To be sure, he's gotten past the first of the month once again without a hitch, and the time's no longer far off when he'll be on top, but the constant economic speculation's spoiling his life all the same. He's testy and absentminded and smokes his cigar in small, nervous puffs. After all, he's living on a volcano and even the strongest nerves can't withstand it in the long run. Besides, it's an irritating thought that regardless of how much he pays Mr. Salomonsen, he'll still owe more than he's managed to pay. As soon as he can't pay the whole installment, an IOU will be issued for the remainder, and since the interest's added right away, the amount's significantly higher than what the installment payment is short.

III

But now he's at least getting closer to his goal, and once he's reached it, all these petty worries will of course be disposed of in one fell swoop. Funny thing is that it was precisely his stupidity that provided him with the chance he went around sighing for. Because of course it was a stupid thing to go ahead and buy an encyclopedia on installments in order to sell it. Even if you took the circumstances into account, it was a stupid thing. But the stupid thing was lucky because as he was coming out of the second-hand bookdealer's, where he'd sold the books, he ran into an old acquaintance. Naturally that had to be celebrated with a modest glass of beer and a cigar in a wine bar. Carlsen and Lundegaard had served their apprenticeships together in the small Jutland provincial town, and so despite the fact that both of them had lived most of their lives in Copenhagen, it wasn't until now that they ran into each other. It was like a sign from fate: now Lundegaard had had enough adversity, now the tide would turn, now the torments were over with. Carlsen was precisely the person in the whole world Lundegaard most wanted to bump into: Carlsen had a prominent position in one of the country's biggest dry-goods firms. Dry-goods imports. Carlsen, who was a few years younger than Lundegaard, still looked up to him
from force of habit, and regarded Lundegaard’s genuine joy at
the chance meeting as sheer joy of meeting again. He totally
forgot that during their apprenticeship Lundegaard had pushed
him around and was just as effusively happy about meeting as
Lundegaard. They had many glasses of beer, and, when they
parted, it was settled that Carlsen was going to get Lundegaard
a job in his firm as a travelling salesman. Naturally it wouldn’t
be today or tomorrow; the boss was out of the country, but when
he got back, Carlsen was going to talk to him. That would cer­
tainly work out. The boss would get back in about a month and
then Carlsen would certainly take care of the matter. Just count
on it, old boy.

Naturally Carlsen had gotten something into his head and
was in an exhilarated mood, and at moments like that you gladly
promise more than you can deliver, but, on the other hand, Carl­
sen was a man you could rely on—Lundegaard remembered him
from back then as reliable and a stickler for his honor. It’d be all
right. In a month’s time this hell would be over with and a new
chapter of his life would begin. Skoal, Carlsen, old boy, can you
remember when I gave you a black eye up in the warehouse New
Year’s Day when we were taking inventory.

Carlsen’s sitting there on a throne: he enjoys being Lunde­
gaard’s benefactor, as thanks for the thrashing he got back then.
His face is the same as back then: chubby, with dimples and
pleasant eyes. It seems to Lundegaard that he looks like a happy
pig, a happy little pig like the one you see on the bacon posters.
Naturally Lundegaard’s got to come to his house and say hello
to Carlsen and his wife some evening. And he absolutely has to
bring his wife along. They can reminisce and play a round of
cards—that’ll be an enjoyable evening.

When they finally part, their faces are bright red from beer
and the atmosphere. What a splendid thing indeed a newly-
struck friendship between real men is. What an excellent human
being indeed Carlsen is. How grand indeed Lundegaard is. He’s
simply much too solid—the kind of person life’s always hard on.

140
IV

But when life begins to appear tolerable, when things brighten up, and your perspective gets a pink glow, naturally annoyances always turn up, small and big annoyances, which cast a shadow across the idyll. In itself maybe it’s no big deal that Poul’s moving out, but still it’s enough to prevent a man from humming when you walk up the stairs to the little apartment that quite obviously had kept the family together. Now of course Poul has work and can take care of himself. Now he doesn’t need them or the home any more and so he’s going. The home was good enough as long as he benefited from it, but now it’s obviously not good enough any more. Now that he’s earning something and could help out a little with the rent, he’s moving into a furnished room.

If he’d just given an explanation they could accept. You couldn’t swallow that nonsense about his not being able to stand seeing their reproachful faces all the time. Lundegaard for one had never reproached him for anything. If anything, it was probably, as Anna said, that he’d met a girl and that he wanted to have a place where they could be alone. Naturally, it wasn’t any fun either for him to have to be lying and sleeping in the kitchen when he went to work every day and earned a week’s wage, but they’d helped him, all right, while he’d been unemployed. After all, they were poor and had to stick together. That’d be a fine kettle of fish if one day all of a sudden Lundegaard moved out into a furnished room and let tomorrow take care of itself.

Now maybe Anna’ll also move out one fine day when her wage is increased so she doesn’t need her parents’ help any more. Your own children, whom you’ve done everything to protect and give a good upbringing, in turn do their part to ruin your life for you. And it’s for their sake that you go and rack your brains constantly trying to find solutions, for their sake you’ve risked everything time and again, for their sake you’ve rushed around town to get yourself a job, solely so that all of them would have it good. Is it perhaps for his own sake that Lundegaard was so happy about his getting in soon as a trav-
elling salesman for a big firm? Isn’t it solely for the sake of his children, home, and wife? All in all, has he ever thought about himself? If he hadn’t had them to support, he could’ve been in clover. And now this is the way they reward him. And when they finally are home and he asks them about something, they barely bother answering him. In addition, there’s no doubt about it—Anna long ago got more in salary without saying anything about it at home. But if she doesn’t feel she owes them and her home that consideration, all right, then, let her have it her own way. It’s not so much for the sake of the few crowns either: when all’s said and done, they don’t really count one way or the other. It’s the way she does it. Her egotism. That’s the kind of thing that makes you sick and tired of everything. Naturally they don’t have the slightest idea what he’s had to go through for their sakes; of course, in general they think only of themselves.

But incidentally that’s the way it is, of course, all the way down the line. People think only of themselves. Maybe just except people like the news dealer, who these days never talks about anything but Spain and has a big map of the theater of operations near Madrid hanging in his room, with black pins for Franco and red for Caballero. But that’s going to extremes; after all, that’s actually something that’s none of our business. But naturally that’s up to the man—if he’d just stop preaching to Lundegaard every morning. Damn, Lundegaard has more than enough with his own stuff to have to be going around worrying about Spain.

V

When Monday morning at 5 o’clock you stagger out of the folding bed in a cold kitchen where the window’s been open for the simple reason that it can’t be closed in spite of numerous complaints to the janitor, put on the clothing that’s absolutely necessary, and sleepily lurch down into the dark, cold courtyard where your bike’s naturally gotten stuck behind twenty others, which first have to be moved, and, unwashed after two or three
hours of sleep, without having had morning coffee, shivering from cold and depression, five minutes too late, rush out to Teglholmen, where you put on a work jacket, which is stiff and filthy, full of iron splinters, which prick and chafe through the thin undershirt, which is the only thing you can have on under the jacket, stick your feet in a pair of wooden shoes, which are so stiff from the heat in the iron foundry that they chafe a hole on your instep, a hole that never manages to heal before it’s chafed up again—you could very well wish you were unemployed again.

But there’s nothing else to do but bear it. And little by little you presumably get into shape, get accustomed to it. In the foundry the molds give off such heat that the sweat jumps off you, the air’s full of gas and drugs you so you can hardly keep awake. When people all over see a piston ring, they haven’t the slightest notion what kind of hell’s tied up with its creation, they’ve never seen a sand mold which the gas flames shoot out of while the huge gas rings are roaring, they’ve never been about to be suffocated by the smoke. To be sure, they read in the newspapers that B. and W.’s stockholders are dissatisfied with the dividend, that they’re at daggers drawn over the profits, but they have very little sense of the number of bodily injuries it costs to bring fine, shiny piston rings into the world. Naturally they read once in a while that now a worker’s been killed again, but there are of course also more interesting things in the newspapers, and it’s the interesting things you pay attention to.

Poul already knows a good deal about piston rings, about rationalization of production and firings, about the pace of work and about accidents. He’s also learned that tomorrow morning a new man’ll be standing there in the injured man’s place, but, honestly, he doesn’t think about it more closely. He just knows that he’s firmly resolved to get something out of life and that this stuff here’s just a transition, a transition he has to go through. All around him they can talk as much as they want, they can talk about politics, about solidarity, about considerateness toward your family, about filial respect, about comradeship—he means to let them talk, he means to get something out of life, in spite of
everything, in defiance of everything. At the end of the day, of course, they, too, don’t care a hoot about him, or they want to take advantage of him. He doesn’t intend to let himself be exploited. When push comes to shove, they just want to bamboozle him with all their nonsense. Naturally he’s not stupid: he can see perfectly well that sticking together’s necessary, that it’s necessary to be organized in order not to be flayed alive. But that far and no further. He doesn’t intend to make sacrifices, he doesn’t intend to let others control his life. And he wants to get something out of life while he’s young, earn money, be independent.

That’s why he also doesn’t want to continue spending his day in a hell reeking of gas and his night on a folding bed in a cold kitchen; he can’t consider his free time at all: in his free time he’s so fatigued and lethargic that he doesn’t know what’s going on. He wants to rent a room, a cozy furnished room, where he can arrange things the way he feels like. And he wants to be a go-getter and constantly be on the lookout for a better job, a job where he earns more, a job where he doesn’t have to work himself to death. As soon as he’s gotten settled in a bit, he wants to go to school in the evening; he’ll certainly manage—he’ll surely get things to go the way he wants them to. He definitely saw the face his old man put on when he said he’d be moving, and he also knows full well that his old man’s going and making a mess of things and can’t make ends meet. But that’s because his old man’s been going at it the wrong way, and why should he suffer for it? If they should happen to be up tight for the rent, he really won’t hesitate to fork out a ten’er; he just wants to be allowed to be himself, not to be constantly regarded as a child, as the prodigal but, to be sure, returned, son you have to indulge. Anna’s actually the one who understands him best; she doesn’t intend either to let other people determine what she thinks or what she does. Not because they ever talk with each other, but all the same they know each other inside and out and tacitly have a shared view of their parents, of their mother, who’s completely broken down, who sits at her sewing machine incessantly and goes to a Nazarene meeting twice a week, and of
Lundegaard, who, after his business went bust, is completely erratic, veers from one extreme to the other and constantly thinks the whole thing stands and falls with him.

VI

By the way, the warehouse clerk had now begun to be his old self again more or less, but it was obviously his lot to be constantly reminded that he’d been rejected by a girl he loved. But on the other hand, maybe it’s good that he got to see Anna in that situation—maybe it can do away with the last vestiges of his feelings for her.

And if it hadn’t been just now, it surely wouldn’t have hurt so much. But just the day it happened, he’d been going around nursing the thought that everything might become good between them again. Of course it couldn’t be helped that he ran into her at least once a week when he was constantly gadding about the places he knew she frequented, and the confounded thing about it was that one time she’d give him hope and the next time she’d plunge him into despair with her dismissive indifference. But maybe she didn’t know either what she wanted; maybe she longed for him once in a while and wanted to make up, maybe she was waiting for him to say the crucial word, maybe her coolness was only calculated to goad him. Because naturally she still cared about him—how else could you explain that she stood there straightening his tie and admonishing him not to be messy, or that she asked how things were going in evening school, whether he was making progress, and so on. But when he was on the verge of asking whether they could become good friends again, it went through him like a cold wave that she’d rejected him, and something in him demanded that she be the one to take the decisive step toward a reconciliation.

Once in a while he forced himself to take the view that the best method for deadening the longing for her was to find a replacement, to find another girl. That’s how he met Sonja, a seventeen-year-old blossom, who thought life was delightful and
loved romance and excitement. And oddly enough, it irritated him when he could sense that Sonja was falling in love with him despite the fact that he wasn’t in love with her, or maybe precisely for that reason. After all, he just thought that she was a sweet girl who was pleasant to be around. Once in a while her being infatuated with him flattered him. Naturally he cared about her, but that was in a different way. After all, he was always thinking about Anna and couldn’t help making comparisons. In the most tender moments when she gave herself to him, he tried to imagine that it wasn’t her, but Anna. And mocked himself at the same time: You could call that love, all right. Afterward he felt ashamed and regarded his feeling for Anna as something morbid that he had to combat at any cost. An imaginary feeling. In reality, of course, Anna wasn’t at all beautiful—you could almost say the exact opposite. Sonja, on the other hand, was beautiful. Unquestionably beautiful. Her little pussycat head with its pretty eyes made the men turn around and look back at her. And naturally it flattered him to be the favored one. But it’s irritating to be loved by someone you don’t especially care about and to love someone else who doesn’t care about you.

But all in all, in spite of everything, he’d more or less regained his equilibrium, had resigned himself to the thought that Anna was a fickle, unpredictable creature, and that the relationship between them would’ve gone to pieces sooner or later anyway. Good that it happened so quickly. Now he’d see to getting it arranged so that they saw each other now and then; maybe they could go out one evening once in a while, and little by little as there was more and more distance between them, he’d be able to satisfy himself that she wasn’t the ideal his fantasy had erected, and he’d be cured of his unrequited feeling. The worst thing would be if he became completely cut off from seeing her—then his fantasy would again begin to idealize her without his getting the chance to make comparisons between the idealized Anna and the real Anna. As things now stood, it was actually pretty great because every time he saw her, he realized more and more that in his infatuation he’d made her into an angel, and that in reality
she was a perfectly ordinary girl, just like all the others.

Naturally he had relapses, attacks of acute longing for her, which, suddenly and apropos of nothing, could come over him. And if it weren’t because it was precisely during such an attack that he’d seen her on the back of another man’s motorcycle, he probably wouldn’t have taken it so hard. Now it had an effect almost like a shock: he got goose bumps all over from distaste and a strange sensation up in the roots of his hairs. In fact, he’d been going around thinking about her when it happened and thought that if he ran into her now, without scruples, he’d do everything to make things good again, he’d have told her how it was, that he couldn’t do without her, that he was going crazy with longing for her. Regardless of whether that would’ve been a smart tactic or not, he’d have laid his cards on the table, said that he loved her, that he wanted to marry her, that now he’d no longer tolerate this hide and seek game, that now he was the one who’d decide.

Incidentally, of course, he hadn’t seen her at all—she was the one who’d hailed him. It was one evening around eleven, he was strolling down Strøget and all of a sudden heard her shouting his name. And it was when he turned around that he saw her sitting on the back seat of the motorcycle, smiling and very pleased. It was at the intersection with Købmager Street and the motorcycle came to a stop to wait for the green light. At the very second he saw her, he spun around on his heels and walked on without turning around.

In the following minutes he had to go through all the torments one more time. All that laborious work of forgetting her had been in vain; but now a new feeling was added to the rest of them—hatred. Why had she hailed him? To torture him? And still he now longed for her more than ever, in spite of the fact that he knew that now he’d lost her for real. That now things could never be good between them. So now she had another boyfriend. It was finished. Irretrievably finished.

He strolled on through the throng of people, worked up, full of hate, and despairing. At Kongens Nytorv he sat down on a bench. In his fantasy he saw Anna and the motorcyclist in situa-
tions that incited his hatred. The sound from the Angleterre’s orchestra penetrated out into the square, the trees over his head were bare as in winter, the black stripped twigs stood out in sharp outline against the sky, which was reddish from the cities’ many lights.
Eleventh Chapter

I

Life's now beginning to take on a little tone and color. Strangely, that's happening exactly at the same time that nature's dying all around him. There are moments when Lundegaard feels downright young and resilient, when he deliberately makes his step bolder and his speech more lively in order to emphasize his enjoyment of life. At moments like that you see a whole bunch of things you otherwise never pay attention to. Or rather, you see them in another way, almost as if it were the first time you were seeing them, and they fill you with a delighted astonishment. They can be quite common things and still it's as if it weren't till now that you discover for real that they exist. It can be a couple of filthy kids playing or it can be a brewer's horse standing at the curb and turning its ears toward the sound of the driver who's going into a store with a case of beer on his shoulder. Lundegaard's surrounded by such an orgy of colors and interesting things when he looks really closely. And he doesn't feel at all embarrassed about yielding to his delight and calmly stopping and standing up against the facade of the building and watching the animal's shiny brown body, which is steaming in the thin autumn air, while busy people hurry off in both directions between him and the horse.

He straightens his back and says to himself that of course he's a man in the prime of life, that it's not till now that his life is about to begin for real, now that he's gotten the brains and ability to live it. It's just now that he makes the discovery that the city, that life looks totally different when you look up, up above the roofs and the tower steeples, which fade out of sight.
in a blue daze, and see the flocks of pigeons clatter off, and higher up a gull sailing on rigid wings, than if you let your gaze run along the flagstones in front of you, as he was otherwise in the habit of doing. He's more careful about his appearance than he usually is and takes his work less seriously; he can perfectly well take it into his head to go strolling along a street, catch a gleam from a pair of beautiful female eyes or in passing let his eyes follow a young woman's beautiful curves. And an expectant sense of what a travelling salesman's life can involve gets him to dream about the future, which is supposed to fully compensate him for all the bitterness and disagreeableness he's had to go through in the past months.

II

So actually it doesn't matter whether it's May or November. What it all depends on is you yourself—the eyes you look at life with. Because in reality November's so pretty damn dreary. Everything's withering and fading and dying right now; before you know it, it's winter and all of life's creatures are fighting for food more savagely, more bitterly than in the summer when there's plenty of food. If you go out into Frederiksberg Garden, where nice old ladies are feeding ducks and gulls French bread, you can see that the birds know the season, that they know that the point is to grab while the grabbing's good. They begrudge each other even the smallest crumb. And it's always the strongest and most brazen that are victorious. Now the nice little duck with the lustrous blue spot on its neck feathers had finally gotten hold of a piece of French bread, which, unfortunately for it, was so big that it couldn't be swallowed in one mouthful, and so it has to fight like crazy for its property right, it has to put up with being nipped by its own sisters and brothers, waddle over to the turf pursued by its own parents, fly across the water pursued by screeching gulls that naturally finally scare it into letting go of its little piece of French bread. The fear of hunger is so great that they begrudge one another a crumb. After all, they could
otherwise just stick around the nice ladies, who have a bag full and keep handing it out. But the brazen ones and the strong ones have always preferred to steal from others.

Naturally, November can be a cozy month for those who’re on the right side of the tracks. After all, there are plenty of colors, chrysanthemums, and motley foliage, Hubertusjagt in Deer Park in red coats, violet twilight, haze, gray sky, fogged atmosphere, and so on. In addition, they can go to the indoor swimming pool and convince themselves that the girls are still brown so that it obviously can’t be so long ago that it was summer. For them winter’s just a little breather in the permanent Danish summer, a little refreshing breather with furs, snow-covered woods, ice-skating on Lake Fuglesang and maybe a quick little trip to Norway’s sun and cold. And then of course cozy bridge evenings, good books, concerts, and theater premieres.

But for ordinary people, damn it, November’s dreary. Hopelessly dreary. Now you can’t put off buying coke any more; it’ll make heavy inroads into your budget, which is plenty cramped to begin with. The storm’s speeding across the country, sucking five Esbjerg cutters down into the deep and chilling thinly clad city people. Naturally, most of them have a winter coat, if not in the closet, then at the pawnshop, but for as long as possible they hate to start wearing it, faded and shabby as it is. Now the farm hands are coming from the countryside to the city to look for work: you can see them at the people’s kitchens and at the main railway station with their yellow rubber boots, big, red hands and worn-out appearance; this isn’t a season that calls on them to continue their trade—the fields are lying desolate and soggy from rain and heavy yellow mist clinging to the furrows. Now they’re plowing out there. And spreading dung.

The Royal Library garden’s so quiet—it’s like going into a convent garden. A couple of gardeners are going around taking up perennials. It’s November, the year’s dreariest month. At Hermitage Plain the deer roar and rattle their antlers against each other in fierce combat, Bennett’s advertising Christmas and New Year’s trips, the racing season closes in pouring rain, Titan jumps 4½ percent, it’s drizzling, the book season’s starting, it’s
getting dark early, and the Christmas tree that’ll decorate City Hall Square next month has already been marked for felling.

III

And the way November really is, it fits the warehouse clerk’s mood splendidly. He’d thought that the sight of Anna on the back seat of the motorcycle would burn the wound clean so it would heal quickly, but instead it’s reopened the wound, infected it. The vision pursues him wherever he goes, tortures the joy out of his life and conjures up phantoms, which incite his hatred of the motorcyclist and Anna. He mocks himself for his longing for a girl who’s engaged to someone else, ridicules himself by saying that maybe he can get the chance to become first reserve lover. Time and again he says to himself that he doesn’t love her and has never loved her, that if she hadn’t broken it off, he would’ve; it’s the humiliation at being jilted that’s done him in—her having rejected him. Of course he’s had other relationships and they all ended without making him unhappy. And that’s the way it would’ve gone this time too if she hadn’t suddenly thrown in his face that he wasn’t good enough for her. Of course that was ridiculous—who in the world did she think she was. Other girls like him and almost couldn’t be gotten rid of again, but she’d rejected him. What was so great about her since he supposedly wasn’t good enough for her. She wasn’t any great beauty—most people would probably even find her boring. Besides, they weren’t suited to each other erotically. In reality, he should be ecstatic over the fact that this warped, stupid relationship had now finally been terminated, ecstatic over the fact that he hadn’t married her—that, of course, would’ve been hell for his whole life. Just let the motorcyclist keep her—he’s welcome to her. Before a few months have passed, she’ll probably have taken a fancy to someone else, if in fact there was anyone at all who’d care to possess her. And those protruding eyes she had—god knows whether she had a propensity for Basedow’s disease or some such thing. In any
case, she was fickle and unpredictable, and life would’ve been hell if he’d swallowed the bait and married her. Thank god things went the way they did. When all’s said and done, maybe all these scenes were just something she’d arranged to awaken his jealousy and bind him more firmly to her. Why otherwise had she hailed him from the motorcycle—after all, he hadn’t seen her before she’d called his name. She knew, of course, that he liked to take a walk down Strøget at that time of evening and so she’d gotten an acquaintance to go for that drive. Maybe that was her brother when you get right down to it. And if it really was a new boyfriend she’d gotten herself, then he was, if anything, making a fool of himself if she was sitting on the backseat hailing other men. And if she’d met him and had stood around fiddling with his tie and so on. In any event, he wouldn’t care to be engaged that way. But one fine day the motorcyclist would surely realize what kind of creature she was and give her the boot, if he was a real man. Then maybe she’d come rolling up and try to make up for things, and then he’d show her that she was barking up the wrong tree.

Yeah, that was the lay of the land when push came to shove. It was good that he’d had his eyes opened to that. Finally a view of things that could calm him down and give him back his equilibrium, a view he desperately clung to. Naturally he knew perfectly well that it was a lie, knew that he loved the girl and would never ever come to love any other the way he’d loved her, knew that all these reflections were just fabrications that were calculated to comfort him, attempts to hoodwink himself. What could love otherwise be if not this constant, gnawing longing?

IV

Lundegaard had little by little grown accustomed to his street; he’s begun to feel at home there. Every evening he leaves his home on one pretext or another and sits down in the tavern over on the corner. In his current mood he simply can’t stand sitting home and listening to the sewing machine’s perpetual
humming. Besides, why shouldn't he be able to permit himself to go over and drink a beer. Other menfolk did. And they didn't leave it at that: they played billiards and spent money on the girlies till they didn't have a penny left when they came home. Of course, he wasn't like that—he took his obligations seriously. But that was of course no reason for you to have to go and be a killjoy. There's some action at the cafe. There's light and cheerfulness in the cafe. So much light and cheerfulness that it penetrates out into the street and attracts marriage-weary menfolk. Once in a while sounds of women's laughter and piano-strumming penetrate out through the door and are reflected back by the walls on the other side of the dreary street. Further on, across from the junk dealer, two police officers are standing and talking about the six-day race. In addition, they're talking about how it'd be nice if it were 2 o'clock soon so they could go into the tavern and get the drink that is the Copenhagen tavern owners' daily tribute to the custodians of law and order. It's nice to be on good terms with the police. And it's nice to be able to go in where it's warm and have a highball or a toddy when you've been patrolling in the cold for a few hours.

And Lundegaard likes the atmosphere in the cafe, likes the smell of beer and tobacco smoke and the sound of the billiard balls caroming. It's so cozy to sit there in a corner and suck on his cigar, take a slug of beer every now and then, so cozy to sit and watch people, the women, who aren't afraid to be a little risqué, and drunken menfolk, who can get it into their heads to sing sentimental songs or dance around on the floor in the old-fashioned manner. Besides, it's so fortunate that the girl in the jaguar fur, his woman friend, has now finally gotten a business. True, it's not a business like the one she used to go around raving about and saving up for back then, but a business that's simpler and more lucrative. A manicure parlor, with telephone, port wine, and subdued lighting. And if Lundegaard feels like a manicure, he can call from the tavern here and arrange a time, sit and enjoy his beer in peace and quiet and even enjoy his visit at the manicure parlor ahead of time. Naturally, the new arrangement also has its drawbacks: the girl's busier now than before,
and there’s no denying that Lundegaard felt a bit offended when she indicated to him that he had to buy a bottle of port if he wanted to keep sitting there and chatting. After all, little by little a kind of friendship has developed between them, and Lundegaard’s fond of her company, fond of sitting and explaining his worries to her. And for her part, she’s certainly also more indulgent toward him than toward the rest of her customers and lets him stay longer than his modest gift actually entitles him to.

Right now, of course, it’s not the worries that are weighing him down, but his high-spirited expectations for the future he’d like to share with someone. And even though he’s now going to be travelling around the country, he’ll probably get time to visit the girl in the jaguar fur. His relationship to her is not solely erotically motivated; his visits to her are like stations on his trip, where he makes an account of how far he’s gone and how much farther he has to go yet; he sees his life more clearly by hearing himself talk about it and outline his perspective. And whom else should he be telling about everything he feels deeply about without their obviously showing that they don’t care to listen to it or straight out snapping at him. In any case, his wife would let him talk without listening and would demonstratively sit down to keep on sewing. In order to show him that it wasn’t talk, but work that mattered. Of course, she lived the part of the righteous and injured party—that was the platform she lived on—and having become a Nazarene hadn’t made it any better. On the contrary. The girl in the jaguar fur showed with smart questions that she understood how things were with him. She was becoming an axis in his life.

Incidentally, Lundegaard’s spending quite a lot of money these days and earning less than he usually does. Without further ado he’s spending left and right some of the money he collects; after all, it doesn’t matter now that it’s of course only a question of time—this chapter of his life, thank god, will of course soon be over. He catches himself counting the days, like a child counting the days till summer vacation or a convict counting the days till his release. Carlsen said he can call a few days into December—the boss would be back by then and Carl-
sen'll have gotten to talk to him about Lundegaard. So the point's just to kill the remaining time, and of course under these circumstances you lose your interest in running up and down the stairs in Sundby and presenting overdue bills to annoying people who only rack their brains over which excuse they'd prefer to use to get out of paying. Besides, it's a pleasant thought that you can allow yourself to be a bit reckless without everything collapsing for that reason. That's why he also didn't think twice about borrowing 50 crowns from Carlsen one day he'd spent too much money and had run dry. From a tavern he called up Carlsen's firm and there hadn't been the slightest problem. A momentary embarrassment and so on. And Carlsen seemed to be happy to do him a favor. Carlsen was a good guy—there should be several more of his kind, then life'd be less complicated.

All in all the thought of his future position made him more daring in his transactions. Quite as if it were the most natural thing in the world, he went up to see Mr. Salomonsen and explained to him that he couldn't pay any installment this month, that to the contrary he wished to take out a new loan. Of course not a big loan, but a modest sum, which was necessary for him to be able to take up his position as travelling salesman. He even mentioned the firm's name, and Mr. Salomonsen, without any further fuss, had given him the desired amount. In that way the new position had already made his life more pleasant even before he'd gotten it. It already dealt him better cards to hold and a different attitude toward life. Actually he already felt like a travelling salesman too. There'd been an article in the newspaper regarding travelling salesmen and Lundegaard had read it with a travelling salesman's eyes and thoughts. The article, which was an attack on the travelling salesmen, made him indignant on behalf of his future profession. We travelling salesmen ought to protest against that sort of article, he thought.

V

Their home, the rear-tenement apartment, is no longer a
home, but just lodgings, a place where you live. Poul comes to visit at most a couple of times a week, Mrs. Lundegaard's more haggard and more taciturn than ever, and Anna's home only when she sleeps. You see her in fact only at dinner. As soon as she's eaten, she's out the door again. She comes home when the rest of them have gone to bed and gets up before them, makes her tea herself in the kitchen and eats with it the piece of French bread her mother buttered ahead of time in the evening. They hear her shout goodbye out in the entry hall and hear the door slam after her. She's begun to be fond of her workplace, keenly works on getting ahead, and will probably end up as forewoman or something like that. Then at least she won't need to be dependent on the menfolk either. Even if she took it into her head to get married, she'll still keep her job and her independence. She doesn't know anything worse than little whimperers who let the men dominate; she's certainly going to have the right herself to share in making decisions. Besides, men always turn out to be a disappointment when you get up closer to them. Either they're on their knees or else they're superior and play the strong man who'll certainly take care of everything. That's why little by little she's also thoroughly sick of the motorcyclist and once in a while longs for an antidote, longs for the warehouse clerk. Maybe all men are like that, and if that's the case, then maybe the warehouse clerk's after all the one she'd best be able to be reconciled to. And when she runs into him, sometimes she's on the verge of wishing that he'd suggest to her going out with him some evening. But instead of saying anything along those lines, he just stands there looking at her imploringly. And as a woman, of course, she can't possibly make the suggestion, let alone after what happened between them. That, of course, would ruin the relationship—if it were ever renewed—from the very start.

When she really considered it, maybe it was also more the motorcycle, the leather jacket, and all that stuff she'd fallen in love with than the man himself. And after the first intoxication of the speed and the motor had simmered down, it felt almost unpleasant to be straddling the back seat and desperately holding
on tight on the curves. The enjoyable part really was quickly overlooked. Besides, he drove recklessly in order to impress her, so she sat locked up in goggles and helmet without being able to see anything other than his back or to hear anything other than the noise of the motor, without thinking about anything but holding on tight and freezing with grace. Now, of course, it was winter, and on the back of a motorcycle the cold feels ten times worse than when you’re walking.

But so it didn’t look as though the warehouse clerk was so much of a real man that he’d come and say that he couldn’t do without her, that he was tired of playing hide and seek, and that he wanted to get engaged to her, with rings and everything, get married to her, and not let her go any more. If he came to her like that, she’d forgive him all his stupidities and mistakes, and they’d be able to get along splendidly.

But if he didn’t come and make up, and presumably he wasn’t going to, she wasn’t about to go mushy because of it. That was the only way the relationship could be renewed, and if it didn’t become a reality, there was nothing you could do about it. Besides, maybe there was something to it that once a relationship’s gone on the rocks, it can never be entirely all right again.

VI

On the next to last day of the month, Copenhagen showed its most disagreeable side and made people dream of Switzerland and the Riviera. It both rained and snowed and the damp, clammy cold penetrated into the houses and made people grumpy and surly. If it’d just been real snow, hard snow, but it was slush and raw weather. Real flu weather. It was already dark in the middle of the afternoon, and Lundegaard was just on the point of losing his good humor over having to go out to Sundby on such a day. But now the firm settled accounts every month and he had to see to pressing the greatest possible amount out of the debtors in order to be able to make it through the accounting. A bike was out of the question in this weather, and when he got to City Hall
Square and had to change to the number 2 line, it was naturally packed with wet, crabby, and mean people. He was pressed up into a corner of the platform and stood there half-freezing in his thin gabardine coat. Before he’d gotten to Knippels Bridge, he’d made up his mind that he’d be damned if he was going to run around in dark, cold stairways and quarrel with grumpy people on a day like this. Another solution had to be found. At Christianshavn Square he got off and went into an automat to drink a cup of coffee and get a little warmth in his body. Just 50 crowns would be able to help him past the first of the month and under these circumstances his brother certainly wouldn’t hesitate to lend it to him. Besides, it worked out splendidly that his brother had off in the afternoon these days: he had the transfer ticket in his pocket and could quickly and without expense get over to Islands Wharf. If his brother wasn’t home, of course there was nothing you could do about it; then he’d have to go out to Sundby after all and keep slogging away. Actually he’d decided never to approach his brother any more for loans, but now, when he could take up a decent position in a couple of days, it was something different.

Then he was sitting on the trolley again, got off at Lange Bridge and walked down Nials Street. It was his brother himself who answered the door. He didn’t turn out to be especially cordial at the sight of Lundegaard, but nevertheless pretended that he was glad for the visit. One of his children was sent to get bread, and his wife went out to make coffee. In the meantime Lundegaard had his brother to himself and had a splendid opportunity to state his business, but naturally he couldn’t manage to say it. The humiliation of having to ask for a loan appeared to him greater now that he was sitting here in the living room, and now when he was getting on his feet again, he’d be annoyed that once again he’d humbled himself. Maybe he’d manage the first of the month in spite of everything—after all, he’d managed it up till now. Besides, it was disgusting to have to say something like that when you’ve just come in the door. Preferably it should come totally naturally in the course of conversation, sort of purely in passing, as if it weren’t a matter of any great significance.
Then the coffee was ready and they sat down at the table. The wife wondered what'd actually made Lundegaard look them up like this in the middle of the afternoon—after all, they otherwise never saw him. His brother was thinking the same thing. Lundegaard was feeling uneasy and said something about having just come by and feeling like hearing how they were doing. His brother assured him a little ironically that they were doing just splendidly.

When they were finished with coffee, Lundegaard sat there thinking that he'd probably better leave again, go over to Sundby and try to get started, but the thought of the stairways filled him to such a degree with disgust that it swept all scruples aside, and regardless of the wife's having put in an appearance, he began telling them about the new position he was going to take up in a couple of days and the expenses he'd been saddled with on that account. If he could borrow fifty crowns, he'd pay it back in a month.

One of the children absolutely wanted to get up and sit on his knee and call him Uncle August, and actually that suited him fine. He'd already seen on his brother's face that he shouldn't have stated his business. And seen in the wife's face that he surely shouldn't have stated it at all in front of her. And naturally Lundegaard had seen correctly: his brother uttered some commonplaces about the end of the month, rent, and all that stuff, that otherwise there wouldn't have been any problem with it, and so on, and Lundegaard was quick to assure him that it didn't matter—he'd surely manage anyway.

But still that was a lot of nerve when your own brother couldn't do you that trifling favor under these circumstances. Lundegaard said goodbye and began trudging out to Sundby; the streets were dreary and slushy in the dusk and the cars splashed the slush on the pedestrians. Well, now, thank god, he was almost through with hopelessness and humiliations—in two days he could call Carlsen; maybe he could start right away. In any case, before long life would be different. Better.
Twelfth Chapter

Then December dawns and Lundegaard’s being led by blind forces toward the crossroads of his fate the way a lamb’s led to the slaughter. It’s the month of the solstice: before the month’s over, it’ll start out all over again and the city’s eight hundred thousand people can face the spring, face a new year. Before the month’s over, the days will be longer by a couple of minutes, you’ll get the courage and optimism to tackle things afresh and can turn your back on the disappointments of the year that’s been concluded.

It’s as if the month doesn’t quite want to get off the ground—what’s really Decemberish is hesitating to put in an appearance. True enough, the evening appears in the traditional manner with a blackish-blue sky and cold, white moon with a frosty wreath, but when you look up the next afternoon, the clouds are furnished with a pink edge and the atmosphere’s so color-saturated that it completely upsets the acquired picture of December, the month of Christmas, snow, and elves. Naturally there are plenty of symptoms of Christmas, but they’re too early, so to speak, staged, so to speak, to create, by hook or by crook, a Christmas mood so something can be sold in the stores. During these days there isn’t an item or thing, there isn’t a product that doesn’t have Christmas’s authorized stamp printed on it. It may be the new perfume, which, for use for the season, was designed by Prince Yousouloff in London, or the ravishing velvet dream of a dress with zipper Madame Landowska has created. All of it’s Christmas—cookies, marzipan and spruce twigs, postcards, sock-suspenders, theater performances, and
church collections. Christmas sheaths of grain have been hung on the trees on the boulevards for the birds, which aren’t permitted to starve in December, and barrel organs play Christmas hymns. There’s a man standing on the corner selling candlesticks made of spruce.

II

Lundegaard isn’t going to call Carlsen till December 3rd. Maybe he’ll even draw it out till the 4th or 5th. For one thing, you shouldn’t be too aggressive, and for another, perhaps he might smash something to pieces by provoking a hasty decision. And if he’s been able to wait this long, it surely doesn’t matter whether he has to wait two or three more days.

These days he’s taut as a bowstring, taut to the breaking point. His face with the pince-nez eyes gives no evidence of it, but all the more restless are his fingers, which nervously drum on the cafe’s tabletop or pick apart a matchbox in his gabardine coat pocket piece by piece. To calm himself down he blows out cigar smoke in a thin, fine strip, or he hums a snippet of a tune in a monotone tempo, the same snippet of a tune over and over, until another snippet of a tune by chance takes the previous one’s place. He’s restless and strolls up and down the streets to find an outlet for his impatience, is startled to hear himself talking out loud in the middle of the street. But the way Carlsen put it, there can’t be any reason to be nervous, and Carlsen’s a person you can rely on. What was supposed to be so strange altogether about obtaining such a position through influence—after all, that’s something that happens every single day in this city. It’s only because little by little he’s become accustomed to defeat that he’s nervous about how things’ll go. There’s no reason whatsoever to be nervous; his optimism guarantees him that the matter in fact has already been decided, that Carlsen’s just waiting for him to call to tell him that it’s taken care of, that he can begin right away. Maybe he should stop at the first kiosk and call to get it over with—right over there on the square there’s a
kiosk. All you have to do is take out a ten-øre coin and ask for the firm’s number—in five minutes he can have his answer if he wants. Or rather get confirmed that he now has a position that in one fell swoop is going to lift him up above all his worries. But he doesn’t want to be overeager. He’s going to keep calm and wait a day or two. Better to go and enjoy speculating about the problems connected to his taking the new position. Of course, he has to have a new suit, a nice blue serge suit, double breasted, with two changes of pants. He’ll surely also have to have a bag, a big, spacious suitcase for underwear, pyjamas, toiletries, and so on. Maybe he won’t begin till the fifteenth, maybe not till January. But once he’s gotten the position, he’ll surely manage to get through that time as well and manage the necessary new purchases. He’s enjoying in advance his visit as travelling salesman for a prestigious firm to his little home town, is enjoying his possible visit at the store he served his apprenticeship at. God knows whether old Jacobsen still runs the business. Or whether he died and his son took it over. Probably such big changes really haven’t happened—there’s something conservative about textiles; he’d bet that the stores by and large look the way they did back then. Dry-goods stores in the provinces have an atmosphere that takes generations to change. Of course, they’ve surely gotten modern store fronts with big plate-glass windowpanes, modern furnishings of steel and nickel. And they’ve gotten cheap ready-made Czechoslovak goods, an installment payment system with a contract, and they’re surely forced to keep up with the fashions more than in the old days. But the atmosphere’s the same. And Lundegaard, who’s forgotten that he used to hate that atmosphere, loves it now, loves the smell of the fabrics, loves the sound of the scissors ripping and whizzing through a piece of summer dress fabric, the sight of the counter shiny from use and of the shelf with its brilliantly colored woolen yarn.

III

But already on December 2nd there’s a letter lying there for
him from Carlsen when he comes home in the evening. It says in short to please call the next day, sincerely, Carlsen.

Naturally he’s afraid that he’ll sleep badly that night, and since he was hoping to be fresh and rested if Carlsen asked him to come up to the office, he has to do something to get to sleep. He tries taking a long walk, but the feeling of loneliness drives him into a tavern. And when he’s had something to drink and his sense of life gets stronger, he calls up the manicure parlor. But the girl in the jaguar fur isn’t in—in any event nobody answers. And since the thought of his visit to her took on such definite shape even during the telephone call, he can’t get himself to go home, but instead forms a casual acquaintance on the street. Not until toward morning does he steal up the rear-tenement stairs, shivering with cold, while he gets undressed and keeps mumbling: Tomorrow, tomorrow.

At eleven o’clock the next day he goes down to the greengrocer to call Carlsen. It takes a long time before Carlsen comes to the phone and Lundegaard catches himself standing there with the receiver pressed against his ear thinking about everything possible except what he’s finally going to find out now—where he stands. He stands there looking at the boxes full of fragrant red apples, at the barrels with potatoes and at the kale stalks in the window, looking at the greengrocer’s wife, who’s now gotten her hair bleached platinum blond, looking at her red hands, at her wedding ring, and thinking about the pieces of gossip going around about her. She’s sturdily built and has lively eyes. Maybe her husband’s neglecting her.

Then finally Carlsen comes to the phone; his voice hits him like a blow. He wants to talk to Lundegaard. Lundegaard shouldn’t come up to the office, but should sit down in the wine bar on the other side of the street. Around twelve. It isn’t certain that Carlsen’ll come right away, but Lundegaard should just stay calm. In any case he’ll come at the latest at half-past.
It's nice and cozy in the wine bar—comfortable chairs, newspapers, and a quiet and calming atmosphere. Carlsen comes a little after twelve—from his face Lundegaard sees right away that everything isn't as it ought to be. Carlsen doesn't beat around the bush, but comes right to the point: he feels that the boss's trip abroad hasn't produced the desired results and that's why he's in a bad mood. In any event, he'd replied very curtly that it wasn't travelling salesmen he needed, but foreign currency. Could he maybe get him foreign currency? What the hell was he supposed to do with travelling salesmen if he couldn't get any goods to sell?

But Carlsen's quick to add that Lundegaard shouldn't take it too seriously—the boss is unpredictable—there'll probably be a chance again soon. The firm works according to the principle of rapid promotions, and so when the employees have reached all the way up to the top and are living in a fool's paradise, and think that the boss regards them as one of the firm's cornerstones, they're fired. That way the boss succeeds in getting the staff to constantly stretch their capacity to work to the utmost. And that's why Carlsen, as far as possible, has kept in the background and preferred slow promotion.

Pleased, Carlsen laughs at his clever insight into modern methods of rationalization—probably also hopes that his cheerfulness will infect Lundegaard and make the bitter pill glide down more easily.

But Lundegaard doesn't hear anything of his good-natured chatter. All his plans've been wrecked. Everything's lying smashed to pieces. It was make or break, this business here, and obviously it turned out to be break.

Carlsen chats on; he's embarrassed about not having been able to keep his promise and tries to smooth things over by chatting. It'll be all right, another chance'll come again soon, and so on. Now damn it, Lundegaard certainly can't go and lose heart—it'll surely all work out all right.

Lose heart? Lundegaard stares at him—lose heart. What
does the man mean? Lundegaard’s face is ashen and he fumbles for his hat.

A trivial little thought says to him all of a sudden that it isn’t Carlsen’s fault, after all—that of course he did his best. And Lundegaard mumbles a kind of thanks to Carlsen, shakes hands with him as if in a dream, and staggers out the door, unsteady on his legs like a man who’s had too much to drink.

V

Now he’s been wandering for hours up and down the streets without knowing where he’s actually gone and without knowing how long he’s been walking. That damn pressure that’s settled over him has surely got to be able to pass little by little, if he just keeps walking. There he turns the corner at Farimags Street and swims with the current down Frederiksborg Street. There he comes to a halt at Kongens Nytorv and stares out across the harbor, as if suddenly he can’t go on any further; here he’s pushed and shoved forward on Stroget, a nice ordinary man in his gabardine coat that’s a bit worn out and his crocheted scarf, a quite ordinary man who all of a sudden can’t find a platform any more that he can keep living on. It’s as if his instinct of self-preservation is paralyzed; his thoughts keep returning to the incomprehensible fact that everything’s all over now.

Later in the evening a physical demand tries to wake him—he feels hunger. Maybe that can save him. At least he has a body that demands maintenance. But his ego, which is racked to the point of great exhaustion and doesn’t glimpse any perspective for continuation, refuses to listen to the body’s warnings, doesn’t permit the sensation of hunger to penetrate into consciousness.

The air’s saturated with moisture, the cars put tracks of dampness on the asphalt, from a radio store the strains are blaring out on to the street: Smile your way through life.

Then the self-preservation instinct gets the upper hand after all. Getting around his consciousness, it leads him into an auto-
mat and sits him down to an a la carte meal. He stares dull-witted at his surroundings, sticks the fork into the half-cold potatoes and time and again forgets to chew. He still hasn’t gotten the slightest bit further in his reflections than when he staggered out of the wine bar; his thoughts, as if fascinated, still revolve around the same point, can’t tear themselves away from it. Every little feeble attempt just runs into a wall of darkness.

VI

But now his fingers are fumbling in the breast pocket of his vest for a cigar: habit’s once again outwitted his dead-tired ego, which sluggishly mumbles its incessant: All over with.

It’s his ego’s fault that he’s now a done-for man and it now disclaims all responsibility by just letting things take their course, by suffocating every single thought his self-preservation instinct tries to send into his consciousness. It was smart of the self-preservation instinct to ally itself with habit and put a cigar into his mouth—the nicotine stimulates the cells and forces the ego to abandon its passivity, forces it to occupy itself with the problem, to try to find ways out.

Grudgingly the man in the gabardine coat tries to mock himself: Good god, little man, now have they been nasty to you again? Now couldn’t you even achieve a good and convenient way out of your difficulties by letting a childhood buddy be your patron, you twirp?

But there’s no sounding board for the mockery—melancholy and depression have dug their way too deeply into him.

The defeat doesn’t make an impression on the self-preservation instinct, which is now aroused and ready to fight. It makes a new attempt: Well, I have to say, that was certainly one thumping kick in the teeth.

But Lundegaard sees quite clearly that it isn’t tenable. He desperately looks for a thought to cling to, but he doesn’t find any. His lower lip’s quivering. He’s so full of that single big thought that there’s no room for more. The thought that today
brought the decision he knew would come. That the only thing left now is hell or destruction.

VII

So he now tries the solution he’s recently had to have recourse to so often. He’ll go in some place and have something to drink. He thereby also gains time, postpones the decision. And if he decides to put an end to it all, it’ll go easier if he’s drunk. An end to it all, completely and for all time. Won’t need to explain anything, won’t need to cope with more problems. It’d be so easy, so pleasantly easy. Besides, it’d be completely impossible to continue along the course laid down—collect, struggle with the creditors, constantly fiddling with things in order to cope with the moment. Then in any case better to go to the police and say: Gentlemen, you’ve got me here, I pulled off such and such scams. — But what then afterward?

But for the time being the alcohol’s breaking a hole in the wall of his apathy and he’s gaining time. He’s drinking energetically. With the definite intention of getting drunk as quickly as possible.

VIII

Far into the evening he rides in a taxi to the billiard parlor. Why shouldn’t he get himself drunk and ride in a taxi? He still has about twenty crowns in his pocket and he’s had so many speculative thoughts these last years that he can’t imagine dying with money in his pocket. And if he sees Mr. Salomonsen up there, he’ll say to him: old boy, things’ve gone bust for me and you’ll never get to see a penny of your money. Maybe he’ll even slap Mr. Salomonsen on the shoulder and ask him whether he’d like to have a drink. That’ll be glorious. That’s the way to treat that swine.

But Mr. Salomonsen isn’t there. Scorekeeper Nielsen isn’t
there either—he probably has the day off. Lundegaard walks
down along the billiard tables to find a place to sit; he has the
same sensation of being dazed like the last time, even though it
helps him somewhat that he’s half-drunk. He’s never liked the
bigger restaurants and hits it off better with the taverns and wine
bars. It’s strange to walk across such a big floor, while all these
people are sitting and gaping at you. In any case, you have the
feeling they are. You don’t quite know how to hold your arms;
your way of moving appears ridiculous to you, and you’re sure
that every single person in the hall is thinking: What a queer fish
who’s coming there.

But once he’s found a table to sit at and has ordered a drink,
when he passes back into inconspicuousness as a spectator, that
loathsome sensation stops. Now he’s moved up from the ac­
cused’s place to the judge’s bench and can join in in sitting and
staring hard at the new arrivals, judging their clothes and their
way of moving.

Incidentally, the parlor’s jam-packed and before half an
hour’s gone by, he’s fallen in with a few nice people who were
lacking one party for club-

Lundegaard can certainly play

and why shouldn’t he join the game. He knows per­
fectly well that the game’s played for high stakes, but actually
that suits him fine. It’ll give his thoughts a different direction
and if he loses what he’s got in his pocket, things can’t get any
worse than they are. And if he wins, he’ll get the wherewithal
for continued intoxication and can delay the unpleasant decision.
Besides, superstition says that people in his situation always win.

And he really does win. At closing time he’s got fifty
crowns on the table in front of him. But his fellow players want
to go somewhere else and continue, and naturally Lundegaard
goes too. They take a taxi to a billiard club where the members
can go in all night. Lundegaard becomes a member, his name
and address are entered into a register and the clubs-

can continue.

Around four in the morning Lundegaard’s been cleaned out.
He’s drunk and downcast and prefers to leave. City Hall Square
lies dark and empty: on the whole big square you see only a few
night wanderers and some homeless people. The light’s on in
the newspaper stand and Lundegaard buys a morning paper. Not
because he’s interested in reading what’s in it, but when, because
of the circumstances, you’re one of the privileged who can get it
before ordinary people, naturally you have to make the most of
the privilege.

IX

He actually doesn’t have a feeling of despondency and de­
spair—rather of emptiness and depression. So now he’s reached
bottom. Now all he’s lacking is to put a period at the end. It’s
an onerous and unpleasant act that’s expected of him. If his
brother hadn’t been so dismissive that day, the depression
wouldn’t have been complete and maybe he could’ve found a
way to continue. Actually, his brother’s responsible: because of
his egotism, his lack of brotherly feeling, he’s to blame that this
is where Lundegaard wants to get off. Let the rest of them just
keep on dancing with their bank book and their stinginess—what
do they get out of it. He can’t be bothered any more.

But his brother’s going to get a reminder about how he drove
his brother to death. When at day break he comes down into the
courtyard to get his bike in the shed, a corpse will be hanging
there from the rug-beating beam. And when he cuts the corpse
down, he’ll discover that it’s his own brother, whom he refused
to give a helping hand when he was hard up. The thought
pleases August Lundegaard. Unsteady on his feet from booze,
sentimental and self-pitying, he walks down the boulevard to get
to Islands Wharf.

X

But when he reaches Lange Bridge, he stops in the middle of
the bridge and looks across toward the Ørsted Works where the
sky’s begun to get lighter from the dawning day. Of course
that’s not at all what he wants. He’s just tired and wants to turn into nothing.

He goes onto the ramparts and sits down on a bench. The night’s almost over and he doesn’t care to get to know the day that’s coming. He’s familiar with it in advance and is familiar with the days that’ll follow too. Now it’s got to be over with. He’s got to pull himself together and try to put an end to it.

He must have sat on the bench for a long time, the factory whistles wake him—he’s totally stiff from the cold. He gets up and walks across toward Christianshavn. Now there are many bikes on the street, dark figures who have to go to work. He stops at the octroi house, shakes himself in his thin coat and reproaches himself for not having spared himself this morning.

The next moment he’s mocking himself: I mean, you just want to die so they’ll feel sorry for you, so they’ll regret they didn’t always act toward you the way they should’ve. And in your heart of hearts you hope you’ll be saved at the last moment so you can benefit from their remorse.

By the mill he goes up onto the ramparts. All of a sudden his despair breaks through and he protests against the accusation: No, but I mean I can’t go on, damn it, I mean I can’t go on. The tears burst forth in his eyes. I mean I just want to be allowed to be left alone, I mean I don’t owe anyone anything, I’ve always done my best. And now I can’t go on any more.

For the first time in many years he suddenly sees his mother’s face before him, her gentle face, which says: My poor boy.

He totally gives himself over to desperation and despair, presses his face against his hands and sobs like a child. Incessantly he repeats that of course he can’t go on.

That it’s over with now.

XI

Then suddenly he becomes afraid that he won’t have the courage to do it after all. And decides that it’s going to happen now, not in a minute, but now. He takes out his knife, opens it,
clenches his left fist, and desperately slices two deep gashes in his wrist.

It wasn’t enough, there’s a scream inside him. One more, one more. Then with brute force he wields the knife for a third time across his wrist.

At first the gashes are white, but the next instant the blood’s gushing out, pouring out, and squirting down on his clothes.

Wild with terror and agitation, he runs down the ramparts and toward the street, desperately holding his right hand around his maltreated wrist. At Christianshavns Square he runs over toward the taxicabs. The driver, who saw him come running, opens the door. Lundegaard flings himself into the car. To the National Hospital, he moans, to the National Hospital. Quick, quick.

When the car stops in front of the hospital, he says to the driver: Just a second, and runs in through the portal. In the emergency room they treat him gently and indulgently, sew up the gashes, give him a glass of something that can calm down his nerves, and say that he can come in a few days and let them look at him again. They don’t ask him anything, not even his name.

XII

When he comes back out to the street, he sees the car, which is faithfully standing in the gutter waiting for him. He goes over to the driver and explains that he’s been injured, that he’s got no money on him, but that the driver can apply at his address and get what he’s owed.

Damn it, nice guy you are, says the driver. Why didn’t you take an ambulance, now you’ve made a mess of the car, and to boot you don’t have any money to pay with. Besides, it would’ve been closer to drive to Sundby Hospital.

So former dry-goods merchant Lundegaard’s again walking up and down the streets. Now he has his arm in a sling and is getting sober. It’s cold and he doesn’t have any money. With his good hand he feels in his pockets to see whether there might
be some small change. There’s thirty øre. At St. Hans Square he goes over to a coffee stand and buys a cup of coffee. He sits down on a crate of cream, which has been stood upright. The coffee man would like to talk and asks him what he did to his arm. And when Lundegaard doesn’t answer, he says something about King Edward and Mrs. Simpson. And that now of course it’ll soon be Christmas; there are already Christmas trees put up for sale all around.

XIII

Late in the evening Lundegaard goes home. He lets himself in quietly and goes into the living room. There’s no one home. He sits down by the window and stares down into the courtyard apathetically.

Then his wife finally comes. She gives a start at the sight of him, she goes over and stands next to him, strokes his hair with her hand, presses his head close to her, and says: August, my poor dear.

They sit like that for a long time. She doesn’t ask about anything, but strokes his hair incessantly. Then finally she says that the driver was there and got the money. Lundegaard just nods.

Some people come up the stairs and let themselves in. They’re standing and talking in the entrance hall. He can tell from their voices that it’s Anna and Poul. Poul’s explaining that he was at the welfare office to take care of something and that he ran into the gardener, that guy who started the florist shop in their old premises. He doesn’t have a business any more and now has to go on welfare.

Down in the street there’s a man shouting ten sweet ones for fifty. It’s probably oranges.
Notes

The bolded numbers at the left refer to the pages of There's a Man Sitting on a Trolley on which the italicized text appears.

1 smallish dry-goods store: In 1935, there were 2,485 dry-goods, clothing, knitwear, and fashion stores in Copenhagen (including Frederiksberg and Gentofte) with a total staff of 10,708 and sales of 227.6 million crowns. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København, Frederiksberg og Gentofte Kommune 1936-1937, tab. 94 at 77 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1937).

1 neighbor's: The Danish word (næstens) is that used in the Ten Commandments: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house . . .” (Ex. 20:17). Nabo is the secular word for “neighbor.”

2 Vesterbro: Vesterbro, Nørrebro, and Østerbro are neighborhoods of Copenhagen lying north and west of three lakes. These former rural suburbs are often called broerne, this name deriving not, as a common misconception would have it, from the bridges going there, but from the cobblestone-paved (brolagte) main access roads leading from there to the city and its three gates named for these three geographic directions (western, northern, and eastern). Mogens Lebech, “Vesterbros Bebyggelse,” in København: Før og nu, vol. V: Østerbro Nørrebro Vesterbro, at 225-302 at 227 (Svend Aakjær, Mogens Lebech, and Otto Norn eds.; Copenhagen: Hassing, 1950). Vesterbro is an arch-working-class neighborhood.

2 slum: In a Copenhagen baggård (a rear courtyard or sometimes merely an air shaft) the rear tenement was built so close to the front building that little air or light remained. For photographs of typical examples, see Edvard Heiberg, 2 vær. straks 22 (Copenhagen: Monde, 1935); Ole Buhl, “Saadan bor de københavnske Arbejdere,” Land og Folk, July 27, 1945, at 3:1-4; Rich. Willerslev, Sådan boede vi: Arbejdernes boligforhold i København omkring 1880, at 23, 25, 132, 134 (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1979). Speculative builders adopted this system of unhygienic working-class rear tenements built around ever smaller courtyards without direct access to the street in the second half of the nineteenth century as Copenhagen’s population outgrew the narrow confines of the inner city (where rear tenements had proliferated earlier, as a result of which 22 percent of Copenhagen’s population were living in rear and side buildings as early as 1855) and the city expanded to Vesterbro, Nørrebro, and Østerbro beyond the old ramparts.
Notes

The shifting of the so-called demarcation line on January 6, 1852, in toward Copenhagen opened the way to construction of tenements in these outer areas, where building had, since 1810, in the wake of the English bombardment of Copenhagen, been permitted only with the approval of the military in order to create a free-fire zone and then only on condition that the military could raze the buildings without compensation. In 1867 construction became permissible in the area between the ramparts and the newly-shifted demarcation line; once the military had finally conceded that the ramparts themselves had lost their usefulness, they began to be removed in 1872. Villads Christensen, “Københavns Oprindelse, Udvikling og Vækst,” in Danmark Land og Folk: Historisk-topografisk-statistisk Haandbog 2:77-121 at 113-18 (Daniel Bruun ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1919); Peter Bredsdorff, “Byens udvikling og vækst,” in København: Nu og før, vol. I: Indledende Afsnit, Slotsholmen, Havnen 41-58 at 51-58 (Svend Aakjær, Mogens Lebech, and Otto Norn eds.; Copenhagen: Hassing, 1949); Mogens Lebech, “Fra de gamle forstæder til voldkvartererne,” in København: Nu og før, vol. IV: Christianshavn Voldkvartererne 183-200 (Svend Aakjær, Mogens Lebech, and Otto Norn eds.; Copenhagen: Hassing, 1948); Georg Nørregaard, “Vesterbro,” in København: Før og nu, vol. V: Østerbro Nørrebro Vesterbro, at 205-224 at 216-17; Harald Langberg, Uden for voldene: Københavns udbygning 1852-1952 (Copenhagen: Den almindelige Brandforsikring, 1952); Jens Erik Frits Hansen, Københavns forstadsbebyggelse i 1850’erne 74-75 (Copenhagen: Akademisk forlag, 1977); Sigurd Jensen and Claus Smidt, Rammerne sprænges 90-91, 150-56, in Københavns historie, vol. 4: 1830-1900 (Sv. Cedergreen Bech et al. eds.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1982). In the 1870s and 1880s, four- and five-story rear tenements with businesses located in the rear courtyards became increasingly common in inner Nørrebro. By 1880 one-fourth of the city’s population lived in such housing. Hansen, Københavns forstadsbebyggelse i 1850’erne at 75; Vagn Dybdahl, De nye Klasser: 1870-1913, at 36, in Danmarks historie, vol. 12 (John Danstrup and Hal Koch eds.; Copenhagen: Politiken, 1965). In the older areas of Copenhagen in 1935, such rear buildings accounted for 16,556 apartments compared to 130,172 apartments in front houses. The highest proportion of rear-building apartments was found in Christianshavn, the inner city, and inner Nørrebro. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistik Aarbog for Køben-
Notes

havn... 1936-1937, tab. 66 at 56. By the mid-1930s, the population question fueled discussion of the need for “slum clearance” and “airing out of slums” in Copenhagen on the grounds that “the lack of light and airy apartments” in rear tenements promoted stagnation in births. “Skal Nørrebro og Vesterbro gennemskæres af Lagkagehuse?” Berlingske Aftenavis, Feb. 15, 1936, at 2:1-2; “Vil Kommune kassere 5000 ældre Lejligheder som sundhedsfarlige?” Berlingske Aftenavis, Feb. 15, 1936, at 2:1-2. New York City had architectural analogs: “Built in the mid to late 1800’s, rear tenements were originally the first building on a lot of land. It had a spacious front yard in a suburban setting. As the population of New York City grew, the front yards gained value as building sites. Newer buildings were built on these front yards and the existing building became the rear tenement. If one were to look out the front window of a rear tenement, he or she would see the back of the newer building.” http://www.dragonfighters.com/anatomy.html#different. The Danish immigrant Jacob Riis, who had experienced Copenhagen slums, wrote in 1890 that 100,000 people lived in New York’s rear tenements. Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives 41 (New York: Dover, 1971 [1890]). Soon after his book appeared, a tenement-house commission called rear tenements “slaughter-houses.” Jacob Riis, The Battle with the Slum 116 (Montclair, N.J.: Patterson Smith, 1969 [1902]). For an American account of housing in Copenhagen that appeared the same year as Klitgaard’s novel and totally ignored these slums, see Agnes Rothery, Denmark: Kingdom of Reason 193-96 (New York: Viking, 1937).

2 Isn’t it written that you have to make the most of your talents: Although the phrase (forvalte sit pund) has a long literary history, the double meaning of “talent” goes back to Matt. 25:25: “And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.” See also Ordbog over det danske Sprog 17:113 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1995 [1937]).

2 Religion is the opium of the people: According to Karl Marx, “Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie: Einleitung,” in Karl Marx [and] Friedrich Engels, Werke 1:378-91 at 378 (Berlin [GDR]: Dietz, 1964 [1844]): “Religious misery is at one and the same time the expression of real misery and the protest against the misery. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”
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2 the Nazarenes: This church was part of the evangelical holiness movement that originated in Methodism-Wesleyanism in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Phineas F. Bresee founded the First Church of the Nazarene in Los Angeles in 1895 and the movement assumed a fixed organizational form in 1907-1908 when the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene was formed as a result of mergers. There are only very few Nazarenes in Denmark today; their minister, who states that the church did not came to Denmark until 1960, is aware only through rumor of the existence of the earlier group. J. Gordon Melton, Encyclopedia of American Religions 344-45 (5th ed.; Detroit: Gale, 1996); http://www.nazarene.dk; email from Kaj Ove Bollerup (July 18, 2001).

2 wholesale merchant's license: Wholesale merchants were disproportionately represented among the wealthiest Danes. In Copenhagen (including Frederiksberg and Gentofte) in tax year 1936-37, of 367 persons reporting incomes of 100,000 crowns or more, 117 were wholesale merchants, more than any other occupation; of 282 persons reporting assets of one millions crowns or more, 75 were wholesale merchants, more than any other group except pensioners. The average annual income of the 4,165 wholesale merchants (18,658 crowns) was exceeded by that of 1,833 company presidents (31,349 crowns) and 703 attorneys (22,812 crowns). Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937, tab. 208 at 168-69. Klitgaard himself included an actual newspaper article from 1942 in a later novel stating that in tax-year 1941-42, 93 of 528 asset-millionaires were wholesale merchants, more than any other category. Mogens Klitgaard, Den guddommelige hverdag 92-93 (N.p. [Copenhagen]: Carit Andersen, n.d. [1975 (1942)]. The word grosserer has a subsidiary pejorative meaning of one who makes an exaggerated show of his wealth. Ordbog over det danske Sprog 7:119 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1994 [1925]). For example, in a well-known contemporaneous novel about the unemployed in Copenhagen during the depression of the 1930s, when one young man who is considering suicide offers his coat to another unemployed young man, the latter remarks that things cannot be so bad with his family if "you can play Grosserer." Leek Fischer, Det maa gerne blive Mandag 72 (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, 1934 [1933]). Grossererere were especially associated with large, expensive, and ostentatious villas in and around Copenhagen. See, e.g., Ole Buhl, "Her kendes Bolig-
nøden ikke,” *Land og Folk*, July 31, 1945, at 3:3-5. The Danish word conveys ideological overtones lacking in the Danish term for merchant (*købmand*) or in the English “wholesaler.” In the United States, wholesalers’ domination of the distribution system, which had peaked by the 1880s, was undermined by direct dealings between mass retailers and vertically integrated mass producers. Prominent wholesale merchants such as Alexander T. Stewart had accumulated extraordinary wealth in the mid-nineteenth century. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* 215-39 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978 [1977]).

2 It may well have been the war that was the setting for their economic success: Many businesspeople made great amounts of money during World War I. Although Lundegaard had surely not been a nouveau-riche war-profiteer (*Gullaschbaron*), merchants with stocks of goods on hand were able to achieve handsome profits by raising the prices of much sought-after pre-war goods. Sigurd Jensen, *Under fælles ansvar* 173-75, in *Københavns historie*, vol. 5: 1900-45 (Sv. Cedergreen Bech et al. eds.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1981).

3 Anna’s salary exactly covered the rent for the little apartment in the rear tenement: If, as appears below (see p. 6), Anna’s monthly wage was 40 crowns, the 480-crown annual rent was almost identical to the average annual rent of 484 crowns for a two-room apartment (see below p. 72) in Vesterbro in November 1935. *Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937*, tab. 80 at 65.

4 Lundegaard set off for his wearisome collection work: Bill collectors (*inkassatorer*) were a relatively low-paid group even within the relatively low-paid white-collar occupations. A special survey conducted in Copenhagen for 1936 revealed that the average annual wage for male office and store employees was 3,402 and 2,962 crowns, while that of bill collectors in the trade sector (excluding, for example, banks) was only 2,652 crowns. Since bill collectors were on average 10 years older than office and store workers (40 versus 30 years old), their age-specific wage was even lower. Henning Friis, “En Undersøgelse vedrørende Handels- og Kontormedhjælpers Lønninger i København 1936,” *Socialt Tidsskrift* 14(5):194-97 at 195-96 (May 1938). On white-collar wages and their relationship to wages of unskilled manual workers, see below note to p. 79. Bill collectors in Copenhagen had their own trade union, whereas in the provinces they were organized
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4 passageway: A *port* is the tunnel-like archway through the front building to the back courtyard where the rear building is located. For photographs, see Willerslev, *Sådan boede vi* at 126, 128, 130. Such passageways were an important site of young people’s social life in Vesterbro. See Tove Ditlevsen, *Barndommens gade* (6th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2000 [1943]).

6 Sundholm: Located in the Sundby section of Copenhagen and established in 1908 (replacing a similar institution, Ladegaard, in Frederiksberg), Sundholm was part of the municipality’s public assistance system (*Forsørgelsesvæsen*). It was divided into three institutions: a hospital (St. Johannes Stiftelses Afdeling); a house of corrections (*Tvangsarbejdsanstalt*) for Copenhagen and the islands where beggars, pimps, and similar groups served penal sentences; and a workhouse (*Arbejdsanstalt*) for Copenhagen for younger able-bodied persons with a tendency to vagabondage and alcohol. In the early 1920s, the *Tvangsarbejdsanstalt* could hold 244 men and 96 women, while the *Arbejdsanstalt* held 600 men and 120 women. Mogens Lebech, “Frederiksbergs Bebyggelse,” in *København: Nu og før*, vol. VI: Frederiksberg, *Yderkvarterer, Forstæder* 43-130 at 106-107 (Svend Aakjær, Mogens Lebech, and Otto Norn eds.; Copenhagen: Hassing, 1950); Mogens Lebech, “Yderkvarterernes Bebyggelse,” in *id.* at 163-226 at 220-21; N. Andreasen et al., “Københavns Kommunes Administration,” in *Danmark Land og Folk: Historisk-topografsk-statistisk Haandbog* 4: 44-69 at 45, 48 (separately paginated) (Daniel Bruun ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, 1922). On March 31, 1936, the *Arbejdsanstalt* held 288 men and 24 women, while the public assistance department housed only 41 men and 9 women. Københavns statistiske Kontor, *Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937*, tab. 171 at 132.

The “slave discipline” enforced at Sundholm led to a number of suicides. Heiberg, *2 Vær. straks* at 25-26. The public assistance law as amended by the Social Democratic government in 1933 charged the minister of social affairs with insuring that there be the requisite number of *Tvangsarbejdsanstalter* with sufficient room to receive the persons who, pursuant to the statute, were sentenced to *Tvangsarbejde* or to receive public assistance through placement in a *Tvangsarbejdsanstalt*. Lov Nr. 181 af 20 maj. 1933 om offentlig Forsorg, sect. 40, in
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Lovtidende for Aaret 1933, at 890-942 at 902 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1934). Sundholm was a common trope in Copenhagen-centered, Depression-era Danish literature. For a well-known example of someone sent to a Tvangsarbejdansanstalt for requesting welfare but refusing to perform communal work of breaking rocks, see Hans Scherfig, Den forsivundene fuldmægtig 125-26 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1996 [1938]). According to Tove Ditlevsen, Man gjorde et barn fortræd 116 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1996 [1941]), the lowest stratum of Copenhagen society was occupied by “those without subsistence, the riffians and drunkards, who sleep in Fælled and Søndermarken until they’re nabbed and sent to Sundholm.”

6 Custom House: Toldbod is the wharf in Copenhagen harbor where the customs service building was located.

6 between 3 and 4 degrees centigrade: Between 37 and 39 degrees Fahrenheit. The average temperature in Copenhagen in January 1936 was 2.5 degrees centigrade. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 3 at 3.


6 Østerbro: It became a somewhat more affluent section of Copenhagen than Vesterbro and Nørrebro in part because construction there did not begin in earnest until the 1880s and was of a somewhat higher quality and in part because military and civil servants moved there; it also included typical working-class areas, and overall architecturally became a “stone desert” like Vesterbro and Nørrebro. Georg Nørregaard, “Østerbros Historie,” in København: For og nu, vol. V: Østerbro Nørrebro Vesterbro, at 5-24 at 24 (quote); Lebech, “Østerbros Bebyggelse,” in id. at 27-98 at 30.

7 but she could get herself glasses. It probably wouldn’t be that expensive—after all, the health insurance fund would pay some of it: Members of the 1,600 state-recognized and -subsidized health (or, literally, sickness) insurance funds (sygekasser), by virtue of paying a modest membership fee equal to about two or three days’ wages of an unskilled laborer (in 1936 the more than 2 million members paid less than 49 million crowns in contributions, while national and local gov-
ernment subsidies totalled 19 million crowns), were entitled to free medical treatment from a doctor, free treatment in a hospital, and a sickness benefit ranging between 40 øre and 6 crowns per day (depending on how high a premium the member chose to pay) not to exceed four-fifths of a member’s daily wages. The state contributed 2 crowns for each beneficiary member of the fund—defined as “persons without means of the working class and those men and women similarly situated to them economically such as smaller farmers, craftsmen, and other tradespeople, civil servants, and the like,” whereby “without means” was defined to be an annual income below 4,200 crowns in Copenhagen (approximately the annual wage of a skilled worker employed year round) and down to below 2,800 crowns in nonurban areas, and assets below 9,500 crowns for single persons and 14,500 crowns for family heads—and one-fourth of the funds’ expenditures on beneficiary members for doctor and hospital treatment and sickness benefits. Membership was made de facto obligatory by conditioning the receipt of old-age and disability pensions on membership in a sygekasse; by 1936 about 90 percent of the population above the age of 14 were covered. Lov Nr. 182 af 20. Maj 1933 om Folkeforsikring, sects. 6, 12, 13, 18, 36, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 992-1035 at 995 (quote), 999, 1000, 1003-1004, 1013 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1934); Bekendtgørelse til Vejledning om de Indtægts- og Formueforhold, der som Regel betinger en Persons Optagelse eller Forbliven i en anerkendt Sygekasse med Ret til gennem denne at nyde Tilskude fra Staten, in id., at 1389; Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1938, tab. 146 at 134 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1938); Danmarks sociale Lovgivning: 1891-1941, at 23, 27 (Copenhagen: Gad, n.d. [1941]); “90 Procent af Befolkningen er nu i Sygekaserne,” Politiken, Feb. 6, 1936, at 10:5-6; Jens Warming, Danmarks erhvervs- og samfundslov: En lærebog i Danmarks statistik 537-39 (Copenhagen: Gad, 1930). For a contemporaneous description of the Danish health insurance system as part of the overall social security system, see Rothery, Denmark at 18-28. Not all health insurance funds provided assistance toward the purchase of glasses, which was voluntary rather than statutorily required. Danmarks sociale Lovgivning: 1891-1941, at 25, 32.

8 it was totally senseless for a girl like her to be engaged to an unemployed office worker who isn’t even in a labor union: Labor unions
in the nineteenth century established unemployment insurance systems for their members. When the parliament enacted a statute in 1907 authorizing subsidies to these systems, the unemployment insurance funds were required to be separated from the unions, although each union heavily subsidized the fund with jurisdiction over the occupation or industry organized by that union. Although unions required their members to join the appropriate fund and virtually all union workers (and almost all industrial and craft workers) were insured, workers who were not unionists were entitled to membership in their occupational unemployment insurance fund, but some funds required them to pay higher fees on the grounds that experience showed that they were more likely than unionists to become unemployed. Danmarks sociale Lovgivning: 1891-1941, at 76-80. A well-known novel set in Copenhagen in the 1930s describes an office worker who joined a union, although it had no collective bargaining agreement with her employer, because she “had an obsession with insurance—she had life, fire, theft, and accident insurance, so why not unemployment insurance.” Ditlevsen, Man gjorde et barn fortræd at 21. Official Danish unemployment statistics did not include the uninsured. In Copenhagen the rate of unemployment among insured office and store workers was considerably lower than the average for all occupations: in 1935, 6.9 percent and 16.2 percent, respectively (and 7.3 percent for all insured store and office workers in Denmark and 22.1 percent for all insured workers in Denmark). Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 185 at 140-41; Jørgen Dich, Arbejdsløshedsproblemet i Danmark 1930-1938: Betænkning afgivet af Socialministeriets statsvidenskabelige Konsulent app. 3 at 377 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1939).

8 you know what a man working in an office earns: At this time the majority of office and retail store workers were not unionized; consequently, according to the Handels- og Kontormedhjælpforbund, starvation wages and much longer hours than among unionized workers prevailed at many work places. “Lønnen i Butiken og paa Kontoret,” Politiken, Nov. 10, 1936, at 10:2. A special survey of the wages of about 28,000 full-time year-round private-sector office and store workers in Copenhagen in 1936 revealed the following average annual wages (in crowns): male office employees—3,402; male shop employees—2,962; unmarried female office employees—2,333; married
female office employees—2,280; married female shop employees—2,025; unmarried female shop employees—1,822. “Hvem er Larsen?” *Kulturkampen* 8(4):2 (September 1938). At the 1930 census, 24,776 subordinate office and shop employees were recorded in Copenhagen and Frederiksberg; in 1936 the total membership of the Handels- og Kontormedhjælper Forbund in Copenhagen and Frederiksberg was 9,021. For office workers alone the figures were 9,406 and 2,538. Københavns statistiske Kontor, *Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937*, tab. 18 at 23, tab. 188 at 144.

9 *Three different pictures of the king of Rome*: Napoleon gave his son, born in 1811, this title; there are many famous paintings of him.

9 *Hjørring*: A town in the far north of Jutland.

9 *Solrød beach*: Solrød strand is located on Zealand about 20 miles southwest of Copenhagen.

9 *the song about Larsen*: This song, written by Sven Møller Kristensen with music by Hermann D. Koppel and Bernhard Christensen, was performed in Kjeld Abell’s play *Melodien der blev væk* (Copenhagen: Monde, 1935). This enormously popular and controversial play about the alienation of the little white-collar worker during the 1930s had its premiere on September 6, 1935. The play opens with the song, which begins: “Here’s a song about a man named Larsen,/it’s him you meet on the street every day,/and he had no luck with life, which he otherwise had expected much of. It should be so good, and in fact it’s so rotten.” *Id.* at 9. At a meeting of teachers, some of whom felt that their pupils should be forbidden to see the play, Abell himself stated that “Larsen is all of us, all who are walking on a treadmill, created by dissatisfaction.” “Pædagogerne i skarp Strid om Melodien, der blev væk,” *Politiken*, Feb. 12, 1936, at 6:3-6. An adaptation of the play by Frances Sinclair and Ronald Adam was first produced in London in 1936, which opened with “Song of Johnson.” Kjeld Abell, *The Melody That Got Lost* 15 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1939). On the play, see above “Introduction” at pp. 25, 27.

9 “We’re brought up to be considerate and modest,” Nielsen said. “That’s what’s destroying our existence. We have to be ruthless, cynical, and cold-hearted”: The cynical narrator-vagabond of Klitgaard’s semiautobiographical novel makes similar utterances—for example, that he’d gotten involved in being enslaved because he’d been brought up to submit to compulsion. Mogens Klitgaard, *Gud mildner luften for
de klippede før 42 (Copenhagen: Carit Andersen, n.d. [1938]).

10 they’d then have to buy a treadle sewing machine on install­ments: At this time the abuses associated with the purchase of consumer goods, especially cars, vacuum cleaners, furniture, books, and radios, were a subject of intense controversy in Denmark. See, e.g., “Den sunde og den usunde Afbetaling,” *Politiken*, Nov. 17, 1936, at 4:3-6.

10 abortionists: Before the enactment of an abortion law in 1937 (which went into effect on October 1, 1939) permitting abortions for medical (the mother’s life or health), ethical (pregnancies caused by criminal acts), and hereditary reasons, it was illegal in Denmark to perform or undergo an abortion. However, juries regularly acquitted mothers and case law increasingly permitted physicians to perform abortions based on the principle of *jus necessitatis*, which authorized the sacrifice of the lesser good (the child’s life) for the greater good (the mother’s life), though defining that criterion caused much confusion. *Lov Nr. 163 af 18. Maj 1937 om Foranstaltninger i Anledning af Svangerskab; Danmarks sociale lovgivning* at 143-46; Vera Skalts and Magna Norgaard, “Abortion Legislation in Denmark,” in *Abortion and the Law* 144-78 (David Smith ed.; Cleveland: Press of Western Reserve University, 1967).

11 the parable of the unfaithful servant: Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-48

11 the Søndermark: Laid out in the eighteenth century, this park adjoins the Zoo and is south of Frederiksberg Palace Gardens; the first playground was added at the end of the nineteenth century. Søndermarken is more like a forest than a park and is wilder than the neat Frederiksberg Gardens, from which it is separated by Roskildevej. Both parks are part of the grounds surrounding Frederiksberg Castle. Else­where Klitgaard reported that as boys “we tobogganed there in the lovely hills.” Mogens Klitgaard, “På skovtur i København,” in *Ekstra Bladet*, July 3, 1937, reprinted in Mogens Klitgaard, *Hverdagens musik: Udvalgte noveller og skitser* 91-96 (Sven Møller Kristensen ed.; Copenhagen: Fremad, 1989).

12 Pledging her salary as security: A **forskrivning** is a document by which a party assumes an obligation. To make clear that Lunde­gaard’s plan is to pledge his daughter’s future salary payments as security for the loan from Salomonsen, **gageforskrivning** has been translated as above. It appears that Danish law does not regulate wage assign­
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ments in the private sector. Email from Thomas Lemvig, attorney in Fredericia (quoting Bernhard Gomard, Obligationsret, pt. 3, at 104 (Copenhagen: JØF, 1993)). The Danish Parliamentary Library (Folkestingsets Bibliotek) could find no information on the subject, but expressed the opinion that it had not been regulated at private places of employment. Email from Eva Nancke, Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv (July 5, 2001). Even if it had been regulated in some manner in the 1930s, presumably it was not prohibited—otherwise it would be implausible that Lundegaard (even apart from his forgery of his daughter’s signature) and especially Salomonsen could expect that Anna’s employer, a large department store, would go along with the scheme and pay out Anna’s salary to Salomonsen. Later Salomonsen himself uses the term “assignment” (anvisning). See below note to p. 49. The degree of legal protection of workers’ wages against their own creditors varied greatly internationally. José González Blanco, Protection of Wages 195-210 (Geneva: La Tribune de Genève, 1959). A number of state labor-protective laws in the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century declared null and void any contracts to pledge future wages to secure loans. For example, the Supreme Court of Indiana upheld, as against a claim of unconstitutional deprivation of liberty of contract, a state law (1899 Ind. Acts ch. cxxiv, sect. 4, at 193, 194) prohibiting such assignments on the grounds that the situation of “ordinary” laborers and wage-earners “renders them peculiarly liable to imposition and injustice at the hands of employers, unscrupulous tradesmen, and others who are willing to take advantage of their condition. Where future wages may be assigned, the temptation to anticipate their payment, and to sacrifice them for an inadequate consideration, is often very great. Such assignments would, in many cases, leave the laborer or wage-earner without present or future means of support. By removing the strongest incentive to faithful service,—the expectation of pecuniary reward in the near future,—their effect would be alike injurious to the laborer and his employer. It is clear that the object of the act of 1899 . . . was the protection of wage-earners from oppression, extortion, or fraud on the part of others, and from the consequences of their own weakness, folly, or improvidence.” International Text-Book Co. v. Weissinger, 65 N.E. 521,523 (Ind. 1902). See generally, Lindley Clark and Stanley Tracy, Laws Relating to Payment of Wages 31-33 (U.S. Bureau. of Labor Statistics, Bull. No.

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408, 1926). Most states in the United States still regulate the assignment of wages. For an especially detailed statute that requires employers to process wage assignments that comply with the statute’s procedures, see Illinois Wage Assignment Act, 740 Illinois Compiled Statutes 170 (2001).

13 It was during these days that a well-known editor of a paper in Copenhagen wrote that a quick little war would have a refreshing effect, create business, production, work for idle hands, earnings: This editor could not be identified, but another well-known leftist novel about office workers during the 1930s that appeared just a year before Klitgaard’s book contained an almost identical passage in which an employer mentions to an employee that “a quick little war . . . can take care of everything and get business humming.” Harald Herdal, Der er noet i Vejen 9 (N.p.: Funkis, 1936). Later the first-person narrator says that there are others who agree that only a new war can save “hard-pressed business.” Id. at 82.

13 If we were just certain of being kept out like during the world war: Denmark was not a belligerent during World War I.

13 Do you remember Copenhagen in 1915-16—life was worth living then: While workers’ real wages declined during the war, the group of corner-cutting nouveaux-riches businessmen, whose incomes especially soared in 1915 and 1916, were derisively known as Gullaschbaroner. Svend Aage Hansen and Ingrid Henriksen, Sociale brydninger 1914-39, at 42-46, in Dansk social historie, vol. 6 (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1980).

13 Then we’ll go boozing the whole night through: “Så solder vi den hele lange nat” is a song from the operetta “Frøken Tralala” performed at the revue theater Scala in Copenhagen in 1914; the melody is by Jean Gilbert and text by Johannes Dam and Poul Sarauw.

13 the soldier-boys’ families: The Danish word jenser, which derives from Jens, the most common male first name, has been a common name for Danish soldiers since the middle of the nineteenth century (see the British term “Tommy”). Ordbog over det danske Sprog 9:789 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994 [1927]).

13 when the steamship company stocks rose, war would come: During World War I, neutral Denmark’s steamship companies transporting wartime freight made “dizzying sums” and paid out huge dividends. Axel Breidahl and Axel Kjerulf, Københavnerliv gennem et
13 the six-day race: An indoor bicycle race in which two-rider teams rode continuously for six days; at least one member of the team had to be cycling at all times. The first such race in Copenhagen took place in February 1934. Breidahl and Kjerulf, *Københavnergennem et halvt Aarhundrede . . . 1912-1937*, at 472 (reprinting a newspaper article).

15-16 Obliging foreigners . . . old buildings: These opening paragraphs of chapter 2 appeared verbatim in the manuscript science-fiction novel that Klitgaard wrote in 1933 but never published and that was not published until 1968. The only deviations are that the earlier version lacked the four sentences beginning with “Its speech” and ending with “splendid city” and that the first version used “A spring evening” instead of “A February evening.” Mogens Klitgaard, *de sindssyges klode* 190-91 (Copenhagen: Carit Andersen, 1968). The appearance of these paragraphs in the earlier novel is a mystery in its own right since they have no connection to the preceding or succeeding text or to anything else in the novel.

15 Tivoli: This world-famous amusement park, which opened in 1843, is situated on remnants of the city’s old fortifications and moat between the main railroad station and City Hall Square. In reprisal for the destruction by the Danish resistance on June 22, 1944, of a factory producing arms for Germany—on the Riffelsyndicat, see below note to p. 109—the Nazi occupiers executed eight resistance fighters and on June 25 the Schalburgkorps, Danish Nazis carrying out counter-sabotage reprisals, destroyed most of Tivoli with bombs and fire. Jensen and Smidt, *Rammerne sprænges* at 33-35; Franz Wendt, *Besættelse og Atomtid: 1939-1965*, at 215-15, in *Danmarks historie*, vol. 14 (Copenhagen: Politken, 1966).

15 Langelinie pier: A very popular waterside promenading area with a view of the port.

15 it’s the city that appears under the item: Payment under an affiliation order in the English state budget: An alimentationsbidrag is a payment, pursuant to a court order, by a man found to be the father of an “illegitimate” child. According to Prof. Elias Bredsdorff, it was known in the 1930s that when Danish women complained that British
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sailors had impregnated them, the British government paid child sup­port payments. Telephone interview (May 28, 2001). An extensive search, however, turned up no such item in the very detailed published budgets of the Royal Navy or the Foreign Office. 1937 Civil Estimates and Estimates for Revenue Departments for the year ending 31st March 1938, in Accounts and Papers, vol. 19, no. 58: 1936-37 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1937); Navy Estimates 1937 in Accounts and Papers, vol. 19, no. 58: 1936-37 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1937). In 1919, when many warships returning English and French prisoners of war visited Copenhagen, newspapers were replete with articles charging that “Langelinie is literally being besieged by a certain category of the city's young women, especially in the evening,” and that the “ill-mannered Copenhagen girls” would not let the foreign sailors in peace. Breidahl and Kjerulf, Københavnerliv gennem et halvt Aarhundrede . . . 1912-1937, at 225 (reprinting newspaper articles).

15 the amateur society whose gala attire’s covered in the press: Klitgaard’s biographer suggests that the group was not an organization of amateur enthusiasts of any sort, but merely people trying to pass themselves off as part of high society. Klitgaard uses the English “society.” Email from Leon Jaurnow (July 4, 2001).

15 cream-colored milanaise: A type of artificial silk.

15 Babbitville: The corresponding fictitious Danish epitome of narrow-minded petty-bourgeois provincialism is Pærekøbing. It is derived from pæredansk (“very Danish”) and the place-suffix -købing (“small market town”).

15 communal gardens: Kolonihaver are colonies of small allot­ment gardens that began to be set aside in the 1880s, especially around cities, as part of the conservative party’s policy of self-help to improve workers’ conditions. By 1908 the movement organized itself in the Kolonihaveforbundet for Danmark and by the 1930s there were tens of thousands of kolonihaver with tiny wooden houses used for recreation. Dybdahl, De nye klasse: 1870-1913, at 416-19; Erik Rasmussen, Velfærdstaten på Vej: 1913-1939, at 384, in Danmarks historie, vol. 13 (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1965); http://www.kolonihave. dk. Alone in Copenhagen, there were almost 16,000 gardens in 1936, two-thirds of them rented from the government; the average size was 350 square meters and the annual rent 6 øre per square meter. Whereas in earlier years the colony gardeners had been almost exclusively industrial wage
workers, by the 1930s office workers and civil servants had also become active. Københavns statistiske Kontor, *Statistisk Aarbog for København* . . . 1936-1937, tab. 231 at 185. On plans at the time to expand the available area, see “Mægtig Kreds af Sommerhus-Kolonier omkring København,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Feb. 1, 1936, at 1:1-2, 2:2-3. In addition to this idyllic side of 40,000 Copenhageners’ living in such tiny houses in the summer, many thousands lived illegally in these totally substandard shacks year-round in the 1930s because they lacked other housing. Heiberg, *2 Vær. straks* at 35-39. Denmark has per capita more allotment and leisure gardeners than any other country in the world. http://www.jardins-familiaux.org/den/den_1_e.htm.

15 *fortifications that’ve been demolished and some that haven’t:* The fortifications that were built under King Christian IV in the early seventeenth century were in large part demolished after 1872 in connection with the city’s expansion; their traces can be found in the ring of parks extending from Tivoli to the Citadel. Lebech, “Fra de gamle forstæder til voldkvartererne.” The most prominent remaining fortifications are the ramparts on Christianshavn, where Lundegaard is wandering toward the end of the novel.

15 *the city that’s notorious for its treatment of orphaned children:* Klitgaard may be referring to his own unpleasant experience between the ages of ten and fourteen living in the Royal Orphanage in Copenhagen. See above “Introduction” at p. viii.

15 *the city that builds layer-cake houses:* In the cubist style with horizontal lines, the original *Lagkagehus* was built between 1928 and 1931 in Christianshavn and became one of Copenhagen’s sights. Rasmussen, *Velfærdstaten på Vej: 1913-1939*, at 414.

15 *starlings’ nesting boxes:* Architect Holger Jacobsen designed an art-deco inspired, towerlike new stage of the Royal Theatre, known as *Staerkassen* in Copenhagen, which was built between 1928 and 1931. The expression was coined by Elna Munch, a Radical member of parliament (and the first woman ever to give a speech to that body), who, during a Folketing debate on March 7, 1928, called the proposed addition a “gigantic starlings’ nesting box.” On April 1, 1928, 20,000 people demonstrated against it. Breidahl and Kjerulf, *Københavnerliv gennem et halvt Aarhundrede* . . . 1912-1937, at 194, 405 (reprinting newspaper articles). Criticism of its exterior and interior led to its closure after two years, but it was reopened shortly after the end of
15-16 but uses a collection of barracks next to a gas plant as a tuberculosis hospital: Øresundshospitalet, Copenhagen’s tuberculosis hospital, was located next to Østre Gasværk (and originally also next to a pig slaughterhouse) and had long housed some of its beds in so-called Döcker-tents or barracks, which were wooden skeletons covered with felt. J. P. Trap, Kongeriget Danmark I: 266 (separately paginated section “Hovedstaden Kjøbenhavn og Frederiksberg”) (3rd ed.; Copenhagen: Gad, 1906); Jensen and Smidt, Rammerne sprænges at 204. Klitgaard himself was a tuberculosis patient there in 1933. See above “Introduction” at p. xiii.

16 800,000 . . . people: The population of Copenhagen, including Frederiksberg and Gentofte, in 1936 was 846,900 or 23 percent of the entire Danish population. Danmarks Statistik, Befolknings fordeling efter køn og alder den 5. November 1935, tab. 1 at 6-7 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1937). For an extended argument that the administrative, monetary, commercial, military, scientific, educational, and artistic concentration in Copenhagen surpassed that in Paris or any other country, see C. C. Clausen, “København og Frederiksberg,” in Danmark Land og Folk: Historisk-topografisk-statistisk Haandbog 4:1-29 at 1-14 (separately paginated).

18 the pastor’s wife: Pastorinden may merely be an ironic-derogatory epithet for a self-righteous busybody—as indeed “sister” itself may be.

19 Nielsen picked up pins: The game being played here is a unique Danish specialty, developed about a century ago, called pin-billiards (keglebillard), which involves 5 pins placed in a diamond shape at the center of the table. The point is to hit the red ball against the white ball, which in turn must knock over the pins in the middle. If the red ball knocks over a pin, the player gets minus points. A player keeps playing as long as he keeps knocking over pins or hitting both white balls with the red ball. http://www.ddbu.dk/BTC/Keglebillard/Keglebillard.html.

19 trotters: The trotting season in Denmark in 1936 began on March 29 and lasted into December. At the two Copenhagen race tracks, there were 34 racing days at Charlottenlund and 36 at Amager.


22 *He desperately held on to the number 18. And here add 4—twenty-two. Carom twenty-six*: A player gets 2 points for knocking over a pin, 4 points when the red cue ball hits both white balls, called red (*ægte rødt*), and 4 points when the two white balls hit each other, called white (*blegt*). Those were the rules in the 1930’s; today players do not get 4 points for white. Email from Jimmy Lauridsen, webmaster, Danish Billiard Federation (May 19, 2001).

23 *Tycho Brahe had had an artificial nose*: The Danish astronomer (1546-1601) lost a part of his nose in a duel and replaced it with one made of gold and silver.

24 *the snow shovelers are getting a little work to do*: See “Tøvejret redder Danmark fra Trafik-Sammenbrud,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Feb. 17, 1936, at 1:1-4. In cities snow shovelling was a way for the unemployed to earn a day’s wage (whereas in the rural areas farmhands were compelled to perform this work as part of their employers’ legal duty to furnish a certain number of men to shovel). “Brevet fra Landet: Snefoged,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Feb. 28, 1936, at 2:3-4. There were complaints in 1936 that snow removal was still regulated according to a statute from 1904 that antedated the advent of modern equipment. *Lov Nr. 96 af den 22. April 1904 om Sneastning*, sect. 15, in *Lovtidende for Aaret 1904*, at 411-17 at 415 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1904).

24 *Deer Park*: Jaegersborg Dyrehave in Klampenborg 6 miles north of Copenhagen is an enclosed forest, which dates back to 1669 when King Frederik III had a smaller deer park created on that site.

24 *Gammel Strand*: Old Strand is a picturesque street with old houses along Frederiksholms Canal, which in the early Middle Ages was the coastline and was long a fish market. In the Danish text, the abbreviation *Gl.* is used for *Gammel*.

24 *Ørsted Park*: Laid out in the 1870s with the remains of the then recently dismantled ramparts and located adjacent to the old center of Copenhagen, the park is named for the physicist Hans Christian Ørsted (1772-1851).

24 *the English king’s been appointed an admiral in the Danish
fleet: King George V having died on January 20, 1936, the king in question was the newly crowned Edward VIII. The title of admiral is used as an honorary title for royal persons. Lademanns leksikon 1:40 (Copenhagen: Lademann 1972). According to the Lord Chamberlain of Denmark, Edward VIII was made an honorary admiral in the Royal Danish Navy on January 29, 1936; King George V had also been an honorary admiral. Letter from S. Haslund-Christensen, Hofmarskallen, Amalienborg Palace (June 14, 2001). According to the director of the Royal Danish Naval Museum, it was “a normal procedure to make friendly monarchs honorary admirals. . . . The main purpose was to make a friendly gesture to a maritime foreign monarch” entitling him to wear an admiral’s uniform on suitable occasions. Email from Ole Lisberg Jensen (June 8, 2001) (quote); email from Anders Olsen (June 7, 2001).

24 “War in Africa and rearmament have created a year of growth,” says the Commerce Bank’s annual report: See “Krigen i Afrika og Oprustningen skabte er Fremgangens Aar,” Politiken, Feb. 13, 1936, at 13:5-6. Handelsbanken was Denmark’s second largest bank.


24 Lord Chamberlain’s Department: The Hofmarskallat is in charge of the monarch’s household. The current Lord Chamberlain sees no connection between these events and his predecessor’s workload. Letter from S. Haslund-Christensen (July 24, 2001).

24 police headquarters: Politigården was built between 1918 and 1924 in the neoclassic style. http://www.kbhpol.dk/PG.htm.

25 Vesterbro Street: Vesterbrogade is a main artery running from Frederiksberg Gardens into the center of Copenhagen near City Hall. In 1935 (and from the beginning of the twentieth century) it was the third most populous street in Copenhagen; Klitgaard lived in a garret on Vesterbrogade in 1936 while writing There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 11 at 11; Mow., “Min Bog var for mig Knald eller Fald—siger Mogens Klitgaard,” Berlingske Aftenavis, June 9, 1937.

25 Strøget: A continuous stretch of five shopping streets (Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv, and Østergade) running between City Hall Square and Kongens Nytorv in central
**Notes**

Copenhagen; though today it is exclusively a pedestrian street, in 1936 there was also motorized traffic. *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Feb 29, 1936, at 5. See generally, Mogens Lebech, “Strøget,” in *København: Før og nu*, vol. II: *Gammel-København* at 73-134.

26 *King's Gardens*: Kongens Have, which surrounds the seventeenth-century Rosenborg Palace and is located a little to the west of Kongens Nytorv, is the oldest in Copenhagen and noted for its statue of Hans Christian Andersen.

27 *Lundegaard rode his bicycle from address to address*: By the early 1920s, Copenhagen was the world's leading bicycle-riding city, especially as a means of daily transportation among blue- and white-collar workers. Andreasen et al., “Københavns Kommunes Administration” at 44-69. Even by 1910, one of the reasons that the owners of private trolley systems did not oppose their municipalization was their expectation that bicycles would soon make significant inroads into trolleys' passenger volume. Jensen, *Underfælles ansvar* at 123. By the end of 1936, there were 400,000 bicycles in Copenhagen and fewer than 20,000 automobiles. Københavns statistiske Kontor, *Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937*, tab. 127 at 97. For a description of the ubiquity of bicycles in Copenhagen at that time, see Rothery, *Denmark* at 6-8. In 1936 it was also estimated that there were 44 bicycles for every 100 persons in Denmark, the highest such ratio in the world (Holland at 43/100 being second). Knud Gulstad, “Cyklisternes Kaar i Danmark,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Jan. 18, 1936, at 9:2-4. By the 1930s, the bicycle had become “a fully integrated feature of daily transport for the broad masses” in Denmark. Hans Kryger Larsen and Carl-Axel Nilsson, “Consumption and Production of Bicycles in Denmark 1890-1980,” *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 32:143-58 at 143 (1984).

29 *contracts that have to be given as security for a loan at the bank*: The firm was using accounts receivable as collateral for a loan.

29 *municipal court*: Copenhagen's inferior or lower court.

32 *Vestre prison*: Vestre fængsel, the Copenhagen city jail, is located adjacent to Vestre Cemetery (see below p. 34), about a mile or two from central Copenhagen. Western Prison was built in 1895 and considerably expanded in 1918; it is constructed on the panopticon model. http://www.kriminalforsorgen.dk/uk_web/uk_info/prisons/krim0017.htm
yellow winter aconite: Also called New Year’s Gift because it often blooms while snow is still on the ground, *Eranthis hiemalis*, belonging to the genus *Eranthis* of the buttercup family *Ranunculaceae*, is one of the earliest flowering bulbs in Europe and Asia.

The lockout’s also arrived. It’s thrown 125,000 men out of work, in addition to the 140,000 who already were. In 1936 the single largest strike/lockout of the decade was prompted by unions’ demand for raises for low-paid workers. It lasted from February 23 to March 30, when 100,000 workers were locked out. The dispute was settled by compulsory arbitration. “Klokker 17 standser Arbejdet,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Feb. 22, 1936, at 1:1; “Fabrik-Fløjterne lød i Morges over København—efter seks uger Tavshed,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Mar. 29, 1936, at 1:1; “Stor-Lockouten kostede Arbejderne 25 Mill. Kr.,” *Politiken*, Sept. 12, 1936, at 2:2-3; Rasmussen, *Velfærdsstater på Vej: 1913-1939*, at 481; Walter Galenson, *The Danish System of Labor Relations: A Study in Industrial Peace* 132 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952).

Vestre Cemetery: Situated south of Frederiksberg Garden and southwest of central Copenhagen, *Vestre Kirkegaard*, Denmark’s largest cemetery at 54 hectares, was opened in 1870 and expanded many times. In 1851 burials within the city ramparts were prohibited and the cemetery that had long served as the city’s main cemetery was running out of space. At the time the municipality of Copenhagen bought the land for the new cemetery, it was located in Valby outside the city limits. Many famous Danes are buried there including novelist Herman Bang. Jensen and Smidt, *Rammerne sprænges* at 145.

Phosgene: Carbonyl chloride was first used as a poison gas in World War I by Germany in 1915. It was considered especially lethal because it was the gas for which the deadliest dose was lowest, although modern gas masks were able to neutralize it effectively. “For sent at anskaffe sig en Gasmaske, naar Krigen staar for Døren,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Jan. 8, 1936, at 10:2-6.

Hobro: A medium-sized town in northern Jutland at the inland end of Mariager Fjord.

The health insurance fund doctor comes later in the day. He’s in a huge hurry, darts right through the doors without looking to the right or the left, right to the bed where Lundegaard’s lying, asks for his health insurance fund card . . . and is out the door again like lightning.
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Approximately one-third of the health insurance funds with more than one-half of all members paid general practitioners a fixed annual amount per member; the rest paid on a fee for service basis. *Danmarks sociale Lovgivning: 1891-1941*, at 25-26. Presumably Lundegaard is a member of a fund that pays his doctor a fixed annual sum.

35 *It was while they had the business; back then they weren’t in the health insurance fund, but in sickness insurance: Sygeforsikring* was a private insurance policy with an insurance company that required higher contributions than the state-approved and state-subsidized health insurance fund (sygekasse) and protected the financially better off against economic losses resulting from sickness. Lundegaard’s income as a merchant may have been too high to entitle and require him to be a beneficiary member of the health insurance fund. He may therefore have been a member of a sickness insurance association (sygeforening), which provided insurance for “people of means” (bemidlede). Lov Nr. 182 af 20. Maj 1933 om Folkeforsikring, sects. 11 and 31 in *Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933*, at 998, 1010.

36 *Princess Trail:* Prinsessestien is a nature trail between Lyngby and Frederiksdal a few miles north of Copenhagen.

37 *Castle Mounds:* Voldstedet presumably refers to Frederiksdal Palace, which grew out of the medieval Hjortholm, which was the castle of the bishop of Roskilde located near Lake Fure. The fortified castle was destroyed during the civil war of 1534-36. King Christian VII in 1739 made a present of Frederiksdal to the first Count Schulin and thus provided the occasion for the building of Frederiksdal Slot in 1744-45. [http://www.ltk.dk/ltktst/profil/sevaerdigheder/tre_slotte.htm](http://www.ltk.dk/ltktst/profil/sevaerdigheder/tre_slotte.htm).

37 *Lake Fure:* Fureso, Denmark’s deepest lake, is located 15 km. northwest of Copenhagen.

38 *Norrebro:* A working-class section of Copenhagen.

39 *when you’re simply forced to pay money to the health insurance fund:* As explained earlier (see above notes to pp. 7, 35), persons “of means” were not entitled to be beneficiary members of a health insurance fund, but the insurance law of 1933 required them to become passive members (unless they were beneficiary members of sickness insurance association) in order to receive an old-age or disability pension. Such obligatory passive membership cost a nominal 2.40 crowns per annum and entitled such members to become active members later in life if their health and income deteriorated. *Danmarks*
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**sociale Lovgivning** at 24.

40 white-collar people: The insulting *Flipmennesker* resembles another fictional communist's use of *flipproletar* in a well-known novel that had appeared in 1936; see above “Introduction” at p. xxvii n. 64.

42 Helsingor Street: One of the municipal baths was located on Helsingersgade (Elsinore Street) just outside central Copenhagen near Kongens Have.

43 Óresund Hospital: Copenhagen’s municipal tuberculosis hospital. See above note to pp. 15-16.

45 a trolley: Trolley service was inaugurated in Copenhagen in 1863 and terminated on April 23, 1972. Privately operated lines were taken over by the municipality in 1911. Andreasen et al., “Københavns Kommunes Administration” at 58 [no pagination]. In 1936-37, Copenhagen trolleys transported 130,000,000 passengers; a ticket cost 20 øre (25 øre including a transfer); a monthly ticket cost 10 crowns. *Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937*, tab. 117 at 89; tab. 138 at 104.

47 now we’ve gotten the Little Belt bridge: After decades of discussion, work on the 1178-meter bridge connecting Jutland and the island of Funen began in 1925 and it was dedicated on May 14, 1935. “Da Lyntog sprængte Baandet over Broen,” *Politiken*, May 15, 1935, at 1:2-6. It was one of the projects that “filled... contemporaries with joy and pride.” Rasmussen, *Velfærdsstaten på Vej: 1913-1939*, at 9.

47 now we’ve gotten the lightning train: The high-speed diesel train was also introduced in 1935 and was made viable by the opening of the Little Belt bridge, which made possible continuous traffic to the mainland at 120 kilometers per hour unencumbered by a ferry voyage from Funen. It was predicted at the time that it would “revolutionize” Danish railway transport. “Med Lyntog til Indvielsen af Lille Bælts-Broen,” *Politiken*, May 5, 1935, at 13:3-4. The red-painted lightning train improved the Danish State Railway’s image in the 1930s even though in fact few people used it. http://www.dsb.dk/universer/trainspotting/nostalgi/lyntog.htm.

49 I’ll have to collect the money through the salary assignment: See above note to p. 12.

49 He knows his man: The phrase *Han kender sine pappenheimere* (“He knows his Pappenheimers”) is taken from a German saying (*er kennt seine Pappenheimer*) concerning General Gottfried Heinrich Pappenheim in the Thirty Years War.
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49 Nice and Menton: Menton is the city next to Nice on the Riviera.

51 City Hall Square: Located adjacent to Tivoli and near the main railway station, it was the nodal point of the trolley system and the center of modern Copenhagen.

51 Gammel Kong Road: Gl. Kongevej (Old King’s Road); Bager Lane: Bagerstræde (Baker Lane).


53 Frederiksberg: It dates back to 1651 when Frederik III gave 20 peasants of Dutch origin from the nearby island of Amager the right to settle in and cultivate the previously royal land. Frederiksberg is an administratively separate municipality, which, after Copenhagen had incorporated several other areas at the turn of the twentieth century, became an enclave completely surrounded by Copenhagen and part of Greater Copenhagen. Efforts by Copenhagen in the first decades of the twentieth century to incorporate Frederiksberg—prompted in part by annoyance over the fact that Frederiksberg residents who worked in Copenhagen paid a lower tax rate than Copenhagen residents because their tax rate was governed by the tax rate in their municipality of residence and Frederiksberg had lower tax rates—failed to persuade the parliament to act. Conversely, as a relatively well-to-do municipality, Frederiksberg was opposed to becoming subject to Copenhagen’s social problems and higher taxes. Jensen and Smidt, Rammerne sprænges at 276; Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 290-93. As an indicator of Frederiksberg’s relative affluence: in tax year 1936-37, 12.2 percent of the income of Copenhageners, but 27.3 percent of those in Frederiksberg was reported by those earning 15,000 crowns or more; in 1935, their average income was 34 percent and their average assets 154 percent higher than those of their counterparts in Copenhagen. Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937, tab. 209 at 170, tab. 212 at 171.

53 Kongens Enghave: Located in the southwestern corner of Co-
penhagen, King’s Meadow was mainly built during the interwar period as a kind of “ideal community” for the working-class population.

53 they’ve begun to paint garden houses: Little summer houses or bowers in gardens.

53 Botanic Garden: The Botanic Garden, originally founded in 1600, is a Copenhagen University institute that maintains a collection of living plants for research, education, and general information purposes to contribute to increasing knowledge about plants and promote interest in nature.

53 the appeals court attorney: A landsretssagfører is entitled to litigate before the intermediate appeals court, on which see below note to p. 138.

54-55 her eyes blue, gray, a bit protruding, have what make men interested; men even have a special designation for that kind of eyes: Presumably the reference is to “bedroom eyes” (sovekammerøjne).

56 the Little Mermaid: Sculpted by Edvard Eriksen and erected on August 23, 1913, den lille Havfrue, based on a tale by Hans Christian Andersen, is one of Denmark’s leading tourist attractions.


58 Godthaab Road: It is a peculiarity of Frederiksberg, reflecting its greater affluence, that almost none of its streets bears the prosaic name “street” (gade); instead, they largely bear the more old-fashioned and rural names “road” (vej) or “avenue” (allé). Such names as “Good Hope” (Godthaab) also hearken back to the time when country houses in Frederiksberg bore such names. Erling Stensgaard, “Frederikssbergs Historie,” in København: Før og nu: vol. VI: 5-40 at 25.

58 a tipple: Gewesen is a nonsense word adopted from German (the past participle of the German infinitive of “be”) that was used by the Danish playwright Kjeld Abell and others in the 1930s. Telephone interview with Elias Bredsdorff, Apr. 9, 2001.

59 Kongens Nytorv: The King’s New Market Square is Copenhagen’s biggest and one of its most popular squares.
59 The war in Abyssinia: Italy under Mussolini invaded Ethiopia in October 1935 and, after a ruthlessly destructive campaign using modern weapons (including poison gas) against a people without them, occupied and annexed it in May 1936. See, e.g., “Mussolini: Krigen er endt: Abessinien er italiensk!,” Politiken, May 6, 1936, 1:2-6.

60 Øster Street: Østergade (East Street) is one of the shopping streets making up Stroget.

60 Højbro Square: Højbroplads (High Bridge Square), located off Strøget, is well known for its statute of Copenhagen’s founder, Bishop Absalon, and daily flower market.

60 the state-owned pawnbrokerage: Det kongelige Assistenshus was established in 1688 as a private money-lending business, but in 1753 it became a state institution originally conceived as a means of alleviating poverty, or, in the words of its semi-official history, “a sound safety valve in the social machinery.” E. Snorrason, “Forord,” in H. Thueslev, Det kongelige assistenshus: Københavns Assistenshus og anden Pantelånervirksomhed v (Copenhagen: Gad, 1976). Pursuant to section 15 of Law No. 272 of May 6, 1921 on Pantelånervirksomhed og Handel med brugte Genstande, in Lovtidende for Aaret 1921, at 825-29 at 828 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1922), pawnbrokers’ lawful interest rate beginning on January 1, 1936, was reduced to 1.5 percent monthly (from 5 percent in 1921); at this low level this business almost disappeared and the Assistenshus regained its de facto monopoly status. Driving private pawnbrokers out of business was in part a function of the perception that they provided outlets for stolen goods. As the business of the Assistenshus declined in the post-World War II period, it was terminated in 1974. Thueslev, Det kongelige assistenshus at 256-316. Although the trend was clearly in favor of the Assistenshus, as late as 1935, the private pawnbrokers were still doing a greater volume of business. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Årbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 133 at 113.

60 the canal: Frederiksholms Canal.

60 Nybro Street: New Bridge Street (Nyborgade).

60 Nikolaj Church: Nikolaj Kirke was built in 1915-17 as a reconstruction of the old church, which had burned down in 1795.

60 Thorvaldsen’s Museum: The museum houses the works and collections of the Danish sculptor of Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844); opened in 1848, it was the first public art museum in Denmark.
60 Christiansborg: Christiansborg Palace houses the parliament and the supreme court; it was rebuilt in the early twentieth century after two earlier palaces burned down.

60 Storm Bridge: Stormbroen crosses Frederiksholmskanal at Stormgade connecting to Slotsholmen (Castle Islet), the island on which Christiansborg is located. Storm refers to an unsuccessful Swedish attack on this part of the city in 1659.

61 A piece of fabric: In 1936, more than half of all the items pawned at the Assistenshus were clothing. Thueslev, Det kongelige assistenshus at 321.

61 the credit rating agency: The Købmandsstandsens Oplysningsbureau—the Danish equivalent of Dun & Bradstreet—founded in 1870, is Denmark's oldest and largest credit agency.

65 the Copenhagen city government ought to be weeded out, says Nielsen. Now there's been another swindle. And it involved millions: In April 1936 a corruption scandal that had been going on for 10 years was uncovered involving the municipal organization selling necessities to the city's poor residents which had been established in 1917 to regulate the prices of fuel, herring, and other items during the world war, but which the municipality had been winding down since the 1920s. There were eleven sales places in Copenhagen, which in 1934-35 sold coal, coke, firewood, and petroleum for 821,867 crowns. The fraud amounted to less than a million crowns. “Københavns Kommune be­draget for over en halv Million Kr.,” Politiken, Apr. 3, 1936, at 1:2-6; “Ottosen hentes paa Hospitalet og gentager sin Tilstaelse,” Politiken, Apr. 3, 1936, at 1:3-4, 2:2; “Fantastiske Regnskaber i Raadhus­Svindelen,” Berlingske Aftenavis, April 16, 1936, at 1:1-6. See also “Torvedirektor Henning Koch suspenderes i Dag!” Berlingske Aftenavis, Apr. 3, 1936, at 1:5-6; “Kan ingen i Verden hindre et Komplots Bedrageri?” Berlingske Aftenavis, Apr. 3, 1936, at 1:1-3, 2:1-2; “Papir­Lappen, der afslørede Svindelen paa Raadhuset,” Berlingske Aftenavis, Apr. 4, 1936, at 1:1, 2:2; Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 158, 296-97.

65 a boy spending summer vacation in the country: A feriedreng (or feriebarn) was typically a poor schoolchild, especially from Copenhagen, spending summer holiday for up to six weeks with an unrelated family (at its expense) in the country, but could also mean, as in Lundegaard’s case, a child from a town spending the summer with relatives in the country. “25-30.000 Københavnerbørn paa Landet, 25-30.000
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66 *L’Hombre’s becoming fashionable again*: L’Hombre is a European card game dating back to seventeenth-century Spain.

66 *There they play straight-out*: *Ligeud* is played with 36 cards and 3 players. *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* 12:858 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994 [1931]).

66 *mousel*: *Mausel* is a German game of chance, which was widely played in Denmark especially in Jutland; its rules are pieced together from those of other games. *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* 13:1115 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1995 [1932]). The name is derived from an anti-semitic German slur, *Mauscheln*.

66 *spoons*: In *Bedstemor med slav i* (Grandma with a smack in it), a popular game in Denmark especially among children, matchsticks are placed in the middle of the table totalling one less than the number of players. A player with four cards of the same order tries to take a matchstick without the other players’ noticing; the player who winds up with no matchstick, loses. The expression *med slav* (Jutlandish for *slag*) means that the other players smack the table around the remaining matchsticks with an open hand. *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* 20:281 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1995 [1941]). The game is called “spoons” in the United States and “pig” in Britain.


67 *a serpentine dance*: Devised in 1891 by Loie Fuller and performed in a white silk dress.

68 *Here’s life and happy days, here the sun never sets*: “Her er liv og glade dage,” a common phrase, was popularized by Axel Breidahl’s use of it as the refrain in a song in a 1928 theater piece, *Stamherren*. Breidahl had taken it from a song sung in servicemen’s associations, “Kammeratens røde næse,” in which the reply to the question as to why the sun never set there was: “Because it’s good to be here.” T. Vogel-Jørgensen, *Bev ingede ord* 262 (2d ed.; Copenhagen: Gad, 1945 [1940]).
According to a novel about the Copenhagen slum proletariat in the 1930s, it was "the ordinary and usual song that was always sung mournfully and slowly when a kind of joie de vivre is at its high point among drunken people, the taverns’ hymn sung in drawling and drunken voices . . ." Harald Herdal, *Man skal jo leve* 1:53 (Copenhagen: Vendelkær, 1982 [1934]).

68 *The American band would've long ago struck up the one about the music being thirsty*: It was and is common for musicians to sing a little song ("*Musikken er tørstig*") about how thirsty they were to cause patrons to stand the musicians a beer.

68 *or the one about we want beer, we wanna have beer: Vi skal ha' øl* is a well-known drinking song.

68 440 pounds: A Danish *pund*, which was abolished as an official measure of weight in 1907 but continued to be used in speech, equals half a kilogram. The Danish text refers to 400 *pund*.

69 *Valencia*: A popular dance restaurant in Copenhagen.

69 *Isted Street*: Istedgade is a main street running through Vesterbro to the main railway station. Isted Heath (now located in Germany) was the site in 1850 of the bloodiest battle ever fought until then on Danish soil, occurring in the course of the wars over Schleswig-Holstein. Roar Skovmand, *Folkestyrets fødsel: 1830-1870*, at 298-301, in *Danmarks historie*, vol. 11 (John Danstrup and Hal Koch eds.; Copenhagen: Politiken, 1964). One of the most heavily populated streets in Vesterbro, it was a center of resistance to the Nazi occupation during the "people’s strike" of the summer of 1944, when residents barricaded the street and hung up banners across it reading: "Hitler can take the whole world, but Istedgade will never surrender." Wendt, *Besættelse og Atomtid: 1939-1965*, at 215-23; Ole Buhl, "Saadan bor de københavnske Arbejdere," *Land og Folk*, July 27, 1945, at 3:1-4.

71 *There are 100,000 unemployed*: In March 1936, 104,644 members of labor union unemployment funds representing 25.9 percent of the membership were unemployed in Denmark. International Labour Office, *Year-Book of Labour Statistics 1935-36*, tab. 1 at 5 (Geneva 1936). This rate of unemployment had peaked at 43.5 percent in January 1933. Niels Finn Christiansen at al., *Tiden 1914-1945*, at 252 (*Danmarks historie* vol. 7; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1988). In Copenhagen (including Frederiksberg) the number of unemployed in March 1936 was 32,911 or 20.8 percent of the members of union unemployment-
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ment funds. The highest rate of unemployment in Copenhagen was 35.5 percent and the greatest number of unemployed was 48,624, both recorded in December 1932. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 186 at 142.

76 a man who drove for a living: In Danish chauffør means both any automobile “driver,” including and specifically a taxi and truck driver, and a “chauffeur”; since the text appears to intend to refer to the man’s occupation and there were few private chauffeurs at the time, it is likely that he is a taxi or truck driver.

76 Sortedam Lake: Sortedamssoen (Black Pond Lake) is one of three lakes located just to the west of central Copenhagen.

77 there are the May Day demonstrations, the communists on one half of Fælleden and the social democrats on the other: Although the two parties held separate festivities, the Communists’ tone, as a consequence of their slogan of unity, was “gentler” than it had ever been before; that tone was, however, not echoed by the Social Democrats, whose leader, Prime Minister Stauning spoke out against the crushing of brother parties by a combination of reactionaries and communists. “Hellere mere Arbejde end forkortet Abejdstid [sic],” Politiken, May 2, 1936, at 6:2-5. In October 1935 the Social Democrats, having received more than 46 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections—their highest proportion ever—were the senior partner in a coalition government with the Social Liberals (Det radikale Venstre), while the Communists’ share was less than 2 percent. Fælledparken (Commons), Copenhagen’s first people’s park for sports, meetings, and concerts, had long been associated with the working class and May Day. Fælleden was originally part of a large pasture extending over most of what later became Nørrebro and a part of Østerbro. As this section was built up, the open area was reduced and its use expanded as a training and parade grounds for the military. By 1870 Nørrebro became a working-class section and workers were using Nøreffælled for picnics and games. On May 5, 1872, the historically important “Battle at Fælleden” took place, when the military and police sought to prevent Danish Social Democracy’s first outdoor meeting. In 1905, as more and more of the land was used to build hospitals and other buildings, the Copenhagen city council, prompted by the country’s first Social Democratic mayor, decided to transform the remaining space into a park before it was too late. The new People’s and Sports Park, as Fælleden was called, was
a reality by 1913 and became the traditional site of the Social Demo-
crats' May Day meetings. The Danish Communist Party did not begin
holding its May Day meetings there until 1932. Søren Federspiel et al.,
*Arbejdernes 1. maj: Arbejderbevægelsens internationale demonstra-
tionsdag i tekst og billeder 1890-1990*, at 34, 58-59, 89, 97-120 (Co-

77 And in the newspaper you can read that the freight market is
livelier: See “Mere Liv paa Fragtmarkedet,” *Politiken*, May 2, 1936, at
16:3.

77 the crisis is about to ease, the commodities markets are char-
terized by an upward tendency: See “Opadgaaende Tendens præger

77 And now you can buy gas masks. They’re not expensive at all.
You can get a nice gas mask for 12-15 crowns: See “En ‘Folks-
Gasmasker’ bringes i Handelen,” *Politiken*, May 15, 1936, at 3:1-2,
which quotes the interior minister to the effect that it was necessary to
discourage the thought of furnishing the civilian population with gas
masks because they would only create a false sense of security. For an
example of such efforts to create a false sense of security, see “Gas-
krigens Virkninger kan begrænses stærkt,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Mar.

77 And the travel agencies are advertising a Pentecost tour to the
Canary Islands and Africa: See “Pinsetur til de kanariske Øer og

77 Tivoli’s opening in pouring rain: Tivoli opened on May 7 in

77 Bakken’s also opening: Dyrehavsbakken (Deer Park Hill), lo-
cated in Klampenborg a few miles north of Copenhagen, is the world’s
oldest amusement park.

77 in Utterslev Marsh you can get yourself your the season’s first
mosquito bites: Utterslev Mose, located in the northwestern part of Co-
penhagen a couple of miles from the center of the city, is well known
for its rich variety of bird life. In 1931 the municipal council decided

77 The thermometer’s fluctuating between 7 and 13 degrees centi-
grade: Between 45 and 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

77 all of the spring’s glorious vegetables have arrived: new potato-
toes, asparagus, strawberries, cauliflower, spinach, lettuce. They’re
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just so expensive that they can’t be bought. By ordinary people, that is: Klitgaard inadvertently included strawberries in the list of vegetables. In May 1936, only 8,071 kg. of hot-house strawberries were supplied to Copenhagen’s fruit and vegetable markets, selling for an average of 7.00 crowns per kg.; in June the supply rose to 29,805 kg. and the price dropped to 3.60 crowns. In June and July, 480,261 and 702,675 kg. of field-grown strawberries were brought to markets, selling for 1.50 and 1.95 crowns, respectively. Asparagus, which cost 3.00 crowns in May, cost 1.75 crowns in June when the supply doubled. The 4,780 kg. of hot-house cauliflower cost 13.50 crowns in May, while the 54,820 kg. of field-grown cauliflower cost 3.80 crowns in June (and 33,115 kg. cost 2.00 crowns in November). Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937, tab. 101 at 80-81.

78 swagger coat: A women’s jacket, fashionable in the 1930s, it had a full back and hung loose in the front. http://www.lib.virginia.edu/~jlc5f/Assign9a.htm.

78 the Circus: The word is capitalized here because it refers to the Circus Building (Cirkusbygningen), which was first built in 1886 and rebuilt in 1915 after a fire; located near Tivoli, it was originally designed for the circus, but later came to be used for other cultural events as well. http://www.cirkusbygningen.dk/Historie.html

78 Citadel: Kastellet or citadellet Frederikshavn at Langelinie dates back to the 1660s, but it was no longer a fortress in the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it was a barracks and was the first object occupied by Nazi Germany when it invaded Copenhagen early on the morning of April 9, 1940. Wendt, Besættelse og Atomtid: 1939-1965, at 68-69.

78 the Smedelinie: The counterscarp on the citadel’s works toward the west named for a building that was once used by the fortress’s smith. It was a footpath between the ditches.

78 the Swedish Church: Gustafskyrken, construction of which began in 1908, is located near the citadel.

79 an Indian carretero: See B. Traven, Die Carreta (Zurich: Diogenes, 1993 [1931]), on the life of Mexican cart-drivers. Traven was one of Klitgaard’s favorite novelists (see above “Introduction” at p. xiii), and Klitgaard is presumably referring to this novel, which had been translated into Danish in 1934.

79 Italian day-laborer dock-hand: Havnesjover derives from the
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Dutch word *sjouw*, meaning a tough job, especially lugging heavy objects.

79 *collar*: The fashion at the time, at least for low-paid white-collar workers, was a detachable celluloid collar, which could be cleaned with soap and a nail brush. Jensen, *Under fælles ansvar* at 253.


79 *when the Egyptian fellah hears about the life of a Parisian servant, in handsomely appointed salons where there are beautiful women and music, whose work consists only in putting a bottle of wine and two glasses on a table with flowers and saying voila, his own slave existence appears to him like a hell without equal*: In Danish this sentence contains a syntactical inconsistency (anacoluthon), which has been eliminated by deleting the word “and,” which Klitgaard used before “whose work,” presumably because he sensed that “whose” sounded as if it referred back to “women and music.”

79-80 *It seems to be a fixed rule across the whole globe that the longer the working hours a proletarian has, the less he earns. Nielsen’s working hours total 70 hours a week. And he earns less than a unionized worker who works 48 hours a week*: Klitgaard, who had this very job in 1936, earned 30 crowns per week (see above “Introduction” at p. xiii); the average wage for all unskilled male laborers in trade and industry in Copenhagen in the third quarter of 1936 was 1.45 crowns per hour. *Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København . . . 1936-1937*, tab. 189 at 145. Based on a 48-hour workweek and allowing for two weeks of vacation (which did not become a statutory right in Denmark until 1938), an unskilled male laborer’s average annual wage at 3,480 crowns would have exceeded all of the average annual white-collar wages mentioned earlier; see above note to p. 8.

80 *Funen*: An island between Zealand, on which Copenhagen is located, and Jutland, the Danish mainland.

80 *Then of course you’ve got the Welfare Office to fall back on. 13.50 crowns per week*: The public assistance law enacted in 1933 provided that local governments should not pay recipients an amount in excess of the amount that they presumably would have obtained un-
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der the national insurance law if they had fulfilled the conditions for the receipt of such aid. Lov Nr. 181 af 20 Maj 1933 om offentlig Forsorg, sect. 297, subsect. 1, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 890-989 at 975. Under the national insurance law enacted at the same time, the annual disability or old-age pension guaranteed a single male in Copenhagen below the age of 66 amounted to 732 crowns, which equaled 2 crowns per day or 14 crowns per week. Lov Nr. 182 af 20. Maj 1933 om Folkeforsikring, sect. 39, subsect. 1, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 992-1035 at 1015-16.

80 you risk being sent to do farm labor: Recipients of public assistance who refused to take on suitable work could be relegated to the poor-relief system and compulsory work in a workhouse. Lov Nr. 181 af 20 Maj 1933 om offentlig Forsorg, sect. 306, subsect. 1, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 977; Bekendtgørelse af Lov Nr. 205 af 20. Maj 1933 om Arbejdsanvisning og Arbejdsløshedsforsikring, sect. 17, subsect. 1, para. 10, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 1279-1301 at 1289-90. In 1933 the minister of social affairs called on agricultural employers to use the public employment service (Arbejdsanvisning)—to which union unemployment funds were required to report the names of newly unemployed members and those of unemployed members who had obtained employment—in their search for workers. “Maa Regeringen genindføre stavnsbaandal?” Berlingske Aftenavis, Apr. 16, 1936, at 5:5-6; Bekendtgørelse af Lov Nr. 205 af 20. Maj 1933 om Arbejdsanvisning og Arbejdsløshedsforsikring, sect. 4, subsect. 1, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 1281. Despite the existence of 10,000 unemployed farmworkers, agricultural employers were seeking 25,000 workers. “Arbejderne skal ikke tvinges fra By til Land,” Berlingske Aftenavis, Jan. 22, 1936, at 4:2-3. In 1935-36, 20,652 agricultural jobs were assigned by the employment service, but only 572 of them by the Copenhagen office. Danmarks Statistik, Statistisk Aarbog 1938, tab. 150 at 136. The labor movement charged that in reality farm employers operated on a revolving-door basis with 14- to 20-year-olds, and later in 1936 farmers admitted that there was no lack of adult labor. Fremad og atter Fremad . . . LOs historie 1871-1960, at 380-81 (Henning Tjørnhøj ed.; Copenhagen: Fremad, 1998).

81 go to the main train station movie theater and see the newsreel:
The D.S.B. (Danske Statsbaner) Kino, modeled on a similar operation in Paris, was opened in 1935 as propaganda for the state railways. Although originally designed as a kind of entertainment waiting room for travellers, it also became popular among Copenhagener. It did not show “real movies” and the newsreel was its main attraction. It was closed in 1971. Carsten Wiedemann, “DSB-Kino på Hovedbanegården” (Friday July 1, 1999). http://dr.dk/p1/danmarkkort/arkiv1999. htm

81 Thor Street: Thorsgade is one of the oldest streets in Nørrebro. Lebech, “Nørrebro Bebyggelse” at 198.

82 Mr. Lundegaard, sir: Danish, like German, but unlike English, has a polite form of address in which the word for “Mr.” is placed before the addressee’s occupational title. Here Andresen addresses Lundegaard as hr. inkassator.

82 the matter would go to the bailiff: Kongens foged is an official charged with executing distrainst against people who fail to pay their debts.

82 cretonne: Strong unglazed cotton cloth.

83 Norreport: The biggest station of Copenhagen’s electrified railway system is not far from the Botanic Garden.

83 he was standing there just inside the entrance to the Garden looking at Pallas Athena: There is a well-known statue of the Greek goddess at the Botanic Garden.

83 S-train: Copenhagen’s electrified metropolitan railway began operations on April 3, 1934, on the route Frederiksberg-Klampenborg. Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 295-96; http://www.dsb.dk/universer/trainspotting/nostalgi/stog.htm. The word S-toget was borrowed from the German, where “S” stands for Stadt (city).

84 Klampenborg: A coastal town a few miles north of Copenhagen.

84 Hermitage Plain, past Stag Marsh, through Raadvad and Stampen, again to the south along the paths and across the open plain: Lundegaard is walking in Deer Park. Hermitage castle was built in 1736 under King Christian V and was used in connection with hunts. Birgitte Rühmann, “Dyrehaven—jagtrytternes legeplads gennem 332 år,” on http://matttsson.dk/dyrehaven.html.

84 Fortune: Elevated area near the southwestern corner of Deer Park.

84 in town: The 1937 edition has a typo (byene) as does the 1970 edition (byerne [“the cities”]); the translation here agrees with the 1997
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86 **Sundby**: A section in the southeastern part of Copenhagen on the island of Amager. In the wake of increasing industrialization toward the end of the nineteenth century and the settlement of a considerable working-class population, Sundby became an independent municipality in 1895, but by 1902 economic and health-related problems in the fast growing population led to its incorporation into Copenhagen. http://www.sulfo.subnet.dk/om_sundby.htm

87 Revolutions are also occurring in the tennis world. Since the English queen has permitted the participants at the world championships at Wimbledon to play with bare legs: “When, in 1933, [the American tennis player Helen] Jacobs became the first woman ever to wear shorts at Wimbledon, her action sparked less controversy than any other player might have caused. Even the Prince of Wales expressed approval: ‘I see no reason on earth why any woman should not wear shorts for lawn tennis. They are very comfortable and quite the most practical costume for the game; and I don’t think the wearers lose anything in looks.” Adrianne Blue, “Obituary: Helen Jacobs: A Woman’s Guide to Gallantry on the Court,” *Guardian*, June 13, 1997, at 22 (Lexis). Jacobs stated in her autobiography that the issue of shorts for women was decided at Wimbledon in 1934 after she had worn them at the U.S. national women’s championships the previous year. Helen Hull Jacobs, *Beyond the Game: An Autobiography* 173-75 (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1936). See also Helen Hull Jacobs, “The Psychology of Tennis Clothes,” *Ladies Home Journal*, June 1934, at 31, 118, 120. When, on the eve of her defense of her title in the U.S. national women’s championship at Forest Hills in 1933, Jacobs announced “her planned debut in shorts . . . the scantiest attire ever worn by a queen of American tennis,” she stated: “I’ve lost many points through my racquet catching in my skirt.” There was “apparently . . . no move to dictate to the women stars what they may wear;” and there had been only “mild excitement” the previous year when Bunny Austin wore shorts in the men’s national championship. “Miss Jacobs Plans Debut in Shorts Today; First Net Champion Ever to Adopt Attire,” *N.Y. Times*, Aug. 15, 1933, at 21:6. According to another account, in 1934 the British player Bunny Austin, fatigued by the “sweat-soaked” heavy white flannel trousers that men wore by tradition, became the first man to wear shorts at Wimbledon. “Bunny Austin,” *The Times* (London), Aug. 28, 2000 (Lexis). He had
"expected a fuss there, but there was none. Slowly, others followed. I don't know why we put up with long flannel trousers for so long." At Wimbledon, King George V and Queen Mary accepted the change without comment, and soon other men, and then women, led by the American Helen Hull Jacobs, started wearing shorts, too.” Frank Litsky, “Bunny Austin, 94, a Pioneer in Tennis Shorts,” *N.Y. Times*, Aug. 28, 2000, at B6:1 (Lexis). According to Austin’s autobiography, he was the first to wear shorts at Forest Hills in 1932 and at Wimbledon in 1933. H. W. “Bunny” Austin and Phyllis Konstam, *A Mixed Double* 96-97 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1969).

87 Now they’d just gotten night buses, which turned Copenhagen upside down and created such scenes that people were just about to start saying Citizen and Comrade to one another: See “Fodselsdagsstemning paa de københavnske sporvogn i Morges,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, May 1, 1936, at 7:1-2.

87 Enghave Road fire station: *Enghavevejens brandstation* is located in Vesterbro.

88 *Ermelunden*: A forest at the southwest corner of Deer Park. A *lund* is a “grove.”

88 In the rear-tenement apartments the heat means that you should preferably not open the windows. The garbage cans put out a stupefying stench: Writing about turn-of-the-century rear tenements in New York City, Jacob Riis observed that if there was an open space between them, “it is never more than a slit a foot or so wide, and gets to be the receptacle of garbage and filth of every kind; so that any opening made in these walls for purposes of ventilation becomes a source of greater danger than if there were none.” Riis, *The Battle with the Slum* at 115.

92 *Gammeltorv*: Old Square.

92 *Marmor Bridge*: The Marble Bridge (Marmorbro), which was built in 1741, crosses Frederiksholms Canal at Ny Vestergade to Christiansborg.

95 *Sundby Beach*: Sundby Strand is located off the island of Amager on the Sound between Denmark and Sweden.

96 What was it that they’d written in the interrogation report from the big criminal abortion case: Only in exceedingly few cases had the operation not gone smoothly: Klitgaard is referring to the trial beginning in 1932 and delayed until 1935 of Dr. Jonathan H. Leunbach (1884-1955), Denmark’s most prominent sexual reformer; he was ul-
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timately acquitted by a jury. "De tre Læger frikendt: Dommen hilst med Raab og Bifald," Politiken, May 10, 1935, at 1:2-6. He was tried again in December 1936 in another case involving a referral of a patient who died as a result of an abortion and he was sentenced to three months in prison in 1936, completing his sentence on April 11, 1937. At the first trial, the mortality rate of women undergoing abortions was much discussed; some studies revealed rates of about 1 percent. J. H. Leunbach, "Retsapparatet i Reaktions Tjeneste," Kulturkampen 1 (1):28-30 (June 1935); "De fire Læger fik alle Fængselsstraf," Politiken, Dec. 8, 1936, at 1:4-6; Max Hodann, "A Prosecution for Abortion in Denmark," Marriage Hygiene 3 (3):202-203 (Feb. 1937); Lau Sander Esbensen, "De illegale aborter—et kompetent alternativ eller russisk roulette?" Bibliotek for Læger 192 (1):5-24 (Mar. 2000). In his defense speech at trial in May 1935, Leunbach evaluated the procedure he followed in his own clinic as having "in the vast majority of cases gone on completely smoothly." Unpublished speech, held by Leunbach in the court between May 7-9, 1935, referred to as "Leunbachs forsvars-tale," included in Leunbach's private files, typescript p. 13; email from Lau Sander Esbensen (May 3, 2001).

97 they have an unemployment card in their pocket: The insured unemployeds’ entitlement to benefits was conditioned on submitting to periodic checks by showing their Kontrolkort at the unemployment fund office during each benefit period. Bekendtgørelse af Lov Nr. 205 af 20. Maj 1933 om Arbejdsløshedsforsikring, sect. 2, subsect. 5, in Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 1293. In 1921 the right-wing government had amended the statute regulating unemployment funds in an effort to prevent abuse by requiring employers to stamp the cards of newly hired workers and send them back to the fund. The system, however, proved to be a fiasco in industries with jobs of often varying tenure and also because many employers forgot to ask for the cards altogether since many employees were not members of funds and therefore had no cards. This regime was abolished in 1927. Hansen and Henriksen, Sociale brydnninger 1914-39, at 240-41.

98 Nielsen says that the difference really isn’t that big because actually he doesn’t earn much more than the other guy gets in benefits: By law the average daily benefit that unemployment insurance funds were permitted to pay could not exceed two-thirds of the average earn-
ings of the occupation in question; the actual payment was lowered by another provision setting the daily maximum benefit at 4 crowns for providers (i.e., family heads) and 3 crowns for non-providers. Bekendtgørelse af Lov Nr. 205 af 20. Maj 1933 om Arbejdssansvning og Arbejdsløshedsforsikrings, sect. 15, subsect. 3, in Lovtiden for Kongeriget Danmark for Aaret 1933, at 1287.

99 the rescue squad: Sophus Falck founded Falcks Redningskorps in 1906 as a private for-profit fire-fighting corporation. Axel Breidahl and Axel Kjerulf, Københavnerliv gennem et halvt Aarhundrede: Gemt og glemt i Alvor og Skæmt 1883-1912, at 457 (Copenhagen: Hassing, 1938) (reprinting a newspaper article from 1906). Over the years it has taken on many other activities such as ambulance and security services.

99 training to run with gas masks on: Such on-the-beach training with gas masks was not uncommon at the time. See e.g., “Gasmasker paa Nyborg Strand,” Politiken, July 30, 1936, at 10:4.

104 out in the new housing blocks with the funny little balconies: In an effort to create greater access to light and fresh air, working-class apartment complexes in Nørrebro began about 1935 to be built with free-hanging, shielded balconies facing south. The leading architects of this functionalist style were Povl Baumann and Knud Hansen. Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 259-60.

104 Herlev: A town a few miles west of Copenhagen. In the first edition and 1970 edition, it is spelled Herlov, which is the name of an inn there.

104 Holte: It is located northwest of Copenhagen near Lake Fure.

104 the whole country’s eating red fruit pudding: Rødgrød is a popular Danish dessert made with redcurrant or raspberry juice, sago flour, and sugar.

104 Fælled park: See above note to p. 77.

105 The d’Angleterre: The Hotel d’Angleterre at Kongens Nytorv was Copenhagen’s fanciest and best-known hotel.

105 Lake Bagsvær: It is situated northwest of Copenhagen, just south of Lake Fure.

105 Burmeister and Wain’s gotten big orders from the Soviet Union: Burmeister & Wain was a large Danish and world pioneer in motor shipbuilding and engineering; before it became Burmeister & Wain in 1865, it had existed under other names since 1843. Already by 1877 it had become Denmark’s largest enterprise with 1,100 employ-
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ees; in 1980 it sold off its engineering division and the remaining shipbuilding firm collapsed in 1996. It built eight ships for the Soviet Union in the 1930s, including two in 1932, three in 1933, and three in 1936; other than the ones built for the Soviet Union in these years, the company had stopped building steamships. Johannes Lehmann, *Burmeister & Wain gennem hundrede Aar* (Copenhagen: A/S Burmeister & Wain’s Maskin- og Skibsbyggeri, 1943); Erik Eriksen, *Værftet bag de 1000 skibe: Burmeister & Wain Skibsværft 1843-1993*, at 106, 153-54 (unpaginated) (Copenhagen: Burmeister & Wain, 1993); email from Anette Eklund Hansen, archivist, Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv (June 20, 2001) (based on information from the B&W Museum).

105 **Prisoners’ Aid: Fængelseshjælp** was a private organization founded in 1902 to help resocialize prisoners. It also supervised parolees. Together with all other similar organizations, it was absorbed in 1951 by the Danish Welfare Society (*Dansk Forsorgsselskab*), which in turn became a state entity in 1973.

107 **which streets he’s been walking along**: The nonsense-producing typo—*gaæt af*—in the first edition (which was retained in the 1970 and 1985 Gyldendal editions) has been ignored in favor of *gået ad* (as corrected in the 1997 edition).

107 **Graabrodre Square**: Located in central Copenhagen, this square contains several houses from the eighteenth century including the remains of the old Graabrodre Monastery. The Gray Friars were Franciscans.

107 **Skinder Street**: Skindergade (Tanner Street) runs right by Graabrodre Square.

108 **Worker Good Samaritans: Arbejdernes Samariterne Forening** was founded on July 31, 1907, in connection with a workplace disaster that injured many workers. In 1922 it became a suborganization of the Danish Red Cross and in 1933 changed its name to *Arbejdernes Samariterne Forbund*. [http://www.asf-dansk-folkehjælp.dk/Historie.html](http://www.asf-dansk-folkehjælp.dk/Historie.html).

108 **Fort Kastrup**: It was built in 1886-87 as part of Copenhagen’s coastal defense, but in 1925 the area was taken over by the municipality of Copenhagen, which used it for civilian affairs. Located on the island of Amager, a few miles southeast of central Copenhagen, it offers a view all the way to Sweden.

109 **Light Automatic Rifle Syndicate**: In 1936 the *Dansk Rekyl*
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*Riffel Syndikat* changed its name to *Dansk Industri Syndikat A/S*. Originally its main product was the Madsen machine gun. It sold weapons to Nazi Germany during the occupation of Denmark.


111 *they ought to do just what was being done in France, which had nationalized the war industries:* Under the Popular Front government of Socialists and Radicals (supported but not joined by the Communists), which had just taken office in June 1936, the Chamber of Deputies, by a vote of 484 to 85 on July 17, 1936, passed the Loi sur la nationalisation de la fabrication des matériels de guerre, which authorized the government to purchase armaments firms. In the course of the parliamentary debates, the Minister of National Defense and War, Edouard Daladier, justified the law on the grounds that: "La fabrication privée des armes n’a pas pu échapper à la loi du capitalisme, qui est la recherche du profit." *Journal Officiel: Débats parlementaires: Chambre des Députés, 16e Législature, Session ordinaire de 1936 (2e partie)* at 1992. See generally, Daniel Ligou, *Histoire du socialisme en France (1871-1961) 396-432* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).

112 *the blue sound:* The Øresund is the strait between Zealand and southern Sweden connecting the Baltic Sea and the Kattegat.

116 *Høsterkøb:* A village half way between Copenhagen and Elsinore.

117 *straw:* The stems of cereal plants such as wheat, oats, and rye are called straw both while they are growing and when used for bedding after the harvest. Although "stalks" might have sounded more familiar to American readers in the sentence in the text, that word is correctly applied to corn, which was not grown in Denmark.

117 *Zealand:* Sjælland is the island on which Copenhagen is located.

117 *Nyboer’s dirty yellow, mildewed old houses:* Originally built in 1631-41 as housing for the Navy, the hundreds of little row houses with 850 apartments and 2,500 residents in 1936 (the number of residents having reached 15,000 at the end of the eighteenth century) were (and are) uniformly painted yellow. "Nyboer giver hvert Aar
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117 Store Kongens Street: Store Kongensgade (Great King’s Street) runs from Kongens Nytorv to Nyboder.

117 Rørvig: A coastal town in a vacation area in northwestern Zealand about 60 miles from Copenhagen.

121 civil-servant’s home: Together with employment security, municipalities made civil service attractive by providing housing to some civil servants.

123 drop the formalities: The phrase være dus means to drop the formal pronoun De of address in favor of the familiar du.

125 Saltholm: A bird refuge, Saltholm is an island to the east of the island of Amager in the Øresund between Denmark and Sweden comprising 6 square miles of mud flats, marshes, and open grasslands. The island and its surroundings are protected and access to parts is limited to certain times of the year. http://www.linander.dk/stig/saltho_e.htm.

125 Nybro Road: Nybrovej is a long street that runs out to the rural lake areas in the northwest in the suburb of Lyngby.

125 Hjortekær: Stag (or Hart) Marsh.

125 open-house coupon-book puzzles: Rundskuedag was introduced in 1910 in Copenhagen as the one day a year (in September) on which the public could visit various institutions. Rundskuehæfter are coupon books; coupons were required to enter the buildings; the books also included puzzles, the solving of which entitled people to various prizes. Ordbog over det danske Sprog 17:136-37 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1995 [1937]). The coupon books provided admission at half price at the horse-racing track where it was possible to win an open-house horse, which could be converted into a thousand crowns. “Rundskue-Galop,” Politiken, Sept. 14, 1936, at 11:4-5.

125 Landsting election: Amendments to the Constitution of 1915 raised the voting age for the Landsting, the upper house of the Danish parliament (which was abolished in 1953), to 35. It had 72 members, one-fourth of whom were elected by the retiring Landsting; the others were elected indirectly through an electoral college. It had long been a bastion of the right-wing parties, which as a result were able to thwart
the will of the more democratically elected Folketing, but in the election held on September 15, 1936, the Social Democrats and Radicals gained a one-vote majority when a tie vote on the island of Bornholm was decided a week later by drawing the name of a Social Democrat from a bronze-age urn. “Det spændende Valg: Kamp om tre Mandater,” Politiken, Sept. 9, 1936, at 5:2-6, 6:1-3; “Landstings-Flertallet skal afgøres ved Lodtrækning,” Politiken, Sept. 16, 1936, at 1:2-6; “Regeringen trak den store Lod,” Politiken, Sept. 23, 1936, at 1:2-6; Rasmussen, Velfærdsstaten på Vej: 1913-1939, at 483-85.


125 The big language courses are opening now: For advertisements of courses opening in September, see Politiken, Sept. 16, 1936, at 19.

125 it was laid down long ago that pink silver lamé will be the coming season’s big craze: See Elinor Kielgast, “Opvisning af Vintermoden,” Politiken, Sept. 7, 1936, at 14:1-4, which includes a picture of such a pink silver lamé item.

129 there are so many travelling salesmen you could use them as hog feed: Working conditions for travelling salesmen were inferior to those of other employees. In 1917 parliament enacted a law that required employers to give them three months’ notice, but the Handelsrejsendeforbund complained in 1936 that arbitrary treatment was still common; for example, if the employer went bankrupt, travelling salesmen were in a much more difficult position; the terms and conditions regulating whether the salesman or the firm took the risk of customers’ nonpayment were also disadvantageous. Lov Nr. 243 af 8. Maj 1917 om Kommission, Handelsagentur og Handelsrejsende, sect. 86, in Lovtidende for Aaret 1917, at 623-39 at 638 (Copenhagen: Schultz, 1918); “Nordens Handelsrejsende ønsker nye Arbejdsforhold,” Politiken, Nov. 11, 1936, at 15:5-6. At the time of the 1930 census, there were 4,948 travelling salesmen in Copenhagen (including Frederiksberg and Gentofte), 96 percent of whom were men; the male labor force totalled 254,986. Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937, tab. 18-19 at 23-27.

130 Ordrup Scrub: Ordrup Krat is located in the southernmost sec-
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130 the king’s city: Copenhagen.

131 Taasinge: A small island directly off the southeast coast of the island of Funen, which is known for its apples. Taasinge, according to a parish pastor there, also “used to produce a lot of fruits, apples, pears and cherries. Unfortunately most of it is gone now.” Email from Didier Gautier (June 26, 2001).

131 Helligaandshus: The House of the Holy Ghost, which is connected to the Helligaandskirke, is the west wing of a fifteenth-century abbey.

131 Lake Gurre: Gurre Sø is located 40 kilometers north of Copenhagen.

131 They made on the whole a day of it that was about as romantic as you see in the American films, where youth has nothing to do but paddle around on large woodland lakes in canoes, which are padded with flowery pillows and with a portable phonograph: Klitgaard developed this image into a short story. Mogens Klitgaard, “Cosy Corner,” in Politiken: Magasinet (Aug. 25, 1940), reprinted in Klitgaard, Hverdagens musik at 41-47.

132 it’s not the chance occurrences that decide your fate, but the way you react to the chance occurrences: Klitgaard’s semi-autobiographical novel opens with this observation: “Sometimes I think about the fact that it’s not the chance occurrences that determine our life, but the way we react to the chance occurrences. To be sure, many times life has surely offered me a chance—I just wasn’t capable of taking it. Conversely, life has many times given me an opportunity to do something wrong, and I’ve never neglected to avail myself of it.” Klitgaard, Gud mildner luften for de klippede får at 7.

133 12 Kamel Street: Kamelgade, which is today called Gernersgade, was in Nyboder. See above note to p. 117.

138 on the West Coast foreign ships are stranded: See “Vestehavet sprænger Dige, flere Kutter i Fare,” Politiken, Oct. 19, 1936, at 10:5-6.

138 the Eastern High Court: Østre Landsret is the eastern division of the intermediate appeals court with jurisdiction over appeals from the county courts in the eastern part of Denmark. It is located in Bredgade not far from Amalienborg Palace.

138 In Brønsøej there’s a man who killed his five-year-old son
because they were starving and were going to be evicted by the bailiff. See “Fortvivlet Far kvæler Søn Kongens Fod finder Liget,” *Politiken*, Oct. 30, 1936, at 1:2-4. Brønshøj is a district in the northwestern part of Copenhagen which was not incorporated into the city until 1901.

138 a suburban theater’s having a success with a play whose main character’s a worker who incessantly claims that, after all, we have it pretty good—-it’s only the idiots who’re complaining—there are really lots of places where they have it much worse: None of the Danish cultural historians consulted (including those who were adults living in Copenhagen in the 1930s) could identify such a play.

138 Moving day, as usual, is turning the city upside down: Moving day was the day on which leases expired and people moved into or out of rented dwellings; at this time it was the third Tuesday in April and October. In 1936, the third Tuesday in October was October 20. Nevertheless, by this time, according to a newspaper article published that day, moving day was no longer a single day, but a season, and in fact the biggest moving day had been the previous Saturday. Because the construction or renovation of many dwellings was not completed on time, many renters who had to leave their previous dwelling could not yet move into their new one, resulting in great disruption, which was exacerbated that year by the big lockout in February and March affecting the building industry. “Flyttedag—men uden Plads til Kom­moden!” *Politiken*, Oct. 20, 1936, at 9:2-6; “Flyttes Flyttedag i Aar til 15. Maj?” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Mar. 20, 1936, at 1:5-6. In connection with parliamentary discussion of a law that as of 1937 made the first of every month a general moving day, it was pointed out that the existence of only two moving days raised building costs by forcing construction workers to work overtime to meet those two deadlines. “Indenrigs­ministeren foreslaar treaarige Leje-Perioder for Lejlighedet,” *Berlingske Aftenavis*, Jan. 8, 1936, at 6:1-4; “Nu kommer Beskyttelsen for Bolig­og Butikslejere,” *Politiken*, Nov. 12, 1936, at 5:2-6. See also *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* 4:1273 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994 [1922]); *Ordbog over det danske Sprog: Supplement 3*:977 (Copen­hagen: Gyldendal, 1997); *Lov om Leje*, sect. 8, subsect. 1, No. 54, Mar. 23, 1937, in *Lovtidende for Aaret 1937*, at 119-35 at 120. Oddly, a large newspaper advertisement for carpets appearing on November 1 was called a “Moving Day Offer.” *Politiken*, Nov. 1, 1936, at 5:1-3.

138 the king’s been to the movies to see Panserbasse: The film was
a 1936 Danish farce cum American gangster-romanticism directed by Lau Lauritsen and Alice O'Fredericks and featuring Ib Schønberg, one of Denmark’s most famous actors, in one of his first star roles, playing “the fat, kind cop... It was lovely, the entire thirteen-year-old public swooned with delight.” Ebbe Neergaard, *The Story of Danish Film* 70 (tr. Elsa Gress; Copenhagen: Det danske Selskab, n.d. [ca. 1964]). The comedy, in which English-speaking foreigners played the gangsters, opened October 1, 1936 at the World-Cinema in Copenhagen. *Politiken*, Oct. 1, 1936, at 19:3 (advertisement); “Dansk Gangsterfilm,” *Politiken*, Oct. 2, 1936, at 3:2-6, at 4:1-2. *Panserbasse* is Copenhagen slang for a police officer (“cop”); *basse* also means “fatty,” which described Schønberg. The king was Christian X, who reigned from 1912 to 1947.

142 *Caballero*: Francisco Largo Caballero, a former plasterer, labor union official, and chairman of the Socialist party, was named premier of the popular front Republican government in September 1936 and named himself minister of war. Klitgaard had such a map of the war front in Spain with black pins for the fascist troop units and red ones for the government’s hanging in his own room. When asked about it by an interviewer, he replied: “I believe Europe’s future is being decided in these very months on the Spanish fronts.” Christian Houmark, “Daarligt egnet til at møde Livet,” *B.T.*, June 10, 1937. In 1938 Klitgaard added that Spain would become fascism’s Waterloo if everyone who understood the importance of this struggle actively sided with the “heroic Spanish people’s side... in the struggle for European culture.” “For regeringen,” *Kulturkampen* 4 (2):4-13 at 9 (Mar. 1938).

143 *Teglholmen*: Burmeister & Wain’s iron foundry was located in the southern part of Copenhagen on South Harbor.

143 *To be sure, they read in the newspapers that B. and W.’s stockholders are dissatisfied with the dividend, that they’re at daggers drawn over the profits*: As a result of the worldwide depression and special problems facing Danish export-oriented firms in overcoming trade barriers and acquiring foreign exchange in order to pay for imports of raw materials, by the end of 1932 Burmeister & Wain faced such desperate straits that it prevailed upon the Danish government to enact a statute (in February 1933) splitting the company into a new operating company and a new company designed to liquidate the assets and liabilities not transferred to the new operating company. Although the
winding-up company was terminated in 1937 after all creditors had been paid in full, the restructuring spawned disputes over the dividends to be paid owners of preferred shares in the new operating company and the disposition of the profits resulting from the unexpectedly vast expansion of the company's sales, which management wished to use for increasing the firm's capital and reserve fund rather than redeeming the preferred shares. The dispute was not resolved until February 1942, when the government enacted a new statute (which had to be and was accepted by a majority of shareholders). Lehmann, *Burmeister & Wain gennem hundrede Aar* at 189-96, 199, 213-25.

144 *the prodigal but, to be sure, returned, son:* The parable of the lost son is found in Luke 15:11-32.

147 *Købmager Street:* The old name was *Kødmanger* ("flesh-monger"); this intersection is near Hojbro Square.

148 *black:* The typo in the first edition (storte) was changed in later editions to sorte ("black") rather than to the equally possible store ("large").

150 *lustrous blue spot on its neck feathers:* The technical zoological term is "speculum"; the word used by Klitgaard (nakkespejl) would be misleading in its English translation ("hand mirror").

151 *Hubertusjagt in Deer Park in red coats:* This traditional hunt was originally the annual foxhunting (on the English model) in the park of the Hermitage Castle north of Copenhagen. St. Hubertus (whose day is November 3) is the patron saint of hunters. Riding clubs have held the chase on the first Sunday in November since 1900; riders wear red coats and foxtails are worn on the shoulders of two persons acting as the foxes. In 1936 the event took place on November 1 and the winner was company president V. Klitgaard. "Festlige Skue i Dyrehaven," *Politiken*, Nov. 2, 1936, at 13:3-4; http://hubertusjagt.dk.

151 *Lake Fuglesang:* Fuglesangsøen (Lake Birdsong) is in Dyrehaven.

151 *a quick little trip to Norway's sun and cold:* Copenhagen newspapers were filled with ads for trips to Norway.

151 *coke:* The residue of coal remaining after distillation without air, coke was used as home heating fuel more in Europe than in the United States.

151 *The storm's speeding across the country, sucking five Eshjerg cutters down into the deep:* This storm caused one of the biggest fishing
catastrophes in West Coast history. Esbjerg is Denmark's most important West Coast port. "Esbjerg savner 36 Fiskere," Politiken, Nov. 1, 1936, at 1:2-6.

151 Now the farm hands are coming from the countryside to the city to look for work: In 1938 Klitgaard developed this scene into a Christmas story about a farm worker who came to Copenhagen in November and wound up begging. Mogens Klitgaard, "En julefortælling," in Solhverv: Socialistisk Julehæfte (1938), reprinted in Klitgaard, Hverdagens musik at 35-40.

151 people's kitchens: A folkekøkken, unlike a soup kitchen, is not free; run or subsidized by local governments, it provides cheap meals to the poor. People’s kitchens were first established in Copenhagen in March 1917 under the impact of wartime inflation and fuel shortages, which caused the municipal authorities to impose severe restrictions on the population’s use of cooking gas. Although at first they served only dinner, later they offered comprehensive meal service. Andreasen et al., “Københavns Kommunenes Administration” at 50; Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 166-67. In 1936 there were five people’s kitchens in Copenhagen and one in Frederiksberg, which served several million meals and were supplied by their own sausage and fruit juice factories and bakery. Københavns statistiske Kontor, Statistisk Aarbog for København...1936-1937, tab. 178 at 135. Klitgaard himself frequented Copenhagen's people’s kitchens before he became a well-known author. Poul Carit Andersen, "Mogens Klitgaard," in Klitgaard, de sindssyges klo D at 11.

151 The Royal Library garden's so quiet: Det kongelige Bibliotek was founded by King Frederik III in the third quarter of the seventeenth century and became the largest library in Scandinavia. A new building for the Danish national library was built between 1898 and 1906. The garden, known as Copenhagen’s “most intimate,” is situated between the library and the National Archives, which in turn is connected to Christiansborg Slot, which houses the parliament and the supreme court. København: Nu og før, vol. I: Indledende Afsnit, Slotsholmen, Havnen 210 (Svend Aakjær, Mogens Lebech, and Otto Norn eds.; Copenhagen: Hassing, 1949).

151 Bennett's advertising Christmas and New Year's trips: See, e.g., Politiken, Nov. 1, at 3:13 (Bennett Rejsebureau advertisements for Christmas and New Year's trips to Norway).

151 Titan jumps 4½ percent: See “Titan sprang i Gaar 4½ i Vejret,” Politiken, Nov. 1, 1936, at 15:4. The share price of the stock of Titan A/S rose by 4½ percent the previous day. Titan A/S, a producer of mechanical and electrical machinery, was founded in 1897. At its peak it employed more than 3,000 workers; after a merger with its biggest competitor in 1965, it is today Thrige-Titan A/S. http://www.titan-textile.dk/forside.htm.

152 the Christmas tree that’ll decorate City Hall Square next month has already been marked for felling: See “Byens Juletræ udvalgt,” Politiken, Nov. 11, 1936, at 5:1.

152 Basedow’s disease or some such thing: First described by an Irish physician, Robert James Graves, in 1835, and later (1840) by Karl von Basedow, Graves’ disease, or Basedow’s disease, as it is called in Europe, is an autoimmune disorder resulting in hyperthyroidism; bulging eyes are a very common symptom.

154 the six-day race: The fourth six-day race held in Copenhagen began November 27. See “I Aften lyder Skudet for det Qerde Seksdagesløbet i København,” Politiken, Nov. 27, 1936, at 10:1-6; Jensen, Under fælles ansvar at 313.

159 Knippels Bridge: As part of a military defense policy of building new fortress towns, in 1618 King Christian IV caused work to begin on the island of Christianshavn (the northern part of the island of Amager); it was connected to mainland Copenhagen by Den Store Amagerbro, later renamed Knippelsbro (Log Bridge). It was first built in 1618-1620 and rebuilt several times over the centuries. The third bridge built in 1906-1908 was hopelessly inadequate to the increased volume of automobile and bicycle traffic of the 1930s; crossing the interim bridge that was in operation from 1933 until a new bridge was opened on Dec. 17, 1937, was almost life-threatening for bicycle riders. Svend Ellehøj, Christian 4.s Tidsalder: 1596-1660, at 220-21, in Danmarks historie, vol. 7 (John Danstrup and Hal Koch eds.; Copenhagen: Politken, 1964); Mogens Lebech, “Knippelsbro,” in København: Nu og før, vol. IV: Christianshavn Voldkvartererne at 41-48.

159 Christianshavns Square: Christianshavns Torv is a central square on Christianshavn. Lebech, “Torvegade og Torvet.”
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159 Islands Wharf: Islands Brygge (Iceland’s Wharf) runs along the island of Amager.

159 Lange Bridge: Lange Bro (Long Bridge) connects the mainland of Copenhagen to the island of Amager. Dating back to the seventeenth century, it was rebuilt several times and in 1930 an interim bridge was built that stood into the postwar years. Mogens Lebech, “Langebro,” in København: Nu og før, vol. IV: Christianshavn Voldkvartererne at 159-64.

159 Nials Street: Njalsgade, as it is now written, runs for several blocks from Iceland’s Wharf to Amager Commons. Large apartment blocks occupied this entire stretch. For a photograph from 1938, see Lebech, “Yderkvarterernes Bebyggelse” at 165.

161 the new perfume . . . designed by Prince Yousoupoaff in London: Prince Felix Yusupov (Klitgaard used the French spelling) (1887-1967) led the group of conspirators who killed Rasputin on Dec. 30, 1916, and after the Bolshevik Revolution lived in England, France, and the United States. From a family of vast wealth in Russia, he sought to maintain a gay life style in the beau monde abroad. While he was visiting London in 1935, the Russian-born Mrs. Lythgaw Smith suggested they open a perfume shop under the name of an earlier business of his, Irfe (the first two letters of his and his wife’s names). He designed different perfumes, selling for £6 to £16, for blondes and brunettes. Christopher Dobson, Prince Felix Yusupov: The Man Who Killed Rasputin 172 (London: Harrap, 1989). According to Alexandre Vassiliev, Beauty in Exile: The Artists, Models, and Nobility Who Fled the Russian Revolution and Influenced the World of Fashion 279, 275 (Antonina Bouis and Anya Kucharev tr.; New York: Abrams, 2000 [1998]), Yusupov and his wife Irene had produced such perfumes in 1926, but the book also includes photos of the perfumes from 1936.

161 the ravishing velvet dream of a dress with zipper Madame Landowska has created: The first edition misspelled the designer’s name (Landkowska) and later editions followed it. Presumably Klitgaard found the reference in “Stribet Fløjlskasak,” Politiken Magasinet, Dec. 6, 1936, at 24:3-4, which spelled the name correctly.

161 sock-suspenders: Men used them at a time when socks lacked elastic bands; they were a typical Danish Christmas gift.

162 Christmas sheaths of grain have been hung on the trees on the boulevards for the birds, who aren’t permitted to starve in December:
Juleneg is a tradition at Christmas, when animals and humans are supposed to be treated well.

163 cheap ready-made Czechoslovak goods: Czechoslovakia was a leading world exporter of cotton yarn, cotton-piece goods, and wool yarn, but not of clothing; Denmark imported and Czechoslovakia exported 15 to 20 times more in yarn and fabrics than in ready-to-wear clothing. Exporting from countries (like Czechoslovakia) with old cotton-textile industries to countries (like Denmark) with newer cotton-textile industries was built into the structure of world trade in textiles. International Labour Office, *The World Textile Industry: Economic and Social Problems* 1: 73, tab. 2 at 73, tab. 4 at 75, tab. 12 at 97 (Geneva: ILO, 1937); L'Office de Statistique de la République Tchécoslovaque, *Annuaire Statistique de la République Tchécoslovaque*, tab. VII 4 at 126, tab. VII 8 at 131 (Prague: Orbis, 1936); Danmarks Statistik, *Statistisk Aarbog 1938*, tab. 93 at 83-84. Foreign exchange controls during the 1930s strictly limited the import of finished consumer goods, especially of those competing with domestic production; the Danish clothing industry was one of the chief beneficiaries of this protection of the home market. Vagn Dybdahl et al., *Krise i Danmark: Strukturanendringer og krisepolitik i 1930'erne* 159, 164 (Copenhagen: Berlingske forlag, 1975). Of the garments (including knitwear but excluding shoes and hats) valued at 18 million crowns officially imported by Denmark in 1936, only 94,000 crowns' worth of underwear came from Czechoslovakia. Danmarks Statistik, *Danmarks Vareindførsel og udførsel i Aaret 1936*, tab. 2 at 109-17, in *Statistisk Tabelværk*, Femte Række, Litra D, Nr. 57 (Copenhagen: Bianco Luno, 1937). Imports of cheap mass-produced Czech clothing may have resulted from exchange agreements involving Danish exports or illegal transactions involving re-exports of goods to countries from which imports were permitted and removal of labels identifying the country of origin. Email from Morten Thing (July 2 and 9, 2001) and Prof. Ole Hyldtoft, Department of History, University of Copenhagen (July 2, 2001).

165 Could he maybe get him foreign currency?: In January 1932 the Danish government established a de facto foreign currency monopoly: a central office (*Valutacentralen*) rationed and allocated foreign currency to importers—who were required to have a certificate from the central office, which in issuing certificates had to take into account the need for imported raw materials for Danish exporting firms and raw
materials and means of production to maintain domestic production—thus in effect regulating imports. To be sure, especially after 1935, all the important national business associations were coopted into a foreign currency council, which helped prepare the guidelines for foreign currency allocations. Rasmussen, *Velfærdstaten på Vej: 1913-1939*, at 410-28; Dybdahl et al., *Krise i Danmark* at 136-38; Hansen and Henriksen, *Sociale brydninger 1914-39*, at 279-80, 302-304.

165 *It was make or break, this business here, and obviously it turned out to be break:* On Klitgaard’s view of the applicability of this “make or break” situation to his own life while writing the novel, see above “Introduction” at p. xix.

166 *That damn pressure that’s settled over him has surely got to be able to pass:* The first edition, followed by the 1997 edition, contains a typo, misspelling *fortage* as *foretage* (“do”), which is nonsensical here; the 1970 edition corrected it.

166 *There he turns the corner at Farimags Street and swims with the current down Frederiksborg Street. There he comes to a halt at Kongens Nytorv:* Kongens Nytorv is about three-quarters of a mile from the intersection of Farimagsgade and Frederiksborggade. *Farimag* means “slowpoke”; before 1880, the street was called *Farimagsvej*, and meant a road people drove slowly on. *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog* 4:768 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1994 [1922]).

166 *Smile your way through life:* “Smil dig gennem Livet” is the title of a slow-waltz composed by Sven Gyldmark; the text is by Axel Andreassen. Two different Danish recordings were made of the waltz in 1934, and in 1936 it was published as sheet music. The song apparently originated in “4 Uger i Himmerig.” Email from Svend Ravnkilde, Danish Music Information Centre (May 29, 2001).

169 *club-sjavs:* This game is apparently the same as the previously mentioned *sjavs*, which may merely be shortened form. Email from John McLeod (May 20, 2001). See above note to p. 66.

170 *Ørsted Works:* This large municipal electricity generating plant, built between 1916 and 1920 and located in South Harbor, about 2 kilometers from Lange Bridge, is named for the Danish physicist Hans Christian Ørsted. Andreassen et al., “Københavns Kommunes Administration” at 56.

171 *the octroi house:* The *accisebod*, located on the ramparts of Christianshavn, was built in 1718-20; it collected the duty on domes-
tically produced goods brought into Copenhagen. This small yellow house, which is called the octroi house, was originally a porter’s lodge, the actual octroi house, built in the 1820s, having been torn down in 1913. In July 1936, just a few months before this scene takes place, the octroi house was moved back a few meters on rails to accommodate the widening of Amagerbrogade. http://www.ravelinen.dk/his-3uk.htm; Breidahl and Kjerulf, Københavnerliv gennem et halvt Aarhundrede . . . 1912-1937, at 496 (reprinting a newspaper article). For a photograph, see Mogens Lebech, “Torvegade og Torvet,” in København: Nu og før, vol. IV: Christianshavn Voldkvartererne at 69-82 at 80.

171 By the mill he goes up onto the ramparts: The ramparts are the old defenses of the city of Copenhagen which were removed elsewhere, but are preserved on Christianshavn and a popular place for walks. The lille mølle on Christianshavn was built around 1800 and stopped milling in 1890; its arms were removed in 1897. It is owned by the National Museum. Mogens Lebech, “Christianshavns Vold,” in København: Nu og før, vol. IV: Christianshavn Voldkvartererne at 149-58; http://www.ravelinen.dk/his-5.htm.

171-72 He takes out his knife . . . and desperately slices two deep gashes in his wrist: This episode, involving rejection by a brother who was a senior bank clerk, bears an uncanny resemblance to one in Klitgaard’s own life. One cold and windy evening in the fall of 1923, when he was living in Copenhagen unemployed and on public assistance, hunger drove him to visit his brother Svend, who was ten years older and rising quickly in a career at one of Denmark’s biggest banks. Despite repeated knocks, no one answered the door. On leaving, Klitgaard could see his brother’s and sister-in-law’s shadows from the street; that night he went to his room and slit his wrist. Leon Jaurnow, Den lyse vagabond: Mogens Klitgaards liv og forfatterskab 26-27 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, forthcoming).

172 National Hospital: The Rigshospital, which is located in Østerbro adjacent to Fåledparken, is about three or four kilometers from Christianshavn Torv. Opened in 1910, it was the premier hospital in Denmark. Breidahl and Kjerulf, Københavnerliv gennem et halvt Aarhundrede . . . 1883-1912, at 500 (reprinting a newspaper article). For a photograph of the entrance, see København: Før og nu, V:184.

172 Sundby Hospital: The distance to Rigshospital is about 30 percent greater than to Sundby Hospital, which after its thorough renova-
tion and expansion in 1933, became one of Denmark’s most modern hospitals. Jensen, *Under fælles ansvar* at 224-25.

173 *St. Hans Square*: Sct. Hanstorp, a short distance from the Rigshospital, is one end of Blegdamsvej, on to which the hospital faces.

173 *King Edward and Mrs. Simpson*: On Thursday, December 10, 1936, King Edward VIII announced that he would abdicate because the government would not permit him to marry Wallis Warfield Simpson, a twice-divorced Catholic.

173 *welfare*: Klitgaard uses the less common word *Socialundersættelse* instead of the more common *Socialhjælp*, which was public assistance available to people after their unemployment compensation and special crisis-assistance ran out. The only reference to a use of the word in the *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* is Klitgaard’s use of it here. *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog* 20:1288-90 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1995 [1941]). Since the gardener with the florist shop was self-employed, he was not eligible for unemployment compensation and was thus relegated to public assistance (*Kommunehjælp*), receipt of which, even after the Social Democratic government revised the law in 1933, could trigger curtailment of civil rights as did receipt of poor-law help. Lov Nr. 181 af 20 maj. 1933 om offentlig Forsorg, sect. 1, subsect. 3, sects. 307 and 309, in *Lovtidende for Kongeriget Danmark Aaret 1933*, at 890, 978-79. In 1936-37, 8,716 persons receiving municipal relief lost the right to vote. Danmarks Statistik, *Statistisk Aarbog 1938*, tab. 160 at 143.

173 *ten sweet ones for fifty*. It’s probably oranges: The price is 50 øre. The world’s 15th largest importer in 1936, Denmark imported 8,975,600 kg. (65 percent of them from Spain) for 3,444,000 crowns; oranges were cheapest in December. Spain was the world’s biggest exporter, accounting for almost two-thirds of world exports from 1930 to 1934, but during the civil war imports from Italy and Palestine—Jaffa oranges were very popular in Denmark before World War II—rose strongly. Danmarks Statistik, *Danmarks Vareindførsel og udførsel i Aaret 1936*, tab. 2 at 90-91; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Statistics 1939*, tab. 263 at 194 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1939). “Sweet ones” (*søde*) was a common expression for oranges in the 1930s, but is not today. *Ordbog over det danske sprog* 23:255 (5th ed.; Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1996 [1946]).
Mogens Klitgaard, who died in 1945 at the age of 39, was Denmark’s leading critical-realist and historical novelist between the world wars. Having grown up in an orphanage after both his middle-class parents had died by the time he was 10, he ran away from his involuntary apprenticeship as a market gardener at 15 and was a vagabond in Europe for a decade until tuberculosis made that way of life impossible. In 1936, while working 80 hours a week for a pittance as a scorekeeper at a Copenhagen billiard parlor, he used the occasion of his 30th birthday to reevaluate his life and decided to write a novel. The result was *There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley*, a satirical yet sympathetic account of the pathetically absurd efforts of a bankrupt dry-goods storekeeper to maintain his middle-class aspirations by working as a door-to-door bill collector during the Great Depression. Adapting John Dos Passos’s montage techniques to weave political and economic events into the action and consciousness of the characters, Klitgaard deftly conveys his fascination with and repugnance for the pulsating metropolis of Copenhagen, presenting perhaps the most poignant contemporaneous depiction of that city’s bleak working-class slum life in the 1930s. Klitgaard has been praised for the “playful intensity” with which he combined a minimalist style with “evocative passages of...lyrical observation and sheer delight in the world” (Nils Ingwersen). Often compared to Hans Fallada’s worldwide best-seller, *Little Man—What Now?*, Klitgaard’s book offers deeper social insight without the distraction of a maudlin love story.

Translator Marc Linder, a professor of labor law at the University of Iowa who taught for three years at Roskilde University Centre in Denmark, has also translated four of Hans Kirk’s classic novels: *The Fishermen*, *The Slave*, *The Day Laborers*, and *The New Times*. His Introduction and Notes place the book and the author in the context of Copenhagen during the 1930s.

*There’s a Man Sitting on a Trolley*, like Kirk’s novels, can be ordered from Iowa Book & Supply at (319) 337-4188 or iowabook@iowabook.com or Prairie Lights Books at (800) 295-BOOK or info@prairielights.com